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PHILOSOPHICAL PADDLING: REVIVING THE AESTHETIC CORE OF CANOE JOURNEYING IN NATURE AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION



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Abstract

In this thesis, I build on the work of Scottish philosopher Ronald W. Hepburn to develop a pluralistic model of aesthetic education in the context of educational canoe journeys. I begin by integrating concepts and arguments from philosophical aesthetics into canoe journeying by exploring emergent metaphors of journeying drawn on in outdoor education literature. While acknowledging that there is limited conceptual analysis in the discourses of aesthetic education and outdoor education journeys, I integrate research to lay the groundwork for building new insights into this identified knowledge-practice gap.

I demonstrate that opportunities for reconsidering aesthetic education in nature and canoe journeys are plentiful. By adopting a philosophical viewpoint and recognising the significant impact of Ronald W. Hepburn on the aesthetics of nature, I develop an original application of his analyses into the context of educational journeying. Furthermore, I discuss how the continued narrowing of aesthetic education to the study of art or the philosophy of art is problematic in the context of the natural environment, as educators lack the sensible sounding language to describe the meaning of their own and their students' experiences when journeying. Building on Hepburn's legacy, I draw upon three further aesthetic philosophers and their models of aesthetics: Allen Carlson – Scientific Cognitivism; Yuriko Saito – Everyday Aesthetics; and Arnold Berleant – Experiential Aesthetics. Each model provides a unique set of aesthetic concepts, which, I argue, are especially beneficial for educators in their efforts to facilitate and guide aesthetic education experiences.

To develop the reader's awareness regarding the practical application of the concepts discussed in this thesis, I employ two novel approaches within its structure and style. Influenced by Mary Midgley, with her argument claiming that philosophy is like plumbing, I have sketched original illustrations of the philosophical concepts and their relationships to educational journeying for each model. Again, inspired by Midgley – and with the assistance of stylistic insights from Nussbaum – I undertake canoe journeys with each philosopher in fictive philosophical narratives. Hepburn, Carlson, Saito and Berleant become imagined *canoe companions* to enable me to address an essential question that Midgley posed: "Who is thinking when you're thinking?".

Although some aspects of these models are not entirely aligned, I argue that there are considerable conceptual tools within them that educators can utilise to cultivate aesthetic sensibilities and maximise aesthetic rewards for both themselves and their student paddlers. To better understand and practice educational journeys, I show the reader how aesthetic concepts and arguments can provide fertile ground for invigorating and growing opportunities for conceptual and practical work in this area. I conclude that a pluralistic model of aesthetic education in nature and journeying can facilitate better world-making by maximising aesthetic rewards in and after the journeys.

Lay Summary

This philosophical thesis explores how canoe journeys can become powerful tools for aesthetically engaging with natural and everyday environments. Traditionally, aesthetics has been associated with the arts or philosophy of art. This thesis contends that by stepping away from conventional aesthetic theories related to the arts and focusing on knowledge and skills centring on perception—aesthetics—in natural and everyday settings, educators, canoe leaders, paddlers, and students can cultivate meaningful personal and educational experiences.

The research in this thesis draws on a range of philosophers whose ideas are contextualised in canoe journeys – Ronald W. Hepburn, Allen Carlson, Yuriko Saito and Arnold Berleant. Throughout the text, narratives, philosophical analyses, and imagery illustrate how canoe journeys, when considering these thinkers, provide fertile ground for aesthetic education and the practical exploration of their aesthetic ideas in real-life situations. The journeying narratives, which are semi-fictional but representative of philosophers' works, articulate an essential provocation by Mary Midgley: "Who is thinking when you're thinking?". Midgley's key concept of 'philosophical plumbing' also forms the structure of this thesis, both in the developed narratives and the imagery created to do justice to the argument's development.

This thesis highlights important contributions to knowledge and practice, emphasising opportunities for future advancements in canoe journeying and aesthetic education in the following areas:

- Expanding aesthetic discussions to include the concept and practise of journeying and, in particular, canoe journeying, valuable to the educator and canoe leader alike;
- Developing practical tools for aesthetic education in journeying, e.g. a glancing sheet for the journeying educator, practicable key terms, and images to support the use of sensible sounding language in different environments;
- The articulation of a system for serious aesthetic appreciation in and beyond journeys;
- Presenting a novel approach to philosophical writing and image-making to represent key concepts and modes of expression, which will be beneficial for the educator, journeying leader and learner;
- Advancing an aesthetic education that applies the concept and practices of better world-making through educational journeys.

This thesis aims to expand aesthetic education beyond the arts, highlighting the importance of various aesthetic models in outdoor education, especially canoe journeying. It draws on Scottish philosopher Ronald W. Hepburn's work, proposing that an educational journey requires lasting disturbance. The thesis underscores the connection between perceptual skills, ethical action, and positive change during and after the journey, suggesting that revitalising the aesthetic core of canoeing can enhance efforts for better world-making.

Declaration

This thesis is entirely my own work. It has been produced only by me. The work below has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. Any publications and academic activities produced from this thesis publications are declared.

Lewis Stockwell

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PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCE PAPERS AND OUTPUTS RELATED TO THIS THESIS

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Stockwell, Lewis. "Reinterpreting the 'Professional'-Isation of Outdoor Education in the Context of Higher Education." In *Reflections on Identity: Narratives from Educators*, edited by Neil Hopkins and Carol Thompson, 123–36. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2024. doi:10.4324/9780203760215-14.

Stockwell, Lewis. "A Reappraisal of Aesthetic Education in Outdoor Learning: Building on Quay's Legacy." *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*. V. 25th Anniversary Special Edition. UNDER REVIEW.

Conference Engagements

Stockwell, Lewis. 'Aesthetic Educational Journeying: Canoe Journeying and Philosophical Analysis'. *11th International Outdoor Education Research Conference*. Tokyo, Japan, 2024.

Stockwell, Lewis. 'Canoe Journeying and the Aesthetic Education of Nature: Finding the "Sensible Sounding" Language for the Aesthetic Education of Nature'. Poster Presentation at the Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, New College, Oxford, March 2023.

Stockwell, Lewis. 'Connection to Nature: The Necessity for Idleness and Deep Wonder'. *Nature Connections*. University of Derby, 2018.

Podcasts and Interviews

Tate, Leslie. Lewis Stockwell and the Wonders of Natural Aesthetic Canoeing, May 2022. <https://leslietate.com/2022/05/16/14545/>.

Moseley Paul and Lewis Stockwell. *Paul Moseley Podcast*. 'Episode #8 - Aesthetics with Lewis Stockwell'. United Kingdom: Moseley, Paul, 2020. <https://paulmoseley.org/explore-our-nature-podcast-feed/environmental-aesthetics-with-lewis-stockwell>.

Invited Speaking

Stockwell, Lewis. 'Fostering Student-Staff Partnerships in Outdoor Environmental Higher Education'. *UCL: Pedagogies for Citizenship, Activism and Just Futures*. University College London, 2024.

Stockwell, Lewis. 'The Canoe and Journeying Pedagogy: Natural Beauty and Attending to Environmental Crises'. *Annual Conference for Research in Education*. Edge Hill University, 2021.

Stockwell, Lewis. 'Philosophy of Education and Outdoor Learning'. *Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, Bedford Branch*. University of Bedfordshire, 2017

Chapter 1: Introduction

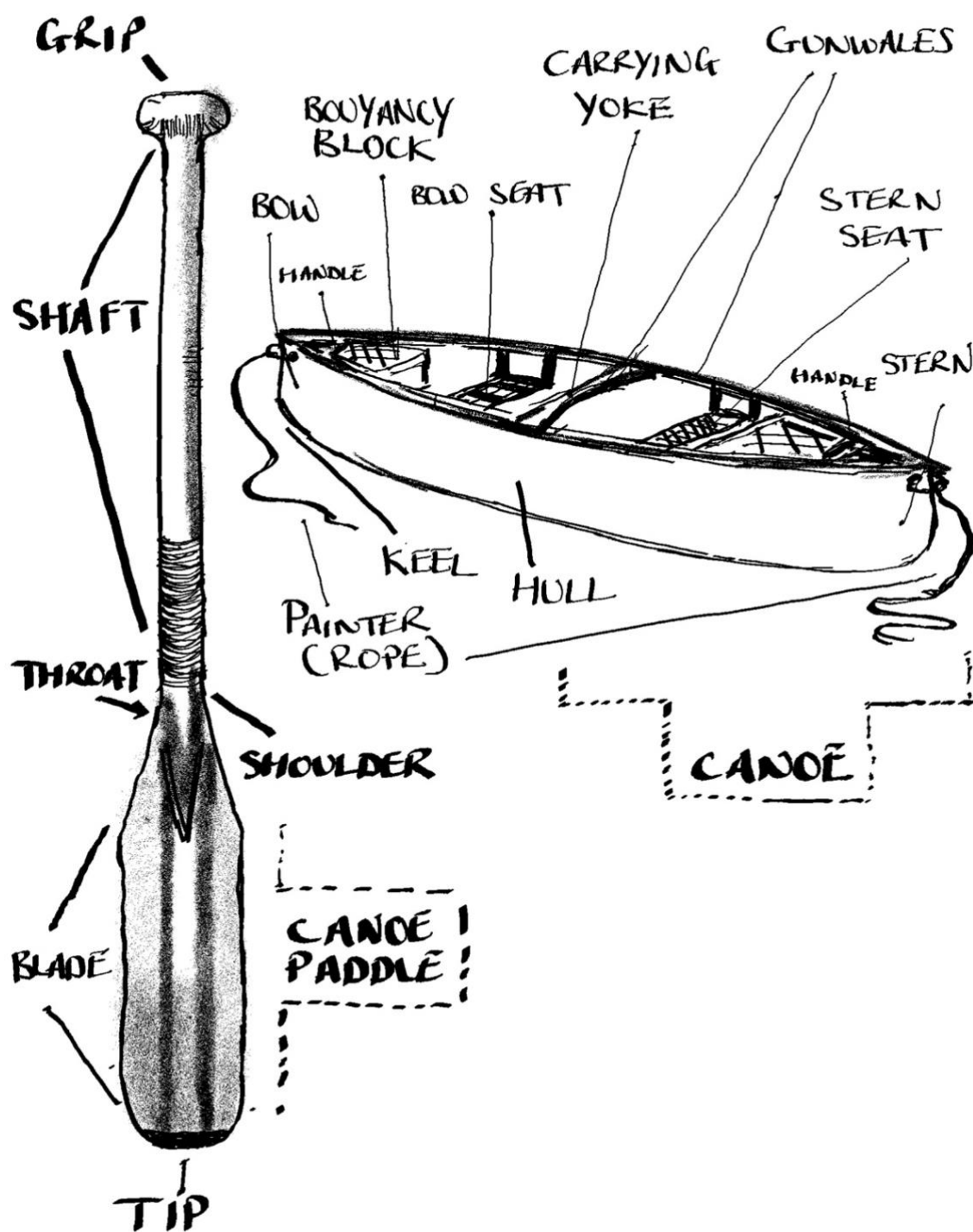


PLATE 1 ANNOTATED SKETCHES OF A CANOE AND CANOE PADDLE

PART 1: FINDING MY THING AND FINDING MY VOICE

This philosophical thesis explores how canoe journeys can become powerful tools for aesthetically engaging with natural and everyday environments. Traditionally, aesthetics has been associated with the arts or philosophy of art. This thesis contends that by stepping away from conventional aesthetic theories related to the arts and focusing on knowledge and skills centring on perception—*aesthetics*—in natural and everyday settings, educators, canoe leaders, paddlers, and students can cultivate meaningful personal and educational experiences.

In the next few pages, I share the motivations and considerations that have influenced the thesis that you are reading now. In part two of the introduction, I start sharing insights about my fellow philosophical paddlers and what they contribute to this thesis. Building on the influential work of Ronald W. Hepburn, I then turn to other models of aesthetics beyond the arts to reconsider the value of aesthetic thinking in outdoor education journeys.

At the most basic level, to be a paddler means to propel one's canoe. They utilise a single-bladed paddle (see plate 1 above), which, along with the canoe, serves as their basic tools. Like features of a landscape coming into view, my philosophical companions' words and works will be introduced as this thesis unfolds. I illustrate their influences through conventional philosophical writing, author-created artistic pieces (plates), and philosophical narratives of canoe journeys. In these narratives, philosophers are depicted as paddlers and conversers in my efforts to bring their voices to life as I reflect and educate from the canoe. In the following pages, I will share the motivations and considerations that have shaped the thesis you are currently reading.

WHO AM I?

I have worked as an education academic in a post-92 university in Hertfordshire, England since 2013. Prior to this, I completed my studies at the same institution and was employed as a student-researcher on a Higher Education Academy funded project since my first year of undergraduate study in 2009. As a lecturer in education studies with a specific focus on philosophy of education, I was not exactly a normal hire for the school. I was fresh out of a degree in history with philosophy and full of idealism, hope and youthful naivety. I was twenty-three years old when appointed. From 2013-2015 I completed an MSc in Practice-Based Research part-time, while working full-time, where I explored student experience of an education studies degree. This degree was openly positioned as *other* amongst staff in a school of study oriented to the main goal of teacher training. I wanted to know how the students made sense of, and felt engaged in, a programme of learning seemingly peripheral from the 'main work' of the school. Drawing on the work of democratic philosophers, moral philosophers, and critical pedagogues, I developed a concern for the state of higher education and its role in public life,¹ especially in its role in developing and defending democratic citizenship.² This led me to develop a modest body of work on student-staff partnership approaches,³ including a small grant funded project from the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, which sought to develop a philosophically grounded understanding of higher education partnerships through an adaptation of

¹ Afolabi and Stockwell, 'The Graduate View: We Are Not Customers'.

² Stockwell, 'Socratic Pedagogy and Citizenship Formation in Higher Education'.

³ Dickerson, Jarvis, and Stockwell, 'Staff-Student Collaboration: Student Learning from Working Together to Enhance Educational Practice in Higher Education'.

Aristotle's Friendship arguments.⁴ I felt hopeful and yet, like my students, not valued as an academic because of my non-teacher background and the categories that had been generated around work that was not teacher education.

These experiences left their mark. I began raising philosophical questions about the practices and cultural norms operating in my school and the university sector. I delved further into critical and radical pedagogical approaches and found myself teaching philosophy of education to early childhood practitioners, teachers, academic education students, masters, and doctoral students. I became 'that guy' who was hauled out once a semester to say something provocative and controversial. I took pride in challenging trainee teachers to consider whether they were indoctrinators rather than educators. I enjoyed developing workshops where early years practitioners challenged their presuppositions about the educational value of play. I spent several years teaching undergraduate and postgraduate students about liberatory and transformative affordances of education through concepts of citizenship, morality and values-based education. I spent a few summer semesters working with teachers and school leaders on a masters module considering the potential of education as a site of social justice and social change, interrogating the meaning and value of concepts of equity, decolonising, value - economic and social. Until this point in the middle of 2017, I had primarily focussed on human problems in education. My confidence in exploring educational issues began to connect to the natural environment. Through a chance meeting, my anthropocentric perception and orientation to life become lastingly disturbed.

FINDING MY 'THING'

While studying and working in the mid-2010s, I had also been seeking various leisure activities. I was struggling to find 'my thing'. Having tried running, rowing, and ice-skating, I would quickly get involved and interested in each and then the motivation (and perhaps discipline) for these activities would fizzle out with similar speed. My fiancé (now wife) got me to try a canoeing and kayak activity at a local river and community festival. Something was different about my behaviour. Getting into a kayak and being destabilised, quite literally wobbling, and bobbling on the water reignited thoughts and discussions from an Open University certificate I completed in 2009, which I used in lieu of A-levels. These thoughts started with Aristotle's ideas of leisure and their educational value.⁵ Being in a kayak also reignited conversations from my undergraduate degree about aesthetic experience, categorising and evaluating objects. I got off the water after paddling for around 30 minutes amongst young and old zooming across the small cordoned off area of the river. As I thanked the volunteers from the canoe club, my fiancé could see I was struggling to find the words to describe the experience while, with every ten steps or so, I kept looking back at the people getting on and off the water, having their thirty minutes of fun. I did have fun. Yet something else happened to me that I would spend much of my academic and personal life chipping away at – and I still am chipping away at.

Philosophy of Education and Outdoor Education were becoming important aspects of my pedagogical practice. I had moved from being 'that philosophy guy' to, a somewhat more appealing and seemingly useful, 'outdoor ed guy' at work. In my teaching and scholarship, I began to ask philosophical questions about psycho-educational concepts like *nature*

⁴ Stockwell, Smith, and Woods, 'That Which Is Worthy of Love: A Philosophical Framework for Reflection on Student-Student Partnership for the Future University'.

⁵ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*.

*connectedness*⁶ and *biophilia*⁷ and started to explore them through concepts like *deep wonder*,⁸ *post-sustainability*⁹ and literature concerning life's meaning.¹⁰

As with many aspects of contemporary higher education framed by neo-liberal practices and norms centring on lack of time and the increase in pressure, I completed the initial registration for this PhD on a train journey back from Swansea to Paddington. Under an incredibly tight deadline, returning from the Society for Research into Higher Education conference I drafted my thoughts from the previous couple of years of teaching and study and submitted a proposal a few days later. I intended to explore a line of philosophical inquiry focussing on outdoor learning and concepts of a life well lived. It was never going to be achievable, but then I had lived much of my life thinking that achieving an undergraduate degree was not possible for me and that getting a job in a university was not realistic or achievable. While I eventually moved away from this initial proposal, I found these ideas holding particular importance in my life at home and at work.

After a full day of teaching in early January 2018, I found myself boarding a sleeper train from London Euston to Edinburgh Waverley. I hardly slept. Edinburgh was beautiful. It was snowing, it was icy. It rained, and it was sunny. The city kept all its promises of weather. I travelled to Moray House School of Education and Sport to meet my supervisors face-to-face for the first time. Two ethical, caring, and sincere educators in the two fields I worked in: philosophy of education and outdoor education. I could not help feeling excited, yet some quite challenging and painful emotions emerged connected to my educational past.

KNOWING, EXPERIENCING AND ELITISM

I felt that as an already practicing academic, I should 'know all' of the answers and felt a hollowing of my confidence that would, for some time, influence the quality of my interactions with my supervisors. I knew the Socratic adage of 'the wisest is s/he who knows s/he knows nothing', but Socrates never had any of his conversations submitted for peer review, nor did he have supervisors who were also colleagues in the fields he was working in. I was at Edinburgh. I had never thought going to university was a possibility, let alone eventually undertaking higher study in a place that was once described to me by a well-meaning senior Edinburgh academic in the following way: "You're at an elite institution now, Lewis – don't you forget it!"

I felt that I had both arrived and failed simultaneously. My perspective on life, study, and academia was to be challenged just by being there. I would spend time spiralling down and up in my thoughts, attempting to seem brighter or more informed than I felt like I was. I felt the need to impress, to present myself as something other; I considered Moray House and Edinburgh as a middle-class haven of students and academics. Whether this was the case or not did not really matter. The frame had been made by interactions, hearsay, and its history. The sensitivities toward behaviours, literature, even my bag and clothing were, at times, important aesthetic considerations for how I 'needed' to embody

⁶ Lumber, Richardson, and Sheffield, 'Beyond Knowing Nature: Contact, Emotion, Compassion, Meaning, and Beauty Are Pathways to Nature Connection'.

⁷ Wilson and Kellert, 'Biophilia and the Conservation Ethic'.

⁸ Schinkel, 'The Educational Experience of Deep Wonder'.

⁹ Jickling and Sterling, 'Post-Sustainability and Environmental Education: Framing Issues'.

¹⁰ Cooper, *Senses of Mystery: Engaging with Nature and the Meaning of Life*; Howell, Passmore, and Buro, 'Meaning in Nature: Meaning in Life as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Nature Connectedness and Well-Being'; Schinkel, De Ruyter, and Aviram, 'Education and Life's Meaning'; Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life'; White, 'Education and a Meaningful Life'; Hepburn, 'Optimism, Finitude and the Meaning of Life'.

a version of me as a doctoral student. I had come for a transformative learning experience; transform I did.

MARRIAGES

In the summer of 2018 my wife and I canoed from West to East Scotland, on the Great Glen Trail. This was now our honeymoon. At this point aspects of our lives were colliding again. We were canoeing through this incredibly beautiful, challenging, and risky land and waterscape. It was an environment framed by physical challenge, by love for each other and for the experiences we were having. It was further bounded with concepts of community with people we passed, asking us about the ribbons on the hull and stern. It was through the paddling, through the concept of the often used word – journey – that I began sounding out these ideas to my wife, and subsequently my supervisors. In these conversations, I kept returning to something that struck me during the all-weather January induction at Moray House.

DOCTORAL 'JOURNEY'

I was introduced to the doctorate by the programme director in the language of 'journeying'. There were to be 'stops on the way', with the 'destination' being the submission *and viva voce*. At the time, this was a conceptualisation that I accepted; it was familiar, and I did not question it. Being a lecturer in education, I used similar metaphors with students (a lot). I would promote clichéd ideals to my students like, "the journey is more important than the destination". However, I felt I had let myself down when I noticed that I should have been a little critical when the term 'destination', in the singular, rather than 'destinations' plural, was used to denote two significant 'milestones' in the process of the doctorate – (1) submitting the thesis and (2) the oral defence. Something about this conceptualisation of the 'journey' did not quite add up. How did this marry with the 'actual' journey I had undertaken on the snowy January night on the sleeper train from London Euston? Could a journey have more than one destination? Could the physical journey be appropriated as an educational metaphor, just like that? As I was canoeing across the vast choppy expanse of Loch Ness, past Urquhart Castle, I felt the need to grapple with these concepts. I could not let the questions go. I wanted to understand what conceptual work had been done in outdoor education practice that led to views like that of the programme director (and many other educators too). This raised questions about how to undertake philosophical research in this area and how to work through my own issues with confidence and voice.

In my first meeting with my supervisors, I spoke of the issues I faced when undertaking an MA by Research in Philosophy, which I promptly curtailed to move on to the MSc programme I discussed above. I spoke with them about the challenging supervisory relationship I had, where my writing was characterised by my then-supervisor through a careful selection of explicit language synonymous with excrement. Such experiences leave an indelible mark on one's confidence and capacities for creativity and being heard. From that starting point, I made it clear that while I was going to develop a philosophy of education thesis, I was driven by a need to find ways of writing and expressing myself that would help me overcome these challenges.

By the time I sat in Moray House at my progression board (sometimes known as the upgrade event), I had decided on developing a narrative-style approach to draw out the philosophical concepts in the lived experience of the canoe journeying educator. In-keeping with ideas from David Bridges in the 1990s, there continues to be no standard approach

to philosophical writing, in contrast to that of the social sciences where the author typically defends their methodological approach.¹¹ My experience of much mainstream outdoor education writing has been its dedication to conform to the practices and norms of the social sciences. Where a great deal of scientific research attempts to render the researcher invisible, philosophical writing can often go further and render the entire research process undetectable. Thus there is little evidence or guidance as to how philosophical theses should be structured, what the job of a philosophy education thesis could be, and how it contributes to knowledge, with even fewer insights into how it might contribute to outdoor education practice. Yet Bridges, along with more recent authors such as Hodgson and Fulford,¹² Pirrie,¹³ and Smith,¹⁴ show that philosophical reflection and argument is, as Carr argued, a 'central feature of the methods and procedures of educational research'.¹⁵ Considerations for not just what to write but *how* to write were important concerns for this thesis and my own identity as a doctoral researcher and practicing academic.

This thesis is as much about aesthetic education and canoe journeying as it is an exploration of the way I can *discuss* and *present* ideas in philosophy of education and canoe journeying practice. In other words, this thesis is also about finding my voice. In the next part of the introduction, I share why I have developed this thesis using philosophical canoe journeying narratives and artworks. I do so without assuming the claims and conclusions of the whole or parts of the thesis.

PART 2: THE PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING OF THIS THESIS

As Richard Smith argues, a significant reductivism in the shared understanding of language and its value in the research process has taken hold.¹⁶ There is an emphasis on the 'writing up' process, where words researchers place on the page are no different from the two-dimensional word-processing or statistical packages used to meet the end goal of the project. Yet, as Smith argues, forms of expression – in any style necessary, including conversation, song, photography – are more than just the mechanistic selection of words or tools. It involves listening to oneself and respecting the people and situations one seeks to understand through appropriate means. As Ronald W. Hepburn advocated throughout his career, it is essential to engage with the world using sensible language.¹⁷

Plate 2, below, is indicative of one way I have sought to develop my academic voice. I am not a trained artist. I do, however, have a keen interest in the ways that images and narratives enable expression. Like Smith, I see these forms of expression as doing justice to both the subject matter and to my own development of academic voice. They help in raising awareness of the ways in which concepts can be related, understood, or even noticed for the first time. Plate 2 plays on the notion of *philosophical plumbing* developed by Mary Midgley:

Plumbing and philosophy are both activities that arise because elaborate cultures like ours have, beneath their surface, a fairly complex system which is usually

¹¹ See Carr in Bridges, 'Philosophy and Educational Research: A Reconsideration of Epistemological Boundaries'.

¹² Fulford and Hodgson, *Philosophy and Theory in Educational Research: Writing in the Margin*.

¹³ Pirrie, 'Icarus Falling: Re-Imagining Educational Theory'; Pirrie and Macleod, 'Tripping, Slipping and Losing the Way: Moving beyond Methodological Difficulties in Social Research'; Pirrie and Gillies, 'Untimely Meditations on the Disciplines of Education'; Pirrie, Fang, and O'Brien, *Dancing in the Dark: A Survivor's Guide to the University*.

¹⁴ Smith, 'Between the Lines: Philosophy, Text and Conversation'; Smith, 'Education, Fast and Slow'; Smith, 'Writing Up and Down: The Language of Educational Research'.

¹⁵ Bridges, 'Philosophy and Educational Research: A Reconsideration of Epistemological Boundaries'.

¹⁶ Smith, 'Writing Up and Down: The Language of Educational Research'.

¹⁷ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

unnoticed, but which sometimes goes wrong. In both cases this can have serious consequences. Each system supplies vital needs for those who live above it. Each is hard to repair when it goes wrong, because neither of them was ever consciously planned as a whole. There have been many ambitious attempts to reshape both of them. But, for both, existing complications are usually too widespread to allow a completely new start.¹⁸

As illustrated by Midgley and Plate 2 (below), examining various components of our philosophical plumbing requires scrutiny and a willingness to tinker with it, isolate it, and, if needed, give it a knock to improve its functioning. It may require bypassing faulty elements altogether and laying new pipework. Engaging with the concepts employed in these fields, Midgley's metaphor of philosophical plumbing unites previously isolated aspects of philosophy and practice.

This thesis examines the philosophical plumbing of the aesthetic turn towards nature, the environment, and everyday life and seeks to identify opportunities for the application of these concepts in canoe journeys. The primary contributor to this shift was Ronald W. Hepburn in the 1960s. Aestheticians argue that his philosophical contributions have inspired contemporary models of environmental aesthetics, including scientific cognitivism, everyday aesthetics and experiential aesthetics.¹⁹ He continued to write until his death in 2010 and a significant portion of his work remains underexplored in the context of the philosophy of education and outdoor education. Through the thesis, I intend to show that reviving the aesthetic core of canoe journeys will go some way to address this regretful gap in scholarship.

¹⁸ Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers: Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*, 1.

¹⁹ Brady, 'Ronald W. Hepburn – The British Society of Aesthetics'.

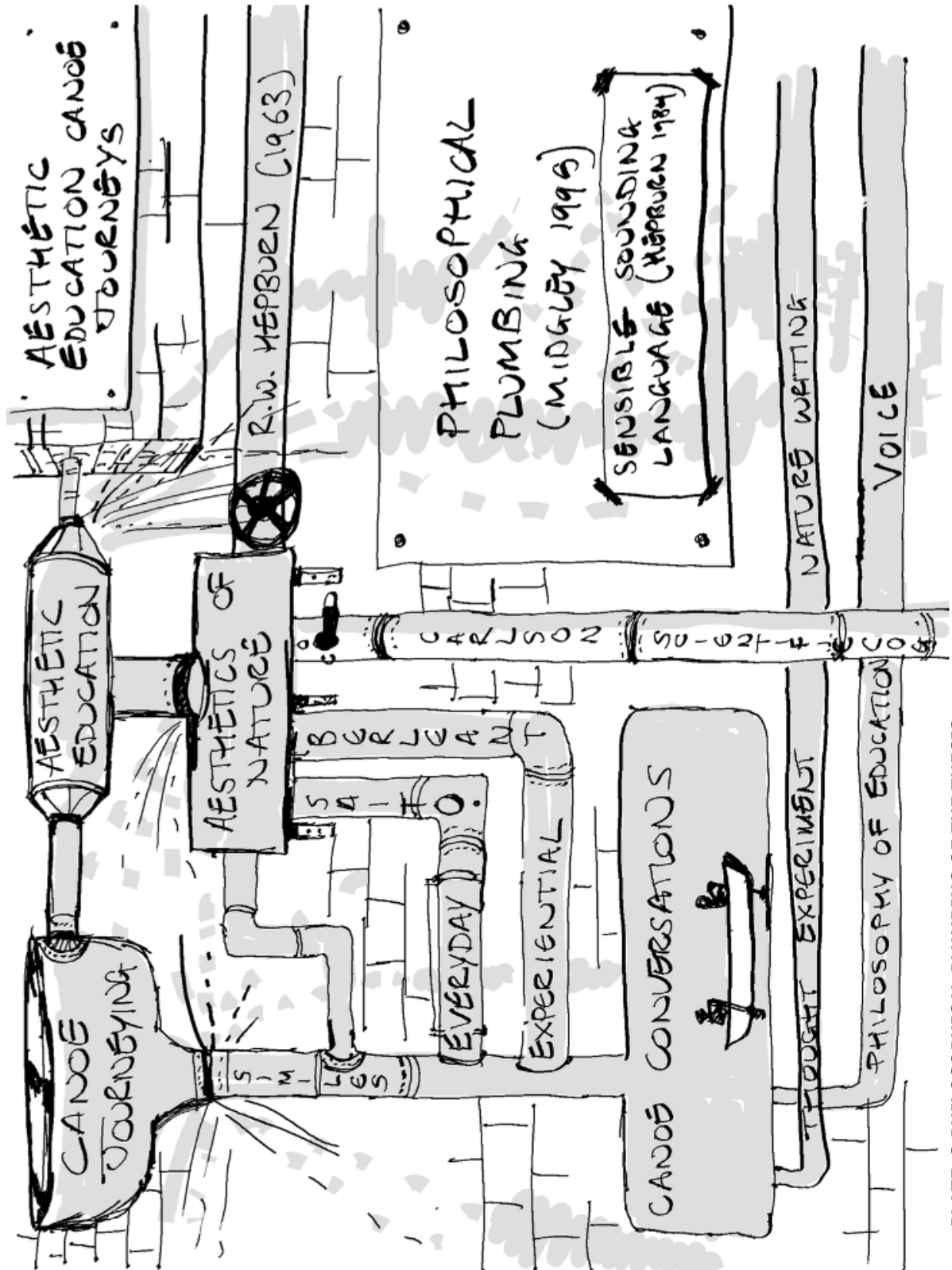


PLATE 2 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING OF THE THESIS

'JOURNEYING' & EDUCATION

It is common to hear of educational experiences described as a metaphorical journey.²⁰ This general idea has been present for millennia in global cultures. In Western culture, an example of the idea of the journey as education can be seen in Plato's cave as a movement from the shackles of ignorance to enlightenment above the surface.²¹ More recently, in the West, the romantic ideas of the Grand Tour and its contemporary iteration of the gap year,²² is seen as a way of consolidating learning for the meaning of, and framing of, one's life through self-discovery and transformation. Kenklies described how some Japanese traditions conceptualised journeys as a powerful source of raw experience that engages with the internal and embodied experience of actual travel through landscapes, often but not exclusively by foot.²³ In First Nations Native American traditions, the notion of journeying has come to embody – literally and metaphorically – a form of liberatory political education that challenges symbolisms and mythologies of oppressive colonialism. Tribal canoe journeys aim at revitalising nearly-lost heritage through paddling for cultural resurgence. Journeys serve as a formative occasion for immersion and encounter in culture, place, self, and more-than-human environments.²⁴ Such insights indicate that 'journeying', at its core, has an educative quality to it that seeks to influence a *person* into a position of *learner*, by creating opportunities to invigorate and call into doubt perception, knowing and acting. Yet, the claim is also valid that the plumbing has been considerably neglected, and journeys are many things to many people. Hence, in Plate 2 above, the canoe journeying and aesthetic education tanks are leaking.

In occasions of educating and learning, we are in an act of meaning-making.²⁵ But what of educational practices that give meaning to the occasions of learning outdoors in the terminology of 'journey' and its cognates? In contrast to other uses of the term 'journey' as a metaphor, in outdoor education practice, educators and students undertake physical and geographical movements in an environment; they undertake what is 'an act of travelling from one place to another'.²⁶ Yet, something more than travelling needs to take place for a journey to be educational. One can travel to and from the shops with their cognitive capacities and embodied skills untouched. Journeying as travelling offers some insight, but more is needed to gain greater clarity on what could be meant by a journey being an occasion for learning.

As part of the background work of this thesis, I undertook a focused analysis of selected practice-based outdoor education literature, which used 'journey' and its cognates in the title and/or keywords.²⁷ Eighteen articles were retrieved from four highly regarded outdoor

²⁰ Kenklies, 'Alienation and In-Habitation: The Educating Journey in West and East'.

²¹ Plato, *The Republic*.

²² Thomas, *The Meaning of Travel*.

²³ Kenklies, 'Alienation and In-Habitation: The Educating Journey in West and East'; Such experiences are also referenced in Thoreau, *Walking*.

²⁴ Two literary accounts exemplify this point particularly well, the former being by canoe and kayak, the latter being by walking: Nicol, *Canoeing around the Cairngorms: A Circumnavigation of My Home*; Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*.

²⁵ Bruner, *Acts of Meaning*.

²⁶ OED, 'Journey, n.'

²⁷ See: Beames & Ross 'Journeys Outside the Classroom', Loynes 'Journeys of Transition: The Role of Narrative within the Stoneleigh Project', Coates 'A Personal Journey through "Moments": Doctoral Research into Parents Who Rock Climb', Higgins and Wattchow 'The Water of Life: Creative Non-Fiction and Lived Experience on an Interdisciplinary Canoe Journey on Scotland's River Spey', Morse 'A Quality of Interrelating: Describing a Form of Meaningful Experience on a Wilderness River Journey', 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey', Kennedy et al 'Expedition (Auto)Ethnography: An Adventurer-Researcher's Journey', Stringer 'Engaging the Mess', Asfeldt & Beames 'Trusting the Journey: Embracing the Unpredictable and Difficult to Measure Nature of Wilderness Educational Expeditions', *Journal of Experiential Education* 40, no. 1 (2017):

education journals.²⁸ In nearly all cases, the term journey was used to entitle or describe the activities, but no definitions were proffered, nor were conceptual analyses undertaken. Authors used the term in much the same way as those, like Kenklies, summarised as something that initially relied on common sense understanding. My process of attending to plumbing found me reading and re-reading these articles to see what sense could be made from the ways authors discussed and reflected on educational journeys. I view the current usage of 'journey' as a 'poly-perceptual rendering',²⁹ combining multiple views from within the literature representative of the functional system of thought (*viz.* Midgley³⁰), which describes and enacts the journey as an occasion of learning. Instead of denying the value of the literature for its lack of definition, I posit a selection of similes, 'journeying as *x*', that emerged from my interpretation of the 'collective and additive' scholarship:³¹

- *Journeying as* a romantic relation through craft and skill³²
- *Journeying as* embodied interaction with self and other³³
- *Journeying as* engaging with the pre-reflective consciousness³⁴
- *Journeying as* relational with the more-than-human³⁵
- *Journeying as* educational transgression³⁶
- *Journeying as* attending to natural beauty³⁷
- *Journeying as* learning for embodied and pre-reflective aesthetic perception³⁸

At the core of these similes is their relationship with skills, embodiment, perception, action and engagement with nature and beauty. Without knowing it at the time, the approach to the analysis of this literature took the form of an aesthetic inquiry to provide the

72–86, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825916676101>, Haskell 'Ecological Journey: An Enactive View of the Nature of Experience', Jukes et al 'Acknowledging the Agency of a More-than-Human World: Material Relations on a Snowy River Journey', Wattchow 'Playing with an Unstoppable Force: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education.', 'Moving on an Effortless Journey: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education', McCulloch 'Ideologies of Adventure: Authority and Decision Making in Sail Training', Murray 'The Development of a White Water Rafting Code of Practice in Response to Multiple Fatalities in Queensland: How Will It Impact the Commercial and Educational Sector?', in a collected works, collated from an Institute of Outdoor Learning Conference on journeying little reference is paid to a 'beyond common sense' understanding of journey/ing, by Humberstone et al *Whose Journeys? The Outdoors and Adventure as Social and Cultural Phenomena.*, Michell 'The Canoe Trip: A Northern Cree Metaphor for Conducting Research Herman Michell', and Mikael and Asfeldt 'Becoming-Crocus, Becoming-River, Becoming-Bear: A Relational Materialist Exploration of Place(s)'.

²⁸ The top four are regarded as: *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, *Experiential Education*, *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, *Journal of Environmental Education Research*.

²⁹ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*, 34.

³⁰ Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers: Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*.

³¹ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*, 35.

³² Wattchow, 'Playing with an Unstoppable Force: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education'; Wattchow, 'Moving on an Effortless Journey: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education'.

³³ Wattchow, 'Playing with an Unstoppable Force: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education'; Wattchow, 'Moving on an Effortless Journey: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education'; Haskell, 'Ecological Journey: An Enactive View of the Nature of Experience'; Morse, 'A Quality of Interrelating: Describing a Form of Meaningful Experience on a Wilderness River Journey'; Morse, 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey'.

³⁴ Morse, 'A Quality of Interrelating: Describing a Form of Meaningful Experience on a Wilderness River Journey'; Morse, 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey'.

³⁵ Mikael and Asfeldt, 'Becoming-Crocus, Becoming-River, Becoming-Bear: A Relational Materialist Exploration of Place(s)'.

³⁶ Beames and Ross, 'Journeys Outside the Classroom'.

³⁷ Wattchow, 'Moving on an Effortless Journey: Paddling, River-Places and Outdoor Education'; Higgins and Wattchow, 'The Water of Life: Creative Non-Fiction and Lived Experience on an Interdisciplinary Canoe Journey on Scotland's River Spey'; Morse, 'A Quality of Interrelating: Describing a Form of Meaningful Experience on a Wilderness River Journey'; Morse, 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey'.

³⁸ Haskell, 'Ecological Journey: An Enactive View of the Nature of Experience'; Morse, 'A Quality of Interrelating: Describing a Form of Meaningful Experience on a Wilderness River Journey'; Morse, 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey'.

opportunity for more attuned sensing of the sources.³⁹ Fuller and Weizman claim that aesthetic investigations involve the capacity for being sensorially affected, the capacities for sensing, and 'sense-making' that leads to 'the capacity for such sensing to become knowledge of some kind'.⁴⁰ Aesthetic inquiries entail making sense of what is being sensed, knowledge production, and figuring things out through appraising and categorising.⁴¹ It is possible to observe that the term journey has been used to describe and conceptualise various educational activities. However, the educator is left with an overwhelming array of options for journeys that see its conceptual tank leaking and almost overflowing in plate 2.

WORKING DEFINITION OF AESTHETICS

For the purposes of the following summary and the narrative which follows, I supply a working definition of aesthetics here, which will be developed further as we move through the subsequent chapters (initially in Chapters 3 and 4). For the moment, the reader will benefit from using Hepburn's explanations of aesthetic experience and appraisal as being partially defined by 'rapt contemplation of particular objects of art or nature' where there is a full-bodied absorption as part of the experience. It moves beyond immediacy, however, and the object and/or experience is: '[...] the centre of, and is the occasion of, many possible lines of reflection or movements of the mind, transformations of perception, attitudes and feelings that may affect the person's life and modify the quality of his experience long after he has ceased to contemplate the particular object itself'.⁴² In addition, I incorporate Fuller and Weizman's approach, discussed above, which seeks to develop human capacities for sense-making.

WHO IS THE 'EDUCATOR' IN THIS THESIS?

In the following discussions, I often refer to the 'educator'. I may also refer to them as the 'journeying educator' or, in the appropriate context, 'the canoe journeying educator'. In reading all of these, it is important to take a very wide interpretation of 'educator'. They are not necessarily a typical teacher, although they could be. They are not necessarily an academic, but they could be. They might not be a parent, but they could be. They might be a canoe coach or leader, but they do not have to be. The point here is that the educator within this thesis is an individual, or group of individuals, seeking to educate themselves and other individuals in the opportunities of aesthetic education in natural environments. They may or may not have professional qualifications that make them recognisable educators in their field; the important point is that, above all, they are striving toward a greater meaning-making goal that occurs because of a journeying experience. In this thesis, the 'canoe journeying educator' is someone interested in the journeying experience through canoe journeys that are enriched by aesthetic concepts. As such, the reader can consider the potential opportunities for aesthetic education beyond the typically limited framing of the 'educator' I have provided here. As the thesis progresses, so too will the underpinning concepts that contribute to the notion of 'educator'.

THESIS STRUCTURE:

In this section, I outline the structure of the thesis. There is a pattern of sorts that the reader will begin to recognise as they move through the coming sections. The reader will

³⁹ Fulford and Hodgson, *Philosophy and Theory in Educational Research: Writing in the Margin*, chap. 15.

⁴⁰ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*, 34.

⁴¹ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*; Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*.

⁴² Ronald W. Hepburn, 'Introduction', 1.

find a canoe journeying narrative, followed by a philosophical plumbing image relating to the themes and concepts of the narrative and the chapter that immediately follows. This is the case for all models except Hepburn's, which has two analytical chapters devoted to his work (Ch.3 – 4). The narrative, image and analysis chapters work like a triptych, each informing the other, with the whole having greater significance than the individual sum of the parts. First, I want to turn the reader's attention to the canoe journeying narratives.

'METHODOLOGY' OR 'STYLE'

For a thesis focusing on aesthetic education and educational journeys outdoors, the relationships between its claims and style are, I argue, just as important as the selection of the appropriate methodology in social science research. Cautions against instrumental reductivism in some aspects of educational research methods have gained prominence in the philosophy of education in recent years.⁴³ What I term as a 'painting-by-numbers' approach to research, while still systematic and very often insightful, can sometimes limit the writer's and the readers' opportunities to meet the ideas on their own terms. The selection of methods sets the agenda for the reader and, as Smith attests,

'When the thesis is written up there shall be a literature review, a chapter on methodology, a conclusion shyly confessing to the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research that would address those limitations. The language shall follow academic conventions, perhaps with some daring use of the first person. The researcher knows what her ends and purposes are: language is just something, like the word-processor and the statistical software package, that we use to fulfil those ends.'⁴⁴

The kind of writing described above is, without doubt, important to the advancement of knowledge. However, Smith is making a greater claim toward justice. There is a need to do justice to the ideas, to find one's voice, to do something that is achieved in and through the writing to open up new ideas rather than suppress them.⁴⁵

A thesis within the realms of philosophy, however, also falls prey to a challenge Nussbaum alleged against Anglo-American philosophy that authors have ignored the relationship between 'form and content altogether', or it has treated style as 'largely decorative – as irrelevant to the stating of content, and neutral among the contents that might be conveyed.'⁴⁶ I agree with Nussbaum that there is a necessary importance to taking 'style seriously in its expressive and statement-making function'.⁴⁷ Thus, the form of the thesis cannot be reduced to the selection of words alone, but what those words are to do in an educative sense for the reader. As Smith says, reflecting on Rorty's distinction between systematising and edifying philosophy:

the former [systematising] being the province of philosophers who aim to solve problems so that they can move progressively on to solve more problems, thus producing a philosophical corpus or record of philosophical achievement, the latter [edifying] seeing philosophy, somewhat in the manner of Socrates or the early Plato, primarily as the enterprise of continuing conversations of an educative kind;

⁴³ Gearon and Williams, 'Why Is the Relationship Between Philosophy and Literature of Significance for the Philosophy of Education?'

⁴⁴ Smith, 'Writing Up and Down: The Language of Educational Research', 676.

⁴⁵ Smith, 677.

⁴⁶ Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, 8.

⁴⁷ Nussbaum, 8.

and not just educative in a general sense but educative for the particular, quasi-embodied people involved.⁴⁸

As with all the canoe journeying narratives in this thesis, the people involved are myself and the philosophers with whom I've read and metaphorically conversed through my independent study. The challenges I faced with finding my thing and finding my voice led me to confront the need to express my ideas in a way that opened opportunities for new thinking. In the upcoming pages, the reader will experience both a systematising approach to philosophy and edifying philosophical fictional literary journeys featuring the key protagonist philosophers discussed in this thesis.

The narratives have been informed through my encounters with the philosophers. This has happened mainly to me through extensive engagement with their academic texts. I do not think it is a significant claim that most educators are unlikely to have met the philosophers and pedagogical theorists who have significantly influenced their practice. I am, like Smith, attempting to show how ideas from literature can become part of my own learning; I reposition my insights into my practice as an outdoor educator. To achieve this, I place the philosopher's ideas in conversation with my own perspective.⁴⁹ Like Nussbaum, I am interested in how narrative can surface – all too often hidden – cognitive, affective, sensuous, aesthetic and moral relationships that best emerge through a different form of writing than contemporary, professionalised philosophy.⁵⁰

The canoe journeying narrative is a way of showing how my interactions between land, water, my own thoughts, and the thoughts of philosophers interact. I think of them as a narrative that opens opportunities for the complexity of thought and action without an overly narrowed agenda to revise an argument and reach a designated cogent conclusion. They, too, offer the reader an insight into canoe journeys that they may not have experienced themselves.

Plate 3 visually represents how I interpret the narrative features of the thesis as an opportunity to make connections between thoughts, emotions, actions and aspects of the world through a process of emerging ideas. I modelled them on forms of nature and travel writing, long-form thought experiments, philosophical stories, and my own thinking and creative engagement outside of those forms. They take place with philosophers while canoeing on Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire rivers.⁵¹ They create a temporary worldview from the author's perspective. They create possible worlds for the author and reader to engage with.

⁴⁸ Smith, 'Between the Lines: Philosophy, Text and Conversation', 483.

⁴⁹ Smith, 'Education, Fast and Slow'.

⁵⁰ Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*.

⁵¹ Huggan, 'Back to the Future: The "New Nature Writing," Ecological Boredom, and the Recall of the Wild'; Craig, 'Narrative Threads: Philosophy as Storytelling'; Gallagher, 'The Narrative Sense of Others'; Squire et al., *What Is Narrative Research?*

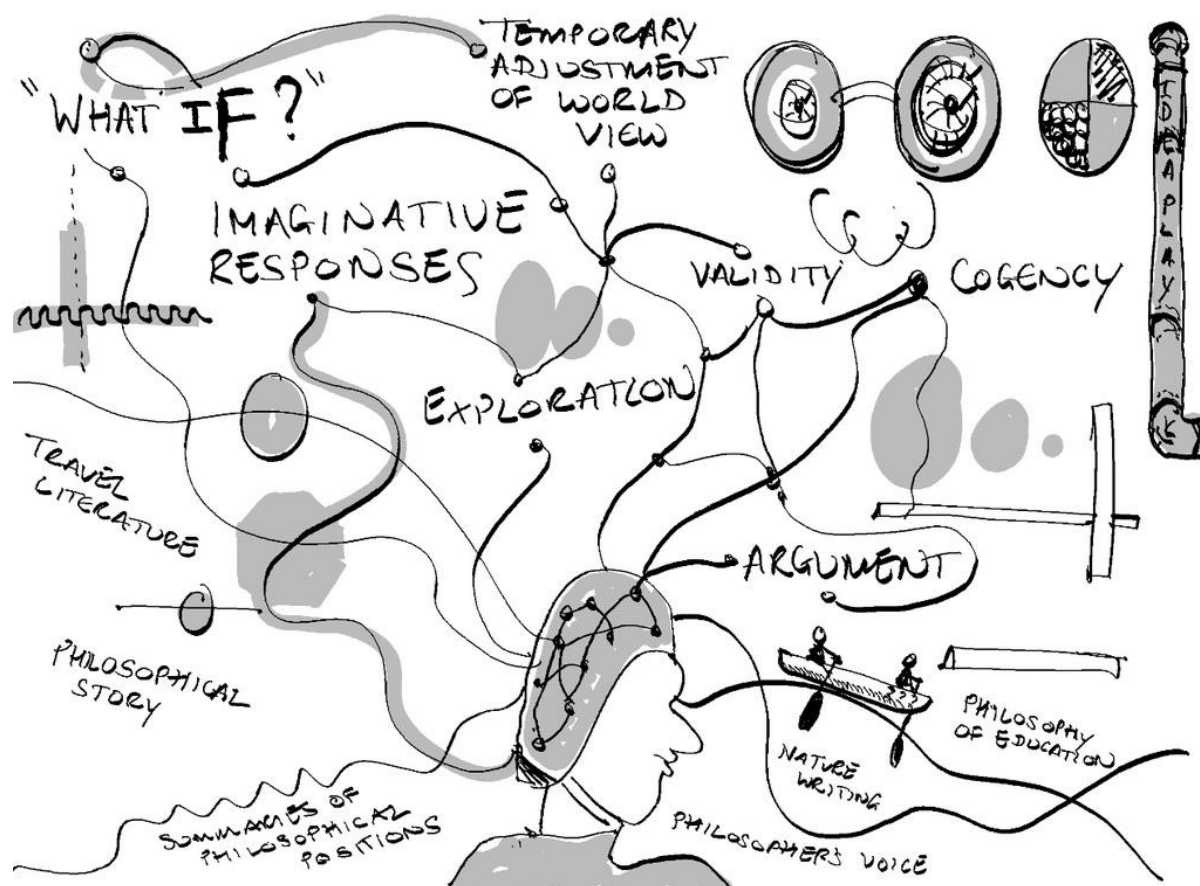


PLATE 3 'METHODOLOGY' OR 'STYLE' – CANOE JOURNEYING IN PHILOSOPHICAL NARRATIVES

The narratives do employ the language used by the philosophers' writing in their roles as paddling interlocutors. After all, I cannot escape the fact that this is a PhD thesis and the audience is specialist. That said, as philosophy of education tends to have more readily available concepts and practices in people's everyday activities than other areas of specialist philosophy or sciences,⁵² it is appropriate that this writing should provide a strong basis for future contributions to aesthetic education and educational journeying. The intention is that the narratives should help open spaces for thinking, conversation, and action with greater freedom than, perhaps, typical philosophical or social science writing allows.⁵³ As Cooper notes:

'Answering the "what if" questions of a thought experiment uses the same kind of processes as answering "what if" questions in all other contexts. As human beings, planning, plotting, and imagining are of great importance to us. If, for example, we are going to decorate a room or book a holiday, we don't just go ahead and do these things but instead spend some time considering the different courses of action available to us'.⁵⁴

⁵² Bridges, 'Philosophy and Educational Research: A Reconsideration of Epistemological Boundaries'; Fulford and Hodgson, *Philosophy and Theory in Educational Research: Writing in the Margin*.

⁵³ Smith, 'Between the Lines: Philosophy, Text and Conversation'; Pirrie and Macleod, 'Tripping, Slipping and Losing the Way: Moving beyond Methodological Difficulties in Social Research'; Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*; Bridges, 'Philosophy and Educational Research: A Reconsideration of Epistemological Boundaries'.

⁵⁴ Cooper, 'Thought Experiments', 377.

These narratives, while not traditional thought experiments often found in philosophical writing,⁵⁵ do share a way of attending to a question like: *What if Hepburn was in a boat with me? Or, how might Saito's thinking influence my own?*, as exemplified in Plate 3 above. The narratives are an attempt to address an important philosophical question asked by Midgley: "Who is doing the thinking when you're thinking?".⁵⁶ Not only is this a profound philosophical question, it is a question that matters to the everyday life of the intellectual and journeyer, alike.

As an educator, and someone deeply interested in philosophy of education and learning in and through journeying experiences in canoes and outdoors, this question has created a series of 'clock-able moments'⁵⁷, which I return to again and again in my career. These are moments of *realisation*, akin to Hepburn's concepts of 'making, or becoming, vivid to perception, or the imagination'; it moves beyond the 'taking note' of a situation or object and involves an application of imagination from a 'clock-able experience'.⁵⁸ Realisation has an episodic component whereby one is in the process of 'coming-to-be-aware', 'it is an experience accompanying and arising out of perceptions – perceptions upon which we dwell and linger' – to make vivid to perception and understanding.⁵⁹ As Plate 3 represents, this process has many opportunities and avenues, all of which cannot be understood or foreseen at the beginning, just like real and honest conversations.⁶⁰ It is important to note that for Hepburn, journeys can be both lived and literary. In my narratives, I have engaged with both elements; for the reader, they are engaging with the literary gifts that have emerged from the lived canoeing. They house ways of knowing and expressing – typically inaccessible in philosophical analysis.⁶¹

The journeying narratives are often the first engagement that the reader will have with the philosopher and their ideas, prior to the analyses of those ideas. This is a purposeful decision. My intention is to give, as best as possible, an insight to the reader into how these thinkers' ideas are at work in my own thinking and experience. To my knowledge, Midgley's question has not been used to structure a thesis in this way before, nor have philosophical narratives of this kind been used extensively in doctoral work.

The extensive use of visual imagery, again influenced by Midgley, is another example of the relationship between claims and style. They are an important part of my expression to communicate what would otherwise be abstract theoretical propositions detached from the subject of the thesis. These serve as important signposting. They are a conduit between the narratives and analytical sections. That said, opportunities for interpretation, revisiting and use of these can extend far beyond the purpose for which they have been created i.e. to facilitate discussion in this thesis. Again, I do not know of any thesis that has put Midgley's ideas to work in this way. I am indebted to her work in aiding me in finding different forms of language and expression in this thesis.

In the remainder of this chapter, I outline the structure and subject matter of thesis to assist the reader in understanding what I am striving to achieve.

⁵⁵ Companion and Experiments, *The Routledge Companion to Thought Experiments*; Sorensen, *Thought Experiments*.

⁵⁶ Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers: Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*.

⁵⁷ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

⁵⁸ Hepburn.

⁵⁹ Hepburn, 27–29.

⁶⁰ See section on conversation as infinite speech in, Bojesen, *Forms of Education: Rethinking Educational Experience Against and Outside the Humanist Legacy*.

⁶¹ Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*.

CHAPTER 2 – CANOE JOURNEYING NARRATIVE: PADDLING WITH RONALD W. HEPBURN

In chapter 2, I take to the water with Ronald W. Hepburn. This is the first narrative that emerges from real canoeing experiences I have undertaken as part of my practice—the narrative centres on an openness to explore Hepburn’s ideas with learning. Surfaced is the importance of observation, acute perception, and attention to developing serious aesthetic appreciation in and of nature as a feature of the canoe journey. The narrative examines how meaning is shaped and understood through the canoe paddle strokes. While canoeing, Hepburn and I spot a Kingfisher that prompts reflections on the notion of revisitation in landscapes and draws on some parallels with Thoreau and Shepherd. A theme that continues from this narrative is the way the canoe becomes a vessel of philosophical research on the water.⁶²

CHAPTER 3 – JOURNEYING AND DISTURBANCE

Having ‘met’ Hepburn on the water in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 moves into an analysis of Hepburn’s concepts of journeying as disturbance. It is fair to say that Hepburn’s work has, no doubt, influenced the way I have interpreted the canoe journeying literature above. I introduce Hepburn’s work that centred on the aesthetic appreciation of nature. I discuss a parable that Hepburn developed to articulate an argument for the educational value of subjectivity.⁶³ I share the conclusion of that parable, which is that journeys should leave the traveller lastingly disturbed. The discussion then explores Hepburn’s work on the education of the emotions and the education of subjectivity which brings together analyses from Saito,⁶⁴ MacAllister⁶⁵ and Yang.⁶⁶ Within the final part of Chapter 3, I argue that much can be gained by bringing together analyses from Hepburn and Midgley in their hitherto separate discussions on the issues of objectivity, scientism, and the potential for journeying creatively.⁶⁷ I claim that the insights presented, framed within the context of canoe journeying, represent an opportunity for diverse, imaginative thinking and learning, as shown in Chapter 2. The journey can serve to unify insights and experiences, compelling the educator to grasp the knowledge and skills of aesthetics through an aesthetic education.

CHAPTER 4 – AESTHETIC EDUCATION AND NATURE

In Chapter 4, I develop an interpretation of aesthetic education, which resists typical reductions of aesthetics as the philosophy of art. First, the argument returns to the etymological roots of aesthetics, which focus on direct awareness, feeling, and knowledge by perception. From this framing, contemporary aesthetic education is critiqued for its reproduction of the aesthetic philosophy of art. I introduce arguments by Hepburn concerning the framing of art on the lack of nature’s frame, which Hepburn posits as a distinct requirement for an aesthetics of nature. The argument problematises and resists the notion of disinterestedness—a concept with a loaded and long history in aesthetics—which requires a richer understanding of embodied engagement, reflexivity, and a pluralistic notion of unity true to nature experiences. These discussions lead to two further arguments that centre on Hepburn’s call, some decades ago, to generate a *sensible-sounding language* for serious aesthetic appraisals; failing to generate this has led to a

⁶² Gendron, ‘Unpacking and Repacking the Canoe: Canoe as Research Vessel’.

⁶³ Hepburn, ‘Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic’; Hepburn, ‘Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity’.

⁶⁴ Saito, ‘Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey’, 2020.

⁶⁵ MacAllister, ‘Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions’.

⁶⁶ Yang, ‘Hepburn’s Natural Aesthetic and Its Implications for Aesthetic Education’.

⁶⁷ Hepburn, ‘Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic’; Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*.

range of sensory experiences being inaccessible. As part of this discussion, I incorporate canoe journeying literature, outside of the practice-based sources summarised above, to exemplify the value of imagination and metaphor, synthesising Hepburn and Fesmire.⁶⁸ The intention is to consider how one can educate for meaningful aesthetic responses in nature-abundant and cultural landscapes, as experienced from a canoe.⁶⁹ I then summarise the broadening of aesthetic education through Hepburn's discussions of wonder through canoe journeys.⁷⁰

CHAPTER 5 – CANOE JOURNEYING NARRATIVE: PADDLING WITH ALLEN CARLSON

Canoe Journeying with Carlson, the main proponent of ecologically informed aesthetics, presents a challenging conversation. In chapter 5, we discuss the value of appraising the environment through scientific concepts, although I question the sufficiency of this model throughout much of the journey. The discussion between Carlson and I, as we paddle on the River Great Ouse in Bedfordshire, highlights some of the particular issues of overreliance on imaginative and subjective modes of aesthetic appreciation, which seem counter to the overall objective goal of Carlson's model. Throughout the interplay between science, ethics and aesthetics emerge. Ultimately, the journey concludes with my acknowledgement that some of Carlson's ideas have been let in, but will be carried forward in my own way.

CHAPTER 6 – SCIENTIFIC COGNITIVISM

Chapter 6 then analyses Carlson's model. While he, like others, sets out that art aesthetics is inadequate for the meaningful and accurate appreciation of nature, his model borrows from the structure of art appreciation. I explain how he does this by adopting, *inter alia*, Hepburn's serious beauty intuition, which argues that for aesthetic appreciation to be meaningful, it must have knowledge supplying the cognitive aspects of appreciation. Carlson believes that *the* correct way to appreciate nature aesthetically is through Natural History. There may be reason to doubt such an assertion as I will show. Carlson claims that by aesthetically appreciating natural environments through *true* scientific knowledge, the perceivers will act with greater ethical consideration toward nature. Carlson is the only philosopher who posits a curriculum that complements his model, which I summarise in this chapter. I believe his curriculum has value but conflicts with the project he is committed to. I argue that the curriculum would leave the journeying educator confused in several respects. While I acknowledge that features of Carlson's model have significant weaknesses, I accept that scientific knowledge is useful in aesthetic appraisal. One may not always have to use it, but it can contribute to rich aesthetic education in and about nature. For the paddler and educator, Carlson's model promises some value. However, it presents several challenges if adopted as a comprehensive and singular model of philosophical aesthetics.

CHAPTER 7 – CANOE JOURNEYING NARRATIVE: PADDLING WITH YURIKO SAITO

In this next canoe journey I am joined by Yuriko Saito. Paddling on the River Nene near Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, the conversations in this narrative emerge from an everyday aesthetic context. On the journey, an expanded notion of aesthetic experience is discussed as we paddle through mundane and unassuming landscapes. Thoughts about

⁶⁸ Hepburn, 'Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination'; Hepburn, 'Values and Cosmic Imagination'; Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination'; Fesmire, 'Dramatic Rehearsal and The Moral Artist: A Deweyan Theory of Moral Understanding'.

⁶⁹ Hepburn, 'Nature in the Light of Art', 1972; Hepburn, 'Values and Cosmic Imagination'.

⁷⁰ Hepburn, 'Wonder'; Hepburn, 'Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination'.

orderliness and aesthetic perceptions of things being in their place emerge. Saito brings forward the importance of context, which includes the arrangement of objects, ambience, and the choice of route, all of which influence a perceiver's attention. The journey concludes by ruminating on the promotion of aesthetic awareness and ethical responsibility toward the everyday environment and leads to a commitment to better-world making.

CHAPTER 8 – EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

Whereas Carlson seeks to narrow the modes and objects worthy of aesthetic appreciation, Saito and everyday aesthetics seek to expand them. This model may prove particularly useful to an educator who leads canoe journeys as part of their everyday toil. By developing a relationship between Western and Japanese aesthetics, Saito critiques the dominant reductive Western culture of aesthetics as a philosophy of art. Instead, she shows that the social, cultural, economic, and political aspects of our lives are all influenced by aesthetic practices and concepts. By placing her work in the context of aesthetic education, I argue that attending to the everyday or mundane elements of a familiar canoeing experience, as explored in the narrative, can reveal meaningful aesthetic and educational opportunities for those who paddle, lead, or educate in places familiar to them.

I introduce Saito's discussion on aesthetic ought and aesthetic action, which Eaton initially developed.⁷¹ This incorporates green aesthetics, enabling the perceiver to attend to everyday sensibilities and actions – Saito posits green aesthetics as part of her everyday aesthetic model. This raises questions and opportunities about *descriptive* and *normative* features of aesthetic practices in everyday life. This chapter explores further concepts to aid in developing aesthetic awareness for the educator. These include *special aesthetic experiences*, *defamiliarization in aesthetic appraisals*, and the justifications for Saito's mistrust of these concepts in everyday aesthetics. *Transience* and *attunement* are analysed in the context of developing a caring attitude; I consider these important concepts for the outdoor educator to bring about *better world-making* through an aesthetic canoe journey. Saito's contribution is synthesised into this project to enable educators to attend to the aesthetic features of their daily working experience.

CHAPTER 9 – CANOE JOURNEYING NARRATIVE: PADDLING WITH ARNOLD BERLEANT

The final canoe journey in this thesis sees us return to the River Ivel, the same river I paddled with Hepburn. Berleant is the only philosopher in the suite of narratives who is a canoeist. This narrative draws on these insights in his writing while also attending to important concepts for an educator. Particularly important is Berleant's approach to *aesthetic description* as a way to begin attending to the experiential qualities of the environment and objects within it. Important, too, are the thoughts he develops about the disturbing experiences that the paddler has available to them while perceiving the world from the water. The 'wobble' becomes a prominent example of the rewards and challenges of the journey. The conversation serves as further philosophical and experiential plumbing between his ideas and Hepburn's.

CHAPTER 10 – EXPERIENTIAL AESTHETICS

Chapter 10 contextualises aspects of Berleant's experiential and environmental aesthetic model into the realm of educational canoe journeys.⁷² I make connections between

⁷¹ Eaton, 'Fact and Fiction in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁷² Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*; Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*; Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*; Berleant, *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts*.

Berleant's proposal of an inclusive environment, which he posits cannot be objectified like traditional art objects. Berleant argues that engaging in the landscape requires full-bodied sensory involvement and sensory directness. For him, the environment is not viewed as an object *out there*, rather it is experienced by the percipient as an ongoing process all around. This enables the discussion of two key features important for education: firstly, his proposition of a descriptive aesthetics, which encourages a stronger bond with the world, seeing the environment as an educator; and secondly, his challenge against the notion of a disembodied aesthetic, showing the role the body has in aesthetic appraisals through theoretical learning and technical know-how.

I compare and contrast aspects of his work with the etymology of liberal education and within ideas of *phronesis* (practical wisdom). As with Hepburn before him, Berleant problematised aspects of language within the cognitive and rational elements of aesthetic appraisals. This is discussed through his idea of *aesthetic criticism of environment*, which further challenges aspects of Carlson's aesthetic. Here, I claim that within his argument is an implicit curriculum, which I draw out for the benefit of the educator.

I propose that Berleant's aesthetic criticism of environment has three aims: (1) to develop skills, techniques, and acute sensibilities to *describe* environment and one's experience in it; (2) to develop *critical explanations* of features of those descriptions and to draw on a wide range of disciplinary insights to delve into the meanings of the aesthetic perceptions; and (3) in keeping with the broader task of aesthetics, to develop *critical appraisals* that make a social and cultural contribution to the enhancement of aesthetic experience for all. Therefore, I claim that the canoe journeying educator has a significant role in communicating possible ways of seeing and orienting oneself and their students to the environment. To my knowledge, this has not been proposed before.

CHAPTER 11 – CONCLUSIONS: DIS/EMBARKING AND REVISITATION

This concluding chapter is structured in two parts. First, the reader is provided with practice-based conclusions and a resource to support the educator in planning educational journeys. They are provided with a glancing sheet of sensible-sounding keywords prompting reflection for framing and describing the journey. In the second part, I bring the thesis to its close and claim to have developed an expanded concept of aesthetic education to include the canoe and journeying. I claim that these concepts can enrich the journey experience and journeying discourse by nurturing an aesthetic pluralism as progressively developed in the thesis. Through finding my voice and finding my thing, I further show that the blend of narratives, images, and philosophical analyses offers the reader multiple ways of practising and contributing to discourses in aesthetic education. I claim that Hepburn's concept of *lasting disturbance* can have lasting ripple effects on the ongoing development of the educator. Bringing the themes of the thesis together leads me to claim that engaging with the aesthetic core of the journey can promote better world-making beyond the journey, underscoring a journey's aesthetic and ethical dimensions.

GUIDANCE NOTE FOR READING THE NARRATIVES:

Building on the earlier discussion on methodology and style, here I wish to briefly build on those ideas to provide the reader with some guidance notes for reading all the narratives in the thesis.

This narrative, and all the ones in this thesis, combines my voice and canoeing experience with those of the philosophers engaged in this thesis. Their words, which have been drawn on directly from their writing, have been presented here in *italics* in order that the reader can distinguish between their words and the 'connecting tissue' of my own narrative.

I have decided against the conventional use of 'quotation marks' within "speech marks" as they can lead to a visual disruption for the reader. **Whenever the reader finds:**

- **"Text within speech marks without italics"** is either my voice or the voice of the philosopher as interpreted by myself, as the author of the narrative.
- **"Text within speech marks that is italicised"** are verbatim words or passages from a text of the philosopher presented as though they were speaking. These are accompanied by footnotes.
- **Italicised text outside of speech marks**, although rarely used, may denote typical emphasis or refer to another source as part of the narrative e.g. when drawing on poetry. This, too, will be accompanied by a footnote.

I have made this decision for two key reasons: first, aesthetic – I want the reader to have an accessible and flowing visual reading experience. Second, I attempt to show the reader how the philosophers' works permeate the life of the canoe educator and educator (i.e. the 'I' and 'Me' in the narratives). These are one way of showing who is thinking when I am thinking.⁷³ These are conscious decisions about style, which in themselves are important aesthetic and intellectual statements of an author, according to Nussbaum. Together, my intention is that they will show the reader how philosophical aesthetics can influence an educator, while also providing a *literary canoeist* with a way into the canoe experience without exposing themselves to the elements. The further intention is to reveal in aspects of the narratives in the philosophical analysis or criticism which follows each canoe journey. Most narratives are accompanied by some illustrations (plates) that provide the reader with further material for engaging with the canoe journeys as they unfold.

The philosophical commentary following each narrative builds in an explanatory and critical style. Arguments are developed; they may refer to features of their associated narrative, make claims and lead to conclusions. The narratives, however, provide the reader with a more open experience that, while directing their attention to important features of the canoe journey, they are enabled to move beyond the limitations of traditional Anglo-Western philosophical style.⁷⁴

⁷³ Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers: Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*.

⁷⁴ Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*.

Chapter 2. Canoe Journeying Narrative: Paddling with Ronald W. Hepburn

It seems premature to think about the way this stretch of the journey will end before putting a single paddle stroke in the water. Suspecting, or hoping, that some kind of learning will emerge from the paddle today, whatever it might be, leaves me open to possibilities that wait beyond the horizon of my imagination. The gleaming red plastic canoe rests on the riverbank, placed expectantly in the direction of the river's flow. It is a calm river. No visible vitality to it. Yet, so much life in it and all that surrounds for as far as can be seen. It is cold and early; dew being absorbed into neoprene shoes as I walk up and down the path between the car and canoe. The fleeting cloud of air, with each exhale, brings a reminder of warmth in my body underneath my paddling kit.

This is the 'ceremonial fuff' time whereby some canoeists meditate between demands of the here-and-now and the potentialities for the paddling ahead. This manifests itself in the mode of packing; characterised in its haphazard behaviours, additional (often unnecessary) items, and a great deal of time spent on land looking expectantly at the water. The grass glistens and my shoes squelch, as I pack into my waterproof drybag: food and a flask of coffee, extra layers, two books - one small covered in brown canvas and the other slightly larger, with a tarnished but glossy blue cover - and my little green journal and pen. Onto my shoulders it goes and paddles in each hand, gathering more squelch as I head back up the footpath to the expectant canoe for today's journey.

Today I am not paddling alone. My fellow journeyer is soon to arrive. He is a great appreciator of the nature but has no stories of canoeing to share; plenty of walking in woodlands, journeying in hills and open landscapes - even gliding on thermals, but not canoeing. I'm intrigued to see what emerges in our conversations today. I untie the painters (the floating canoe ropes), which I have permanently tied at the bow (front) and stern (back). When on the car the rope forms a tort-line from its tied end to a seat or a yoke where it is wrapped and bound for safety. There is an art to it. You just know when it doesn't look right. When it doesn't look right you suspect that it might come undone and cause damage to yourself, your vehicle or to someone else. Untying the ropes and stowing them safely at each end to not risk entrapment, should one of us fall in, is both a measure of safety and aesthetics. It looks right, it feels safe. Here one sees possibilities and potential in what might lay ahead, even in the most unassuming of environments and circumstances.

*

With these thoughts my fellow paddler arrives. Hepburn stands by the canoe inspecting it with a sharp, perceptive eye. Then he looks up over the bullrushes that stand attentively from the water's edge. He looks to the wild meadow and treeline some distance behind the opposite bank.

"Hello! Are you looking forward to paddling?", I say buoyed up to see he's found his way for this journey. "Oh yes", he replies, "I am going to open myself up to this

experience and *give myself to wonder in ways not too fancifully analogous to how I give myself in friendship*. I am going to let myself be open and vulnerable to its objects and experiences”.⁷⁵

I’ve paddled this little river many times before. The River Ivel is local and has been significantly managed by human intervention and industries. It houses several old mills and our destination today is the disused lock above another mill that houses the Ryvita company, which make cracker breads and granolas. Knowing in some ways what to expect is part of the lure back to the familiar place.

Yet this visit is cast in a new light, in new aesthetic framing. There is a potential for learning, for seeing the river as something else than the familiar,⁷⁶ or to take the familiar and capture new and challenging experiences. The journey becomes a place of opportunity, as Hepburn says, to leave one open to the other. The opportunities are not only of my making. Hepburn, I and the environment around us have a role to play in the creation of today’s journey and may influence journeys to come.

*

We gear up, putting our buoyancy aids on, and I make sure they are a snug, warming fit, with the cords attached and stored properly. We move the canoe to the water’s edge. Hepburn holds the stern carry handle, and we place the bow of the boat so that it hangs expectantly above the water. Little minnows or sticklebacks momentarily leave their warm feeding spot - they’ll return once we are gone. I am in line with the carrying yoke and have placed a painter underneath it. The painter makes an ‘L’ shape, with the vertical line from the bow to the underside of the yoke and the horizontal line of the ‘L’ from the yoke to my hand. “Shall we get going?”, Hepburn asks softly as to not disturb any unseen aquatic life. “Give it a little push”, I say matching his softness. The canoe’s bow dips and the stern rises. The bow hits the water – ‘ptshhhhh’. The floating canoe arcs around to the right, the tethering from the painter under the yoke enables me to pull it back toward the bank; keeping it steady and controlled.

⁷⁵ Hepburn, ‘Wonder’, 134.

⁷⁶ The notion of ‘seeing as’ emerges in much of Hepburn’s work. A prominent example is found here: Hepburn, ‘Poetry and “Concrete Imagination”: Problems of Truth and Illusion’.



PLATE 4 HEPBURN IN CONVERSATION

The bow seat, Hepburn's seat, appears waiting for him. With paddle in hand, he steps to the side of the canoe and with a little help from me to stabilise the boat, he moves from land to watercraft. Seated, he holds his paddle still across his body waiting for my momentary destabilisation. I use the gunwales to push the canoe forward a little to make it easier for me to get in. Body low, I put my paddle in the canoe and step precariously in – left foot as central as possible, to not topple the boat. 1, 2, 3... right foot now in the boat, and at the same time moving from land I lower myself onto the seat, knees on the bottom. Our terrestrial selves are softly stowed as we become paddlers. We use our paddles to push ourselves from the bank. The sky reveals itself as we move from underneath the guardianship of bulrushes, sedges and reeds into the middle of the easy flow. We are equidistant from each bank as we begin our paddling journey.

*

I speak to Hepburn about balance, “As long as you keep your head inside the gunwales, you can, pretty much, move around and get yourself comfortable without unbalancing the canoe. One thing that we’ll be doing together is judging our paddle strokes, the strength we use, the distance from the gunwales, the cadence and the completion. We can put our paddles in at the same time and use roughly the same power, but if I were to keep my paddle in longer than needed it could unbalance the direction of the boat; we’d head toward the reeds and bank. The same works for the paddler up front, too”.

There is a sense of harmony, balance and grace in the canoe. When things aren’t going quite right, the canoe can be noisy; it can move as though it were sentient and free-willed. The upshot is that the paddler can be forcibly required to deal with aspects of themselves, their skills, and emotion-states that may otherwise go untested, uneducated.

Hepburn and I start discussing the river. We look at its form, the wintering colours and the stark contrast against the blue sky and reflect on how to interpret nature without losing respect for it. I think aloud for a moment, hoping Hepburn will have some thoughts in response, “I do wonder how canoeing has peculiar qualities to it that make it an interesting vantage point for learning. There is a movement involved, of course, but there is a static element too. If human movement is typically experienced primarily from the legs – walking, for instance – there is a distinctly different experience when paddling. There is the upper body in full movement, while the lower body is in relatively static fine adjustment. The lower body enables the flowing movement of the upper body to propel the whole ensemble through the paddle stroke. The vantage point extends into, and from, the canoe and the paddle, perhaps even the river. The lower body, particularly the knees and bum, serve to tweak and adjust the edging (the amount of the hull in the water by my leaning to one side), which influences the resistance from water and weather and the grace of movement on the water. Do you think it could be from this point that we can begin to consciously engage with aesthetic education?”.

Hepburn looks back like a car driver might when engaging in conversation with passengers in the rear seats; a slight contortion while eyes are fixed on the river, and the paddle strokes continue in rhythm. We both look left at a narrow channel, which leads to the bottom of a derelict locked chamber at Stamford about one mile away. We continue forward, with the river expanding and deepening in hue as the riverbed deepens.

Hepburn speaks softly, aware of his surroundings, carefully selecting his words, “It is important to attend to the body and to be aware of it as a standpoint from which to perceive and reflect. We can recognise much about the landscape and human interactions by considering our relationships with objects from this particular point of view. When I was in the Lake District some years ago, walking to a tarn at low light, *I was not simply a solitary tarn-watcher in a darkening landscape, but one who walked the surface of a planet suspended in a space it shares with other heavenly bodies, planets, satellites and stars... My sense of bodily size and scale, my position were*

*determined by my relationship with these.*⁷⁷ From that position, not dissimilar from the canoe, I am then able to recognise my relationships, my emotion responses, the connections I (the human) have with nature through different analogies, metaphors, poetry and narratives.⁷⁸ It might be that the canoe affords opportunities for *coaxing consciousness into expansion*, which I might suggest has an educational feature to it.”⁷⁹

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As if on cue, at that moment, a bolt of blue! Flame-flickering, golden-flared, orange throated flashes of a kingfisher shot out from a partially submerged branch. We both stop paddling. Silent.

The Evening Angler, Weather-teller, rainbringer and / Rainbow Bird - setting the stream alight with burn and glitter. Without consciously knowing it, I had recalled one of MacFarlane and Morris’ *Lost Words* poems – Kingfisher.⁸⁰

The descriptive celebration of this beautiful bird resonated from my mind to my lips, as I whispered some lines while it pulsed away from us: “Gold-flare, wing-fan, whipcrack the kingfisher – *zingfisher, singfisher*”. “Every time”, I say jubilantly, “every time I see one, my heart lifts and in the moment, my eyes don’t let it go. Sometimes I feel my smile; I hold my breath. As it slings itself into its next sanctuary, in the moment of disappearance, I breathe out again. It is as though in that moment I’m trying to hold onto it, to slow down time. There is something about being on this visual level that makes it feel special somehow”.

I reflect in Hepburn’s ear, “the kingfisher has come to represent to me the primarily solitary life. It is only on even rarer occasions than this that one might see them in pairs. The Halcyon creature reminds me of many ways to get to deeper meanings and broader connections for learning. It might conjure discussions of solitude, like that exemplified in Thoreau’s *Walden*.⁸¹ In the past, I spent a while on the river with one, perhaps this very bird, moving with me about twenty to thirty metres ahead, for a good stretch. I kept thinking about the notion of revisiting, just like being here again today, and considered the way Nan Shepherd revisited the Cairngorms and experienced the familiar plateau in many different ways.⁸² At the same time, it made me think about the journey, in previous writing you introduced your discussions on journeying by *revisiting a familiar country path*, do you remember?”

Hepburn nods, calmly.

⁷⁷ Hepburn, ‘Nature Humanised; Nature Respected’, 273.

⁷⁸ A prominent place for this point can be found here Hepburn, ‘Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature’.

⁷⁹ Hepburn, ‘Time-Transcendence and Some Related Phenomena in the Arts’; Hepburn, ‘Nature Humanised; Nature Respected’. – These are two examples of many, where Hepburn speaks of attending to the aesthetic with a consciousness enhancing impact.

⁸⁰ Macfarlane and Morris, ‘Kingfisher’.

⁸¹ Thoreau, *Walden*.

⁸² Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*.

“I found it so interesting”, I say after his moment of reassurance, “in fact you might say disturbing, that such a profound learning experience happened in a place I’ve visited many times, rather than a new and unknown place in a clichéd paradigm of adventure. The glistening, pulsating, vibrant kingfisher challenged my imagination and consciousness in many ways”.

“Oh yes”, Hepburn says considerately, as we start paddling again.

Passing dense reed beds and tall dying grass high-up on the bank, Hepburn brings together some points of our discussion, “In aesthetically enjoying a landscape, we take in (at different moments) more and less of our field of vision as our object of attention: we pay more or less heed to factors of colour, texture, the arrangement of large forms and of small forms, to isolated objects and to objects in groups. The kingfisher is a good example of an object in isolation. The constantly varying content of our experience is partly a function of changes in external nature, e.g., lighting, changing position and attitudes of self-moving objects, weather and many other factors. But the variation is no less a function of our grouping, our thinking, and of what we choose, in our improvisation, to take at any moment as focal - say the kingfisher, what as peripheral - say the remaining riverscape. Mobility of attention must count as one of the main generators of aesthetic diversity in relation to nature”.⁸³

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I wait a moment, letting his words circle around my mind and imagination. “Are you saying that the diversity of attention, and the opportunities for these kinds of varied appraisals could be central features of educational journeying?”, I say in a moment of verbalised revelation. “It makes me think about how a journey, like this one, can have different purposes, different *frames*, so to speak. It seems to me that my challenge is to design learning experiences that can enable paddlers to seriously appraise the landscape in these ways, which entails going beyond the analysis of form and other surface features”.

Hepburn replies, “I recognise that form, lighting, objects, environmental conditions are important starting points for the developing learner to begin attending to the aesthetic qualities present in the journey, to help develop their perceptive tools. Choosing the focal point of the journey is significantly important”.

In reply, my voice picks up speed in excitement, “This could be about the development of paddlers’ subjective selves like you’ve spoken about before. I’d need to look elsewhere, but it could be about understanding the habitats that sustain the kingfisher, couldn’t it? The learning needs to be connected to their lives, to enable learners – and educators are learners too in my view – to create meaning in their lives from journeying experiences... both learner and educator need a wide range of opportunities on the

⁸³ Hepburn, ‘Nature Humanised; Nature Respected’, 273–74.

journey to find that sensible sounding language that connects to their lives, even if to disturb pre-existing misconceptions.”

Hepburn has been listening carefully, as we continue our paddling around a sweeping meandering ‘S’ carved into the landscape. To the left, the remains of a swan’s nest made from reeds. To the right, up a steep bank enveloped with sedges then dense nettles, hides the footpath often frequented by four-legged creatures: dog, badger, vole, otter and deer. The sky remains blue as the thick canopy from left bank casts a long, unforgiving shadow of coolness on an already chilly, but bright day.

“Education is your domain, not mine as such”, Hepburn declares respectfully. “I know I don’t draw from the arts to discuss nature, but perhaps as we are discussing journeying a musical analogy might be helpful? *In music the direction towards grasping of the relevant reality is the enhancing of intentional, subjective density of awareness, and decidedly not the reductionist objectivising way. To know what is happening is not a matter of stripping away all but ‘this note sounding now’ (the orchestra at an instant), but rather of imbuing that note with all the meaning and character that its musical context loads on to it. One may travel metaphorically from the home key towards the key most remote from that, and a sense of the harmonic distance, remoteness, can be among the main intentional elements in the experience of that section of the piece.*⁸⁴ Geographically, physically and metaphysically, the educational elements might be framed like this”.

“So”, I reply, “The paddling and noticing can build into a coherent synthesis, that gathers those senses of distance and remoteness from the everyday for the learner. The notion of returning to the home key, as you say, will still leave the journeyer with the rich experiences gathered from the learning undertaken, some of which will be in relation to the embodied elements, others will be in relation to the thought components. The educator’s challenge is to be equipped with knowledge of different aesthetic approaches that most adequately and respectfully speaks to that home key and context of the journey’s purpose”.

We paddle, receiving the warning calls from the crows. They alert all that lives on this dark stretch of river that we are here. I get an emotional sinking feeling. The learning possible from Hepburn’s perspective is rich and rewarding, and yet can only go so far. It is undeniable that the thought component of serious aesthetic appreciation can be enhanced by literature, poetry, the arts – this is fine if this is the detail of the ‘home key’ he spoke about. But what about journeys that centre an understanding of the aesthetic concept of experience itself, or of the natural history of river that could explain, for instance, the ecological networks that sustain the kingfisher's existence? And, what about understanding the home key for the educator, who might be paddling in familiar places again and again? How can they keep their aesthetic sensitivity, serious appraisals

⁸⁴ Hepburn, ‘Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic’, 196; See also for an education-focussed version of this argument Hepburn, ‘Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity’.

and awareness alive in their everyday, educational experience? How can I be sure to not place the kingfisher into the background or to disregard it from the experience?

It is as though Hepburn could hear my inner monologue. “As an educator, you may have in the back of your mind the striving for meaning for yourself and those you educate. This probably comes with doubts sometimes, too. Human beings look outward into places like this, and the wider universe, to *make sense of the meaningfulness of their lives*.⁸⁵ There are more than just my, or your, way of aesthetically perceiving and metaphysically imagining”. He looks up to disappearing clouds.

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“The challenge” he says, after some moments of paddling silence, “is to recognise that a meaningful life is not one that is governed by a single rule or map of meaning. It may be like a work of art, in a sense: *a meaningful life must have its diversity as well as its unity; and the more diversity, the more challenging is the task of unifying and preventing mere fragmentariness. The pathological is touched when unity, of a kind, is reached only by a person’s withdrawal from diversified aims and projects.*”⁸⁶

“Don’t be pathological”, he asserts, turning his neck. He doesn’t turn around fully but looks as far as *he* can as takes in an elm on the left bank. Just then, one of its leaves falls, swaying down from side to side as though being rocked slowly to sleep. It reminds me of vulnerability in living and becoming. Knowing that while there will be other seasons where the leaves fall, there are innumerable changes and transformations beyond the horizon.

Hepburn seeks to reassure me in my pensive silence: “It is challenging, seemingly crushing perhaps. But endings can be of a better or worse quality. Their meaning is built upon the narratives and framings developed through the *great magnitudes in perception and imagination* and the ability to *possess them, assimilate them, to be in one way equal to them and aesthetically to enjoy them rather than be crushed by them.*”⁸⁷ Different home keys, different tunes. Different stories to bring the landscape’s meaning alive to its human appreciators”.

I look into the middle distance as we approach the disused lock. The canopy has opened to reveal individual trees once again. A skeletal form of thick and spindly branches strikes against the backdrop of vibrant thick grass, blue lightly clouded sky and sound of white noise as water gushes violently into the disused lock chamber. There is life and energy here – its ‘disuse’ is only a marker of ‘human’ disuse; there is still much to see and feel by being near it. There are many ways to discuss it, to capture its meanings. The closer we get to it; the clearer it is to see the detritus captured at the sluice gate.

“It is time to say goodbye, isn’t it?” I say with a heavy yet appreciative acceptance. I exhale as the paddle strokes slow and my mind picks up momentum. “I’ll do my best

⁸⁵ Hepburn, ‘Optimism, Finitude and the Meaning of Life’, 172.

⁸⁶ Hepburn, 159.

⁸⁷ Hepburn, 176.

to find diversity and unities in the company of others; others who have come after you and been inspired by what you've contributed to the world; to be with those who ultimately found their own meaning and created other ways of thinking about aesthetics of nature. I need to turn to them for this diversity, to not be pathological by withdrawing myself to a single aim or aesthetic project”.

“Aye, it's time to expand and revel in *a network of complexly connected concepts, each with limited but genuine explanatory power*”,⁸⁸ Hepburn says softly as we make moves to get back onto land. I think of *unities* of aesthetic thought rather than a single unity, as a way of considering the variety of thought to support my educational *seeing as* in future educational canoe journeys.

“Thank you for joining me today”, I say warmly, as we climb carefully onto the bank and use the painter to drag the canoe over the nettles. As I turn to look down the river



PLATE 5 PADDLER IN THOUGHT

⁸⁸ Hepburn, 'Life and Life-Enhancement as Key Concepts of Aesthetics', 75.

we've just paddled, I rest perching on the bow of my canoe. "Before you go, would you like to have a cup of coffee and a biscuit, Hepburn?", I ask hopefully.

"Sorry", he says, "but this is journey's end for me".

"That's a shame... but... thank you," I say with an admiring smile, "It is high time I looked to add aesthetic diversity to the frames I use for educational journeys. I'll get my little green notebook out and capture my thoughts."

As Hepburn leaves, the small brown canvas book - Wonder and Other Essays - and the larger glossy blue book - The Reach of the Aesthetic fall out of my bag onto the soft ground. I pick them up and wipe the dirt from them. Perching for a bit, sipping my coffee, I write about my canoe journey and capture this consummatory experience and attempt to *synthesise* and *characterise* the journey with Hepburn. I quickly scribble 'Ecology, Experience & Everyday' into a blank page so as not to forget to recall these later. I spend some time jotting down thoughts from this journey and turn to thoughts of portaging to future canoe journeys to come.

Chapter 3. Ronald W. Hepburn: Journeying and Disturbance

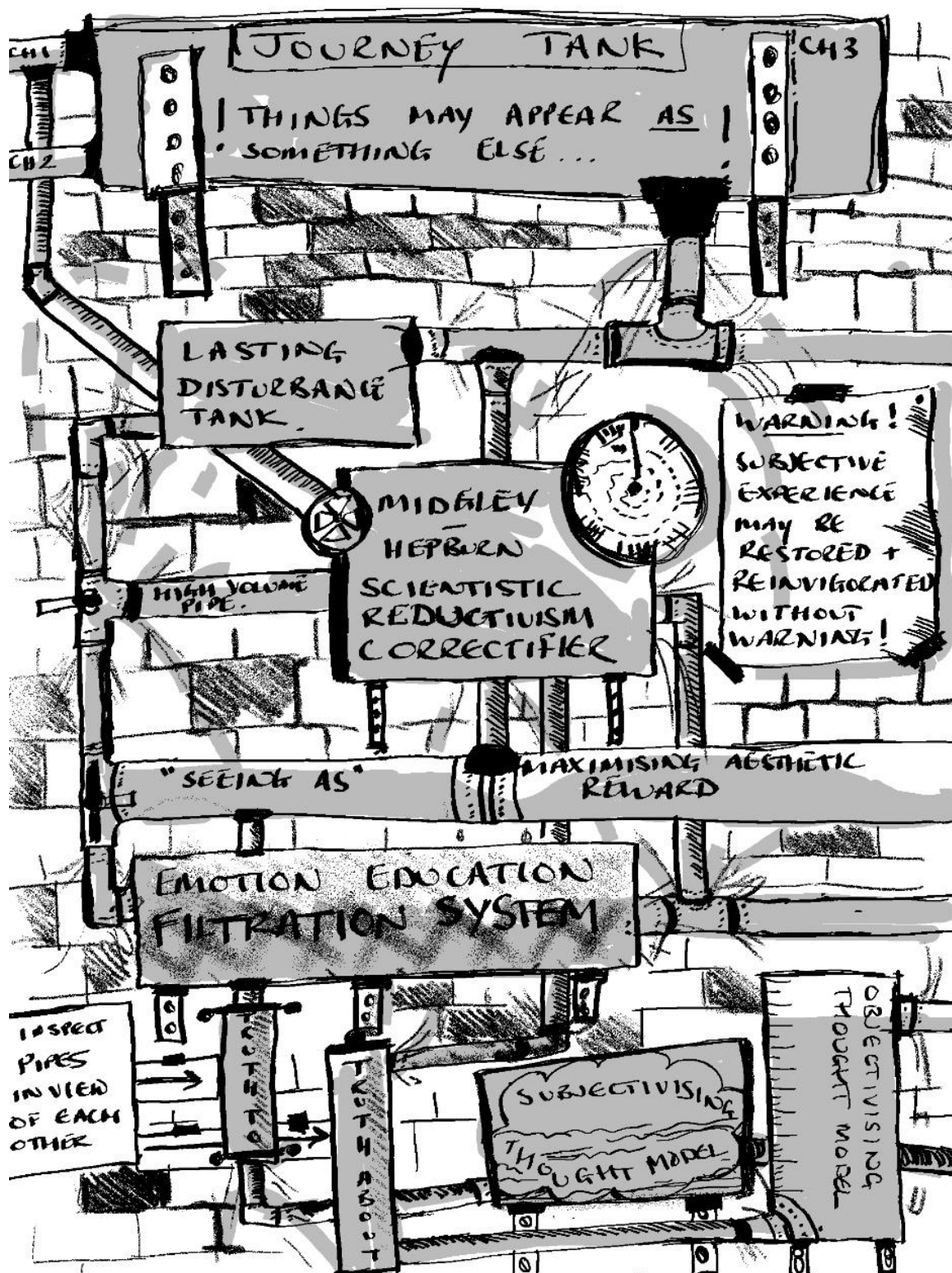


PLATE 6 CHAPTER 3 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING

In this chapter, I return to my academic voice. Having met Hepburn – the paddler – in the previous chapter, I now turn to introducing detailed aspects of his work and his influence in the aesthetics of nature and environment. Continuing with the idea of philosophical plumbing, Plate 6 above gives some indication as to the central concepts to be explored below. I will argue that Ronald W. Hepburn’s work on reviving the aesthetics of nature has an important contribution to make to conceptualisations and practices of educational journeying and aesthetic education in nature. I explain why Hepburn is an important voice in this thesis, as already explored in the previous narrative. He appears throughout many of the following discussions.

I introduce his parable centring on journeying through the landscape and culminates with his view that journeys should leave the traveller *lastingly disturbed* – as indicated in the ‘lasting disturbance tank’ in Plate 6. I will show that his lasting disturbance argument has educational qualities central to it. A key feature of these insights is the education of the emotions – which is captured in Plate 6 by the ‘Emotion Education Filtration System’. This discussion brings a range of recent scholarship together on Hepburn, along with historic discussions of the education of the emotions from Hepburn’s contemporaries, namely R.S. Peters and John White.⁸⁹ From this juncture, I contextualise his arguments with the work of Mary Midgley.

As far as I know, neither Midgley nor Hepburn cited each other in their work. Yet, they both had deep suspicions of the overwhelming power of objective and reductive sciences to be *the* path to truth as narrativised in much of public life and education. Both argued that attending to the richness of subjective experience is failed by societal trends towards powerful and reductive sciences. This discussion serves in some way to revise this trend and is exemplified in the ‘scientific reductive correctifier’ in Plate 6. It was the concern for the disregard of subjective forms of knowing that Hepburn was raising with this parable. I discuss this below in analysing his arguments about ‘paths to truth’. This is shown above by the distinction of ‘truths to’ reality, which are truths of the human experience. This is also complemented and contrasted with ‘truths about’ reality, which can be captured through a range of empirical knowledge creation tools. Undertaking the work in this chapter opens opportunities for Chapter 4, which focuses on extending the understanding of aesthetic education outside of the arts and widens the engagement with journeying literature from Chapter 1.

First, let me introduce you to Hepburn, the philosopher.

RONALD W. HEPBURN AND REVIVING THE AESTHETICS OF NATURE

Hepburn was born in Aberdeen on 16 March 1927 and died on 23 December 2008.⁹⁰ For much of his career, he was Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh (1975-1996). His work is difficult to confine within traditional philosophical boundaries. It can be framed within the analytical tradition, experiential traditions of pragmatism and phenomenology, overlapping with literature, religion, ethics, and education, but he is primarily recognised as an aesthetician. As Emily Brady wrote in his academic obituary to the British Society of Aesthetics, Hepburn ‘was best known for his ground-breaking work in environmental aesthetics’.⁹¹ His landmark paper ‘Contemporary Aesthetics and the

⁸⁹ Peters, ‘The Education of the Emotions’; White, ‘The Education of the Emotions’; Hepburn, ‘The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion’.

⁹⁰ Watt, ‘Hepburn, Ronald William (1927)’.

⁹¹ Brady, ‘Ronald W. Hepburn – The British Society of Aesthetics’.

Neglect of Natural Beauty' is cited in many of the papers and chapters on aesthetics of nature and environment.⁹² In it, he argued that the aesthetic models needed for the appraisal of nature were different from the arts primarily because the arts are human-made, and nature is not. In contemporary phraseology, this is now conceptualised as *treating nature on its own terms*.⁹³ Importantly, for the educator engaging with Hepburn's work, I believe it to be accessible and poetic, making it readily useable when challenging typical human behaviour that poorly applies pre-existing understanding of art objects to nature; instead, he argues, we need to meet *the other* in aesthetic experience and to embrace our doing and undergoing.⁹⁴ This led Hepburn to make connections between the aesthetics of nature and moral action.⁹⁵ He was chiefly concerned with the ways in which aesthetic theories had offered very little to meaningful experiential engagement in nature. Similar approaches and concerns have developed further traction by Berleant in his aesthetics of experience and engagement.⁹⁶

Throughout much of his life, Hepburn prioritised teaching those entering the field of philosophy - first year undergraduates - as was the tradition of Scottish Professors of Philosophy. He felt this came at the cost of his writing. However, his two collected works: *Wonder and Other Essays: Eight Studies in Aesthetics and Neighbouring Fields* and *The Reach of the Aesthetic: Collected Essays on Art and Nature* have an integrity and invitational quality to them. His writing spanned an impressive six decades, and these collected works provide the reader with a variety of topics that are carefully woven together and can speak to each other.⁹⁷ Each chapter (or the original article from which most were developed) could be read in conjunction with another, revealing more about Hepburn's philosophical project.

I believe his works are important for a number of reasons, two of which will recur in this thesis: (1) the supplying of a range of aesthetic terminology that can be mobilised in aesthetic activities outside of the arts, for instance developing theses on wonder,⁹⁸ the education of emotions,⁹⁹ and the relationship between the aesthetic and moral;¹⁰⁰ and (2) making philosophical problems accessible for analysis without narrowly-framed gatekeeping through over-specialised labyrinthine language, which means they can have a bearing on aesthetic education concerns outdoors and outside of the arts. For instance, when arguing for how to maximise aesthetic reward of nature outside of human-made art (see central pipe in Plate 6), we receive a somewhat assured and rousing offering from Hepburn:

The maximising of aesthetic reward in nature is dependent on the extent to which one learns to shift attention flexibly from aspect to aspect of the natural objects before one, to shift focus from close-up to long-shot, from textual detail to overall atmospheric haze or radiance; to overcome stereotyped grouping and clichéd ways

⁹² Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'; Hepburn, 'Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁹³ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*; Budd, 'Aesthetics of Nature'; Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

⁹⁴ Hepburn, 'Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁹⁵ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2019; Hepburn, 'Nature Humanised; Nature Respected'; Hepburn, 'Life and Life-Enhancement as Key Concepts of Aesthetics'.

⁹⁶ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*; Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*; Berleant, 'Objects into Persons: The Way to Social Aesthetics'.

⁹⁷ Szécsényi, *Aesthetic, Nature and Religion: Ronald W. Hepburn and His Legacy*.

⁹⁸ Hepburn, 'Wonder'.

⁹⁹ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of Emotions and Subjectivity'; Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion'.

¹⁰⁰ Brady, 'Ronald W. Hepburn – The British Society of Aesthetics'.

of seeing. The more flexibility, the greater likelihood of discovering aesthetically rewarding modes of perception of any given subject-matter.¹⁰¹

Hepburn's style and concern for the subject matter provide the reader, educator, student and observer alike with opportunities to reappraise their own lived experience of the aesthetic. This example illustrates the way in which education – particularly learning to perceive and think about nature, carefully, with diversity and intensity – is a recurring theme in this work and a particularly powerful way of framing educational canoe journeys. Let us turn to his parable before moving into a discussion of the educational value of his work.

PARABLE: HEPBURN'S JOURNEYING FOR LASTING DISTURBANCE

The following parable, as Hepburn titled it, was developed to criticise the ways in which the promotion of 'objectivity' failed to adequately recognise the complexity of the human experience. Fortunately for this thesis, it shows the upshot of Hepburn's concern. The use of the term 'parable' is important here. A parable, unlike a thought experiment,¹⁰² is expected to give a clear moral message.¹⁰³ I have therefore attempted, to the best of my ability, to ensure that this version of the parable is true to his original imagery, intention and moral message developed in *Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic*.¹⁰⁴ (This was originally published in the Journal of Philosophy of Education under the title of *Art, Truth and Education of Subjectivity*¹⁰⁵ - one of his two papers on education).

[...] let us consider the broader concept of journeying through a landscape. In objective terms to journey through a landscape would become the occupying of successive different positions in space, through time, together with a succession of correlated physiological states. If we now restore the rich subjective dimension that belongs to a full realisation of what it is so to journey, then again we shall not be moving away from awareness of the truth, as how things are - to ornamentation or illusion - but towards a fuller grasp of the truth. We have to restore, for instance, a schematic sense of the ground to be covered (let us say on foot), the topographical impediments, hills, water, marshes, a sense of direction whence and whither. En route, the journey-so-far is continuously synthesised - how far you have come, what ground remains to be crossed. (Lacking that, each step would feel like your first.) The sense of having been elsewhere, and of being on the way qualify and pervade all the minor episodes of journeying. To arrive is to be among others who have not journeyed at all, and to be in that way different from them. If that experience is to have a consummatory quality (and the fullest concept of arrival is consummatory in such a context), it must be experienced par excellence in a conscious synthesising of the total journey which has been completed in the immediate past. Lose that, or, in extreme fatigue or confusion of mind, fail to think it through, and you are at once, and even to yourself, indistinguishable from the natives. Yet, from a reductionist, objectivising viewpoint, that is how things are; you and the others simply make one group. (Contrast the quite different sense we have of belonging to the group co-present with us at our starting-point.) 'Consummation' we should have to relegate to the illusory or the ultimately meaningless: truth is limited to the noting of spatial location at an instant.

¹⁰¹ Hepburn, 'Nature in the Light of Art', 1984, 46.

¹⁰² Companion and Experiments, *The Routledge Companion to Thought Experiments*.

¹⁰³ 'Parable n.'

¹⁰⁴ Hepburn, 'Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic'.

¹⁰⁵ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity'.

Consummation becomes negation of the journey. We could speak of this as the 'irony of arrival'.¹⁰⁶

I discuss aspects of this parable in three stages. First, by showing how Hepburn's work has touched aspects of philosophy of education. Second, I attend to the epistemic context that Hepburn was responding to, namely the troubling educational and social practice of valorising objective routes to truth at the expense of the education of subjectivity and the emotions. Third, I contextualise his argument with work developed by Midgley, who dedicated a great deal of her intellectual project celebrating the value of science while challenging its mythology as an omniscient system of thought and action.¹⁰⁷

RECENT EDUCATIONAL DISCUSSIONS OF HEPBURN

It is helpful for the reader to know that Hepburn did not attempt to develop a general philosophy of education. It is unsurprising then that only a handful of philosophers of education have engaged with Hepburn's work beyond the typical cursory – one line – remark about him being responsible for the reinvigoration of environmental aesthetics from the 1960s. For instance, only two further analyses have been made by philosophers of education about his educational works – Koopman¹⁰⁸ and Reddiford,¹⁰⁹ and these are not extensive. Others, Fesmire¹¹⁰ (discussed in Chapter 4) and Yang,¹¹¹ have drawn on Hepburn's environmental aesthetics in the context of education of the imagination and education of environmental responsibility, respectively. More recently, Saito and MacAllister have individually contributed to a collected work reflecting on Hepburn's intellectual project, edited by Szécsényi – *Aesthetics, Nature and Religion: Ronald W. Hepburn and his Legacy*.¹¹² An aspect of Saito's argument posits Hepburn's aesthetic project is intrinsically educational, which I discuss below.¹¹³ MacAllister engages with Hepburn's work on emotion, subjectivity, journeying and wonder – the only paper that I know of that brings both Hepburn's education and aesthetic work together for philosophy of education analysis.¹¹⁴

Somewhat aptly using a metaphor of journeying, Saito claims Hepburn's aesthetic work as significantly and broadly educational:

It is like a journey, according to Hepburn, that is not simply a spatial movement that changes one's location continuously, but more importantly a process in which the previous experience informs and transforms the present experience, which in turn directs the subsequent experience. He characterises this process as many levelled, layered, improvisatory, exploratory and creative. It is an open process whereby we are receptive to whatever we encounter in our journey, but at the same time we are not passive recipients simply absorbing whatever comes at us. We are the creators of the aesthetic experience while being faithful to the object of that experience. It is the process of aesthetic engagement with undergoing and doing.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ Hepburn, 193–94.

¹⁰⁷ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By* See Chapter 3 - Progress, Science and Modernity.

¹⁰⁸ Koopman, 'Art and Aesthetic Education'.

¹⁰⁹ Reddiford, 'Subjectivity and the Arts: How Hepburn Could Be an Objectivist'.

¹¹⁰ Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination'.

¹¹¹ Yang, 'Hepburn's Natural Aesthetic and Its Implications for Aesthetic Education'.

¹¹² Szécsényi, *Aesthetics, Nature and Religion: Ronald W. Hepburn and His Legacy*.

¹¹³ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020.

¹¹⁴ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions'.

¹¹⁵ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020, 223.

Saito captures a key feature of Hepburn's aesthetics that draws on the Deweyan tradition. The notion of doing and undergoing,¹¹⁶ or as Hepburn proffers: being actor and acted upon, means that my movement in the landscape affects change on the landscape, and too, the landscape affects change on me. The rich subjective experience of the material world enables me to capture powerful moments that might otherwise go dismissed if the pervasive and powerful reductive approaches to thought are not kept in-check. Both Hepburn and Saito suggest a pedagogical element to the aesthetic journey, that through the process, learning takes place which will have an impact on one's way of seeing and acting in the world far beyond the journey's end.

Saito agrees with Hepburn that the aesthetic educator should enable the learner to engage with the aesthetic with an adventurous openness – to be receptive to the other – and to conversely not under-shoot and to leave the learner in 'easy' and 'unadventurous acquiescence in the limiting of our aesthetic concern to ready-made human perspectives'.¹¹⁷ In the case of the journey parable, the educator ought not only to be concerned with the maximising of the aesthetic reward from the continual syntheses in the journey, but they ought to help the learner in grasping the present of the journey, which ultimately leads to a vitality of experience and life-enhancement when the learner undertakes journeys on their own.

Hepburn continues about missing the mark in aesthetic appreciation: 'Such undershooting undoubtedly diminishes both art and the aesthetic contemplation of nature'. Consequently, 'To undershoot is to limit oneself to aesthetic experience that is complacently free of the *disturbing*, or of the thought modes of being to which we are barely sensitive'.¹¹⁸ Therefore, the journey is not an ordinary, or every day, travelling through the landscape to which we often ignore sensory components – because we have other kinds of demands to attend to e.g. the shopping list, getting the children to school, catching the commuter train, etc. Instead, to recognise and categorise the journey is to have a rich aesthetic experience that enhances one's abilities for sensory contemplation, which leads to learning, whereby one's sense of reality is changed toward a greater degree of accuracy of interpretation. In this case, learning is captured by the lasting change in the way one thinks, feels, perceives, and acts in the world resulting from aesthetic insight. It is further captured by the experiential element that they are made different because of acting and being acted upon in the landscape.

It seems that the restored sense of self and being on one's way through the diversifying and intensifying of the present experience is something that can emerge through self-learning and through the guidance from an educator. Attending to the quality of the journey creates opportunities for wonder, imagination and meaning in life (addressed in the conclusion of Chapter 4) – a shared feature of the aesthetic and education. The words of Yang are helpful here:

Education in aesthetic sensitivity involves an engagement of the senses, feeling, cognition, body, and the imagination. Generally, teachers will teach students to appreciate forms, shapes, colors [sic], types, and stances of natural objects. Focusing only on appearances is, however, too superficial. We may offer related scientific knowledge to give students a deeper understanding of aesthetic

¹¹⁶ Ord and Leather, 'The Substance beneath the Labels of Experiential Learning: The Importance of John Dewey for Outdoor Educators'.

¹¹⁷ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 192.

¹¹⁸ Hepburn, 196-97; Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020.

appreciation. However, we should take a step further to introduce them into the world of the imagination. [...] imagination moves us beyond perceptual qualities to fly toward metaphors and philosophical contemplation, poetic and novel engagement with the world, expanding and opening up new horizons of experience, and enriching it with meaning. Imaginative contemplation or awareness can lead us to discover more aesthetic values in nature, which can be an effective foundation for cultivating a moral attitude of respect for and protection of the environment.¹¹⁹

What the educator is aiming for when educating for subjectivity is the education of sensitive awareness to the qualities of the self and more than self. Here the educator can be the self or other. What I take from Yang, is that it *can* enhance the learning experience, but that in itself is not enough. Doing something with that knowledge is an important follow-on step. Yang seems to be using 'imagination' as a way of creatively applying what one has come to know to ensure accurate appraisals of objects and experiences. Imagination is a key feature of an enriched aesthetic experience.

For journeys to have an aesthetic richness, there is a need to look toward deeper meanings through imaginative contemplation, awareness, and action.¹²⁰ By nurturing those aesthetic and moral attitudes which are reliant upon an education in emotion and subjectivity, the learner develops a sense of seeing nature, and their place in it *as it really is*, which is characterised by Hepburn as the element of interpretation that determines the overall character and meaning of the 'whole experience'.¹²¹ It is not an isolated moment. One must attend to nature as it presents itself to us, rather than how we are often predisposed to it, which may involve emotional responses, and a revised imagination, which require an education to enable one to be open to features of the world. In his only other education paper, Hepburn provides analyses on the education of the emotions.

HEPBURN ON THE EDUCATION OF THE EMOTIONS

Hepburn argues that emotions are directed, situational responses that have grounds. The grounds for an emotion can be adequate or inadequate, in that they can be absurd or justified, and as a result they are educable. Much like the way the teacher will enable a learner to move through misconceptions, the same can be said of educating the emotions. 'To have certain emotions', Hepburn says, 'involves not only perception or misperception of the facts; it involves also evaluation of the facts'.¹²² To have an emotion is to have an active involvement with an object and experience. The task of education of the emotions is to lead to an enlarged and highly discriminative way of seeing, responding to objects and situations and having grounded reasons for the response. It becomes the task of the educator to enable the learner to move beyond shabby stereotypes and clichés that serve to restrict emotions. Their role is to enable emotional complexity through finely tuned emotional discrimination.

Aesthetic sensitivity as Yang described above, can be nurtured through opportunities for *emotional freedom* – the freedom from stultifying emotional clichés and stereotypes – that can increase the options one has for emotions. Nurturing emotional freedom leads to 'a vitality and keenness of feeling', contrasting with overly rationalistic promises of *freedom from emotions* that leave a subject lacking in emotional energy, minimal choice, and no

¹¹⁹ Yang, 'Hepburn's Natural Aesthetic and Its Implications for Aesthetic Education', 229.

¹²⁰ Hepburn, 'Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination'.

¹²¹ Hepburn, 192.

¹²² Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion', 89.

efficacy.¹²³ Conversely, emotional freedom that nurtures highly tuned responses to objects and events is essential to a fulfilling engagement in the world, Hepburn maintains. One way the educator can nurture emotional freedom is through an education in the arts: 'Education of emotion through art is a learning how to make sense of patterns of behaviour in others – patterns that can otherwise lack unity and intelligibility'.¹²⁴ Hepburn particularly sees the arts and art experiences enabling emotional freedom, which he defines as the freedom to 'modify a pattern of feeling' to which it is 'essential to have a grasp of its origins, objectives and affiliations'.¹²⁵ By *looking out* to the arts and literature as the source material for education of the emotions, one learns to identify and make sense of complex, sometimes highly irregular, patterns of human behaviour that may remain an anathema, because they lack 'unity and intelligibility'.¹²⁶ Seeking intelligibility of the world, the truth in material-phenomenal reality, is again seen in educational canoe journeys. This is exemplified in both the narratives above and below, coupled with the recent literature discussing the canoe as a vessel for research.¹²⁷

The combination of emotion and cognition is 'pulled together by the notion of 'seeing as''.¹²⁸ It is through works of art and literature – Hepburn uses Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* – that we are exposed to familiar and entirely new aspects of emotional experience. The case Hepburn uses is the character Levin's response to seeing his new child for the first time. MacAllister assists with an explanation here: 'What Levin felt was no simple joy, but a tortuous awareness of liability to new pain, that only slowly evolved into joy and pride'. Such passages in literature educate by affirming the complexity of emotional life and by eliciting a new way of seeing'.¹²⁹ This argument, while compelling, is not without its philosophical challenges.

To tighten-up what is meant here then, emotions are ways of responding to stimuli, to see phenomena *as* pleasing, distressing, safe, fearful and so on. As Hepburn stated: '[...] in part at least', 'having an emotion is an active affair, since it involves selective attention, the grouping or interpreting of perceived features of one's situation, and the making of judgements of value'.¹³⁰ Being able to direct attention, group features and respond to sensuous qualities with purposeful emotional discrimination complements Hepburn's position for maximising aesthetic reward.¹³¹

Emotions are central to aesthetic reward and to serious aesthetic appraisals. One is responding to stimuli, but not in a reductive behavioural psychological sense. Hepburn provides an example where one might view anger in a work of art but may not feel any need to clench their fists even though they are receiving the anger in the artwork itself. One can recognise the emotion in the artwork, or qualities in the landscape that may resemble emotional features (like *angry* thunder or *raging* crashing waves) without appropriating these emotional qualities into their own mood or their highly particularised response.¹³²

¹²³ Hepburn, 94.

¹²⁴ Hepburn, 96.

¹²⁵ Hepburn, 94.

¹²⁶ Hepburn, 96.

¹²⁷ Michell, 'The Canoe Trip: A Northern Cree Metaphor for Conducting Research Herman Michell'; Gendron, 'Unpacking and Repacking the Canoe: Canoe as Research Vessel'.

¹²⁸ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions'.

¹²⁹ MacAllister.

¹³⁰ Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion', 89.

¹³¹ Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion'.

¹³² Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempts as Analysis'.

Hepburn dealt with two foreseeable objections that his position was likely to face. First, that emotions do not have to be oriented toward objects. It is quite possible to have emotional responses to events, moments and things that are quite obviously not in object form. Hepburn responds by accepting this point, but by maintaining that to respond to objects and events with fine-tuned emotions requires discrimination. Emotions can be directed to describe how the world looks/feels. In recent history emotional responses to the Russian-Ukrainian War or the Israel-Palestine wars have a variety of emotional responses to them, many of which are grounded in well-reasoned, articulated beliefs as to how the world appears to the perceiver. Hepburn also acknowledged that artists themselves are not always confident about the completeness of communicating emotions, and part of an education through the arts is an acknowledgment that some aspects of emotional experience can be finely tuned but incommunicable in certain moments. Second Hepburn deals with a socio-cultural point, that 'Works of arts may replace one set of clichés with others of their own creation, in the end no more or less flexible, discriminating or fit to cope with the complexities of real life than the clichés they displace'.¹³³ Hepburn's response to this is sharp. He argues that replacing one set of emotions for another is mere phoniness and dishonesty in the education of the emotions. How to really counteract possibilities for this kind of displacement, the educator ought to provide a wide range of artistic sources to engage with. Along with the resources, the educator needs to engage with pedagogical practices that nurture questioning, argumentation and grounds for emotion responses. As MacAllister summarises:

If it is accepted that emotions are educable cognitive states, then educators can and should encourage students to see emotions as always involving active appraisals and interpretations of situations, appraisals that can be true to reality or not. Hepburn maintained that educators should teach students to question whether a given emotion is truly grounded in reality or not or if other emotional responses are possible or have more warrant.¹³⁴

MacAllister further points out an important objection: Hepburn failed to foresee or articulate that while the arts *can* provide grounds for emotions, there is no guarantee that they will. MacAllister reminds us that such learning does have its obvious limit - 'Fiction is fiction and life is life. The two can meet and enrich each other, but they need not'.¹³⁵ An education in the arts and humanities cannot guarantee one become a 'good person', what they can do is provide opportunities for the education of the emotions and morality,¹³⁶ through educated aesthetic appraisal.

MacAllister succinctly summarises Hepburn's position: 'The arts (and especially literature) can educate the emotions in various ways: by enlarging experience beyond the trite emotion clichés of everyday life; by enhancing self-knowledge and emotional freedom, by revivifying and revitalising emotional experience, and by improving our understanding and relations with other people'.¹³⁷ Although MacAllister limits this discussion to people, Hepburn is broadly committed to improving and understanding relations humans have with the *other*, human and other-than-human. The revivifying and revitalising are important features of Hepburn's aesthetics – particularly from his Neglect paper onward – as his emotion argument marries with much of what he argued therein. So much so that

¹³³ Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion', 99.

¹³⁴ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions'.

¹³⁵ MacAllister, 239.

¹³⁶ Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs to the Humanities*.

¹³⁷ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of Emotions and Subjectivity', 234.

he saw the inner emotional life as *worth* more than accepting the shabby stereotypes and clichés (a recurring theme) that only serve to restrict emotions to the 'lowest common denominator of human response to *generalised* human situations...' (emphasis added).¹³⁸ The quality of responding that Hepburn sees as central to serious aesthetic appreciation, which includes both the arts and nature, should enable highly discriminate emotional responses, which are grounded with reason, and be appropriately complex for the object and situation one is involved with at a given moment.

What can be achieved in a journey may be much less about those consecutive moments, and much more about how one responds to objects and experiences, the characterisation of the meaning of experiences and moments when moving through a landscape. As a canoeist, I might ask myself "What did the journey mean to me?" Or "How has the journey changed the way I orient myself to X or see X as Y?". As an educator, I might ask similar but slightly reframed questions, such as "what could the journey mean to the students?", Or "What truths and emotions are going to/could be/best to be/ revealed by journeying in this place, and in this way?", "How might the students/or I exercise emotional freedom or describe how the world appears to me/us?"

It is important to note that Hepburn sees journeys as being both lived and literary. It is quite possible and reasonable to suggest that our view of reality can be lastingly disturbed through nature-writing, travel literature and arts depicting journeys, as well as physically moving through a landscape. MacAllister seeks further clarity about Hepburn's view that journeys, both lived and literary, *will* enable students to 'get to reality'. Essentially, MacAllister is asking, whether lived and literary journeys can *really* 'reveal the life-world of difference between a mere change of location and really living through a journey to its end?'¹³⁹ This could be addressed by referring the educator to the questions above to enable learners, and or themselves, to actively exercise thinking rather than absorbing literature.

PHILOSOPHICAL COMMENTARY ON THE EDUCATION OF THE EMOTIONS

Within Hepburn's framing, a mark of an aesthetic experience is characterised by the percipient's emotional response to a work of art or a landscape as a way of maximising aesthetic reward. For instance, I may feel overcome with relief from anticipation when I find the campsite I have been paddling to for the last seven hours. I may feel sorrowful when I find (or read) that a river has been closed off with barbed wire to discourage canoeing and potentially cause harm to paddlers.¹⁴⁰ I may feel guilt when I bring to consciousness the history of canoeing in the UK and its appropriation by white colonisers, which caused considerable harms to the First Nations Native American designers and manufacturers.¹⁴¹ Where Hepburn discussed the thought component of serious aesthetic appraisal, it is important to expand his argument to incorporate the affective elements. As Hepburn argued, emotions are partly cognitive and therefore educable – consequently, they can be assimilated within his *thought component*. The thought component can involve not only knowledge but, emotion.

Emotions give 'interpretations of a situation, interpretations that go beyond the recording of acts and feelings occurring at any particular moment'.¹⁴² As such, in his early work,

¹³⁸ Hepburn, 'The Arts and the Education of Feeling and Emotion', 91.

¹³⁹ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions', 244.

¹⁴⁰ Dudley, "'Muddying the Waters: Recreational Conflict and Rights of Use of British Rivers'"; Randall, 'Who Owns Water? The US Landowners Putting Barbed Wire across Rivers | New Mexico | The Guardian'.

¹⁴¹ Newbery, 'Canoe Pedagogy and Colonial History: Exploring Contested Space of Outdoor Environmental Education'.

¹⁴² Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempts at Analysis', 259–60.

Hepburn held the view that '[...] being bitter', for instance, 'involves making certain evaluations, not simply having feelings or acting in particular ways. It is logically impossible to *hope* for something one does not favourably evaluate; or to *feel contrition*, unless one acknowledges oneself to have done something wrong'.¹⁴³ An implication of this position is that emotions are not just labels for feelings, they are situation appraising. Thus, an aim and outcome of an education for serious aesthetic appraisal is the grasping of highly discriminable emotional qualities, requiring the use of powerful and appropriate metaphors, imagery and language, as argued above. It can, therefore, be concluded that aesthetic appraisals, seriously engaged with, are educational. What we need to know now is, how and in what direction?

Saito suggests that Hepburn's focus on the way one sees objects and experiences influences their 'mode of being in the world and of interacting with 'the other''.¹⁴⁴ Having an aesthetic education (broadly conceived) of this kind enables one to cope with variety and complexity, which is of recurring importance to Hepburn's project.¹⁴⁵ This is a process which takes time, involves coming-to-be-aware, synthesising levels of meaning, and exploration in relation to objects being experienced.

'As we practice making aesthetic journeys, the nature of our experiences develop and mature, from trivial and superficial to profound and rich. Despite promoting exercising freedom of the imagination in aesthetic experience, Hepburn does not advocate the 'anything goes' stance. We have examined trivial and superficial experiences that are not sufficiently object-centered. They include a strictly formalist approach and using the object for one's fantasy, reverie and amusement. He also discriminates between different emotive responses. Sometimes they are cheap sentimentality typical of greeting cards and generate experiences that are easy'.¹⁴⁶

We can take from this that meaningful and emotional engagement is a significant feature of the aesthetic education experience. Therefore, it is a reasonable suggestion that the educator ought to create learning experiences that aim to take those 'superficial greeting card' responses, hold them to account and develop more accurate appraisals. Part of that engagement is the aesthetic-moral relationship of respect for the object and experience (which will be discussed later in this chapter). It requires the educator to nurture the learner's responsibility to ethically engage with the *otherness* of the object or experience. The learner will likely need support in confidently using the appropriate language for these characterisations. This will enable them to do justice to the qualities one is responding to and sharing, which involves both the educator and the learner having a robust understanding of emotion.¹⁴⁷

The metaphor of 'baggage', more specifically 'emotional baggage', is a well-noted phenomenon in the canoeing community.¹⁴⁸ For the remainder of this discussion, I make connections between Hepburn and his commentators, and place these within a canoe journeying context. In literature woven into canoe culture, the concepts of emotional

¹⁴³ Hepburn, 259–60.

¹⁴⁴ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2019, 112.

¹⁴⁵ See Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempts at Analysis'.

¹⁴⁶ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020, 235.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, 'Writing Up and Down: The Language of Educational Research'.

¹⁴⁸ Raffan, 'Probing Canoe Trips for Persistent Meaning'.

baggage, the releasing of emotional baggage, and doing emotional work is wrapped up in the physical object of the canoe and the practice of canoe journeying.¹⁴⁹

Emotional baggage is associated with the excess of 'physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological movement' in coming to an experience.¹⁵⁰ Through canoe journeys one can become aware of one's emotions, particularly those which are suppressed by what Hepburn would call 'apathetic perception'. Apathetic perception is a sluggish, stereotyped, unnuanced form of perceiving. It dulls appropriate emotion responses to aesthetic qualities.¹⁵¹ Through the environmental distance from everyday existence, certain events in the journey – disembarking, paddling, isolation, observing a non-human centred environment like the experiences in the narrative above – one can develop an awareness of their subjectivity through self-knowledge of physical skill and emotional awareness. The awareness of our emotions and our responses to events left on shore and in the immediate environment – such as the setting sun or a swooping osprey – becomes a hybrid activity in the canoe journey. It may lead to greater self-awareness where the canoeist can enter into moments of self-evaluation and self-transformation.¹⁵² This could become an act of unselfing – Murdoch's phrase for appreciating the other on their own terms¹⁵³ – through paddling, which 'helps to destroy some of what we have made of ourselves, allowing time or the evaluation and reshaping of our lives'.¹⁵⁴ Aesthetic education in canoe journeys could involve physical, emotional spiritual and psychological movements as a way of unselfing, which could contribute to fine-grained aesthetic appraisals. This position leads to an enhanced subjectivity of the educator and learner, but it is not without criticism.

In the original collection in which Hepburn's paper was published, it sat alongside an article by R.S. Peters. Peters held that emotional responses, while at least partly cognitive, lead a percipient to act in a predisposed frame of mind, which was characterised by unreflective moods and beliefs that influenced appraisals. Peters argued the education of the emotions '[...] must therefore consist in fostering the capacity for objectivity. This is not just a matter of ensuring that children are well informed; it is more importantly a matter of converting what natural curiosity children have into a concern for truth, and getting them to discipline themselves to submit what they think to public tests'.¹⁵⁵ Yet, it is clear from Hepburn's position that a great deal of cognitive work goes into responding to sensory stimuli in a grounded and sensitive way. Furthermore, as the discussion of emotional baggage above indicates, it enlivens the emotional tools the learner has at their disposal to engage respectfully with the world. Peters did not accept that emotions or nursing the richness of subjectivity could be stable paths to truth. The role of the educator, for Peters, is to nurture the cardinal virtues of honesty and sincerity. Educators, he claims, are to be concerned for their learners' development of:

[...] knowledge and understanding, and if people are concerned with finding out what is true, it must in general be the case that they are disposed to reveal their thoughts and feelings to each other. Without this, no kind of co-operative enquiry can flourish. How children are best encouraged to develop this disposition is an

¹⁴⁹ Peace, 'Journeying by Canoe: Reflections on the Canoe and Spirituality'.

¹⁵⁰ Peace, 229.

¹⁵¹ Ronald W. Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempts at Analysis', in *Wonder and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 75–87.

¹⁵² Raffan, 'Probing Canoe Trips for Persistent Meaning'.

¹⁵³ Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*; This concept is developed in relation to Hepburn in: Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Peace, 'Journeying by Canoe: Reflections on the Canoe and Spirituality', 232.

¹⁵⁵ Peters, 'The Education of the Emotions', 354.

empirical matter about which it would be rash for a philosopher to make any pronouncement.¹⁵⁶

Although Peters stands back from making such pronouncements, he does, however, proffer a position that would not be accepted by Hepburn and that has been directly criticised by White. Peters conceives of *emotions as labels* for passive responses and active motivations associated with those emotions. As White summarises: 'When we talk of *fear as an emotion*, we refer to cases where people are overcome by fear [passivity], reduced by it to teeth-chattering or blanching inactivity; where it is a motive, it is, [...] a *motive for action* (emphasis added)'.¹⁵⁷

To see the object of one's emotions in *this* or *that* way is - as White and Hepburn both independently suggest - to enter a particular kind of appraisal. As White posits, each emotion brings distinct thought with it e.g., '[...] fear bringing with it the thought that something is a threat to one, anger the thought that something has frustrated one, and so on'.¹⁵⁸ Hepburn would not accept Peter's bifurcation of emotion, its supposed passivity, nor its trajectory for an education in objectivity. Emotional responses for Hepburn have the capacity to be educated, carefully, and with a response to *the other* underpinned by an evaluative stance, which requires thought and action. For Hepburn we are both acted upon and actors in aesthetic experiences.¹⁵⁹ White is further unconvinced by Peter's artificial separation on the basis that such a claim is 'counterintuitive: [because] in ordinary speech we make no such distinction. It seems to make entirely good sense to say that emotions can be motives, that, for instance, the anger which afflicted me is the reason why I hit him'.¹⁶⁰ In a less aggressive example, the sadness I feel at the eddy of the river being filled with plastic litter is the reason I paddled to collect the items and put them in the recycling. Such actions are expressions of a much more connected way of thinking about objects and experiences, which inform and are informed by knowledge and emotion. As White states:

Peters sees little or no positive role for the emotions in education, whether we are using 'emotion' in his sense or in the more usual sense whereby emotions can be motives. Emotions as forms of passivity can, as we know, 'warp and cloud perception and judgment' and need therefore to be controlled and canalised in this, as in the correction of the false appraisals they sometimes involve, reason can get to work in one form or another [...] so as to prevent emotions from interfering with rational development.¹⁶¹

There may be a sense in which Hepburn would have some sympathy with an aspect of Peters' view, as summarised by White. Hepburn would probably accept that emotions, if engaged with in a way that led only to passivity, would inadequately respond to the object or qualities in the environment. Hepburn might go as far to say that an emotional education leading to passivity is not an emotional education at all: relying on sluggish forms of perception, dead metaphors, stock thoughts and clichés would consequently lead to the clouding of perception and judgement. But for Peters to argue for the controlling of emotions if they are based on reason as Hepburn signifies, then this would run counter to Peters' own philosophy of education that rests on the development of rationalism and the

¹⁵⁶ Peters, 355.

¹⁵⁷ White, 'The Education of the Emotions', 233.

¹⁵⁸ White, 233.

¹⁵⁹ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

¹⁶⁰ White, 'The Education of the Emotions', 238.

¹⁶¹ White, 239.

ultimate exercise of autonomy into worthwhile human activities.¹⁶² For Hepburn, rationalism and reason are not to be conflated with objectivity. Both philosophers would rather that the learner would follow social rules and appraisals based on reason rather than social pressure or indoctrination. Educators should, on White's view, be more concerned with seeking out and reflecting on the procedures of educating rather than following pre-ordained ideals about the aims of education. For example, it seems legitimate to suggest that one's emotional responses to qualities in landscapes have an important role to play in the learners' and (educators') experiences on the journey and can be a rich source of education. Such experiences could lead to lasting disturbance.

Emotions have a significant role to play in serious aesthetic appraisal. The education of skills and knowledge for appraisals requires considering source material (i.e. environmental qualities and emotional responses) and pedagogical procedures to grow the capacity of subjectivity. Importantly then, the educator must consider ethical pedagogical procedures and paths to knowledge to enable the learner to engage in learning that enables them to access various paths to truth. Contra Peters' comments earlier about managing the emotions to valorise objectivity, Hepburn argues that experiences of arts and nature can provide an education in subjectivity, but how?

HEPBURN AND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE AS A PATH TO TRUTH

The reader will remember that the *journeying through the landscape* parable cautioned about the potential implications of removing or underappreciating actual qualities central to subjective experience. Hepburn also uses it to capture the often espoused reductive, objective thought model, which is positioned as the only approach to disclose truth. The objective model fails to appropriately capture the subjective human experience, primarily because subjective human experience has little to offer objective inquiry (often associated with a particular reading of what constitutes 'the sciences'). Hepburn states:

The objectifying way is the way of the sciences. It involves forming claims about the world that can be tested in controlled experiments, claims that can be verified or falsified. The subjectivising way by contrast is the way of the humanities and arts. It involves sensitively attending to the particulars of lived human experience. It does not involve making claims about the world that can be generalised or falsified.¹⁶³

Hepburn argues that these two thought models significantly influence the way one comes to know the world through education. These are the two contested ways of characterising the journey in the parable. As MacAllister summarises above, the objective and subjective thought models are supposedly distinct in the ways in which they disclose 'roads toward truth or fuller knowledge of reality' to the learner.¹⁶⁴ Whether one accepts the sharp delineation between the arts and humanities on one side and physical sciences on the other, for the purposes of this argument, it is important to note that while there is plenty of healthy scepticism about such rigidity, there is a very real sense in which such a dichotomous approach is lived out in the everyday lives of learners and educators. Such 'ideals' are prevalent in common parlance and in educational policy in England – this is seen in the delineation and hierarchy of disciplinary subjects (sciences being more valuable than arts, maths more valuable than history, etc.) or in the way arts and humanities

¹⁶² Peters, *Ethics & Education*.

¹⁶³ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of Emotions and Subjectivity', 241.

¹⁶⁴ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 185.

subjects are being defunded by the UK Government in the English Higher Education system).¹⁶⁵

The objectivising way sees the primacy of truth about reality through reductionism and, as Hepburn states, the removal of 'anthropomorphic accretions' (like emotions, feelings, aesthetic judgement): the removal of the typical elements that make one human. Human emotion and feeling muddy the waters of *robust inquiry*; removing human qualities enable clearly verifiable, objective truth to emerge. It is these truths about reality and their associated inquiry, experimentation and learning processes that are essential components to the objective thought model.

The subjectivising way is, contrastingly, characterised by the ways arts convey messages which reveal *truth to reality* through experiential and sensuous phenomena that humans use to characterise and mediate their interactions in the world. They do this through humanising emotions, feelings, moral praxis and aesthetic judgements. Both models directly impact how human beings view reality. One must, therefore, acknowledge that reality can be viewed – and lived – from a range of perspectives. As Hepburn notes about the educational power of the arts:

This is very often a matter of conveying 'what it is like to...' enjoy or undergo some human possibility of experience: to be consumed with jealousy, baffled by the opacities or ambiguities of human character, or to struggle to keep oneself spiritually alive in a concentration camp. The phrase, 'what it is like to...' points to the intimate access we are given, by art, to the relevant subjective perspectives, ways of seeing and feeling the world, the complexes of emotions, evaluations, distinctive perceptions, which, in a unity, make up a mode or moment of experience, so characterised. This is indeed 'truth-to' rather than 'truth-about'.¹⁶⁶

Hepburn shows that works of art, including literature and experiences in nature, can in some way reveal *truths about* reality. They do not have to, but they *can*. Sharing facts about the way the world is, is a feature of the objectivising way. For example, artworks may (and can) accurately present the history of an event, present accurate landscape features, or share the accuracy of psychological or biographical features of a protagonist.¹⁶⁷ Such features in the arts enable one to know *how* things are, and *what it is like* to be in this or that situation.¹⁶⁸ D'Olimpio argues that this is valuable on moral and political grounds as the reader or observer can respond to such insight by generating compassion and care toward the other. D'Olimpio draws on Nussbaum, who also argued that an education in the arts and humanities is essential for the sustainability and growth of democracy.¹⁶⁹ This position builds on recognition of *the other* and in the nurturing of abilities to empathise with the lives of others.¹⁷⁰ Practically, this is put to use when one makes decisions on behalf of the other, which is what we ought to do when we articulate political points of view, when we go to the ballot box, and when one is educating.

The ways of *seeing* and *feeling the world* through the arts are by no means guarantees of enabling successful aesthetic appreciation, nor becoming a morally virtuous person. Exposure to them is not enough; conscious action is required. Yet, aesthetic education is

¹⁶⁵ Office for Students, 'Funding Boost to Degree Apprenticeships, Skills, Healthcare, and Science Courses'.

¹⁶⁶ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 186.

¹⁶⁷ Hepburn, 186.

¹⁶⁸ D'Olimpio, 'Defending Aesthetic Education'.

¹⁶⁹ Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs to the Humanities*.

¹⁷⁰ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2020.

helpful in enabling the learner to have an open and receptive stance toward the other. MacAllister notes that Hepburn recognised the challenges posed by such an argument and asserts that educators must be mindful of the misleading philosophical dichotomy between objectivity and subjectivity that runs through policy and practice:

Hepburn however moves to assure arts educators, affirming that there is no good reason to exclude lived experience from the domain of the real. Indeed, he argues that human subjectivity undergirds all truth-seeking practices, even in science. He reasons that when seeking truth, human beings choose their methods of inquiry. These choices can only ever be made by subjective human agents in the experiential life-world. [...] Hepburn concludes that every truth-seeking thought-model that disparages the very thing, human subjectivity, that makes truth-seeking possible, must be thoroughly distorting and questionable. As these thought models rest on unjustified dualisms, he insists that educators must resist the temptation to oppose the humanities and social sciences.¹⁷¹

Similar concerns have arisen when capturing the learning from journeys. Higgins and Wattchow drew on creative non-fiction to enable participants to capture reflections from the experience that might have otherwise been missed.¹⁷² Were the objective thought model to capture features of the journey, one would find it is experientially and aesthetically austere. My journeying with Hepburn in Chapter 2 would have been a mere recollection of geo-spatial movement, for instance.

The sensory components would no doubt still be present, but the tools designed from the objective model could not capture them, as exemplified in the parable. The emotional experience would be present but ignored. The leaps of thought and metaphor between landscape and imagination would be seen as fanciful, harbouring no serious educative value. Hepburn argues that such a position is also incompatible with appropriation of the objective thought model being completely linked to the sciences. Such an austere approach would fail to capture the scientist's experience of what they are doing and the stages in the processes they are involved in. Hepburn argues that this would be an 'incoherent limit' to which there would be no 'intellectual obligation to work towards'.¹⁷³

Hepburn further argues that the subjectivising way can be a legitimate 'cognitive path to truth' and not all forms of inquiry need to be reductive and analytical (breaking down objects and experiences into elements, and assuming they reveal ultimate truths). It is important to note that he is not saying that one model should be replaced with another. Rather he is saying that both have their place to contribute to appraisals of objects, environments and broader epistemological schemes. It is this point that Reddiford misrepresented in his response to Hepburn's original paper.

He claimed that Hepburn failed to recognise the power of some art objects – he draws on *Macbeth* – in disclosing such authoritative portrayals *true to* reality that they should be read as *truths about* reality.¹⁷⁴ MacAllister is unconvinced by Reddiford's claim on the basis that the amendment to the argument need not be made. As explained, Hepburn claims only that the objectifying and subjectifying way are both different ways to truth. Artworks like *Macbeth* cannot be 'creative objective truths as it is not composed via the objectifying

¹⁷¹ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions', 242.

¹⁷² Higgins and Wattchow, 'The Water of Life: Creative Non-Fiction and Lived Experience on an Interdisciplinary Canoe Journey on Scotland's River Spey'.

¹⁷³ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 193.

¹⁷⁴ Reddiford, 'Subjectivity and the Arts: How Hepburn Could Be an Objectivist'.

way, by scientific inquiry'.¹⁷⁵ In the case of the journeying experience, we are left wondering what would be gained by pursuing a misguided notion of objectivity within an otherwise rich opportunity for subjective inquiry and learning. Journeys - whether lived or literary - may reveal elements of journeying in newly clarified and newly situated ways, enabling discoveries hitherto ignored. This could be seen in the ways the similes and metaphors were generated resulting from my subjective engagement with them and reading them for their *truths about* educational journeying experiences.

I claim that Hepburn's view of journeying has a core learning component to it. In the way characterised here, the rich subjective experience is committed to truth about the experience. Whereas when engaging with an artwork, we often experience it conveying 'what it is like to...' enjoy or undergo some human possibility of experience. We can be consumed with jealousy, baffled by the opacities or ambiguities of human character, or struggle to keep oneself spiritually alive in a concentration camp'. When journeying through a landscape, we may experience a similar range of feelings and thoughts in the moment, and the same can be said for insights from arts and literature. The journey becomes a way of 'revealing or disclosing of truth about reality'.¹⁷⁶ It is then through this subjectively rich attention and interaction and through being exposed to movement through an environment - whether first-hand or in literature - we open ourselves to the other, and the opportunity for our ways of thinking to be transformed and disturbed.

To do justice to such experiences requires a range of descriptive language in objectivity and subjectivity and for an educator to hone the learner's use of metaphors and other 'sensible sounding language' to characterise the meaning of such experiences.¹⁷⁷ This is likely to rely on the nurturing of a range of sensitivities, forms of imagination and understanding of embodied experience, which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 4. The educator, whether in the arts or in nature, for Hepburn, has a role to ensure that fellow educators and students realise that 'all the perceiving, thinking and judging apparatus we employ in the aesthetic field operates within the human life-world, alone'.¹⁷⁸ To diminish the meaning and power of experiences in nature and the arts by leaving them free of disturbance is to render both learner and educator with modes of thought bare of sensitivity. These experiences not only point or prompt us to go beyond the experience, but they can also prepare us to sit and work with the 'enigmatic and metaphorical *'pointing-to''* of the experience. This is 'an essentially incompletable intimation, in part self-referential, witnessing to its own transfigured quality, and an earnest of *other* anticipated transfiguration, with deep repercussions upon the subject's system of values'.¹⁷⁹

HEPBURN AND MIDGLEY CHALLENGING THE REDUCTIVE OBJECTIVITY

Hepburn is by no means the only philosopher to have shared their thoughts on such models and their power. Midgley wrote of the pervasive power of *scientism*, which is the false valorising narrative of the ultimate power of scientific inquiry in resolving *all issues* in the world.¹⁸⁰ The acts of reduction and removal of human subjectivity, which shares a remarkable resemblance to the scientistic view, will - we are taught - 'resolve' *all issues* we face in the act of existing. It does not matter whether these are issues of climate,

¹⁷⁵ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of the Emotions', 243.

¹⁷⁶ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 186.

¹⁷⁷ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 11-12.

¹⁷⁸ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 197.

¹⁷⁹ Hepburn, 197.

¹⁸⁰ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*.

emotions, human relations, or much more besides. These issues are so broad in nature that they require specific ways of seeing, assessing and responding to. However, as Midgley and Hepburn both articulate,¹⁸¹ there are serious issues in thinking that objective ways of operating, as typical in the sciences, require operators – thinkers and actors.

I summarise a critique from Hepburn: for anyone who takes the supposedly objective position, they are already making a choice to view reality in such a way, which is an act emergent from a subjective position.¹⁸² Midgley holds a similar, if not sharper view:

our inner experience is as real as stones or electrons and as ordinary an activity for a social mammal as digestion or the circulation of the blood. The capacity to have this conscious experience, and to use it effectively in making choices, is one that has evolved in us, and in many other species, just as normally as our capacities to see, hear and walk.¹⁸³

The objectivising way, for all its promises of truth *about* reality are truths generated by human beings. These human beings require their perceptual and evaluative faculties to function. As Hepburn notes, the subjective way is always in view in the objective (see Plate 5 and the guidance sign beside the truth to and truth about pipework). The decisions the scientist makes are just that, *decision* from the subject (the scientist) who is evaluating, judging, sensing and feeling the appropriate course of action in this or that situation, such decisions and thought require the whole person. They are aware of what they are attending to, they have a brain, a body, and are influenced by the environment, as Midgley asserts.¹⁸⁴

Such faculties are associated with aesthetic appraisals and subjective experience in the arts and everyday life.¹⁸⁵ Hepburn argues that such qualities are often denigrated; the general disparagement, their negation in everyday life, or the control and limitation of them is often sought when practising in the sciences.¹⁸⁶ The impact of such thinking has been captured over decades in the work of critical pedagogues and radical education thinkers such as Freire and Holt.¹⁸⁷ At the heart of their works, originating in the 1960s and 1970s (a similar time to Hepburn's *Neglect paper*, but neither cited the work of the others) is the sense in which human beings have their capacities for creating new realities for themselves severely limited by an objectivising, and dehumanising, set of educational practices and cultural norms. More recently, those cast as *educational gurus* – whose work may not be deep but who are engaged with by millions of educators – have argued that educational systems that prioritise objective outcomes do so at the cost and serious harm to learners' subjective development and their capacities for creativity¹⁸⁸. Similarly, Hepburn cautioned about valorising the objective at the cost of downgrading of the subjective:

All experience is of life-world, within the field of subjectivity. It is from that that we abstract and conceptualise in the objectivising style. So it must be a thoroughly distorting thought-model according to which, in the aesthetic mode of activity, we

¹⁸¹ Midgley.

¹⁸² Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 192.

¹⁸³ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*, 79.

¹⁸⁴ Midgley, 80.

¹⁸⁵ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*.

¹⁸⁶ 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 191.

¹⁸⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; Holt, John, *How Children Fail*; Holt, John, *How Children Learn*.

¹⁸⁸ Robinson and Aronica, *Creative Schools*.

move away from a normative objective world-view towards a subjective realm, from which the one truth about the world can no longer be made out.¹⁸⁹

Hepburn is not saying that this dichotomous relationship between thought models should be flipped; he accepts that both are paths to truth, and each has a role to play in enabling different types of understanding in the world. Midgley, on the other hand, is sceptical of such dualistic notions, which were originally developed from the enlightenment and the separation of mind from body by Descartes. As Midgley notes, reducers themselves are sceptical about everyday language, rendering it somehow 'unofficial' because it does not speak to the truth of reality. To further question reality evokes metaphysical discussions which the reducers will tell us reside in mechanical and atomistic explanations. It is shown in the practices of physics and those practices which seek to gain the authority of physics through the search for atomistic understanding, such as chemistry and - are responsible for the *austere reductionism* that wins physics the status of being the discipline nearest to the building blocks of existence.¹⁹⁰ This has led to the primacy of physics – the gold standard of the objectivising way, one might say - and all other disciplines as subordinate, in rank order, to it.

Its primacy obviates the subjective, justified by the fallibility of subjective accounts if we take only scientific thoughts models as legitimate paths to truth. As such physical explanations have, for centuries, been posited as 'real' explanations, while subjective experience has been characterised as 'only appearance', which is sometimes misinterpreted as the reality-illusion binary.¹⁹¹ Yet there are objective facts within subjective experience, which thinkers like Descartes and Hobbes and contemporary defenders of the 'omnicompetence' of physics failed to recognise.¹⁹² This is seen in Hepburn's account of the journey above.

Such things as pain, grief, delight, location, the past and future 'can be centrally important parts of facts that affect us. These things do not just appear to matter; they do matter. So we vitally need appropriate conceptual schemes for discovering them'.¹⁹³ The arts and nature-based experiences generate many conceptual schemes for use and the processes involved in coming to know, nurture subjective awareness and enable conceptual leaps between what one knows and what one experiences. Hepburn again:

The human world is part-assembled, part-fashioned by means of the synthesising concepts and organising images we apply to our sensations and by which we interpret the actions of others and our own actions. That human world has a perfectly valid claim to reality; but what does and does not go into it, and how it is organised is the work of creation-and-discovery, and of discerning through creating.¹⁹⁴

The work of *creation* is associated with the arts; the work of *discovery* is associated with the sciences. The added layer of complexity is that the subject is both typically in the position of *discover* and *creator*. As the journeying experience can be analysed in a range of ways and discussed through a range of disciplines, it leaves the educator with a range of aesthetic, ethical and epistemic considerations as to the best ways to create and discuss

¹⁸⁹ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 192.

¹⁹⁰ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*.

¹⁹¹ Midgley, 49.

¹⁹² Midgley, 50–51.

¹⁹³ Midgley, 49.

¹⁹⁴ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 188.

features of the experience. If self-educating, or teaching others, one ought to be aware of the conceptual and disciplinary maps that relate to the objective world but result in a complex set of images. This can require sensitivity. Midgley draws on a different map analogy from Hepburn with reference to disciplines to articulate this point:

The point of my analogy with the relation between different maps is to draw attention to just this kind of clash between conceptual schemes. Though there is indeed only one world, the various disciplines necessarily describe it differently by abstracting different patterns from it. While they ignore each other, they can commit themselves to views that turn out to conflict. When this is noticed, both parties need to work to make their conclusions somehow compatible. [...] Making those changes does not, however mean getting rid of the difference between their methods so that they end up with a single pattern. Nor does it mean that one discipline will eliminate the other. They continue to present different pictures, like the different maps of the world, but now with a better understanding of how they should be related.¹⁹⁵

As Plate 7 (below) visually represents, if a journey is framed in a particular way, say as only a geographical movement through the landscape in which the canoeist or walker is tasked to *discover* parts of the world they are primed to see, they are operating very much like Deweyan scientist. Their task is the constant synthesising of one experience into another, integrating and relating past experiences to the present and hypothesising and anticipating future situations, on the given theme.¹⁹⁶ The educator will guide and prepare the learner with thematic cues like those attached to the frame in Plate 7. These are given to enable the learner to make decisions about the appropriateness of material to be included in the synthesising of sensuous qualities and responses. Hepburn's concern is that in the objective model, the conceptual maps influencing the cues for thinking and sensing will garner minimal meaning. Learning and integration of feeling moving through, or outside of the frame, may not contribute to life-enhancement in a journey, and may be lost if the cues are reductive, like the annotations show in Plate 7 – the deer and the hill are both interpreted inside and outside of the frame. If important sensuous and reflective elements of the experience go on being ignored like those outside of the frame, important affordances of experiences, emanating from the self and environment cannot be synthesised or integrated into meaningful educational experiences.

It must be recognised, though, that learning may not always or even regularly include occasions of instant gratification. We might need to learn 'stuff', to learn propositional knowledge, which is drawn on later in the learning experience or later in life. Being a scientist is no bad thing as it involves highly valuable skills and no doubt enriching modes of experiential learning, especially when in nature-abundant environments and disruptive experiences, like being in a canoe in open, or moving water. The educator must enable the learner to discern what subjective and objective insights – the maps – ought to be drawn on in characterising and sharing their journeying experiences with others (through convivia, presentations, writing, assignments, art pieces, etc.). It stands to reason then that the purpose of the journey must also be clear to the educator, even if such a purpose is to discover things about ourselves.

¹⁹⁵ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*, 75.

¹⁹⁶ Hildebrand, 'Experience Is Not The Whole Story: The Integral Role of the Situation in Dewey's Democracy and Education'.

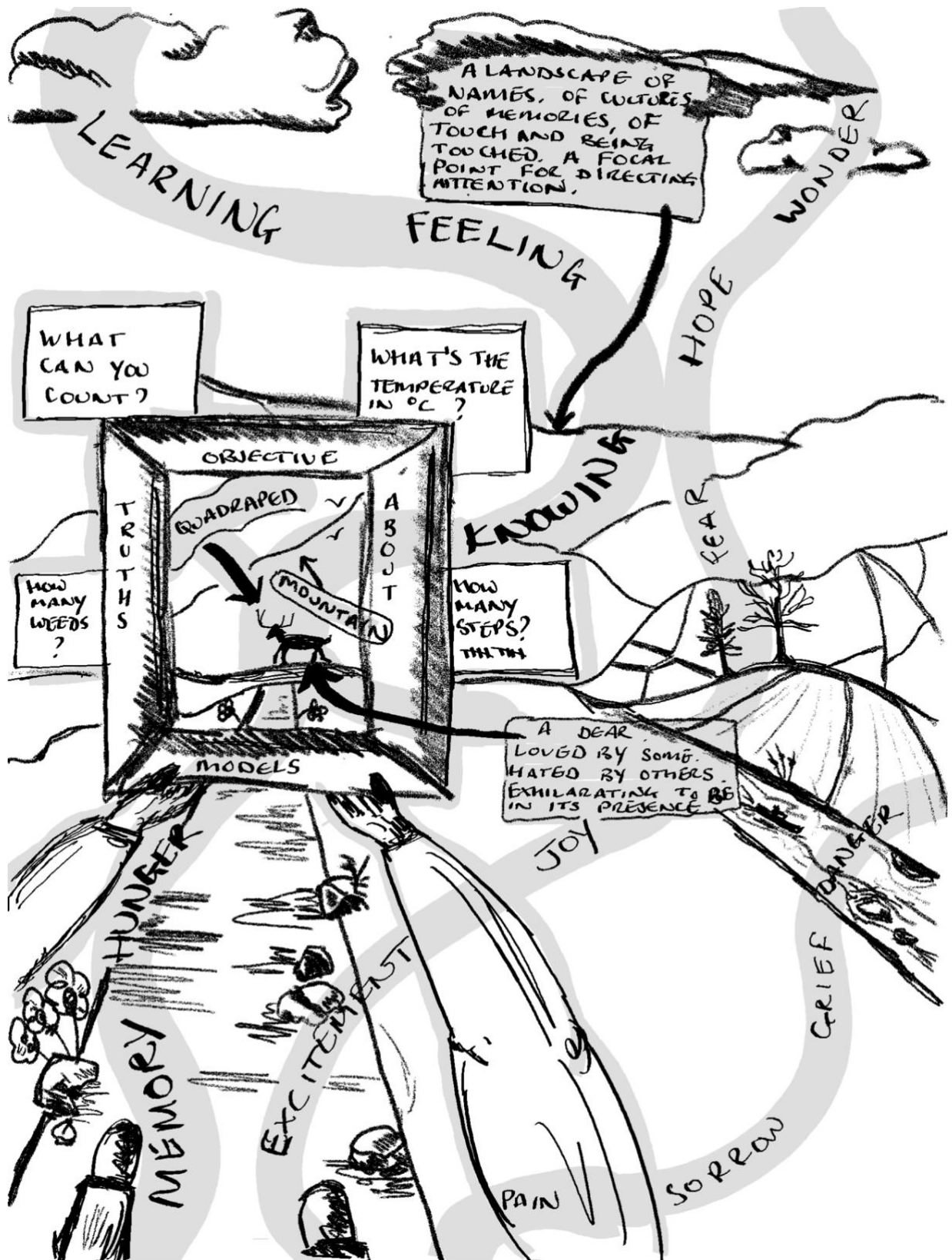


PLATE 7 THE FRAMING AND MANAGING OF EXPERIENCE

Conversely, the journey as an act of creation puts the educator, and the learner, predominantly in the mode of the subjectivising way. This contrasts with the learner as discoverer of things existing out there, and instead places them as artist, writer and creator producing, responding and acting with an 'exploratory attitude to new possibilities of experience, and as overcoming views of human possibility that are limited by what is filtered through a restrictive and crude set of popular conceptions'.¹⁹⁷ What Hepburn is likely referring to here are the clichés and preformulated ideas that are lazily overlain onto sensuous qualities in the world – a recurring theme between his work on the education of the emotions and education of subjectivity. This can sometimes be the way the discovery mode is caricatured; but as anyone who undertakes painstaking and sensitive empirical research knows, that if done well, the inductive and deductive engagement of research material is a taxing and highly particularised activity. The haphazard and trivialising mode aside,¹⁹⁸ it is telling that Hepburn sees value in the joint relationship between the creative and discovery mode. They are important parts of the human learning and life experience.

In a more historic literary example, Thoreau who famously moved to Walden Pond 'to live deliberately', consciously decided to focus deliberations on aspects of living, including tending to his hut, growing food, the economics of home, solitude, and commenting on socio-political and industrial changes such as the railroad.¹⁹⁹ These enabled him to decide on what information to include and exclude, to decide how reality was to be disclosed to him and the reader as a result. In a further Thoreauvian example, this time of his text *Canoeing in the Wilderness*, he shared vivid descriptions of the landscape, and waterscape, accessed through paddling skill and knowledge given by his First Nations guide, Polis.²⁰⁰ Polis' skills and interactions with the landscape and canoe became a recurring theme of Thoreau's account of this canoe journey. While objective geographical movement occurred in all of these examples, this results in an insufficient description of the qualities of the journey, which included rich reflections and various forms of learning, including cultural differences in the way first nations and occupying social groups perceived and valued the environment.

SUMMARY

In this chapter I have introduced the work of Ronald W Hepburn and placed aspects of his aesthetic project into the realms of education and canoe journeying. This synoptic chapter has introduced his work on journeying *as* disturbance, the education of emotions to enable emotional freedom, *seeing as*, and enhancing abilities to describe the world *as it is*. These analyses have engaged with his concept of maximising aesthetic reward, which I have interpreted here as an important aspect of the aesthetic core of educational journeying. These original contributions to knowledge further involved attending to notions of revitalising and revivifying the emotions as a domain for education. This recognises emotional baggage as part of the canoe journeying experience, along with attending to the ethical and pedagogical considerations to nurture subjectivity, contra R.S. Peters. The original contributions I developed here have been accented with the synthesising of Hepburn and Midgley, in their hitherto separate projects to elevate the status of subjectivity. While both accept the value of science as a path to truth, both take the view that different disciplines - conceptual maps - have important roles to play to disclose *truths to* and *about* reality. Subjectivity is the starting point for objective truth seeking and they

¹⁹⁷ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity', 189.

¹⁹⁸ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

¹⁹⁹ Thoreau, *Walden*.

²⁰⁰ Thoreau, *Canoeing in the Wilderness*.

Chapter 3 – Journeying and Disturbance

both have sought to redress the onto-epistemic imbalance that valorises the objective at the expense of the subjective. It stands to reason that embracing diverse forms of knowledge to disclose truths - in the domains of creativity and discovery - could maximise aesthetic reward. I claim that this is particularly valuable for aesthetic education in canoe journeys.

This chapter has shown that Hepburn's ideas have much to offer those who undertake and engage with journeys. The educator, however, may now rightly be considering further questions about Hepburn's work and how it relates to established aesthetic education and practice. They may also be thinking about alternative modes of aesthetic appreciation that could contribute to the variety of maps to aid serious aesthetic appraisals while on, or reflecting post hoc about, canoe journeying.

Chapter 4. Aesthetic Education and Nature

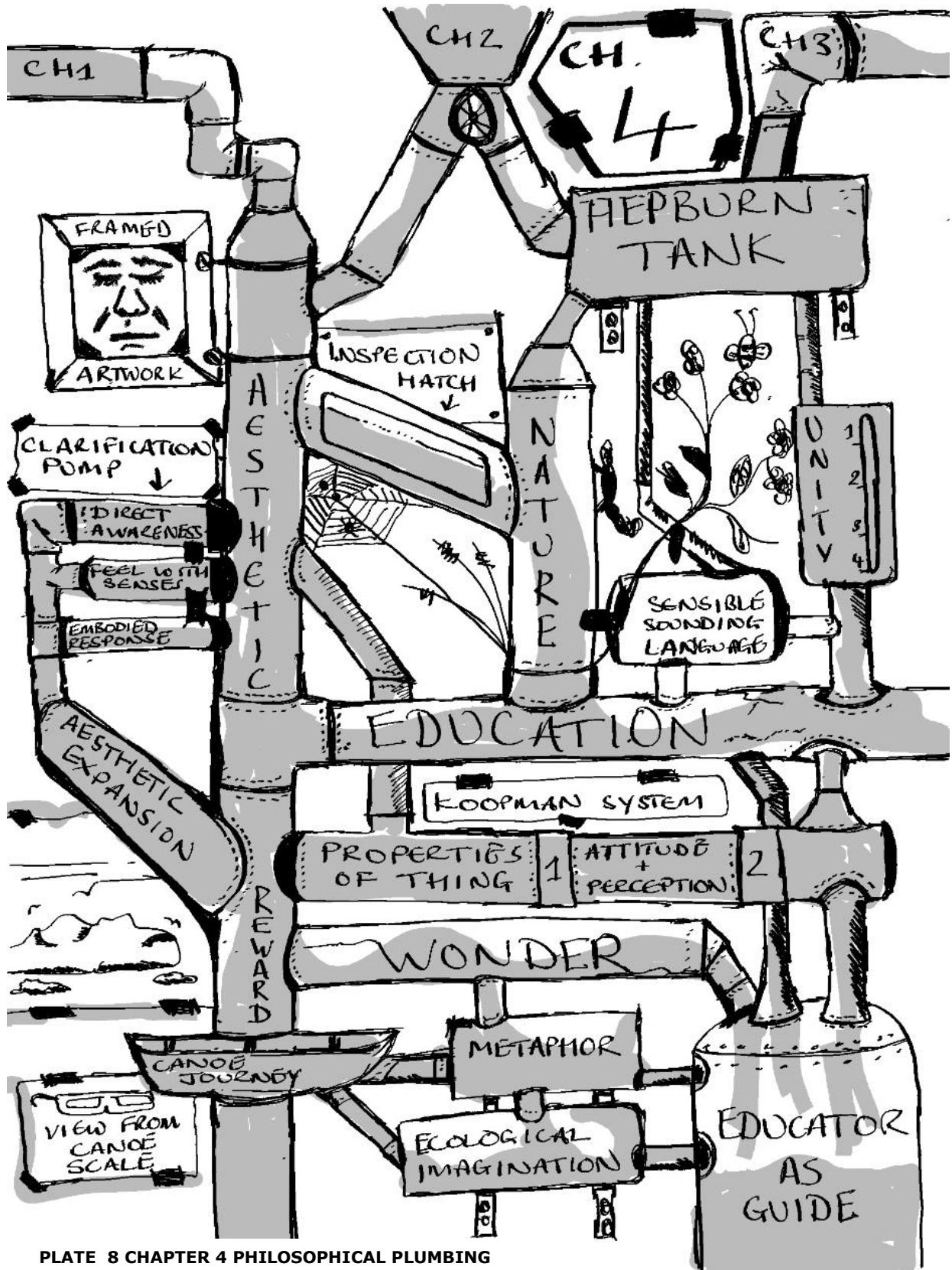


PLATE 8 CHAPTER 4 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING

In this chapter I consider aspects of Hepburn's work in relationship to typical notions of aesthetic education. I engage with his discussions concerning the 'framing of art' and 'unframed nature'; his views on disinterestedness and aesthetic unity through plurality; and subsequent commentary on these discussions. His goal to find sensible sounding language for aesthetic appraisals of nature, are engaged with in relation to recent literature on canoe journeying in First Nations Native American communities. Plate 8 above identifies some of the key concepts discussed in the following passages and shows different ways they connect. For instance, the central pipe work labelled aesthetic, education and nature, are connected in such a way that the aesthetic is connected to education, education and nature are joined, as well. Aesthetic education and nature flow together. Instead of the system leaking due the pressure of untapped overflowing ideas, I see this chapter as dealing with underpressurised thought that I attempt, with the work of Hepburn and commentators, to revitalise and reanimate so that the educator can learn from and share in the aesthetic rewards of the canoe journey. I build on Hepburn's notions of serious aesthetic appraisal in natural environments to maximise aesthetic reward for educational purposes. This chapter closes by considering discussions on the value and potential of wonder in the context of aesthetic education in canoe journeys.

The reader will recall the earlier working definition of aesthetics supplied in the introduction. My narrative with Hepburn and the chapter above suggests a considered expansion of the qualities entailed in aesthetic appraisals and experiences. The pipework to the left of the aesthetic pipe shows some of the concepts feeding into the aesthetic expansion pipe. By returning to this discussion the reader will be able to see rewarding educational opportunities through canoe journeys.

BUILDING ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE 'AESTHETIC'

'Aesthetics', as a term, is used in a variety of domains in contemporary society. It can refer to experiences of art, awe-inspiring natural landscapes, the conflicting emotion response associated with the sublime. More recently 'aesthetics' has come to prominence in the beauty industry to describe the 'enhancements' possible to one's pre-existing physical features, such as 'nose job', lip 'fillers' and buttock implants.²⁰¹ The term 'aesthetic' is used in a range of everyday language and in highly specialised discourses in philosophy, geography and medical science to name a few. Beardsley sees aesthetics defined simply 'as a branch of philosophy' which is 'essentially meta criticism' arguing that 'It deals with philosophical problems that arise when we make statements about works of art and other aesthetic objects.'²⁰² Aesthetics is both a body of knowledge and a way of orienting oneself to the world; one can act with *aesthetic* sensibilities for a range of purposes.

The Ancient Greek etymological root *aesthenesai* relates to the view of direct awareness of feeling or emotion resulting from perception of objects and experiences.²⁰³ One 'feels with the senses', which is captured in a further derivation, *aisthanestai*.²⁰⁴ It is a form of embodied response to objects in an environment. A further derivation - *aesthesis* - literally means 'perception by the senses', feeling or sensitivity;²⁰⁵ one can come to know objects through direct engagement with them. Sitting within these root terms is the suggestion of a wide range of inquiry activities, enabling investigations into aspects of the world, objects

²⁰¹ Porteous, *Environmental Aesthetics: Ideas, Politics and Planning*.

²⁰² Beardsley, 'Aesthetic Theory and Educational Theory', 3.

²⁰³ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*.

²⁰⁴ Iared, de Oliveira, and Payne, 'The Aesthetic Experience of Nature and Hermeneutic Phenomenology', 192.

²⁰⁵ Iared, de Oliveira, and Payne, 192.

and experiences.²⁰⁶ If we can undertake inquiries into aspects of the world, it also stands that we can inquire into the conditions that enable our awareness of the sensory experience.²⁰⁷ The basis of such conditions relies on embodied forms of knowing, which facilitate a range of inquiries where the self interacts with the *other*.²⁰⁸ This approach is compatible with Hepburn's notion of actor and acted upon. Learning about and through the aesthetic then requires honing perception, enabling the learner to peel back layers in their perceptual assumptions,²⁰⁹ and to begin the process of articulating the meaning of aesthetic experiences and objects.²¹⁰

In formalised educational spheres however, aesthetics is typically discussed in arts-based subjects and in 'the' philosophy of art, singular. It is such a common occurrence to conflate aesthetics as art and philosophy of art that even aestheticians across decades have written about this problematic conflation.²¹¹ One will easily find introductory texts on aesthetics that use the term 'philosophy of art' and 'aesthetic' as though they are one and the same,²¹² or that equivocate *aesthetic* as *beautiful* (this can be seen in the high street beauty industry). However, aesthetics encapsulates a much broader range of experiences, objects and inquiries than those limited to beautiful art objects or positive aesthetic experiences.²¹³ The reader has been exposed to this in my canoe journeying narrative with Hepburn, along with the analyses that have followed. If aesthetics as art experience is one end of the spectrum, then aesthetics in *everyday* life – which credits its beginnings from Hepburn – is at the other. Here one can aesthetically appreciate washing on a clothesline,²¹⁴ or a particular seating arrangement in a classroom, i.e. anything can be appreciated aesthetically. Consequently, aesthetics includes and goes far beyond appraising beautiful objects.²¹⁵ In fact, while 'aesthetic' and 'art' are often discussed synonymously, Koopman – as seen in Plate 8 – provides clarity:

Aesthetics does not pick out a certain kind of object. Rather it denotes two things: (1) a certain property, a feature or aspect of things (e.g., beauty or grace), and (2) a certain kind of attitude, perception of experience.²¹⁶

Koopman offers a helpful and broad account of the aesthetic. It directs the educator toward properties in objects or experiences and the ways in which people can be sensitised to them. Despite similar views being taken up by others in the field, including three major thinkers discussed at length in this thesis – Carlson, Berleant and Saito – a strong and perpetuated view that aesthetic education resides primarily in the arts persists even now.²¹⁷ Hepburn being resistant to aesthetic reductivism, however, provides a helpful example which I analyse using points (1) and (2) from Koopman.

When perceiving the openness of the rolling hills (1) or the idyllic Lakeland scene and one notices an imposing thunderstorm ahead (1), the aesthetic qualities 'creates a

²⁰⁶ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*.

²⁰⁷ Iared, de Oliveira, and Payne, 'The Aesthetic Experience of Nature and Hermeneutic Phenomenology', 192.

²⁰⁸ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*; Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*.

²⁰⁹ Fuller and Weizman, *Investigative Aesthetics: Conflicts and Commons in the Politics of Truth*.

²¹⁰ Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*; Saito, 'Future Directions for Environmental Aesthetics'.

²¹¹ Redfern, *Questions in Aesthetic Education*; Koopman, 'Art and Aesthetic Education'.

²¹² Janaway, *Reading Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art*.

²¹³ Albrecht, 'Solastalgia: Environmental Damage Has Made It Possible to Be Homesick without Leaving Home' This provides a useful counterpoint to aesthetics as only the appraisal of the beautiful.

²¹⁴ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*.

²¹⁵ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*.

²¹⁶ Koopman, 'Art and Aesthetic Education', 436.

²¹⁷ See D'Olimpio, 'Defending Aesthetic Education'.

restlessness, an alertness, a search for ever new standpoints'²¹⁸ (2) that can result in greater skill and awareness of aesthetic contemplation of features of nature. Being able to cope with 'unpredictable perceptual surprises; and their mere possibility imparts to the contemplation of nature a sense of adventurous openness' (2).²¹⁹ Attending to such experiences however requires both knowledge and aesthetic sensitivity that, until relatively recently, has lacked serious appraisal outside of art experiences. In contrast to traditional detached notions of aesthetic appraisal, whereby the perceiver is reduced to a disembodied rational perceiver of art objects (including physical and performance arts), Hepburn viewed aesthetic appreciation of nature as positioning the perceiver as only partial creator of the experience, as is described above in his conceptualisation of the perceiver as actor and acted-upon.

This reorientation Hepburn posits decentres egoism often found in art appreciation, while maintaining a respectful humanism. Where one might think that the artwork as created and displayed solely *for their* enjoyment, in nature experiences there are a range of emotions and embodied perceptions (visual, auditory, olfactory, sensual), all of which could change as one moves through a landscape and as one perceives further sensory qualities of the other. Moving through the landscape as both spectator and actor fits well with Hepburn's journeying as disturbance. To be disturbed through the journey, one needs to be actively engaged in an activity and environment with the realisation they are only a part of the unfolding occasions and scenes.

Recently, Nicol and Sangster reported the varying degrees of comfort, openness and challenge that postgraduate outdoor education students faced while attending to a familiar place within the City of Edinburgh for a single one-hour period.²²⁰ Although not referencing the ideas above, some participants noted being able to think in new ways and seeing familiar locations 'differently' and with the emergence of greater connection to place. While Nicol and Sangster were reporting on the concept of Ontological Disruption, there are similarities with serious aesthetic appraisal outside of the arts, through sensitisation and attentiveness to place.²²¹ Their educational concern for the frames of mind that nurture aesthetic and ethical environmental experiences are apparent. One further way of describing this learning experience can be found through Saito. She discusses the process of defamiliarization, whereby perceivers can reappraise familiar objects *as though new* and move past previously assimilated formal qualities (i.e. line, shape, colour, depth, etc.) and practical perceptions (i.e. use, tasks, quality of completion, etc.) of objects or places,²²² like those of the Edinburgh students. Similarly, ontological disruption occurs when one has an intentional experience in receiving the *other* – in this case, a familiar location in a way that forces the percipient to shed their pre-existing sensory and thought-component assumptions. The upshot being that the perceiver allows the environment to 'actively play' with them and their sense of self.

AESTHETICS OF NATURE AND AESTHETICS OF ART

²¹⁸ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 15.

²¹⁹ Hepburn, 15.

²²⁰ Nicol and Sangster, 'You Are Never Alone: Understanding the Educational Potential of an "Urban Solo" in Promoting Place-Responsiveness'.

²²¹ Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*.

²²² Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*.

In developing his account of an aesthetic experience of nature, Hepburn articulates two guiding principles introduced above: (1) that the spectator is observer and actor in natural aesthetic experience; and (2) art objects are framed, nature objects are not. These principles are important in that they paved the way for subsequent aesthetic models, which are explored later in the thesis (Chapters 6, 8, and 10), and they continue to challenge historical foundations of aesthetic appraisal and experience.

Principle (1) has an experiential element to it. Active engagement of the perceiver is required in the co-creation of aesthetic experiences. It is possible that such an experience could be a kind of enveloping and confrontational one, in which disengagement is impossible and where a multitude of senses interact with the stimuli all around. Additionally, movement can be a key feature of a nature aesthetic experience, whether that be my own or movements in the surrounding environment. A painting, or a film, may well be described by the critic as 'having' or 'showing movement', but the movement is of the artist's making, which then requires imaginative enactment of the perceiver. The kind of involvement Hepburn is suggesting is akin to canoeing down a meandering river channel with dappled light through long reed grass on a sunny afternoon, in an evolving and growing – not static and incomplete – aesthetic experience. This requires an acuteness of embodied perception that is viewed as unnecessary in traditional aesthetics reliant on *disinterestedness*. Hepburn appears to be directly challenging this in both principles, however on further analysis it is possible to see that he has some sympathy for the value of imaginative distance. I will briefly discuss disinterestedness in relation to principle (1), before further elucidating principle (2), after which I will discuss how the latter also challenges principles of disinterestedness.

RESISTING DISINTERESTEDNESS

A persistent notion in aesthetic theory is disinterestedness. It has a range of associated features connected with perceptual disassociation, 'psychical distance', detachment,²²³ and calm contemplation.²²⁴ It involves bending the will to engage with individual qualities of objects in isolation. It requires separating the object and self from the everyday demands of life,²²⁵ and the development of an intellectualist attitude to appreciate artworks from a selfless and non-egoistic (without vested interest) point of view.²²⁶ The challenge here is to understand how, if at all, disinterestedness could be compatible with Hepburn's interpretation of aesthetic appraisal in the sense of acknowledging that one is both actor and acted-upon.

Developed from the British aesthetic theorists of taste in the eighteenth century, particularly Shaftsbury, Kant argued that an object is beautiful only when one takes pleasure from it that is free of any other connected considerations such as 'desire, aim, purpose, or any social, moral or intellectual consideration, even free from any concern regarding the very existence of the object'.²²⁷ Hepburn acknowledged that we may engage with the natural scene in a disengaged or quasi-anaesthetised way. But, he recognised too that we are much more likely to acknowledge and respond to the situation as it envelopes us from all sides. By being both spectator and actor we are actively involved in the situation. This contrasts with the kind of detached contemplation found in museums and art galleries, where the physical and psychological space is designed in such a way that

²²³ Kneller, 'Disinterestedness'.

²²⁴ Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*.

²²⁵ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*.

²²⁶ Berleant, *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts*.

²²⁷ Guter, 'Disinterestedness', 58.

one often stands stationary to observe and appreciate a room- or wall-bound object. Being in a stationary and distant mode of appreciation is further challenged through attention to, and acknowledgement of, the movement in the 'natural scene', which includes the movement of the self as well as that in the environment, discussed above.

My own positioning in the landscape is important; it changes the opportunities for aesthetic appreciation and the potential to be affected by emerging relationships with natural objects and experiences. Hepburn calls this the 'reflexive effect' where one sees oneself in an 'unusual and vivid way' that is 'intensely realised' and more pervasive in natural aesthetic experiences than in typical art experiences.²²⁸ Hepburn does not directly address the issue of disinterestedness in his neglect chapter. He positions a more active and externally influenced mode of aesthetic appreciation: 'for we are in nature and a part of nature; we do not stand over against it as over against a painting on a wall'.²²⁹ Here Hepburn is articulating a more invested and active approach to aesthetic appreciation centring on the qualities being experienced. Importantly, this is done in such a way that one remains free from a kind of detached psychological state. Dickie argued that we can have an enriching aesthetic experience without the need of 'adducing a special state of consciousness beyond attention' which utilises unnecessary 'explanatory entities'.²³⁰ Couple this criticism with models that have emerged since, as a result of Hepburn's work, such as everyday aesthetics and experiential aesthetics, then the need to postulate a disinterested explanatory entity is unnecessary. More charitably though, while serious attacks of this mode of appreciation have emerged in different areas of aesthetics, if one takes the view as Berleant does, we can rethink disinterestedness as a particularly intense mode of engaged aesthetic experience (see Chapter 7). It can capture the variety and complexity of the aesthetic and is much more representative of the enveloping aesthetic experience of nature Hepburn was addressing. Here Berleant clearly captures this point:

In the place of disinterestedness theory, we must recast ideas of aesthetic appreciation into a positive, less prejudicial account. It is a setting that can realise in shared experience important qualities often neglected in aesthetic appreciation: perceptual receptivity, directness of presentation and immediacy of awareness, somatic participation, concentration on the intrinsic qualities of perception and meaning, collaboration with artist and performer as part of the appreciative act, and the resonance of association and memory through which the aesthetic occasion expands outward to other regions of life.²³¹

Berleant captures the essence of the holistic approach Hepburn aimed toward. In fact, they co-wrote a paper on this topic.²³² This led Hepburn to develop principle (2), which ensured that aesthetic experience and appraisal of nature contra art becomes clearly delineated. Art objects, Hepburn argues, are framed and/or purposefully positioned whereas nature is (typically) not.

By 'frame' or 'framing', Hepburn argued that sculptures are not in physical frames, yet like paintings on a wall they are typically set apart for the purposeful detached contemplation by the observer. Even landscape art and cultivated gardens are purposefully structured so that there can be no mistake that human intervention has occurred and as such should

²²⁸ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 12–13.

²²⁹ Hepburn, 13.

²³⁰ Kneller, 'Disinterestedness'.

²³¹ Berleant, *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts*, 50.

²³² Berleant and Hepburn, 'An Exchange on Disinterestedness'.

rightly be appreciated as art forms. Art objects and experiences have a formal completeness to them, which shows them to be bounded by an internal structure, which importantly makes it possible for the observer to distinguish them from the rest of the environment. Such positioning enables disinterested aesthetic appraisal. The importance of the unbounded and incomplete aesthetic experience can be recognised in moments of 'perceptual intrusion'. The perceptual intrusion of a thrush singing beyond the next curve of the meandering river is a welcome opportunity to 'play imaginatively'²³³ with the 'perceptual surprises'.²³⁴ This may not be so when at theatre and the sirens from emergency vehicles pierce through the now disrupted performance.

In the nature experience we make room to incorporate perceptual intrusion. Here we should not read 'intrusion' as a negative quality, rather as an opportunity to integrate new perceptual stimuli into the growing aesthetic experience and its later retelling and 'characterisation'. This relies on and expands one's creativity and imagination, which contributes to the process Hepburn called the challenge of integration, whereby the way we receive and synthesise perceptual information from the experience impact on our characterisation of it. 'In positive terms', Hepburn advances, 'this provisional and elusive character of aesthetic qualities in nature create a restlessness, an alertness, a search for ever new standpoints, and more comprehensive gestalts'.²³⁵

As Hepburn argues, the background to the immediate sensory experience is also part of the experience, making it difficult to accept the perceiving of an object in isolated disinterestedness (in the traditional sense of the term). In rejecting further, associations of disinterestedness and the limitation of aesthetics as philosophy of art, Hepburn worked to redefine the particularist approach i.e. sensuous qualities residing with a singular object of contemplation. He argued that aesthetic experiences of nature should revel in plurality. For instance, where a perceiver may refer to their experience as being 'at one with nature', they are often referring to an aesthetic 'unity'. However, they may not be referring to the same kind of experience. Hepburn argues that unity does not have to mean singularity, nor completeness. Rather it can have a pluralistic meaning, which emerges from the qualities of objects and their connections to other objects and thoughts, as well as being framed by the cultural context, which influences the way objects and experiences are contemplated. He posits four notions of unity, which I synthesise and paraphrase below:

(1) Unity of integrity and truth to natural aesthetic experience, in which he introduces the notion of the 'challenge-to-integrate' whereby one is prepared and open to engage with sensory information outside the 'limit of our attention'. Additionally, one engages with 'courageous perception' where there is a refusal to see in only readily available patterns. This enables finely tuned evaluative and emotional responses, or no response as one can become overwhelmed and unable to hold various elements of the experience together. This notion of unity serves in a regulative capacity of the aesthetic experience, acknowledging that nature is not a given whole and there are limits to psychological expansion;

(2) Unity of humanising/spiritualising nature, which is the often-felt experience of putting thoughts and passions of humans into nature. This notion of unity aims to close the gap between the spectator and object, the dualisms of human and nature, but accepts that this may be fully unobtainable. Unity here is a form of regulative response of 'brute

²³³ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 16.

²³⁴ Hepburn, 15.

²³⁵ Hepburn, 15.

external nature into a mirror of the mind',²³⁶ while acknowledging that such experiences are still important and profound;

(3) Unity of place and foreignness is characterised as an unmediated response between human and nature: 'Aesthetic experience of nature may be experience of a range of emotion that the human scene, by itself, untutored and unsupplemented could not evoke'.²³⁷ It is the combination of feeling, and allowing of that feeling, of otherness and foreignness to influence our sense of being. It is, as Hepburn notes, a way of 'naturising' the human in contrast to human's often attempts to 'humanise nature'. As a result of this notion of unity, we are reminded that humans have become foreign to nature in an everyday sense. Yet, this reminder of the separation, provides opportunities to sensing and connecting in various ways. Part of that connection is also to understand that humans are inseparable from the more-than-human and we feel in these experiences of nature the 'unexamined notion of ourselves' by having not assimilated pre-existing conceptualisations of nature's form, imagery or perception. We might say we, conscious of being its 'other', are sitting with it in its otherness.

(4) Unity of reconciliation with plurality. By being engaged and invested in aesthetic appreciation of nature, contra the isolated notions of disinterestedness and detached contemplation, we are able to take a heterogenous approach. We can acknowledge the background qualities of the objects, understand the influence on our emotions and attitudes. We can cope with suspected conflict between the object of immediate focus and other sensory interruptions and additions; they become part of the growing experience. Additionally, and directly in contrast to disinterestedness, this notion of unity enables us to engage with the variety of experiences humans have in the landscape, including its uses. By engaging with a reconciliatory unity, we can, on Hepburn's view, acknowledge that we are part of the environment in which we live and take food, that sustains life. We can unite these varying experiences of beauty, need and sustenance in a markedly different way from simplistic and cliched notions of unity.

There are two reasons for engaging with Hepburn's unity arguments: first, disinterestedness in its traditional form is deeply problematic in environmental aesthetics and requires further discussion. Second, by acknowledging a plurality of unities, the aesthetician or educator can consider them in developing experiences that aim for perceptual and responsive vitality, that move beyond 'domesticated and stereotyped emotional qualities' and that enable more sensitive aesthetic engagement.²³⁸ This, as I see it, relies on a further two considerations, the first being a need for a variety of experiences in a range of environments that challenge aesthetic perception and unsettle ready-made and socialised ways of perceiving and evaluating. Second, this requires a considered education, which needs to centre on experiences to facilitate aesthetic learning in a range of environments, enabling opportunistic – as well as planned - learning in which the educator exercises their skill to enable the learner to integrate the various propositional statements, embodied and perceptual experiences into a coherent educational narrative. In line with Hepburn and commentators' views, this should integrate and grow cognitive resources (including emotions and knowledge of subjectivity), embodied skills and appropriate aesthetic language.

²³⁶ Hepburn, 20.

²³⁷ Hepburn, 20.

²³⁸ Hepburn, 22.

THE NEED FOR SENSIBLE SOUNDING LANGUAGE

Aesthetic education can offer all involved in such experiences opportunities for what Hepburn might call the nurturing of 'alert perception'. In challenging reductive aesthetic education – namely that firmly and limitedly placed in the arts – MacIntyre Latta proposes a reinvigoration of aesthetic experience and education outside of the 'exclusive realm of the artist and/or art connoisseur' and further resists the 'very limiting and foreign notion' of the aesthetic, which is 'vaguely associated with the beautiful and sublime'.²³⁹ Instead '... aesthetic experience attends to the act of creating from within the act of creation itself. The interconnection of perceiving, thinking, and feeling draws attention to the role and place of assimilation, internalisation, and integration with creative activity'.²⁴⁰ Hepburn's concern, before MacIntyre Latta's remark but which still stands, is the concern for the concepts and language at work in such aesthetic education processes, including internalisation, integration and creative activities in relation to nature.

As a reminder, Hepburn's chief early concern for the aesthetic neglect of natural beauty took the form of humanity's estrangement from nature. Through the sheer lack of aesthetic theories to give meaning to the potential range of experiences in nature, humanity would be left without conceptual maps to draw on – as discussed above. In addition, he was concerned with the failure to aesthetically appreciate nature appropriately, which directly impacted on ethical actions in and towards nature. This concern arose from a characteristic view of contemporary humanity as 'encompassed by nature, which is indifferent, unmeaning and absurd'.²⁴¹ At the time of writing the original article, in the 1960s, the most recent attempts in supplying a robust aesthetics of nature were found in the then mostly rejected romanticism of the 18th and 19th centuries.²⁴² The general rejection of this language and framing and the favouring of a scientific and a human-centred, resource focussed conceptualisation of nature,²⁴³ meant that there were 'no theories' to readily speak of nature aesthetically. Couple this with the still prevalent view that aesthetics *is* the 'philosophy of art' and many aestheticians, then as now, argue that the appropriate objects of aesthetic appreciation are human-made artefacts. It becomes clearer what Hepburn was challenging in his articulation of a theory of aesthetic appreciation of nature. The neglect of nature in philosophical aesthetics was a 'particularly bad thing' on two grounds: (1) aesthetics is not examining richly complex and relevant data; and (2) 'when a set of human experiences is ignored in a theory relevant to them, they tend to be rendered less readily available as experiences':

'If we cannot find sensible-sounding language in which to describe them – language of a piece with the rest of our aesthetic talk, the experiences are felt, in an embarrassed way, as off-the-map; and, since off the map, seldom visited. This result is specially unfortunate, if for some other reasons the experiences are already hard to achieve – in some of their varieties at least.'²⁴⁴

Imagine for a moment that you drive past a woodland carpeted with bluebells. The colours are so rich that they catch your eye as you drive past. You are so taken aback by the sheer richness of colour underneath the dappled light from the canopy above, that you turn the car around and pull up on the side of the road. The movement from the isolation of your

²³⁹ MacIntyre Latta, 'Aesthetic Education: The Task of Revisioning', 687.

²⁴⁰ MacIntyre Latta, 687–88.

²⁴¹ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 10.

²⁴² Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and the Environment*.

²⁴³ Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature*.

²⁴⁴ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 10–11.

vehicle creates a dimension to the experience that you had not had prior to that point. The air temperature is no longer controlled, you hear ambient sounds of cars in the background, birds in the trees and bushes. As you turn your gaze toward the inviting (although cordoned off) woodland, you trespass. A hint of excitement indicated in your emotions, the raising of your heartbeat just slightly. A hint of indignation at the 'PRIVATE PROPERTY' and 'KEEP OUT' signs remain in the back of your mind, knowing that you could be questioned about your presence in the woodland. You become overwhelmed with the need to capture this moment of greens, purples, temperature and light, and emotion. There is in you a palpable sense of the importance of this experience and the place, and your being there. You know this because you did not just 'feel' you needed to stop; you actually did stop. You carefully walk only a few meters from the fence taking it all in. You then quietly and carefully leave, making sure you trample none of the plants. You leave like a bouncing deer; the naughtiness associated with this (minor) act of trespass was worth it. It was worth it, so much so, it was beyond articulation to your friends when you reach your destination. You try to explain to them what you have seen, how you felt, why it was important to you (and why you were late to getting to them) but something is lost in your attempt to communicate it. You see your friends' eyes glaze over, looking at each other thinking that you are some hapless 'bunny hugger' or 'romantic'.²⁴⁵ You realise that there is something important to this experience for you, but you cannot characterise it. You decide to keep this experience as your own for the time being, as you do not have the language you need to describe the qualities of the experience and its meaning to you.

You are not just embarrassed by your interaction with your friends, rather you are embarrassed that you felt this way at all. You feel that you have been unable to understand the meaning. You feel unable to communicate or share this important aesthetic experience. Being supplied with easily recitable quotes, similes and metaphors though, may lead to only shallow forms of aesthetic engagement. Clichéd appraisal with dull conceptual tools fails to treat the experience on its own terms.

METAPHORS, CANOE JOURNEYS AND AESTHETIC APPRAISALS

The language necessary for aesthetic appraisals, and the maximising of aesthetic reward, is varied and wide. As with the experience described above, without the sensible sounding language it is difficult to share meaning, or even to describe features of them. Sometimes detailed and descriptive language will be used to articulate prominent objects and their formal qualities. Other times figurative and metaphorical language will enable one to characterise features, meanings and the inter-relatedness of objects and experiences to those connected with them. Metaphor plays a significant role in nurturing aesthetic awareness of natural environments, ecosystems and outdoor experiences.

Metaphors provide creative ways of thinking about phenomena and their relationships. They can establish and disrupt modes of thought and can be enacted through the body, providing the basis for mental simulations and dramatic rehearsals.²⁴⁶ Metaphors construct schemas; they have their own logic to them and are powerful cognitive devices that can bring together lived experience, cognitive reasoning and affective responses. This is particularly important for educational canoe journeying, as the evocative experiences emergent in the canoe, moving through the landscape, and responding to sensory stimuli

²⁴⁵ The term 'bunny hugger' was used by Prime Minister Boris Johnson to disparagingly describe environmental activists 'Greta Thunberg Dubs Herself a "Bunny-Hugger" after Boris Johnson's Climate Remarks | Greta Thunberg | The Guardian'.

²⁴⁶ Lakoff and Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By*; Gallagher and Lindgren, 'Enactive Metaphors: Learning through Full-Body Engagement'.

can be both empowering and disabling depending on the metaphors one has available to them. This speaks directly to Hepburn's concern above – without sensible sounding language enabling one to speak the truth about objects and characterisations of experience, one feels experiences like that of the woodland above, in an embarrassed and confused way. The language needs development and the language requires sharing; opportunities for the educator on canoe journeys. In the following discussion, I will discuss selected features of metaphor and consider them in relation to educational canoe journeying.

Cultural values and metaphors are often consonant with each other and can characterise the values of that culture.²⁴⁷ As with the analysis of the metaphor of 'unity' above, to recognise the way in which humans relate to nature, metaphors form a coherent system of concepts we live by. Concepts in themselves can be stable, but interactions between different concepts can lead to conflicts of thought and subsequent action. Metaphors influence the way we think and the way we act by developing concept-based schema. For instance, in Chapter 1 I shared several different similes of journeying – which function in a very similar way to metaphors in their imagery and their logic – meaning the summary of the literature represents some thing or somethings greater than a verbatim account. The *journey* becomes a metaphor of an event with a particular impact. *The Wye Trip* or *The Honeymoon Paddle* capture powerful memories that signify the canoeing, the interaction amongst other paddlers, reciprocity between person and landscape, fire-side discussions, and much more. The metaphor becomes a coherent system in which one structures experience, organises thought and knows how best to respond to environmental stimuli.²⁴⁸ Ultimately experiences lead to insight, to see something that couldn't be seen before, which as one commentator states 'has obvious relevance for education'.²⁴⁹

For metaphors to work however they have to be engaged with. This could be an encounter with a 'sitting metaphor' or could be an active and explicit engagement. Gallagher and Lindgren place passivity at one end of a scale, with metaphors that do not really touch us. At the other end of the scale are active metaphors, that afford enaction.²⁵⁰ At the active end is the living out of metaphors, which can involve physical and embodied play acting – a kind of pretence. Where learners engage with otherwise difficult to conceive of imagery such as an asteroid's orbit, learners can act through the object's movements, which would otherwise be relayed to them in some other passive and disembodied way. In fact, these authors are rather critical of educational metaphors, which they see as being particularly disembodied and relegate them to only 'thinking through' subject matter, rather than actively engaging with them. The 'kinaesthetic pay-off', along with dialogic engagement with metaphors when discussing and problem-solving with others, is supported by cognitive science research, which indicated learners had higher levels of understanding resulting from enacting metaphorical subject matter.²⁵¹ This position is consistent with varied literature on bodily movement and metaphor interaction and influences on perception, understanding and action.²⁵² Metaphors have a particular potency as they frame and guide the way one perceives, includes and excludes features of importance, and the ways one conceptualises and places value on those objects and phenomena.

²⁴⁷ Lakoff and Johnson, *The Metaphors We Live By*.

²⁴⁸ Lakoff and Johnson.

²⁴⁹ Gallagher and Lindgren, 'Enactive Metaphors: Learning through Full-Body Engagement'.

²⁵⁰ Gallagher and Lindgren.

²⁵¹ Gallagher and Lindgren.

²⁵² Hrach, *Minding Bodies: How Physical Space, Sensation, and Movement Affect Learning*; Payne and Costas, 'Creative Dance as Experiential Learning in State Primary Education: The Potential Benefits for Children'.

Like metaphors themselves, canoes are objects in relation. They are related to their origin histories, their craftspeople, the landscapes that required their specific adaptations, and they are always in relation to paddlers, their purposes and environments. Canoe journeys, too, serve as metaphors; they represent something greater than the literal movement across a waterscape. According to Luste, canoes provide opportunities for spiritual kinship and solitude with the land and waterscape.²⁵³ Being connected to the canoe and moving through the landscape at a pace seemingly more in tune with the 'gentle rhythms of the natural world' enable the paddler to acquire a sense of immensity.²⁵⁴ Luste suggests the paddler is able to confront the affective and cognitive aspects of spiritual kinship with landscape and to experience the mirroring of the 'inner landscape' of the mind into the physical landscape. For Luste, engaging with the 'primordial elements' emergent between self, canoe and environment leads her to conclude that canoe journeys are opportunities for self-healing: 'In revisiting those remembered places, our emotional and spiritual roots, our mysteries and troubled inner spirits are soothed and healed'.²⁵⁵ The canoe and canoe journey move beyond surface literality and into a deeper metaphorical meaning that captures therapeutic qualities and aesthetic richness.

Another commentator recognises that the canoe as an aesthetic object 'represents' something alongside and greater than its physical utility; it is an object with competitive and ceremonial purposes. Attending to the metaphors of the canoe enables paddlers and thinkers to recognise it as complex. In the contextual framing of North America, the canoe was (and arguably still is) an object of colonialism,²⁵⁶ was one of commerce, and 'was the celebrated vehicle for freedom and adventure, and similarly the means of return to loved ones and family'.²⁵⁷ It is interesting to note that Grant describes the canoe as a *vehicle to* access nature's enormity, while recognising that communities and artworks represented the canoe as miniscule in the landscape. Here it appears that Grant is using 'vehicle' as a way of *moving* the paddler-reader's perspective regarding the canoe's affordances and its meaning.

More recently the aesthetic framing of *Tribal Canoe Journeys* in the Heiltsuk nation, on the Pacific Northwest of Canada, has reinvigorated the canoe and canoe journeys, as a way for community leaders to build community and 'share in amazing life experiences' in the natural environment. The tribal canoe, *gwla*²⁵⁸ – a sea-going hollowed out cedar canoe – was positioned as initiating cultural resurgence for First Nations communities devastated by oppressive, violent and colonial policies in Canada and the North Americas.²⁵⁹ Brown *et al* share reflections from the Heiltsuk Nation drawing on collective metaphors of the Tribal Canoe Journeys, which are characterised as cultural gatherings, enabling members to learn about their culture, share in communal practices, develop land-related commercial production and trading networks.²⁶⁰ The canoe becomes a metaphor of community, identity and relatedness to landscape. Central to the nurturing of the canoe and Tribal Canoe Journeying metaphor is the education of those within and outside of the community.

²⁵³ Luste, 'Solitude and Kinship in the Canoeing Experience'.

²⁵⁴ Luste, 152.

²⁵⁵ Luste, 157.

²⁵⁶ Newbery, 'Canoe Pedagogy and Colonial History: Exploring Contested Space of Outdoor Environmental Education'; Newbery, 'Will Any/Body Carry That Canoe? A Geography of the Body, Ability, and Gender'.

²⁵⁷ Grant, 'Symbols and Myths: Images of Canoe and North', 10.

²⁵⁸ Brown *et al.*, 'Tribal Canoe Journeys and Indigenous Cultural Resurgence: A Story from the Heiltsuk Nation', 33.

²⁵⁹ Cushman, Daehnke, and Johnson, 'This Is What Makes Us Strong: Canoe Revitalisation, Reciprocal Heritage, and the Chinook Indian Nation'.

²⁶⁰ Brown *et al.*, 'Tribal Canoe Journeys and Indigenous Cultural Resurgence: A Story from the Heiltsuk Nation', 36.

The canoe 'stands as a dynamic response to this enduring colonial violence inflicted upon a people, and demonstrates that it is possible to reassert cultural and political agency by reconnecting with and protecting the land, ocean and lifeways of past, current and future generations of Heiltsuk'.²⁶¹ Therefore, the canoe and canoe journey as metaphor has many contextually significant meanings, which will inevitably influence sensitisation of the perceiver to objects, phenomena, interpretations, meanings and ultimately actions. Thus, metaphors can, as Hepburn recognised, be dead, but they can be re-invigorated through sustained action,²⁶² like that discussed in relation to Heiltsuk (and other nations) with Tribal Canoe Journeys. The associated imagery and logic of metaphors can be cultivated for a range of purposes, central to which is to ensure sensitive and accurate aesthetic appraisal.

Environmental scholars have shared interpretations of the power of metaphorical thinking in environmental philosophy, Hepburn, Fesmire²⁶³ and Evernden²⁶⁴ being particularly prominent. Evernden shows that the way we understand what nature is and its relationship with humanity is central to enabling change in human action. For instance, nature having its 'vocal cords cut' by humanity.²⁶⁵ The logic of this metaphor has enabled the inward silencing of nature's messaging on human consciousness. Alongside this, it entails the 'destruction of the larynx of the biosphere, an action essential to the transformation of the world into a material object subservient to the laws of classical physics'.²⁶⁶ The pervasiveness of this metaphor leads Evernden to the conclusion that modern science has denied 'life in order to study it';²⁶⁷ that nature is 'lifeless' for this particular characterisation of scientific inquiry is also a pervasive metaphor with a host of connections, imagery and reason bound into its schematic web. Metaphors have educational potential in their physical enactment and in nurturing critical thinking. On the very point of nature's voice, Hepburn indicates that metaphors provide a way of appropriately responding to the natural environment, which is in fact a key task in developing serious aesthetic appraisals; additionally, they must be critiqued and balanced when it is likely they will be misconstrued. In the case of nature's voice, we must accept that our emotional response to nature is just that, and what we are in fact dealing with is the metaphorical voice of nature that is a powerful force for meaning.²⁶⁸

While some scholars above are noted as being critical against reductive approaches to science, Fesmire argues that nurturing an ecological imagination is essential to improving theoretical considerations of interrelatedness among all things:

'Ecological imagination is treated herein as relational imagination shaped by key metaphors used in (although not necessarily originating in) the ecologies. Our deliberations enlist imagination of an ecological sort when these metaphors (some of recent origin and some millennia old) shape what John Dewey calls our "dramatic rehearsals".'²⁶⁹

²⁶¹ Brown et al., 43.

²⁶² Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', 9.

²⁶³ Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination'.

²⁶⁴ Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature*; Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and the Environment*.

²⁶⁵ Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and the Environment*, 17.

²⁶⁶ Evernden, 17.

²⁶⁷ Evernden, 17.

²⁶⁸ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

²⁶⁹ Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination', 183–84.

Conceiving of imagination as relational is not that difficult to conceptualise when we consider that our thinking is typically in relation to stimuli originating in the world, which includes the physical and mental. Dramatic rehearsals enable ways of seeing 'actual conditions in light of what is possible, so it is fundamental to our best scientific, aesthetic and moral thinking. Imagination on this view is a concrete cognitive capacity as ordinary for humans as nest building is for birds or dam building for beavers',²⁷⁰ Fesmire argues. It is a way of finding different lines of thought, through metaphor, and running them through to their consequences; 'we project ourselves in imagination into alternative futures always with the option of undoing the imagined outcome'.²⁷¹ By attending to, and drawing on a range of metaphors, they enable us to understand features of ecological systems. This results in the potential for shaping human perception of ecological relationships for improved characterisations of the systems. Metaphors:

[...] play an indispensable, irreplaceable, and un-avoidable role in shaping ecological thought. A coherent inquiry is organized along the lines highlighted by a metaphor (or, as is often the case, a tangled inquiry along the lines of conflicting metaphors). Possibilities not highlighted are overshadowed by the brilliance of focal alternatives.²⁷²

As Hepburn showed with the analysis of 'unity'/'unities' (above and with the simile creation), metaphors can become entangled and their logic conflict. Part of aesthetic appreciation is an awareness of the human capacity to see something as something else.²⁷³ Through seeing as, one is encouraged to nurture what Hepburn calls *concrete* imagination. This challenges one to engage with a range of vocabularies, images, thoughts and perceptions and apply them with sensitivity, with the main goal of articulating how the world really is or the world as we hope it to be.²⁷⁴ The interrelatedness of experiencing natural environments and dramatically rehearsing experiences within them is also of importance.

Fesmire argues that educational opportunities in nurturing ecological imagination for children (and I would add, adults) are many, as 'physical interactions with environment activate the same neural regions as imaginative simulations of that environment, these children are continuously developing their capacity for ecological simulation in the garden, in the kitchen, in the dining hall, and in the brick-and-mortar classroom'.²⁷⁵ Ecological imagination serves as an opportunity to understand how human actions, food cycles, gardens, and larger natural systems intersect: seasonal change, the water cycle and so on. Furthermore, it enables one to nurture a wider range of connections between objects, thoughts, and emotions beyond surface-level engagement and responses. 'In this way, these children learn that every action has systemic consequences, and they are more likely to become the kinds of people who habitually take a measure of responsibility for these consequences'.²⁷⁶ Although Fesmire discusses children, arguably this could apply to adults as well. Learning and nurturing of interconnectedness, with oneself in the environment and with linking aesthetic and the moral, enables cognitive and affective refinement – arguably an educational act - that can, argues Fesmire 'contribute to wiser perception of

²⁷⁰ Fesmire, 187.

²⁷¹ Fesmire, 'Dramatic Rehearsal and The Moral Artist: A Deweyan Theory of Moral Understanding', 574.

²⁷² Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination', 191.

²⁷³ Hepburn, 'Poetry and "Concrete Imagination": Problems of Truth and Illusion'.

²⁷⁴ Hepburn, 63.

²⁷⁵ Fesmire, 'Ecological Imagination', 203.

²⁷⁶ Fesmire, 203.

the complex nature of environmental problems, cultivate empathy for those affected by our choices, imaginative probings for technical and communal solutions, sensitivity to cultural traditions, and rich aesthetic responses to natural and cultural landscapes'.²⁷⁷

Canoe journeying is a particularly rich activity for *imaginative probings, communal solutions, cultural traditions* and *aesthetic responses* to natural and cultural landscapes, as discussed above. In a Scottish context, the canoe and kayak journey of Nicol around the Cairngorms, for instance, was a journey that aimed to deepen sensory connections, historical understanding, artistic relations, as well understanding environmental and sustainability issues situated from the canoe and kayak.²⁷⁸ In Canadian contexts - where a great deal of canoe-based education and research resides with its historical association with First Nations Native Americans – writers and paddlers have highlighted the importance of canoeing experiences, expeditions and adventures have had in enabling active care of the environments they have been journeying through. In relation to the Tribal Canoe Journey discussed above, the canoe 'represents a vehicle for practicing respect, reciprocity, and resistance simultaneously' and the gatherings serve as a 'kind of social barometer' the stability of the Heiltsuk nation,²⁷⁹ a theme shared in the literature.²⁸⁰ The interrelated nature of the 'simplicity' of the canoe with its 'simple artistic and functional beauty'²⁸¹ has also enabled many to access 'wilderness' and wreak havoc on the environment and decimate First Nations culture from where the canoe is most strongly associated; those communities who historically lived more intimately with North American land and water than the colonising white settlers.²⁸² Hodgins writes of the canoe as a 'wilderness symbol' and urges readers to attend to a more integrated and connected approach, which he argues emerges naturally from the practice of canoeing:

The canoeist should see that an emotional commitment to the preservation of lands approximating wilderness and a year-round concern for our canoeing-heritage is more important than a cold, rational and unreflective control of the canoe on a two-week vacation, away from it all. Usually, the vacation canoe trip is followed by a return to the concrete jungle and to participation in the general degeneration of the Canadian environment, all in the name of economic growth and development. Certainly, the canoeist should avoid and reject the use of expressions connoting conflict with the wilderness. We never "conquer" a river or route, unless societally, we participate in polluting or ravaging its shoreline. And then, in the long run, it is we who are conquered.²⁸³

Despite the problematic terminology of 'wilderness' in debates that I cannot recite here due to the focus of this study, Hodgins' participation is important for two reasons. First, he shows that attending to the environment from the canoe with something like an ecological imagination enables the paddler to develop an awareness of the way they see the object, environment and activity *as* something else. This might be *as* a possession, *as* something to be *conquered*. Second, it shows that the *concrete imagination*, as posited by Hepburn could be nurtured through an aesthetic education to enable a learner to rely on

²⁷⁷ Fesmire, 203.

²⁷⁸ Nicol, *Canoeing around the Cairngorms: A Circumnavigation of My Home*.

²⁷⁹ Brown et al., 'Tribal Canoe Journeys and Indigenous Cultural Resurgence: A Story from the Heiltsuk Nation', 43.

²⁸⁰ Franks, 'Canoeing: Towards a Landscape of the Imagination'.

²⁸¹ Hodgins, 'Canoe Irony: Symbols of Wilderness, Harbinger of Destruction', 54–55.

²⁸² Cushman, Daehnke, and Johnson, 'This Is What Makes Us Strong: Canoe Revitalisation, Reciprocal Heritage, and the Chinook Indian Nation'.

²⁸³ Hodgins, 'Canoe Irony: Symbols of Wilderness, Harbinger of Destruction', 55–56.

a more sensitive range of metaphors, synonyms, reasoning and imagery, thus enabling a learner to attend to the powerful aesthetic qualities at play in the experience. This may include not only what one perceives, but what they feel, how they respond and the language they use to characterise and tell the story of the canoe journeying experience, like those shared above. For instance, Horwood argues that the metaphor of river as teacher has been powerful in challenging the way learners come to understand their world and responses to environmental qualities:

The river itself is a teacher because of its neutrality and implacability. It is the most inescapable primitive element on a canoe trip. In the thrust and curl of white water or in the aching, dangerous monotony of big lake waves, alienated young people find that they are driven inexorably to find new relationships and new levels of understanding about themselves and their relationships to each other and the world. The driving emotions are fear and euphoria, the two being mutually dependent. The enfolding sensation is pain. It is very difficult, especially for novices, to conceal fear at the top of rapids. No one tries to hide the euphoria at the end of the run. Here again, a door is opened for the discovery of lost relationships. [...] The power of the experiences to push the young toward rediscovered relationships lies in the metaphoric connections of the physical events to other aspects of life.²⁸⁴

My reading of Horwood is one where the river facilitates opportunities for learning. The river is not a teacher in the sense of a person guiding learners in a curriculum, teaching skills, or making meaning through human-human interaction. Rather, Horwood shows that the power of metaphor enables learners – here I would not be so inclined to make the distinction between child or adult learners – to exercise their ecological and concrete imagination. As I've shown, metaphors associated with the canoe and canoe journeying, the range of imagery, sensitivities and actions arising from different metaphor use can be variously profound. Aesthetic engagements in the environment, which could be a result of continued exposure – as suggested by Hodgins – or through situations of sublimity (of awe and fear), learners may be able to run through the consequences of thoughts and actions and/or reflect on the actual movement through landscapes. The *dramatic rehearsals* or *enacted metaphors* contributes to serious, rather than trivial aesthetic appreciation.

LEARNING FOR SERIOUS AESTHETIC APPRECIATION OF NATURE

Having woven the aesthetic discussion into the context of canoe journeying, I claim that these are particularly rich occasions for serious aesthetic appreciation. The purpose of this has been to show that meaningful aesthetic appraisals involve attending carefully to sensory qualities, imaginative opportunities and metaphorical affordances of objects and experiences. Moving beyond attending to surface-level formal qualities, the perceiver is educated to engage with a deeper commitment and interconnection to features of aesthetic appreciation through the imagery and logic of metaphors. These can then be expressed utilising the concrete and/or ecological imagination. In this section, I return to what Hepburn calls, *serious aesthetic appreciation* in the context of education.²⁸⁵ The discussion is framed and inspired by Hepburn's chapter 'Serious and Trivial Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature' - in his second collected work *The Reach of the Aesthetic* - the

²⁸⁴ Horwood, 'Canoe Trips: Doors to the Primitive', 126-27.

²⁸⁵ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

blue book in the canoeing narrative with Hepburn. Along with recent commentary, and selected other works of his, the primary purpose of this section is to articulate the embedded educational aspects of Hepburn's serious aesthetic appreciation. To my knowledge, neither Hepburn nor any other scholar, has posited his argument for serious aesthetic appreciation for aesthetic education and canoe journeying purposes.

A necessary condition for serious aesthetic appraisal, in responding to the issues discussed above, is the sensory and thought component, so that the percipient can move beyond 'standard' viewpoints. This is a concern that follows through Hepburn's work since his *neglect of natural beauty* article. As discussed above, the importance of the framing and logic of metaphors has an important role to play when one reflects on the canoe and sees *it as* an object of colonialism or conversely sees *it as* an object of freedom. Serious aesthetic appreciation then needs to heighten the learner's sensitivity to the sensuous qualities of experiences and objects, while ensuring that the thought component enriches the explanation and characterisation of the experience without overpowering the sensuous information, or destroying it altogether. Hepburn's concern is an aspirational one, and while an education for serious aesthetic appreciation should move one from 'standard viewpoints' or clichés it would be reasonable to suggest a threshold of proficiency (which Hepburn does not provide explicitly) whereby the educator (and learner) is satisfied that they are participating in a life enhancing aesthetic experience. While not explicit, Hepburn may provide the educator with one way of achieving this; that task is to enable the learner to understand how scale and viewpoint matter for aesthetic appraisals of nature.

The appreciators of nature have in one way more to do than the art-appreciators; they play a larger creative role in fashioning their aesthetic object. They have to find their viewpoint, decide on boundaries of attention, generate the thought-content. The experience is more of a cooperative product of natural object and contemplator. But what lurks behind the more comprehensively dismissive and sceptical movements of mind with regard to nature is an assumption about what we might call 'authority'.²⁸⁶

The appreciator's viewpoint from the canoe indicates a more active and creative role in harnessing the rewards from aesthetic experiences. When journeying through a landscape one may feel that the environment passes one by, with little grabbing the attention. At other times one might reach sensory incapacitation, resulting from a sublime moment or of arresting awe. At either end of this spectrum, the educator can enable the learner (the canoeist) to fashion their role from the viewpoint of the canoe. As serious aesthetic appraisals have a thought component, relying on diverse forms of knowledge and insight, it is possible to educate this to see these aspects as a cooperative product of the human-nature experience.

The educator may do this prior to or within the canoeing experience itself. They can support the learner to identify their position in the landscape; the conceptual tools within their reflexivity; what they are going to attend to, and how – with what metaphors or thought components – they might use to characterise the object or experience and produce meaning from it. This form of cooperation is produced by the sensuous component, the thought component and the combined acknowledgement of otherness of the objects²⁸⁷ – seemingly distinct from the self – to isolate the perceptual qualities and

²⁸⁶ Hepburn, 13.

²⁸⁷ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2019.

their meaning. For instance, I may feel a sense of connectedness to the water, singing birds and come to recognise my sense of awe, inner and outer stillness, with the immediate environment from the canoe.

The canoe-centred scale, the buoyant position of observation under the canopies of vast willows, may be caricatured by those who hold onto a discrediting and overly-rationalist 'authority' against what appears to be misplaced romanticised position.²⁸⁸ Yet Hepburn cautions against those who are so ready to discredit the perceiver. Holding onto such a discrediting view is, in Hepburn's view, based on the grounds of reductive conformity and (supposed) objectivity. This fails to realise the thinking one is bringing to the aesthetic experience and does not acknowledge the central role of the perspective as a 'factor in the maturing of this experience'.²⁸⁹ This falls on the side of trivialising aesthetic experience according to Hepburn – to engage with the aesthetic at the surface level or lazy application of ideas that are seen to be the *only path the truth*. He argues that 'what is highly contestable is the implicit claim that one perspective, one view, one set of resultant perceived qualities takes precedence over another, and so can discredit or undermine another or even all others: that one of them has, in an aesthetic context, greater authority than another.'²⁹⁰ Arguably, Hepburn is suggesting that the percipient and aesthetic educator resist the simplistic application of thought-models that have supposed authority, especially when they undermine or completely destroy any aesthetic reward. As Hepburn argues 'we cannot oblige ourselves to think-in what threatens to fragment or overwhelm or dissolve aesthetic perception, instead of enriching it. Aesthetic experience must be human experience – episodic and phenomenal. To destroy it [with reductive and imposing thought-components] can hardly be to deepen it!'²⁹¹ As argued in the previous section with metaphors, the percipient has work to do to ensure their thought component relates appropriately to, and sufficiently characterises, the aesthetic appraisal of phenomena.

The educator's role becomes one of guiding the learners (and themselves) out of simplistic and potentially misguided thinking; something that those interested in the development of learners, for the good of the learners (at all ages and stages) are committed to (see historical examples from Socrates' pedagogy along with liberal educators such as R.S. Peters and Freire's critical pedagogic 'problem-posing' approach). For instance, in the discussion so far, I've been resistant to associate aesthetic appreciation as the appreciation of the beautiful, where beauty is equivocated as pleasurable. Hepburn indicates that, where aesthetic appreciation may lead to characterising of an object or experience as beautiful it ought not be seen as de facto pleasurable, rather it is better understood as aesthetically arresting, or rewarding. In nurturing a finer grained approach to appreciation, the educator can enable the learner to understand that something could be beautiful and yet be part of an unhappy but profoundly sad event. In a useful case on a canoe journey, Nicol describes a moment when on a beach on the east coast of Scotland where the waves were frothing and crashing on the shore and rocks, the sky was ranging in purples and greys and his comment of the experience lacking the aesthetic.²⁹²

In reference to life events, one might characterise a funeral of a loved one as a 'beautiful' and 'fitting send-off', but it fails to meet any of the associated synonyms of, or even directly, a definition of a pleasurable experience. Yet such cultural practices, acts and

²⁸⁸ Hepburn, 'Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic'.

²⁸⁹ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', 13.

²⁹⁰ Hepburn, 13.

²⁹¹ Hepburn, 7.

²⁹² Nicol, *Canoeing around the Cairngorms: A Circumnavigation of My Home*.

objects associated with them are important to one's personal learning and socialisation into cultural norms. The scale of time again may be important here. The immediacy of intense emotion may provide the sensory component, and subsequently time, can enable reflection and knowledge-input; the thought-component helps to maximise the aesthetic reward. Similarly, when paddling on Lake Windermere (England) I might recognise the beauty of the landscape and the water, but I have had headwind and every paddle stroke, every *pull*, is arduous work in a sensorially rich setting; the sensory experience is rewarding, but not necessarily pleasurable. It takes engaging with appropriate sources of knowledge, metaphor and insight to enable the learner (the paddler) to recognise and articulate rich aesthetic complexity.

As Hepburn exemplifies:

Consider that paradigm case of aesthetic experience of nature - the fall of an autumn leaf. If we simply watch it fall, without any thought, it may or may not be a moving or exciting aesthetic object, but it must be robbed of its poignancy, its mute message of summer gone, its symbolising all falling, our own included. Leaf veins suggest blood-vessel veins - symbolising continuity in the forms of life, and maybe a shared vulnerability. Thus the thought-element may bring analogies to bear on the concrete particulars: this autumn is linked to innumerable other autumns: to the cycle of the seasons.²⁹³

Where the sensuous and cognitive combine, part of the interaction may be non-verbal and, initially lacking self-awareness. Hepburn recognises that for serious aesthetic appreciation to take place, the cognitive element is essential to the formulation of connections and appropriateness of response. In this case, the ecological and concrete imagination enable *speaking to* the experience. These contribute to its meaning in serious aesthetic appraisal. One may not be consistently able to access the cognitive resources required to realise the experience – especially if the experience is one of fearful sublimity or exhilaration. Yet, the experience will nonetheless serve as a rich resource for subsequent meaning-making. The educator, and learner, could use this kind of experience as a stimulus for further aesthetic and ecological inquiry, serving increased aesthetic rewards.

MAXIMISING AESTHETIC REWARD

The interaction between the sensuous environment and thought component should lead to, on Hepburn's view, the modification of awareness. The primary goal of serious aesthetic appreciation is the maximising of aesthetic reward. This is partially characterised as successfully bridging the gap between the observable physical world and the thought component. Elsewhere in Hepburn's work, this might be characterised as consciousness being 'coaxed into expansion'.²⁹⁴ Activities that raise awareness of the thoughts and images enacted by paddlers with white settler national identity, canoe-based research with First Nations paddlers highlights the sensory and cognitive component Hepburn may be thinking of:

Before we even dip our paddles into the water, we have already conceived the places we paddle through, what exists there, and what our experiences will be like. The way we view the places we visit is socially constructed; that is, when we visit

²⁹³ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', 2-3.

²⁹⁴ Hepburn, 'Nature Humanised; Nature Respected', 274.

places we do not see them with a neutral eye but rather gaze up on our surroundings with particular expectations of and intentions for being in that particular place. Often, paddling canoe means an encounter with what is conceived as untouched, preserve nature that will provide an opportunity to experience the landscape as it existed in the past. This image of unspoiled nature is upheld by guidebooks, parks information, and so on, as well as through details relayed by many who have canoed through these same waters before us.²⁹⁵

Drawing on the sensible language, metaphor, and imagery, the educator can enable the learner to develop tools for aesthetic reward; they can enable them to raise awareness of the similar hidden expectations and feelings that the authors above surfaced for themselves. As recognised in the quotes above, not only can an aesthetic appraisal connect thought into the physical, concrete particulars - of our experience in the world, such as canoe journeying – successful aesthetic appraisal should mediate thought, awareness and response to phenomena. Just like poorly fitting shoes can mediate a walk through the countryside through blistering of heels and mental tribulation, so too can emotional responses mediate our experiences, with say a regretful response of suggesting to the salesperson that the shoes, “fitted just fine”. In the case of the canoeist, there may be felt a sense of conflict, between guilt and enjoyment, when paddling a craft and moving through aesthetically arresting lands which are imbued with impacts of colonial legacies. The particular expectations of the journey, what’s to be seen in the landscape, what the landscape *should mean*, and the emotion responses intertwine the sensuous and thought-component. The encounter in the landscape can lead to the emergences of a further component: wonder. The educator must understand something of the emotions and, in the case of this thesis, understand emotions within aesthetic and pedagogical considerations in the careful guiding of learners when undertaking education canoe journeys. In doing so, they may be in a stronger position to coax consciousness into expansion and to maximise the aesthetic reward for all involved.

WONDER AND CANOE JOURNEYING

For Hepburn, objects and experiences can be worthy of wonder and it is the worthiness that stimulates inquiry through a steady dwelling with the object or experience. Although he does not frame wonder in educational terms, Hepburn recognises wonder’s power to expand the mind through truth-seeking.

Wonder is distinct from curiosity in that curiosity has a fleeting quality to it. Curiosity is unstable, leaving little space to dwell with objects. Once we are finished with an object in a curious frame of mind, we seek out the next thing, and then the next, to keep our attention stimulated.²⁹⁶ Wonder entails dwelling with objects with ‘rapt attentiveness’,²⁹⁷ which the reader will remember is a contributing feature of aesthetics in this thesis. In recently revised pedagogical literature in outdoor education, a similar analysis has been developed. The reader will remember the partial use of the following phrase in my canoe journeying narrative with Hepburn:

I give myself to wonder in ways not too fancifully analogous to how I give myself in a friendship, entrusting myself to another in an open and therefore vulnerable

²⁹⁵ Gendron, ‘Unpacking and Repacking the Canoe: Canoe as Research Vessel’, 220.

²⁹⁶ Beames et al., *Outdoor Learning Across the Curriculum: Theory and Guidelines for Practice*.

²⁹⁷ Hepburn, ‘Wonder’, 134.

way. So the question is always a serious one: will the object of my wonder let me down?²⁹⁸

In the latest version of *Learning outside the Classroom: Theory and Guidelines for Practice*,²⁹⁹ the original text has been significantly reworked in recognition of the limits of curiosity in the educational experience. While acknowledging that curiosity may fuel desire in the learning environment, it is accepted that it operates within a limited framework. This framework may not allow the educator or the learner to move outside of educational policies or curricula. Within the broader literature, there is an awareness that even in relatively rich experiential learning situations, curiosity can be reduced to a kind of learning task, still guiding the learner to operate within systems that emphasise performance measurement and standardised educational outcomes.³⁰⁰

In contrast, everything can be questioned if the object or experience invokes a wondrous response in the percipient. This may include the very systems that one is operating in.³⁰¹ Opdal argues that young children do this and that they function in a similar way to a philosopher through questioning, inquiring and exploring. Although she does not specifically mention wonder, Midgely would also agree that this kind of wondering could lead a person to question the philosophical plumbing in the form of ideas and norms that they have been inducted into through socialisation, education and enculturation into policy frameworks and the like.³⁰² Such learning through wonder, versus curiosity, has the potential to lead to lasting disturbance. This could motivate distinct desire to operate differently within such systems (both for the learner and the educator), which canoe journeys go some way to show.³⁰³

There is a sense that even when enquiries are 'complete', there is still wondering left to do: 'that interrogative element, no longer expecting any further answers, may still persist in a muted and generalised form within wonderment'.³⁰⁴ Wonder is a part of the aesthetic mode and thus aesthetic education and experience, but is not to be reduced to either of these. As Hepburn proffered in a later article, wonder is a central quality in the processes of recognising self and recognising nature both as separate but deeply interwoven entities. Wonder is often associated with astonishment and surprise: 'It is essentially an appreciative contemplative delight in its object. It is self-rewarding and self-perpetuating'; it is 'a glad and serene inner celebrating of the actuality of these items, those processes of nature'.³⁰⁵ As Brook interprets, wonder with its various characterisations can evoke ethical terms like 'cherishing', which is further emphasised in much of Hepburn's work in the *aesthetics of nature*.³⁰⁶

Wonder is opportunistic. It appears in us with what is placed before us and what envelops us. It can sideswipe us, drawing our attention away from the *here-and-now* as normality, and can disrupt typical patterns of perception and influence the attitudes of a person's life. In Heaney's poem, *Postscript*, we find an apt verse for this kind of wonder:

²⁹⁸ Hepburn, 134.

²⁹⁹ Beames, Higgins, and Nicol, 'Harnessing Student Curiosity'.

³⁰⁰ Schinkel, 'The Educational Experience of Deep Wonder'; Opdal, 'Curiosity, Wonder and Education Seen as Perspective Development'.

³⁰¹ Opdal, 'Curiosity, Wonder and Education Seen as Perspective Development'.

³⁰² Midgley, *Utopias, Dolphins and Computers: Problems of Philosophical Plumbing*.

³⁰³ Beames et al., *Outdoor Learning Across the Curriculum: Theory and Guidelines for Practice*.

³⁰⁴ Hepburn, 'Wonder', 135.

³⁰⁵ Hepburn, 'Nature Humanised; Nature Respected', 177–78.

³⁰⁶ Brook, 'Wonder Revisited', 151.

'A hurry through which known and strange things pass / As big soft buffetings come at the car sideways / And catch the heart off guard and blow it open'.³⁰⁷

Wonder too can linger by continuing the drive for dwelling and remaining open to the other – blowing the heart open as the reality of the strangeness of things buffets us from the side. It is most accurately understood in terms of amplification and intensification of deeply focussed experience. Hepburn recognises the need to further hone conditions of wonder, which in the case of this thesis will prove useful to those who journey (whether in the position of solo traveller, student or educator).

There are three key features of wonder that Hepburn posits that enable one to answer the question in the opening quotation. The first of these being associated with wonder emerging from ignorance (1). It would be quite reasonable to suggest that one might wonder because of a lack of explanatory framework with an object. For instance, I sit in the canoe in open water and I am mesmerised by the fact that it floats. I am stunned. In that moment I am sitting in and with the canoe considering various explanations for it floating. Yet even with subsequent knowledge of buoyancy and water displacement there is still something that keeps wonder in this experience. This could be the result of several factors, the contrast of being a terrestrial creature in a vessel to enable one to become a mediated aquatic creature, or perhaps in recognition of the very design of the canoe and its affordance to float and with ease in certain environments. It is not a given that wonder would subside even when explanatory systems are proffered. As Hepburn recognises, causal explanations can be incorporated into an experience whether complex, non-habitual, or typical, and can maintain (and potentially increase) aesthetic reward, although it may not always be so.

The second feature of wonder (2) at emergent qualities, is recognised partially through seeing as (discussed above), along with noticing movements of things becoming *something*. Hepburn states, however, that this kind of wondering focusses on contrasts and impacts rather than how qualities emerge from objects. The example Hepburn gives is how ink blobs become landscapes in art works. He sees the kind of wondering here as focussing on the contrast between the ink blobs and their becoming something i.e. the portrayal of a landscape. In the canoe journeying narrative with Hepburn (above), the Kingfisher moment could be readily characterised in the enjoyment of rapt attention in the movement of a 'thing' becoming 'something'. Looking inwardly, there may be a recognition of the change in self as a result of travelling through an environment. This may lead to a realisation that 'I' am made different because of the aesthetic experiences being engaged in from the canoe and on land.

Hepburn's third feature, (3) existential wonder, faces toward the persistent attitude that there is existence at all, in its ungraspable totality. Hepburn argues that this kind of wonder is not undermined by additional causal explanations, and can focus on wholes or parts of experiences. This is because wonder is focused on the fact that things exist; it is a kind of celebration of existence with an understanding that we cannot fully understand all that there is. Wonder at objects, scenes and experiences themselves are typical focal points of this kind of wonder. The questioning aspect found in all forms of wonder described, can be a significant motivating force to find out more about existence. More so, it is a way of orienting oneself toward all that exists and presupposes, on Hepburn's view, that there are things to be valued in existence. It stands to reason that things lacking worth are not

³⁰⁷ Heaney, 'Postscript'.

going to be objects of wonder. Existential wonder is of a kind that can sustain powers of thought and rationality, while also being an appropriate response to objects and experiences. Such responses will no doubt solicit emotional aspects to them, as discussed above. Wonder of this type is associated with moral attitudes of appreciation and openness toward the other and acknowledging the otherness *in their otherness*. Hepburn views all three kinds of wonder as life-enhancing, enabling one to enjoy existence in its rich diversity. This shows a deeply felt connection between the aesthetic and the moral, particularly in the sense that one's identity can be destabilised and one's understanding of the world can be, like on the journey, *lastingly disturbed*.

Hepburn's first kind of wonder seems compatible with many educational models, as knowledge can contribute to wonder and not undermine the aesthetic reward. The same claim cannot be made for his second and third type of wonder. In both (2) emergent and (3) existential wonder, learning has implicit, non-measurable, and sometimes disturbing features. In the case of Brook, as quoted above, it is a deeply unsettling learning experience to have one's existence reoriented in a deeply affective, sensorially immersive, wondering way. Such an experience could well be descriptive of a Hepburnian journey, where the traveller is lastingly disturbed: where my travelling through a landscape means I cannot return as the same 'I' who left – I have attended to and learned things in places journeyed through that others have not.

Educators may not be able to evoke a state of wonder in the learners, particularly in Hepburn's second and third types. Objects *can* elicit wonder, but it does not necessarily entail that aesthetic appreciation always drives one toward a wondrous experience or, in contrast, that wonder might lead one to aesthetic appreciation.³⁰⁸ This is not to say that the educator cannot be responsible for creating, or unable to create, the conditions for the learner to be open to all types of wonder Hepburn posits – a basic requirement being that openness and receptivity toward the other. This will well require the educator to understand aspects of aesthetics of nature, what the discipline entails and its opportunities for critical (re)appraisal of the objects and experiences. It may require the educator-paddler to acknowledge, and help others acknowledge, the ways in which the natural environment influences their actions, being both 'actor and acted upon'. In addition, it may be prudent for the educator to recognise that aesthetic journeys require a different kind of metaphysical framework, outside of the 'framing' of arts-based disinterest and isolation, to ensure that *truth* to the experiences can emerge and be *realised*. Such awareness and knowledge, along with other key aspects of Hepburn's work discussed above, leads Yang to the claim that:

Educators should teach students to imagine, for example, that our body and conscience disappear when we close eyes to feel the fresh air of a forest. There is no distance and distinction between us and the trees. We can imagine trees speaking to us when watching them. [...] I can also see the co-presence of life and stillness in the great stone. I may imagine trees talking to each other, though they seem silent. Trees and flowers are still but also vivid.³⁰⁹

While Yang's position may seem to agree with Hepburn, considering his agreement that objects can elicit wonder and *realisation*, the statement above would likely be treated with some caution. Hepburn does not claim that the self becomes indistinct from the objects,

³⁰⁸ Hepburn, 'Wonder'.

³⁰⁹ Yang, 'Hepburn's Natural Aesthetic and Its Implications for Aesthetic Education', 230.

scenes or systems being experienced or aesthetically appraised. It may also seem that Yang's description is engaging with sensible sounding language, but as already noted from Hepburn, we are both *actor* and *acted* upon in the environment. Seeing the co-presence of life, is also noted in journeys through landscapes with a heightened awareness and receptivity toward nature.³¹⁰ This is not the same claim as there being no distance amongst the perceiver and perceived. While there are some elements Yang's position that are agreeable, including the engagement of the imagination and the vividness of certain kinds of experiences in the natural environment, knowing associated with the subjective thought-model, enabling serious aesthetic appreciation and maximising aesthetic reward still requires a *subject*. Aesthetic education can, in the sentiments of Leopold, nurture respect, love and admiration of the land – for its object and more-than-human inhabitants – and give it significant value.³¹¹ In Hepburn's view this does not require the complete suppression of the self. Rather, it requires a self-attuned, attending and respectful openness to the wonder of nature and its experiential affordances.

SUMMARY

Hepburn has enabled me to delve deeper into 'finding my thing' and making my thing a source of wonder and aesthetic reward. Engaging with his arguments and considering them in the context of canoe journeying and education is an important contribution to knowledge developed in this thesis. To the best of my knowledge the lines of philosophical thought, education and canoe journeying literature have not been woven together previously. In my view they serve as a way of enlivening educative experiences through serious aesthetic grounding. These counteract the aesthetic neglect of nature, which persists in aesthetic education today. This combination has left me lastingly disturbed.

Like my canoeing companions, the reader has accompanied me in the momentary destabilisations and challenges in the philosophical analyses of this chapters. In coming to terms with the neglect of aesthetic thinkers in engaging with nature in education, Hepburn has been particularly valuable in finding ways through this seeming impasse. I have worked to show, at least in some ways, how Hepburn's aesthetics could contribute to a broader aesthetic education.

By reconsidering aesthetic education in this way, it has been possible to move beyond traditional and powerful discussions of disinterestedness. I have drawn on Hepburn's argument for the need of sensible sounding language to bring rich experiences in nature – canoe journeys, for instance – into view of the conceptual map. I have argued that objects and persons are in relation and the richness of these relations, as Koopman helpfully articulated, rely on an understanding of the properties of things themselves and attitudes or perceptions of the experience with those things. I see this being just as important in the canoe journeying experience as in the processes of educating more broadly.

A challenge that a broadened aesthetic education poses, however, is in Hepburn's concepts of unity - the challenge to integrate, humanising and spiritualizing nature, place as foreignness, and reconciling plurality. I propose that these are educationally valuable in developing alert perception through the spontaneous and planned aesthetic learning on the canoe journey. The opportunity that can be engaged with in the canoe journey is likely

³¹⁰ Morse, 'Being Alive to the Present: Perceiving Meaning on a Wilderness River Journey'.

³¹¹ Leopold, *A Sand Country Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*; Hepburn, 'Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination'.

to be significantly limited in many formalised education systems. It is well documented that many operate on 'ideals' of compartmentalisation of knowledge and the need for recall, but this is incompatible with a broader sense of gaining knowledge through the senses in holistic learning experiences. That said, in the shaping of thought, skills, feeling and expression, I have argued that there are ways forward.

In developing an emotional commitment to the preservation of natural environments, I have brought Hepburn and Fesmire together. The cultivation of serious aesthetic appreciation requires sensible sounding language. The synthesising of different forms of metaphor – seeing X as Y, sitting metaphors and enacted metaphors – into the ecological imagination, is one way of developing the skills for this kind of aesthetic appreciation. Furthermore, it feeds into the imaginative task sometimes required to engage respectfully with the other, which is where I drew on Fesmire's notion of dramatic rehearsal. Together these can become powerful tools for the educator, who adopts a metaphorical identity themselves – educator *as* guide. Thus, aesthetic education in nature concerns the educator and student, the leader and paddler to be open to each other, despite positions of power. One of the tasks, then, is to share in the companionship of the canoe journeying experience. Together, those in relation can nurture vivid awareness of their viewpoint, scale, and position in the landscape. The canoe has become a vessel not only for research – as I shared with the reader in the introduction – it has become a vessel for developing the capacities for aesthetic meaning making and exercising those capacities.

Finally, the reader will recall the discussions focussing on wonder. Wonder can enable those in canoe journeys to realise and characterise the story, doctrine or theory, emerging from the canoe and through the paddle strokes. Wonder is problematic in education, it cannot be reduced; it may need to be dwelled in, it is opportunistic; its buffeting qualities can bring ways of feeling and respecting nature. Wonder is a mode of being within the aesthetic education in nature, which is educationally valuable and of profound importance to the ethical treatment of nature. These claims, while exemplified from the perspective of the canoe journey, have a host of other outdoor educational opportunities that cannot be explored in this thesis due to the focus of this study.

POSTSCRIPT TO CHAPTER. 4 -PADDLING FROM HERE: A MULTIPLICITY OF AESTHETICS IN EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS

The opening of my canoe journeying narrative with Hepburn spoke of different kinds of departures. The departure onto the water with Hepburn; sharing of the journey together and my finding my own way. There were thoughts of saying goodbye before we had left land. It is to this point that we return, momentarily, so that the remaining journeys can be framed and understood.

I have argued for a broadening of aesthetic education. I posit that canoe journeys are a particularly rich opportunity for aesthetic education in nature. A key part of that argument does, however, leave me open to a claim that I have critiqued about aesthetic education – that the narrowed framework has resulted in a reductive understanding of the aesthetic. Drawing on the generous writing of Hepburn has gone some way to address this issue. At this point in this thesis, aesthetic education is deeper, full of opportunity, perhaps even more democratic. Yet, my position is open to the challenge that I am relying on a single position, which is itself limiting. A single philosopher's frame of reference, however rich, is a single story. The reader will have noticed that Hepburn challenges us not to see *wonder*, rather *wonders*. He posits *unities* instead of *unity*. To do justice to the wake the Hepburn has left, I move to three other models: Scientific Cognitivism, Aesthetics of the Everyday, and Aesthetics of Environment. The purpose of the following canoe journeying narratives and philosophy of education analyses is the contribution of a pluralistic aesthetic education in nature and understanding of canoe journeying. These models seek a wider range of objects and experiences for engagement - that Hepburn's original *Neglect* paper foreshadowed.

These models are not entirely in agreement with Hepburn. They have challenged me and my assumptions about aesthetic education. They have disrupted my ways of imagining the educative potential of canoe journeys. The following models will leave us open to more momentary destabilisation. Hepburn will not be deserted on an island in the river though; his ideas will be revisited through concepts deposited above and like paddle strokes in the water – we will see their ripples. They will foster a range of ways of 'seeing as' in the pursuit of a serious aesthetic appreciation of nature, which maximises aesthetic reward through multiplicity. First, let us move into a challenging aesthetic model – Carlson's Scientific Cognitivism. Here the reader may well be suspicious that, after all I have discussed above about the limitations of science, I should turn to a science-informed aesthetics of nature. The next canoe journeying narrative with Carlson teases out aspects of my discomfort, yet seeks clarity of where scientific knowledge can be valuable for the canoe journeying experience.

Chapter 5. Canoe Journeying Narrative: Paddling with Allen Carlson

... Portaging. *Sounds like port-arr-jing*. Verb: The physically gruelling act of carrying the canoe on your shoulders across land. The canoeist, author, film-maker and artist Bill Mason says this of portaging:

I've heard it said that portaging is like hitting yourself on the head with a hammer: it feels so good when you stop. Again I must say that for me portaging is the last resort, but it's not all that bad. Portaging can be a welcome change from paddling and a chance to stretch your legs. The trip back for a second load gives you perspective and a closeness with the land that you don't get from a canoe. [...] It's the portage that makes travelling by canoe unique. What other vehicle can you just pick up and carry on your head?³¹²

The portage is an experience of contradiction. One of pain and pleasure, one that brings into stark contrast the features of the journey – the water and land. Being in the canoe and the canoe being on you. In UK canoe culture, placing the canoe on the shoulders is a relatively rare occurrence; it is often carried by the gunwales or wheeled on a trolley. In North American canoe culture, carrying on the shoulders is the norm. Portaging has sensitivities and enacted practices which are tied up with aesthetic appraisals about the right kind of body,³¹³ gendered experiences, subjectivity, cleanliness, emotions – such as pain, suffering and elation³¹⁴ and spirituality³¹⁵...

*

“If there is one thing I don't feel right now, it is spiritual!”, I think to myself as thoughts turn to earlier writing in my little green notebook.

It is a failed attempt to distract myself from the discomfort. I'm hauling the canoe uncharacteristically on to my shoulders. I lament forgetting my canoe trolley. I am in shadow. The red hull faces the sunshine sky. I am portaging from an artificial lake. This place was once a site of excavation; material pulled from the earth for the manufacture of bricks. Now it is an avian rest spot and a site of protection for plants and aquatic life.

My back turned, I navigate around a tight chicane of Braeburn and cooking apple trees – most turns are tight when you have been temporarily extended 8 feet in front and 8 feet behind. I am stomping down a tight permissive path with nettles and broad-leaf trees to my left and an historic 10ft high flint wall on the right. It is cream and white and partially reflects some light back into the burdensome shadow weighing heavy on my shoulders. With each careful placement of my foot on the stony ground, the steel bolts and wooden yoke creek as I step; the sound reverberates through the suspended hull and makes a dull 'thud'. Nearing the portaging point, I see a man looking through

³¹² Mason, *Path of the Paddle: An Illustrated Guide to the Art of Canoeing*, 168.

³¹³ Loeffler, 'Diversity and Inclusion in OEE'.

³¹⁴ Newbery, 'Will Any/Body Carry That Canoe? A Geography of the Body, Ability, and Gender'.

³¹⁵ Peace, 'Journeying by Canoe: Reflections on the Canoe and Spirituality'.

a pair of binoculars, face obscured by his hands and the straps attached near the eye-pieces.

“Ardea cinerea”. I look puzzled as I near him.

“Ardea cinerea”. The repetition leaves me no clearer as to what he means.

His magnified gaze is fixed on a dense bed of sedges. The optical tools enable otherwise lost aspects of the environment to become vivid and fascinating.

I remember a helpful phrase I picked up in canoe leadership training: reeds are round and sedges have edges. A very limited introduction to aquatic ecology. I struggle to see what he is fixed on, but just then something disrupts the expected view of the swaying razor blades. Among the individual strands of green and brown there is a diffused strip of white and grey; a bright orange flash of the beak pointing like a dagger at the still water.

*

I think of Hepburn and our last paddle. I am hoping today’s journey will help me think clearly about what could be involved in an education for the aesthetic appreciation of nature. I feel that it is important to get to grips with this. It is neglected in education, not to mention everyday life.

What is interesting about Carlson, however, is his distinct approach to informing this kind of appreciation. Science. Natural History. Ecology. I’m doing my best to be open-minded and not ‘pathological’ about it – just like Hepburn implored me to be. Some tasks are more difficult than others: I’ve always been a bit distrusting of people and ideas that promise something with a definite article – put ‘the’ in the title and, for me, the mental drawbridge goes up and that stuff isn’t coming in.

Carlson doesn’t quite say it is ‘the approach to end all approaches’, but he defended himself on several occasions that his approach is the correct way to aesthetically appraise the environment. If nothing else our conversation today will give me an opportunity to add a diverse thread of thinking.

“Oh goodness, this hurts”, I say as I wince.

My feet get heavier as I exhale to the dense patch of Fir trees.

*

I stop.

I carefully lean the canoe forward so that the black gunwales of the pointed bow ruptures the ochre clay. Holding the gunwales, I move my arms from in front of me to in line with my neck. From this point I lift the already ascended stern higher into the air. I hold the canoe above my head like a weightlifter in full extension. Dropping my left arm slightly the canoe rocks over. In its moment of descent, I move with it. Like

dancers in an embrace, I twist my body to catch the canoe's fall. It comes to its penultimate rest on my bent legs as it presses on my bruised quads. As I hold onto the closest gunwale, the canoe comes to its rest in the shade of Sycamores off the footpath. I stretch and loosen my back and attempt to adjust my neck. The relief burns. I step over the path and look up the flow of the River Great Ouse.

I breathe quietly. I don't want to disturb the scene in front of me. "Hello Carlson, what's caught your attention?"

*

Now whispering - what I initially think is - to himself, I realise he is speaking to me while looking at the poised, diffused forms.

"Over there. A Heron – *Ardea cinerea*. It's influence in the waterscape is significant. Its ability to manage the fish in the river and to be a stabilising force when there is an abundance of aquatic life, is a profoundly important part of the ecosystem. They are a visible indicator of river health. Its presence makes the river an aesthetically valuable place".

"Oh, that's so interesting" I reply.

"I'd not really had cause to join the dots between their majestic presence and their ecological role on the river. Of course, it makes sense that the Heron is here, and remains here, because the river can sustain the life of its necessary food supply. I had framed its presence in a holistic way, capturing it almost as a fact of life, rather than a scientific truth", I say agreeing with him.

I breathe in the damp air that signifies being near water. It relaxes me into a different orientation to the world. The river is about 60ft (~18m) wide. Unlike other rivers I've journeyed recently, this is navigable by powered craft and is a regular haunt for fishermen. I've spent many a day paddling with friends and cleaning up the river. I now bring my students here to experience a landscape from a different perspective and to learn canoeing skills. There are competing uses of this place. The word 'competition' has profound ecological resonances that are not lost on me as the thought floats away.

*

"The get-in is a little challenging", I say as he and I walk toward the canoe.

There is a small gap, no doubt, made by other canoeists. The reeds are quite deep and extend about a metre from the bank. Opposite this opening is an old, submerged post just below the surface. This makes it both the only spot to get in here, as well as a likely place to have a swim.

I hold the boat at the stern with about 30 centimetres of it making connection with the bank. I crouch down to hold it as firmly as possible.

As Carlson grabs my shoulder I provide instructions with a gentle authority I give to all novice paddlers: “Keep your body low and yourself distributed across the hull. Hands and head inside the gunwales”.

The steps are slow but calculated. The closer to the bow he gets, the further out of the water the stern comes. The easy part done. He’s in and calm.

I now examine the possibilities for getting in without getting us both wet. I pull the canoe into the reeds as much as I can, to stabilise it. That means I can just lean to the far side of the canoe and step across from the land.

“Right. You’ll feel a slight wobble. Keep your hips loose and head inside the gunwales and you’ll be grand”, I say.

Carlson nods in reply, looking down the long passage of water reflecting the now overcast sky.

I crawl into the canoe, unconfident and undignified. “I’m in and on my seat”. I loosen up my hips and get myself onto the kneeling mat.

“Shall we head upstream and then if we get time, we can then head down stream and complete a kind of circular route? I was up here a few months ago with my students and the moment we were off the water for our lunch, we saw an otter swim past us. It was magical!”, I say, with a hopeful smile.

Carlson looks back, catching the iridescent admixture of diesel remnants laying on the dark green water. “Yes, that sounds like a great idea and how very interesting about the otter”, he says.

We put our paddles in, Carlson paddles forward on the left and I put in a rudder on the right; we arc around a little haphazardly, knocking our paddles against the gunwales. Now facing in the opposite direction and against an almost imperceptible flow, we settle into a rhythm.

*

We paddle toward a disused railway bridge which has been repurposed as a bridle way. Its peeling paint reveals the steel construction - lightly rusted rivets as big as fists. Steam and diesel trains long gone; the clatter of carriages giving way to birdsong and bicycle bells.

“This bridge reminds me that being aware of the processes that continually influence landscapes is important to our appreciation of them”, Carlson remarks as he inspect the bridge, like a structural engineer surveying for stability and integrity.

“Unlike artworks”, he observes, “there is no specific time at which most landscapes are completed ... their natural histories and their actual histories – their historical uses –

are in a sense continuous, since both constitute a single ongoing history of production. Landscapes are promiscuous in this sense”.³¹⁶

We paddle under the shadow of the bridge and hear our voices reverberate through the metal structure.

“It certainly helps the place come alive when teaching”, I say. We move around a left curve, under a shady canopy of trees on both sides of the river. People’s voices are audible; cars pass with the fleeting white-noise of accelerating engines and tyres on tarmac.

I feel a kind of nervousness take over me. I’ve never been good at this kind of discussion. An occupational hazard for paddler of philosophical concepts. “But”, I say in anticipation, “isn’t history of that kind relegated to your supplementary curriculum?”. Carlson misses a paddle stroke; I counter it. Both awoken like when a heart skips a beat. It is a known shock, but a shock, nonetheless.

He looks up to a small impassable channel, blocked with this vegetation. The densely knotted brambles look like some medieval torture device. “I do value the contribution of history, and other *sciences* like *geography, anthropology and sociology*. That’s why they are in the supplementary curriculum along with *landscape myths, symbols and art*. Educators, like yourself, will need to *employ the knowledge gained from such sciences specifically to tell the stories of the long-term development of the landscape*³¹⁷. *Without this knowledge, when we view the landscape, we will surely misunderstand and misappreciate it*”,³¹⁸ he says.

“I don’t disagree with you”, I say. I feel the contrast of warmth and coolness on my face as we move under the openings of the canopy. “I get that as we paddle through this landscape, for instance, that you’re quite sure that common knowledge, science, history and contemporary use all must play a part”.

“Exactly”, he jumps in from my flow and is right to do so considering I’m reciting his ideas back to him, “Knowledge of those kinds *directly influence[s] the nature of actual landscapes*, like this one. Cultural myths, symbolism and art are more about how humans create meaning in the landscape and *seemingly have nothing to do with the histories of production of landscapes*.³¹⁹ They don’t hold an *essential place in the curriculum*,³²⁰ but they do characterise the *making and remaking of imaginary landscapes in the individual or the collective mind*. Saying this enables multiple interpretations of the imaginary landscapes without denying the *privileged reading* from the sciences and histories. I stand by this and have done for decades”.

*

³¹⁶ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 115.

³¹⁷ Carlson, 115.

³¹⁸ Carlson, 117.

³¹⁹ Carlson, 122.

³²⁰ Carlson, 125–26.

There is a moment of human silence in the canoe, which makes way for the light rustling of leaves. The sound of trickling water comes upon us. It is hidden amongst a species of plant that is characteristically unwelcome on the banks – Himalayan Balsam. Scientists categorise it as an ‘invasive species’, ergo it is bad as it causes harm to the native species and their habitats.³²¹ Although its form and flowers are seemingly beautiful, it is characterised as an environmental menace. Humans – I included – have taken to the water in canoes to pull it from the banks, but often to no avail.

The water from the pipe is discharging brown sludge. I signal to Carlson to pick up the paddle strokes; there have been recent reports that the local water company has been discharging human effluent into the rivers, killing 5000 fish in the process.³²²

“Perhaps Carlson is right, science should be prioritised” I think to myself as I imagine the impact of these phenomena, amplifying their far-reaching consequences.³²³

Then I realise something I’ve not thought of until this moment, being here, on this journey with Carlson.

*

“We can slow it down a little now”. I turn back, unable to see the pipe or its outflow. We are out of any potential harm. I don’t want this to become some kind of competitive canoeing activity and miss opportunities for conversation.

With a line of thought on its own journey from paddle-stroke, to brain, to mouth I find myself speaking: “You give a lot of space in your curriculum for propositional knowing, the kind of knowing that is characterised in the phrase ‘knowledge that such and such is the case...’. Who were the authors again you said students should read to understand the natural world?”

“They are my favourites... Henry David Thoreau, John Muir, John Burroughs, Aldo Leopold, Joseph Kurtch, Marston Bates, Sally Carrighar, Sigurd Olsen, Loren Eiseley, Barry Lopez and David Quammen – they are natural historians and scientifically informed nature writers who specifically discuss human understanding and appreciation of the natural world”.³²⁴

I sense a smile on his face; a physical change in his paddling as he conjures the impact of their thinking on his life.

“They are such interesting authors and provide the basis for that serious beauty intuition from Hepburn, that we ought to use so as to not mislead aesthetic appreciation in ways similar to those of various art-based approaches...”³²⁵

³²¹ CABI, ‘Himalayan Balsam - Invasive Species’.

³²² HMGov, ‘Water Company Fined £510,000 after Sewage Discharge in River’.

³²³ Brady supplies the concept of ‘ampliative imagination’ in Brady, ‘Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature’.

³²⁴ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 113.

³²⁵ Carlson, 127.

I notice that the authors are primarily male and from the western tradition. A notion of common sense or scientific knowledge are wrapped up in ideas of a limited and limiting tradition that leaves its indelible mark in my thinking. It was from this thought that struck the unforeseen illumination in my mind.

“As an educator, engaging with literature of this kind is such a rich way of bringing the landscape alive to the minds of my students. Sharing the stories of the landscape, reciting quotes from Thoreau, Muir, Wilson,³²⁶ Carson,³²⁷ Wall Kimmerer,³²⁸ Shepherd,³²⁹ Jamie,³³⁰ MacDonald, Sethi³³¹ and other insightful voices expand our capacities for knowing, gaining skills and imagining ideas in the act of journeying. Yet, I remember feeling at quite a loss when first making acquaintance with your work”. I confess, as though the separation of us at each end of the canoe in some way softens my feelings.

“Your emphasis of common sense and scientific knowing left me at a loss for *how to* go about the task of educating. I needed the know-how along with the know-that. You shared a hint, didn’t you, that aesthetic education should *marry imagination and reality* – you got that from Santayana if I remember rightly?” A thoughtful and intense affirmative nod from the bow paddler.

I continue: “... And, that aesthetic education centres on training to see the maximum beauty in the physical world. But I am confused”, I say in an awkward acknowledgement of my limitations.

“You’re saying, we should go to a particular kind of common sense and scientific knowledge, which is found in works of nature writing”, I say somewhat puzzled.

“But these are important and rich subjective accounts, aren’t they? Those authors and books should enrich the subjective experience in developing our informed imaginings about nature to maximise the perception of natural beauty”, I exhale deeply.

“It feels to me that on the one hand you’re defending a scientific approach and on the other you are suggesting a much more holistic approach to perception and aesthetic education relying on rich subjective imaginings”.

I stop speaking to look behind. A tourist canal boat crawls a little way behind us. This serves as an opportunity to head into a little eddy (a point of safety on the river, out of the main flow). Gathering thoughts, we move into a small sanctuary a little bigger than our canoe. The large boat, about 70 feet in length is full of paying tourists travelling upriver. It is large, about 12ft in width. Vast clean windows run its full length for boaters-of-a-different-kind to make the most of the gentle and restful mode of travel. The light wake sends ripples, tickling the canoe and stirring us softly up and down, side

³²⁶ Wilson, *Every Species Is a Masterpiece*.

³²⁷ Carson, *Man’s War Against Nature*.

³²⁸ Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

³²⁹ Shepherd, *The Living Mountain*.

³³⁰ Jamie, *Sightlines*.

³³¹ Sethi, *I Belong Here: A Journey Along the Backbone of Britain*.

to side. I wonder what stories of environment they have been told? I wonder what information they've been given about the river and the human influence on it...

“It is important to remember that nature must be appreciated on its own terms. If we are to appreciate nature aesthetically, then we must have the appropriate categories of knowledge to support that, Lewis. Common sense as I see it, natural history and landscape-use are fundamental and should be taught in all appropriate situations”, Carlson replies.

“Yes... I do wonder why though why you commit yourself to doing this through forms of nature writing. Don't you find that a little odd?”, I ask.

Carlson contemplates this while pointing out the darting movements of a water boatman. We paddle out to underneath the next bridge and we stop on the left-hand bank of the river. The concrete is chipped and small amounts of steel rebar protrude erratically.

“Mind your hands” I say as we carefully get out of the canoe.

Carlson first, spritely: “Shall I hold the gunwales?”.

“That would be great, yes please”.

I clamber out, aware that my right leg is numb and that I cannot feel my toes. I walk around the uneven concrete in circles for a moment to regain feeling.

*

“You know”, I say striking up the conversation again. “I agree with you that knowing truths about the natural world through natural history and ecology is valuable in aesthetic experiences. Consider the heron, or biodiversity for instance. Yet the life of the heron or the concept of biodiversity must be employed in our imagining in, and about, the landscape. As I see it, engaging with ‘knowing that’ the Himalayan balsam is an invasive species, or ‘that’ the human species is causing destruction to our rivers by discharging effluent, increases our capacities for ‘seeing as’. Seeing the river ‘as’ maimed, ‘polluted’, or beautiful, or inspiring, enhances the canoe journeying experience. If those facts or insights are based in truths about the environment and are true to human experience, then they allow for diverse ways of enhancing serious aesthetic appreciation. For instance, ‘seeing as’ enables us to delve into deeper forms of complexity – how is the heron still here, even though the river is polluted? We might agree that we've canoed through parts of the river that are beautiful, wondrous even, and recognise that it is not pristine, not without environmental concern. This means as educators, and as students, we are free to act in response to the offerings of the environment and imaginings. From there educators and students, eventually the public, will be able to make decisions about acting morally in and for nature”.

I breathe deeply so as not to offend. After all, this paddle is not meant to be a mimetic reconstruction of the adversarial philosophy seminar by the water.

On the wide arch of the bridge, quotes from a text I suspect we've both read have been graffitied onto the concrete in vivid green capitals: 'THE MANIFOLD WAYS BY WHICH HUMAN BEINGS ARE TIED TO THE REMAINDER OF LIFE ARE POORLY UNDERSTOOD, CRYING FOR A NEW SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY AND BOLD AESTHETIC INTERPRETATION – E.O. Wilson.'³³²

“That also reminds me of Rachel Carson”, I say.

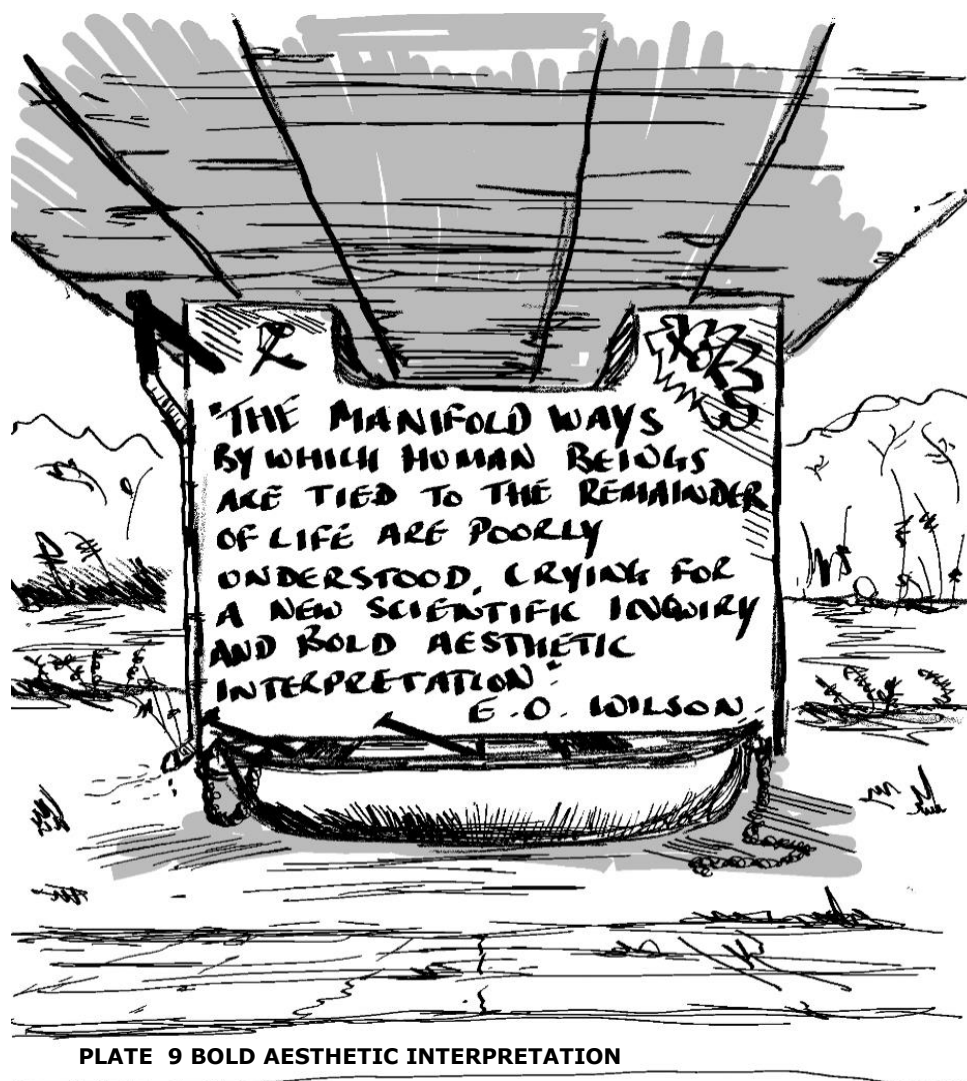


PLATE 9 BOLD AESTHETIC INTERPRETATION

I think of her whenever I'm cautious about humanity's hubris. Her work on DDT³³³ was an example of how science viewed with particular tools, with an unending

³³² Wilson, *Every Species Is a Masterpiece*, 66.

³³³ Carson, *Silent Spring*.

authority, radically dissected humans from nature and attempted to cut away features of nature that were seen as parasitic, problematic or simply annoying. It is one of the very worst examples I know of closing humans from nature from which we are inseparable, through an arrogant science. It led humans to treat the environment as a slave to man, denying its life, its agency to live, make and remake itself.

“Wilson’s challenge is an important one, and one that canoe journeys like this could aid. The journey could help one to imagine the concepts in the environments where they matter the most.”, I reflect aloud.

“I think my approach, which brings together scientific inquiry and aesthetic interpretation, could perhaps be described as ‘bold’, Lewis”, Carlson says as he looks toward Wilson’s words.

“Yes indeed, no question; I just wonder whether it is made too much in the framing of science and thus too limiting in developing a rounded aesthetic education. I may be wrong, but it seems to me to perpetuate similar educational issues that may have contributed to statements from Wilson and the views of Carson?”, I reply.

*

We sit on a bench by the water. The red canoe rests underneath the green quote. The colours make me blink. Like an eye-test. It is a visually interesting installation – the canoe, the quote, the environment.

“I don’t think we’ll see otters today; the river isn’t clean enough now. They’ve likely migrated down river to fresher water”, I lament.

I am depressed at this fact which is rampant across UK waterways. I see the river through metaphors: mismanaged, dying, incomplete. It lacks a grace, no matter how much sun brings the river’s colours and forms to life.

*

Back on the water, we pass the portage point where we got on earlier. The heron or perhaps another is stone still on flattened grass where I’d dragged the canoe into the reeds. The banks of the river are a lush, defiant green; the vegetation disrupting the distinctions between land and water. We approach a sweeping bend. On the outside corner, private pleasure boats and canal boats are moored perpendicular to the bank. Steel and fibreglass representations of the human use of the waterscape are a reminder of how the river here has been bent to the will of human culture for over 300 years.³³⁴

*

“Learning to aesthetically appraise from the canoe means knowing the kind of environment that is being paddled through. Each environment requires us to choose our mode of aspection carefully. You can’t attempt to appraise everything. *To aesthetically*

³³⁴ Willan, ‘The Navigation of the Great Ouse’.

appreciate an environment we experience our surroundings as obtrusive foreground allowing our knowledge of that environment to select certain foci of aesthetic significance and perhaps exclude others, thereby limiting the experience."³³⁵, he speaks confidently, and the confidence is matched by his paddle strokes.

"There is much evidence to suggest that a scientific thought component is incredibly important in appreciating downgraded, unassuming, uninspiring, scenically challenged environments", he continues.

"In the Chinese aesthetic tradition, they ignore some of our Western concepts altogether. One model I've worked on more recently promotes a stronger unity between humans and the world. Proponents argue that the aesthetic appreciation of nature should rest on ecological knowledge to enhance appraisals and attend to the *hidden* and *ordinary* in the environment;³³⁶ it advances an *ecological consciousness* that guides aesthetic appreciation. Instead of advancing our traditional *is-ought* distinction between science and ethics, they advance a model of ecoaesthetics that puts them together. This is quite bold. Their *ecoaesthetics do not address specific problems so much as they present an overall programme for promoting, protecting, and preserving the environment.*³³⁷ It brings together *ecological value for ecological aesthetic appreciation* that rests on a deep, experiential, everyday, unified and embodied understanding of *biodiversity and ecosystem health.*"³³⁸ Carlson comes alive to me. His discussion seems fresh and inviting. Almost an entirely different voice.

Our paddle strokes continue as the river gently meanders amongst bright green willows above us, and below us in the rippling reflection.

"Canoe journeys could enable educators like me to attend to the environment and the experience as a unified endeavour, while considering how to act in and for nature. Instead of promoting a retroactive overlay of the only appropriate governing knowledge of aesthetic appraisals as you said in the past, perhaps we can become more open to different forms of scientific, aesthetic and ethical learning that emerge when journeying – to educate for sensitivity and boldness in aesthetic appreciation", I say.

*

We reach a sign-posted portage point. A little sign on a post with two people carrying a canoe above their heads makes me smile. We carry the canoe down a long slope of undulating grass. At the bottom, a wooden bridge spans a small inlet of water to the lower river. It is enclosed by a lock a little way along from the portage point. Instead of putting-in here, we continue our carrying portage – arms tiring – to a small shingle and flint beach. The canoe crunches down. We look over to the lake. I see the apple trees in the distance.

³³⁵ Carlson, 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment', 273.

³³⁶ Carlson, 'Environmental Aesthetics, Ethics and Ecoaesthetics', 406.

³³⁷ Carlson, 407.

³³⁸ Carlson, 407.

“The island over there is protected. We aren’t allowed to paddle near it. It is amazing that it is a home for herons, voles, cormorants, ruddy ducks, pochard, and whiteclawed freshwater crayfish”, I say as I point out this feature in the lake.

I feel a sense of returning. Of seeing the land and water differently. It is not a complete shift in perception, but a portage of the imagination where different notes sit together in dissonance, waiting for a resolution to the home key that doesn’t come. I was hoping for an expansion of aesthetic education. It comes, partially.

“Shall we launch?” I say.

“You go ahead” Carlson says, “I’ll walk around on the lake path and head back, it isn’t far. I can see where I need to go”.

“Oh ok”, I check: “Are you sure?”.

“Yes, I’ll stretch my legs and see what birds I can observe from the stability of terra firma. Binoculars and the movement of the canoe can be a bit of a struggle”, Carlson reassures.

“Well, thank you for your conversation today. I hope that like the ways a work of art that can imprint on us the canoe journey has done something similar”.

Acknowledging that his ideas have influenced me, I’ve let them in and will take them with me, in my own way.

Chapter 6: Scientific Cognitivism

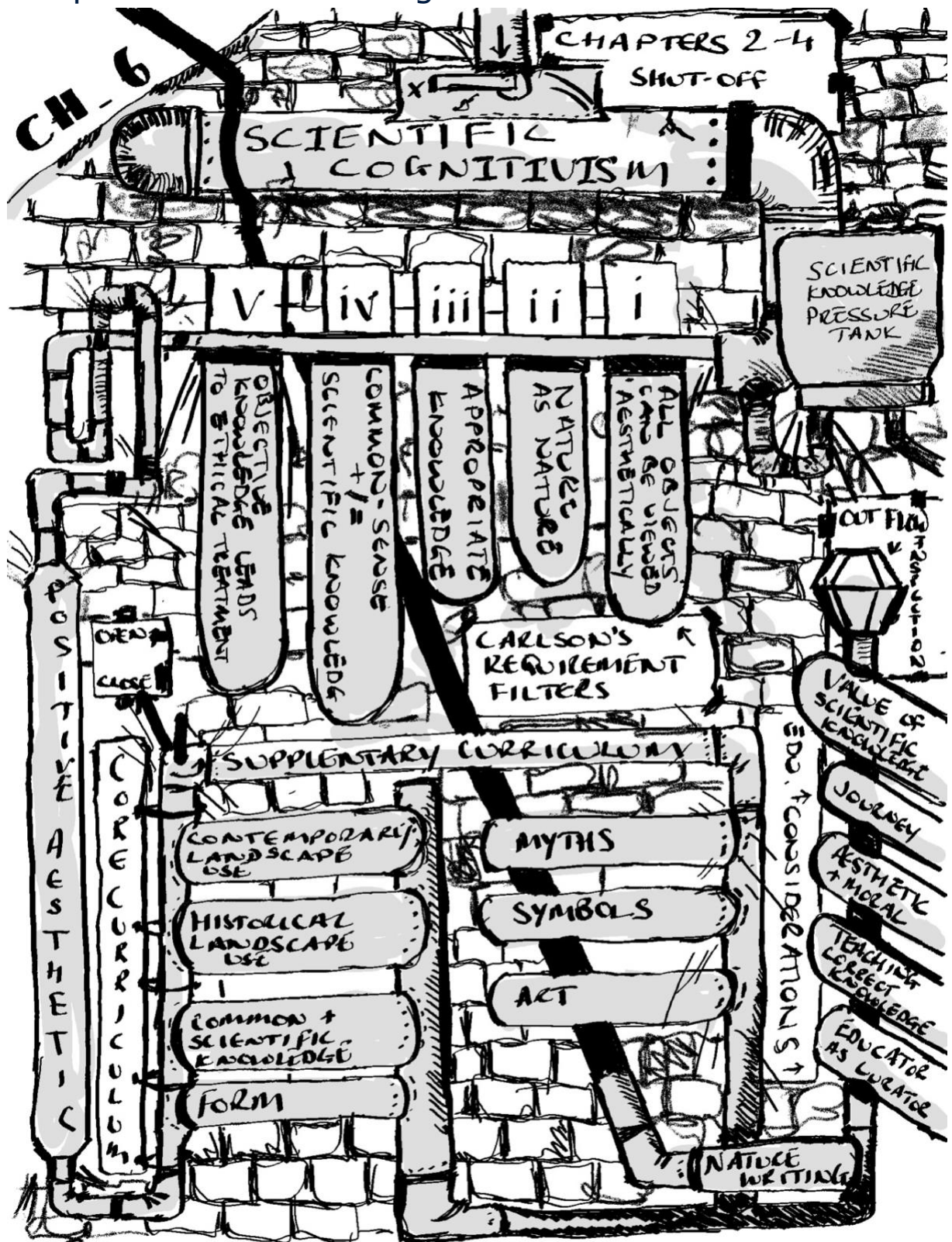


PLATE 10 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING IN CHAPTER 6

There has been a lot of ground, or perhaps water, covered in the last canoe journeying narrative. The canoe journey concluded with Carlson and I going our separate ways. It felt markedly different from Hepburn's goodbye. Yet I do acknowledge that Carlson's approach to the aesthetic appreciation of nature has some merit. After all, it was significant enough for him to become a canoe companion on The River Great Ouse. The reverberations from our discussions have gone some way to marry imagination and reality.

In the analyses below, I engage with key features of Carlson's position within the frame of the ongoing history of production in the aesthetics of environment. An important starting point is that this model is made in the image of art aesthetics – his model is, for the most part, an argument by analogy. Plainly speaking, Carlson swaps art knowledge for scientific knowledge – this was a key issue I raised with my canoeing companion in the narrative above. The reader is introduced to Carlson's aesthetic requirements – in Plate 10 above. I have presented this as a set of filters. These requirements only allow certain objects and approaches for aesthetic appraisal to pass through them. These discussions highlight criticism of two types of aesthetic models prevalent in the aesthetics of nature: the object model and the landscape model. Additionally, Carlson's view on the connection between common sense and scientific knowledge is then examined and related to positive aesthetics. It is here where I take on critical insights from Parson who identifies that Carlson's adoption of a positive aesthetic approach – which claims that absolutely everything in nature has aesthetic value – moves away from central claims within the aesthetics of art. It is patently true that not all art objects have aesthetic value; this indicates to me that there are some internal inconsistencies in Carlson's philosophical plumbing that require attention. Finally, further contradictions are explored in his curriculum for aesthetic appreciation. Carlson proposes a core and supplementary curriculum, which can offer a variety of ways of engaging aesthetically with landscape, but is not without its ethical, as well as epistemic, issues. While I think there are useful insights, I offer a grounded position for my concern that this model is not going to provide the *bold aesthetic interpretation* of the natural environment that the graffiti artist implored us to consider when immortalising Wilson's phrase under the bridge. On Carlson's own terms, I discuss some of my struggles with the position he takes and relate these to the role of the journeying educator – presented in the image above as 'educational consideration' outflow pipes. First, I take the reader to learn about the aesthetic requirements Carlson places on the aesthetics of nature.

CARLSON'S AESTHETIC REQUIREMENTS

Carlson's model – which is referred to in the literature under the interchangeable names of *Scientific Cognitivism* and *the Natural Environment Model* – draws inspiration from an analogy with artistic aesthetics. Carlson, and the model's other proponents – argue for the use of scientific knowledge to ground aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment. Writing in the immediate wake of Hepburn's *Neglect of natural beauty* paper in the 1960s, Carlson's project, which was developed from 1979 as well as in more contemporary literature in the 2000s, has taken this consistent line of argument.³³⁹ The nomenclature and timeframe are significant in as much as they indicate broader debates in aesthetics of nature. Carlson's approach, which prioritises scientific knowledge in objective, and

³³⁹ Carlson, 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment'; Carlson, 'Contemporary Environmental Aesthetics and the Requirements of Environmentalism'.

seemingly disembodied and cognitively prominent ways, is critiqued by a range of aestheticians.³⁴⁰

His position relies on five premises which are laid out over the coming pages, which I present as requirements. Each are necessary, but none are sufficient on their own. The first two are these: (i) the model of aesthetics must acknowledge that all objects can be viewed aesthetically; and (ii) nature must be treated as nature, and not as a human artefact. As accepted in other approaches of aesthetics, including those not pertaining to aesthetics as philosophy of art, Carlson's model recognises that all objects have sensuous qualities. This however does not mean that all objects can be appraised using the same theoretical or conceptual tools. Carlson, along with other aestheticians, recognises that nature is not an art object; nature is not a human creation - nature is nature and therefore it must be treated on its own terms. Each kind of object or environment will require forms of knowledge appropriate for their aesthetic appreciation, which is Carlson's (iii) requirement:³⁴¹

Our knowledge of the nature of particular environments yields the appropriate boundaries of appreciation, the foci of aesthetic significance, and the relevant act or acts of aspection [(appropriate type of appraisal resulting from primary sense being used i.e. sound, sight, touch, etc.)] for that type of environment.³⁴²

Modes of aspection – sensory perception which lead to aesthetic appreciation – need to be consistent across different types of objects. Just as I would not be expected to appreciate a painting for its practical qualities or its utilitarian qualities, such as covering up a stained wall, there are boundaries of appropriate appraisal.

In the case of art, one should draw on art history and art criticism to inform the evaluation of a piece of work. In the case of the environment and objects within them, we should – according to Carlson – draw on scientific knowledge, primarily natural history. Using the knowledge of science enables an agent to treat the object(s) as a *natural thing(s)*.³⁴³ This knowledge in turn supports aesthetic appreciation to focus upon the relevant detail, say in the qualities of the youthful elm tree or my disgust at the human effluent being pumped into the river as we canoe past it (as described in the canoe journeying narrative above). Thus, treating nature as art is doing nature an injustice. Carlson characterises this as a form of human chauvinism that places human cultural experiences and beliefs above scientific knowledge in the aesthetic appreciation of nature.³⁴⁴ Carlson accepts that it is through scientific knowledge that one can *treat nature on its own terms*, which guards against artistic ideals or human emotion projections.

The basis of the philosophical plumbing in this model is infused with ideas from outside the field of aesthetics – that of scientific knowledge. Carlson's system of thought is pressurised by this scientific knowledge (see the pressure tank in the image above) to guard against poor quality quasi-aesthetic appreciation. Yet, the model incorporates Hepburn's position of serious aesthetic appreciation.³⁴⁵ Carlson calls this Hepburn's

³⁴⁰ See: Godlovitch et al., 'Symposium: Natural Aesthetics'; Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*; Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*; Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity'; Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*.

³⁴¹ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 29.

³⁴² Carlson, 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment', 274.

³⁴³ Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 50.

³⁴⁴ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 29.

³⁴⁵ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

'serious beauty intuition'. At this point, the reader might well think how can scientific knowledge and Hepburn's position be reconciled. This suspicion is understandable. However, we must be reminded that his thought – along with our companion Midgely – does not deny the value of science. Rather, they are concerned with its valorisation at the costs of other forms of knowing. We are unable to take a position on this yet, but it will be possible to draw some conclusions as we move through this chapter.

Carlson's approach challenges the prominence of formalist and postmodernist aesthetics, as they both fail to supply the perceiver with knowledge and tools to appreciate nature as nature. Formalism - the appraisal of the sensuous surface such as shape, line, colour, depth - fails because one does not appreciate the landscape's natural, organic, ecological or climatic qualities. Instead, one appreciates the lines or qualities, tones, shapes, and so on, of the object as pieces of art or an artistic *scene* in front of them.

Carlson does however accept that the education of formalism may still be an appropriate place to begin a learner's aesthetic education of natural environments. Yet, importantly in Carlson's aesthetic model (rather than curriculum discussed below), formalism violates requirement (ii) as it does not treat nature as nature. Similarly, formalism could miss requirement (iii) as it would be unable to identify the foci of aesthetic significance. While there is often an accepted objectivity within formalist appraisals of pre-modern artworks, modern and post-modern art typically are appreciated within a subjective reference. This enables the appraiser to exercise aesthetic creativity and freedom when appraising art objects and natural environments.

What of the failure of post-modernism, then? With its creativity and freedom in appreciation, in the eyes of Carlson, it fails to equip the aesthetic appraisee with an adequate, objective thought-component for serious aesthetic appreciation.³⁴⁶ Instead, postmodernism promotes a freedom of interpretation. This means any emotion or meaning can be projected onto the object, environment or experience freely. In Carlson's view, this would violate requirement (ii) as it would not be appraising nature *as* nature. Along with conceptual tools, Carlson argues that borrowing aesthetic thought components from models based on emotional arousal (among others),³⁴⁷ fail to maximise the sensuous qualities of nature. Carlson calls into question two prominent models that delve deeper into understanding the inadequacies posited above – the Object Model and the Landscape Model.

OBJECT MODEL

The object model focusses attention and appreciation on, as the title suggests, the object in isolation. The physical features – what is aesthetically relevant, its 'sensuous, design and [...] expressive qualities' – are the foci for consideration.³⁴⁸ There is no need for the object to be understood in relation to external, environmental factors. It is to be considered on its own, for its own sake. In appreciating the object's qualities, it may be typical for the observer to remove it – physically or mentally – from its surroundings, say in the case of a feather or pebble. This enables the perceiver to attend to the expressive qualities of the object without external intrusions. This is reminiscent of Hepburn's idea that art objects are framed and nature is not. As Carlson recognises, it is quite common for homes to have natural objects placed on display for appreciation. Just like abstract

³⁴⁶ The idea of the thought-component in aesthetic appraisal originates in the work of Hepburn.

³⁴⁷ Carroll, 'Emotion, Appreciation, and Nature'.

³⁴⁸ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 24.

sculpture, the natural object removed from its originating environment has 'no representational ties to the rest of reality'.³⁴⁹

If one were to engage only with the *form* of the natural object, compromises would have to be made to what one could mean by 'serious aesthetic appreciation of nature'. Carlson rejects such a compromise because one attends to a now sensuous object rather than a natural object.³⁵⁰ While natural objects, and ready-made human objects can be granted 'artistic enfranchisement', the objects are no longer appreciated as what they originally were in a natural context: 'appreciating a sculpture that was once driftwood is no closer to appreciating nature than is appreciating a purse that was once a sow's ear',³⁵¹ Carlson attests. On his view, the model's inadequacy is shown in the act of physically or imaginatively isolating the object from its environment. It becomes a form of isolation and framing that is associated with art not with nature, as Hepburn warned.³⁵² In an art class a teacher might task learners to appraise the formal qualities of a piece of driftwood for display and draw its aesthetically pleasing qualities: its lines, colours, tonal features, and so on. However, Carlson suggests aesthetically relevant information will be absent from the appreciation:

Thus, for natural objects, their environments of creation are aesthetically relevant and, because of this, their environments of display are equally relevant in being either the same as or different from their environments of creation.³⁵³

Taking a similar example as the pebble above, Carlson considers a smoothed and curved rock. On the mantelpiece it may express solidity, but in its original context it may express other qualities as a direct result of it being situated in its environment. When in place, the object may be expressive of the forces pounding on it – the pounding of the water as it gradually takes particles away with it. This does not stop, showing the continued power of the water on it. We are thus able to appreciate the rock in its place and the relationships it has to its environment, the forces working on it. Such qualities and connections are not present when the pebble or driftwood is appreciated in isolation and in the artistically informed object model.

Carlson considers this model inadequate on two grounds: first, the object is to be removed for appreciation of its sensuous qualities in isolation, which leads to a shallow perception with limited aesthetic qualities being appreciated. Second, if the object is left in situ, the object model cannot draw on otherwise important contextual and environmental information informed by ecology or natural history, primarily because the model's focus attends to only formal qualities. Aestheticians who argue that formalism is the only appropriate way aesthetically to appreciate nature tend to be, to greater or lesser extent, anti-cognitivist, arguing that knowledge of the object is not required for its aesthetic appreciation.³⁵⁴ On Carlson's view this is profoundly inadequate.³⁵⁵ Yet, as I shall show below, Carlson does accept that formalism of this kind is prevalent in aesthetic education and can be a way of enabling learners to develop deeper and scientifically informed aesthetic appraisal. This shows that, to some degree, Carlson's view on formalism in the aesthetic experience, especially the educational experience, is not absolute. A further

³⁴⁹ Carlson, 25.

³⁵⁰ Lintott, 'Adjudicating the Debate over Two Models of Nature Appreciation Author'.

³⁵¹ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 25.

³⁵² Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

³⁵³ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 26.

³⁵⁴ Parsons and Carlson, 'New Formalism and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

³⁵⁵ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 26.

model Carlson finds objectionable is that which reduces environments to *landscapes* or *scenes*.

LANDSCAPE MODEL

In the canoe journeying narratives so far, there have been plenty of references made to the aesthetic qualities of the landscape and waterscape. The use of the term *landscape* is however problematic according to Carlson, as it imposes a particular standpoint and requires a distance to adequately appraise a landscape. One is not typically appreciating an up-close and potentially engulfing landscape, instead one is expected to appreciate the scene from a distance, to take in the vistas and the like. Thus, if I were to ask my paddling companions – my students – “What do you notice in the canoeing experience?” This would be nonsensical because of the closeness and experiential mode in the landscape is not taken from a distanced standpoint. After all, the canoe is not a ‘standpoint’ as one is paddling – i.e. moving – through it.

Appraisals informed by the landscape model are not typically concerned with the object itself (the painting). Instead, they are concerned with the representation of the object – the landscape. This *reading* of a representation of the landscape involves appreciating the real visual qualities as one might expect to do of the artistic image, therefore the form of the piece is noted as significant. The landscape’s ‘lines, colours, and overall design’³⁵⁶ are emphasised. Thus, the appreciator is no longer engaging with the landscape as though it were nature, they are ‘appreciating’ it as art, particularly its sensuous surface and formal ‘composition’, which conflicts with Carlson’s (ii) requirement – treating nature *as* nature.

In common language, however, the use of the terms *landscape*, *picturesque*, and *scenic route*, are all associated with this model. Many artworks focussing on environments are still available in galleries all over the world and are typically considered ‘landscape’ paintings. Yet, while this ready-made language is in our common parlance, its philosophical plumbing is faulty. These terms invoke a way of appreciating the environment as though it were to be experienced as works of art, divided into manageable scenes, viewed from a distance and appraised with ideals dictated by the world of art.

One may often see road signs for ‘scenic routes’, or ‘viewpoints’, for the perceiver to enjoy, capture and engage with from the dictated spots that rely on the distal senses. Additionally, the touristic perceiver is often primed to capture the perfect shot of the landscape that is framed for the camera, quite literally the ‘picturesque’ that privileges beautiful landscapes over those more scenically challenged such as wetlands and swamps.³⁵⁷ More so, in contemporary society, there is a tendency to enhance the photograph’s colours and to share them through social media. The environment, again, is appraised and appreciated as a framed object or work of art, rather *than* nature: ‘It reduces a walk in the natural environment’ Carlson laments ‘to something like a stroll through an art gallery.’³⁵⁸

Carlson takes the view that the landscape model is so inadequate that it ought to be considered ‘environmentally and ethically worrisome’. As one commentator notes, appraising the landscape through arts celebrates the beautiful and neglects unassuming environments; it motivates the conservation of the beautiful and the disregards the

³⁵⁶ Carlson, 26.

³⁵⁷ Lintott, ‘Adjudicating the Debate over Two Models of Nature Appreciation’.

³⁵⁸ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 28.

scenically challenged.³⁵⁹ In drawing on other authors, Carlson concludes that the model reinforces anthropocentrism as it entails nature as existing for human pleasure and thus not appreciating it on its own terms:

It construes the environment as though it were a static, essentially two-dimensional representation, reducing it to a scene or view. But the natural environment is not a scene, not a representation, not static and not two-dimensional. In short, the model requires that the environment be appreciated not as what it is and with the qualities it has, but as what it is not and with qualities it does not have. The model is unsuited to the actual nature of the object of appreciation.³⁶⁰

In reply to such a charge, Untea argues that we ought not be too hasty in denigrating the symbolic power of landscape art with its capacity for reminding that human-beings are connected to and part of 'nature'. Landscape art serves as 'gestures of translation of the awe-full into what can be constructively appropriated by humanity, thus as an attempt toward perpetuating a symbiotic relationship with nature's intentionalities by taking them as witnesses of humanity's spiritual growth, not merely the material.'³⁶¹ Paden objects to Carlson's impoverished historical account of the role that landscape art has played in depicting environmental crises since the 18th century and presents three objections to Carlson's position: (i) landscape paintings did not try to depict formal beauty in a grand theory of idealised landscapes, rather they depicted aesthetic crises of the 18th century. Interpretations of paintings were left to the viewer; (ii) appreciation of paintings does not happen through reduction to superficial forms - there is a need to know what the forms are and consider their meaning; and (iii) experience of paintings is not 'distanced' and 'static'. Instead it is an invitation to understand their world and to consider various relationships between the piece and one's own life.³⁶² Untea concludes that landscape art can enable humans to understand the rich relationships between their own and nature's agency. Combining landscape art and experiences of nature's agency will lead us to states of wonder.

In reciting arguments from Hepburn's *neglect of natural beauty paper*,³⁶³ Carlson warns that if a person's aesthetic education involves nurturing attitudes, perceptual approaches and expectations associated only with the arts, then the learner will likely do one of two things, or a combination: they will either not attend to the aesthetic qualities of natural objects at all, or they will attend to them in the wrong way, finding enjoyment in them as though they had artistic qualities. Here I tend to agree with Carlson – as discussed in Chapter 4. I have my reservations that the complete disregard for emotional responses in the aesthetic experience, which Hepburn showed could have rational grounding, would fail to appropriately respond to nature as nature. Carlson is steadfast in his approach and takes a view that neither the object model, the landscape model or features with them connected to formalism and emotional arousal, can amount to *the* correct way of informing the aesthetic appreciation of nature. Having identified these problematic areas, Carlson offers ways forward for what should inform aesthetic appreciation. For him, this begins with common sense and scientific knowledge.

³⁵⁹ Lintott, 'Adjudicating the Debate over Two Models of Nature Appreciation'.

³⁶⁰ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 28.

³⁶¹ Untea, 'From Sacrifice to Gift: Aesthetic and Moral Aspects of the Experience of Awe for the Natural Environment', 27.

³⁶² Paden, 'Picturesque Landscape Painting and Environmental Aesthetics'.

³⁶³ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty'.

SCIENCE AND COMMON SENSE

As a reader will remember, Carlson accepts that a model of the aesthetic appreciation of nature should follow an analogous structure to traditional aesthetic models established in the arts. He holds the view that appropriate objects for appreciation should be accompanied by knowledge to illuminate and give meaning to appraisals:

[...] the relevant knowledge is our common sense and the scientific discoveries that we have made about those environments. Such information yields appropriate boundaries of appreciation, particular foci of aesthetic significance and relevant acts of aspection... then to appropriately aesthetically appreciate nature we must have knowledge of diverse natural environments and their different systems and their components ... naturalists, ecologists and geologists equip us to aesthetically appreciate nature. Thus the natural and environmental sciences are central to the appropriate aesthetic appreciation of nature.³⁶⁴

This leads to a further requirement of Carlson's model that: (iv) serious aesthetic appreciation is available in scientific knowledge and common sense. This entails that the scientific description must be similar enough to the common sense description to not warrant a significant change in the original and non-specialist description of the environment. This means that when describing a feature of the environment, the scientific knowledge ought to enhance the perceiver's experience, not obliterate it. Carlson notes this position's broader significance to environmental ethical action:

[...] the natural environment model faces aesthetic appreciation on a scientific view of nature and its qualities. It thereby endows the aesthetic appreciation of nature with a degree of objectivity that helps to dispel environmental and moral criticisms, such as that of anthropocentrism. Moreover, the possibility of an objective basis for the aesthetic appreciation of nature holds out promise of some direct practical relevance in a world increasingly engaged in environmental assessment.³⁶⁵

The age of environmental assessment that we find ourselves in presently, Carlson claims, is not an age informed by the aesthetics of nature. Carlson's position does not appear – in common sense at least – to lead the educator to an age where objective knowing and science-informed aesthetic appraisals will lead to improved ethical human action toward natural environments. Simply speaking, Carlson's claim does not appear to stand up to the very real dissonances of continued human-induced global environmental degradation and simultaneous increase of human scientific knowledge about it.

As Finnish philosopher Mikkonen claims, such scientific knowledge is generally incomprehensible to the lay person: The knowledge is too specialised and concerns too many complex features, variables, vast time frames and scales that 'go far beyond human experiential and cognitive frames.'³⁶⁶ Not only does Mikkonen challenge Carlson's ethical claim, but also that scientific knowledge can be equivocated with common sense. Along with Hepburn and Midgley,³⁶⁷ Saito reminds us that scientific inquiry is not without its criticisms: 'Science organises, interprets, and analyses nature by means of our all-too-human conceptual scheme and vocabulary; as such, science does not tell us nature's story. Rather, it tells our story in the sense that scientific endeavour is a kind of humanization

³⁶⁴ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 33–34.

³⁶⁵ Carlson, 35–36.

³⁶⁶ Mikkonen, 'Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature and the Global Environmental Crisis', 53.

³⁶⁷ Midgley, *The Myths We Live By*.

and (conceptual) appropriation of nature to suit our needs.³⁶⁸ That said across much of Carlson's intellectual project, he has asserted – rather than argued – that natural history and ecology are *the* ways to inform our aesthetic appreciation of natural environments. This is an important point to raise here, as scientific cognitivism challenges other aesthetic models without ensuring a similar level of critical introspection. It simply does not enter human common sense (to return to Carlson's framing). Despite this criticism, Carlson's (v) and final requirement that engaging with ethical and aesthetic appraisals of natural environments will be improved by the objective knowledge of natural history (and associated scientific disciplines) needs to be explored further.

REQUIREMENTS OF SCIENTIFIC COGNITIVISM

Before moving onto to some contextualisation for the purposes of this thesis, I offer the reader a reminder in short-form of the requirements of scientific cognitivism:³⁶⁹

- (i) any object can be aesthetically appraised.
- (ii) nature must be treated as nature; the 'on its own terms' requirement.
- (iii) unity of approach to aesthetic appreciation is required across different objects (i.e., if art knowledge informs the aesthetic appreciation of art, then natural history should inform the aesthetic appreciation of nature).
- (iv) scientific knowledge and common sense knowledge should supply the thought component for the aesthetic appraisal of nature.
- (v) scientific knowledge will improve the aesthetic-ethical appraisals of natural environments.

POSITIVE AESTHETICS

The fourth and fifth requirement are particularly important to Carlson's model, as requirements (i) through (iii) are accepted in other aesthetic models, not explored in this thesis.³⁷⁰ The significance of requirements (iv) and (v) is, as Parsons notes, that the model moves away from similarly structured aesthetic appraisals in the arts, which is central to Carlson's argument by analogy for the natural environmental model. On Carlson's approach, '*absolutely everything* in nature takes on significant aesthetic value, when seen in the light of scientific information about it' (original emphasis).³⁷¹ The model takes this to be advantageous, as it promotes the 'aesthetic preservation' of 'hitherto scenically challenged landscapes.'³⁷² However, Parson notes that this is a controversial position as the same claim cannot be made in relation to works of art:

Such a claim would hold that absolutely all artworks, when properly appreciated, have some significant level of aesthetic goodness: there are no aesthetically poor artworks. Even a cursory glance at the art of any given period confirms that this is not the case: much art is mediocre, and some of it is truly awful.³⁷³

A first claim in support of Parson's claim above emerges in the work of Saito. In keeping with her everyday aesthetics (see the following chapter), she argues that scientific

³⁶⁸ Saito, 'Aesthetic Experience as an Educational Journey', 2019, 14; Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and the Environment*; Evernden, *The Social Creation of Nature*.

³⁶⁹ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, 18 This name was originally coined by Yuriko Saito. This name is to be used interchangeably with the Natural Environment Model.

³⁷⁰ See Budd, 'Aesthetics of Nature'.

³⁷¹ Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 57.

³⁷² Parsons, 57.

³⁷³ Parsons, 57.

knowledge illuminates nature's story in the objects being appreciated.³⁷⁴ Natural sciences disclose a 'rich account of how that natural thing came to be, how it works and what it is composed of'. This renders nature's form as articulated through scientific accounts – from which, nature's form is 'never mute' and provides *the* story of the object with aesthetic insight. Yet, as noted in her comments above, it is the story of the object from the human perspective.

The second support claim is Carlson's own, that through the ever-increasing correct categorisations of science over time, one can come to know nature with greater intelligibility. This claim may go some way to respond to Mikkonen's argument. The qualities associated with this growing comprehension are those such as 'order, regularity, harmony, balance, tension, resolution, and so forth... These qualities that make the world seem comprehensible to us are also those that we find aesthetically good.'³⁷⁵ As discussed above, Carlson takes the view that scientific knowledge renders nature more intelligible by understanding its aesthetic features, such as its order, its patterns, and so on.³⁷⁶

This model aims to limit freedom of aesthetic appreciation of nature by limiting the thought component to common sense and scientific knowledge. If one were to accept that the appropriate aesthetic education in nature must be informed by scientific knowledge, then what ought we to do about the wider range of aesthetic experiences that are well documented in environmental aesthetics, nature writing and academic articles, and the canoe journeying narratives in this thesis? In this model, such experiences may be inaccessible, placed off the conceptual map, as Hepburn would attest. They would be mere imaginings or emotional projections onto natural objects or environments.³⁷⁷ As I introduced the reader to Hepburn's view above, when a scientist is appraising the results of an experiment, which is often seen as an objective disclosure of reality, there are a wide range of emotional responses that constitute the whole experience. This emotional element is just as much part of reality as the observation of the physical results. The appraiser can never be without their subjectivity.³⁷⁸

Carlson seems to sit uncomfortably with such a position. While acknowledging that nature and environments are not human creations and should therefore be treated on their own terms, he acknowledges that to manage the 'titillating chaos' of environments, there is a need to imaginatively compose the landscape or object. The perceiver needs capacities to face the aesthetic ambiguity of the landscape.³⁷⁹ Yet, the insight we do gain from Carlson's position is that scientific knowledge can inform aesthetic appraisals of nature. I am not as assured as Carlson that doing so will lead to better ethical treatment of the environment. I prefer the position of multiplicity, to draw on the variety of appropriate knowledge for the experience, object or environment under appraisal.

In developing a curriculum for the aesthetic education of natural environments (which I turn to next), Carlson concerns himself with the subject knowledge required to appraise the composed landscape.

³⁷⁴ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*; Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 58.

³⁷⁵ Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 58; Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*.

³⁷⁶ Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 59.

³⁷⁷ Brady, 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

³⁷⁸ Hepburn, 'Art, Truth and the Education of Subjectivity'.

³⁷⁹ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 106.

THE CORRECT CURRICULUM FOR SCIENTIFIC COGNITIVISM

A distinct feature of the model is its seemingly absolutist valorisation of scientific knowledge. It leaves the educator somewhat confused as to the actual importance of the aesthetic. Brady has raised a corresponding concern about Carlson's model, which I see as speaking to a broader concern for the aesthetic educator:

Ecological value in particular plays a dominant role in the process which leads to a decision about how to conserve or manage the natural environment, yet aesthetic value is often dismissed as too subjective and too difficult to measure, and thus loses an important place alongside other types of value. To ensure that aesthetic value is treated seriously in practice, we need a model of aesthetic appreciation of nature that carves out a distinctive place for aesthetic appreciation and provides an understanding of aesthetic value as not merely personal or arbitrary.³⁸⁰

The emphasis on Brady's point should not, I argue, be interpreted as though the educator must take an 'either or' decision about the use of scientific knowledge or the affective domain. Neither Brady, nor Hepburn, would argue against the use of scientific knowledge if it aided the aesthetic reward. The argument is that the objective insights could compliment aesthetic appraisals, which rely on sensitive subjective and embodied awareness. I also see Brady's concern also speaking to the education question – how exactly is Carlson's scientific cognitivism going to support the aesthetic educator with *aesthetic education*? In the case of this thesis, how could it enable one to undertake aesthetic canoe journeys?

Expanding on his initial discussions above, Carlson subsequently allows for a wider range of disciplines and practices in his curriculum to enable an aesthetic education of natural environments. The certainty with which the curriculum is laid out is telling in Carlson's use of the phrase 'the correct' to indicate the appropriateness of the natural environment aesthetic curriculum.³⁸¹ Carlson leaves the reader to speculate about his conception of the term 'curriculum'. Interpreting his offerings to the reader would suggest an emphasis on propositional knowing while acknowledging the need to develop skills of application, evaluation and critical explanation. In the remainder of this chapter, I summarise Carlson's curriculum approach and present some of its consequences, both in terms of opportunities and limitations for canoe journeying.

The curriculum is divided between core and supplementary knowledge. First, I will discuss the core curriculum proposals - form, common knowledge, scientific knowledge, landscape history, and contemporary landscape use. Second, I discuss the remaining supplementary curriculum - landscape myths, symbolic landscape use, and art. As Carlson notes: 'In aesthetic education, the core curriculum would be taught in every situation, while different supplementary curricula would be relevant or not, depending on the context.'³⁸² The categorisation of 'core' and 'supplementary' indicate the 'must haves' and the 'nice to haves' respectively. Learning about and through these provides the *cognitive* component for the appropriate aesthetic appreciation of environments.

CORE CURRICULUM

³⁸⁰ Brady, 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', 141.

³⁸¹ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 114.

³⁸² Carlson, 129.

FORM

As introduced above, Carlson notes that formalism attends to the form of an object or collection of objects; it focuses on the 'aesthetically moving combination of lines, shapes and colours.'³⁸³ Enabling learners to attend to the aesthetics of natural environments, Carlson implies that there ought to be a staged introduction to the aesthetic appreciation of nature. The model recognises that formal beauty may be the first step that learners take in exercising their aesthetic appreciation. In recognition of this point, Carlson accepts that many people will appreciate the formal qualities of the landscape. As a pre-emptive measure he takes the view that if one is going to appreciate the landscape's formal qualities, then one had better learn to do it in the best way they can. This requires a curriculum to focus on the teaching of knowledge to appreciate the formal qualities of the natural environment, which I discuss below. However, this comes with a cautionary requirement.³⁸⁴

Unlike in art, form and content cannot be separated when aesthetically appraising nature. Attending to pure formalism of nature alone will violate requirement (ii), the nature as nature constraint. The educator will need to structure the learning in such a way that the learner comes to recognise the lines, shapes and colours to be *things out there*. However, Carlson is distrustful that attending to, for instance, the shapes within a composed landscape will do much good except when we note that *the shape over there* is a *tree* or *mountain*. He argues that 'This is in part because by reference to only themselves, the formal elements of a landscape can hardly be identified. The way in which they are identified is by reference to something other than themselves, typically content.'³⁸⁵ While he takes the view that formal knowledge is of a relatively basic kind, it is essential, nonetheless, as it is likely to be a central feature of common knowledge and language. Yet, essential as it might be it is incredibly basic according to Carlson and 'hardly needs extensive treatment in teaching the curriculum, for it is the kind of knowledge we acquire in our language learning and socialisation.'³⁸⁶

Without any further guidance from Carlson, we must assume that this is what he takes to be common knowledge. It is, however, an odd argument. We are forewarned that the educator had better get this kind of appreciation of the environment right, but we are then also told to assume that this kind of knowing is so basic that we will do it anyway. The educator is left at a loss as to know how best to aesthetically appreciate the form of, for example, The River Great Ouse. As we paddled on its meandering flow were we to describe the form, shape, scale, depth or colour of the river as graceful? If so, then should that gracefulness be further defined by some other form of common-knowledge or better still, scientific knowledge? When canoe journeying under the constraints of this feature of the curriculum, it is difficult to know how to direct my attention and/or the direction of learners' attention to (eventually) meet Hepburn's serious beauty requirement. Yet, there is some merit in attending to the form of the river and explaining features of it.

COMMON AND SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Implied in the formal aspect of the curriculum, common sense knowledge and understanding of landscape are acquired through language learning and socialisation, according to Carlson. Carlson sees common knowledge and scientific knowledge of natural

³⁸³ Carlson, 109.

³⁸⁴ Carlson, 110.

³⁸⁵ Carlson, 111.

³⁸⁶ Carlson, 112.

environments as intimately connected. Everyday descriptions of, say, the landscape of Edinburgh, as manifested by its hilly terrain is enhanced by an understanding of its volcanic geological history. The common sense description does not fundamentally change, as such; instead, it is enriched by this knowledge and may enhance the way in which the terrain is aesthetically appraised. In the context of the core curriculum, the primacy of scientific knowledge and the way it is manifested is particularly important for the educator to consider.

First, scientific knowledge is positioned as an extension of common knowledge. Scientific concepts are finer grained and theoretically richer than common sense descriptions, as considered above. The model allows for some conceptual movement from common sense to scientific descriptions, but it does not involve a movement away from the original aesthetic appreciation. Aesthetically appraising the sensuous surface of Dundas Street in Edinburgh, in this model is a potentially trivial affair, as it can go no deeper than perceiving shape, form and colour. Moving toward the enriching insights of scientific revelation leads to a more serious mode of aesthetic appreciation of the environment.³⁸⁷ For instance, it may stop me from viewing the street as the climb toward a seeming artistic 'vanishing point' at its peak, which would be to attend to the formal qualities of the landscape through an artistic concept. By grounding the appreciation with scientific insights, one could appraise the stonework, the flow of water down the rainy street, or suspected aesthetic impact of weather conditions.

Second, as Carlson summarises, the scientific approach adheres to the disciplinary analogy of aesthetic appreciation of art *as art* (by the appraiser treating nature *as nature*):

Thus for the same reasons that art historical and critical knowledge is given prominent place in any curriculum for the aesthetic appreciation of art, scientific knowledge must be given an analogous place in a curriculum for the aesthetic appreciation of landscapes.³⁸⁸

Where attending to formal qualities and drawing on common sense knowledge and language are ways of aesthetically appreciating landscapes, the natural environment model places scientific knowledge as the primary way of enabling more serious and rich forms of aesthetic appreciation (hence its other name, *scientific cognitivism*). This is recognised by analogy in the aesthetic appraisal of the arts. This approach does however place a limit on this analogy when attending to the uses of the landscape. Plainly, it cannot be a post-modernist free-for-all.

HISTORICAL LANDSCAPE USE

In recognising that many landscapes are not without impingement or influence by human intervention, appreciating nature as nature may be assuming the view of an untouched nature, or wilderness. The model accounts for this issue, within the core curriculum, by acknowledging that there are no appropriate analogous tools in art to accommodate and attend to historical and cultural uses of landscapes.

The model, made in the image and analogy of art aesthetics here moves to a disanalogy. The curriculum, in Carlson's view, must recognise that artworks are *completed* at particular times, and in some cases historical context to the artwork may be important but are

³⁸⁷ For 'trivial' and 'serious' aesthetic appreciation see Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

³⁸⁸ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 113.

certainly not fundamental to the appreciation of its form.³⁸⁹ In contrast, landscapes are never *finished*. They are in a constant process of making. Landscape history and uses are thus continuous. They 'constitute a single ongoing history of production.'³⁹⁰ This promiscuity of the landscape, its inability to be bounded and completely framed, occurs through the making and remaking of it through the ebbs and flows of human and more-than-human powers. This recognition of the ongoing history of the landscape is vital to its serious aesthetic appreciation. Carlson emphasises the fact that it is 'often, the most important key to such appreciation.'³⁹¹ Although Carlson does not directly make the claim, his point may be analogous to treating nature *as nature* i.e., treating the landscape *as a landscape*, which in many typical cases around the world have been (and continue to be) deeply influenced by human intervention, educationally and through physical interventions such as farming and building. Despite adhering to the primacy of science within the model overall, Carlson recognises the value of incorporating multi-disciplinary insights into aesthetic appraisals of landscapes:

Consequently, the knowledge about landscapes provided by the social sciences – history itself, as well as geography, anthropology, and sociology – is an essential component of the curriculum for the appreciation of landscapes. Especially relevant are particular kinds of studies that employ the knowledge gained from such sciences specifically to tell the stories of the long-term development of landscapes.³⁹²

Various types of information could influence the way the educator conceptualises canoe journeys. Engaging with wonder that emerges through geographical, anthropological or sociological framings could offer rich multi-disciplinary insights about the watercourse and the purpose of the journeying. More so, the surrounding landscape, historic human and animal relations with it, as well as economic and political dependencies, can emerge as areas of inquiry to tell the ongoing story of the landscape. In doing so, it would enable aesthetic appreciation through key concepts and knowledge as the landscape unfolds. It appears that the landscape is framed as an educational object with the potential of a myriad of meaning-making opportunities.

The reader will have noticed that in the introduction plate for this chapter, a dark pipe cuts diagonally – top left to bottom right – against the back wall of the leaky plumbing system. The emergence of the pipe at the bottom of the page represents nature writing. The stories of the long-term development of the landscape are, in my view, most readily available through a range of nature-writing literature. The stories could be representative of fiction or non-fiction. They can provide richly evocative and enlivening ways of thinking about the landscapes and waterscapes. Yet in Carlson's curriculum they do not meet his requirement for always appearing in our aesthetic appraisals.

Yet, I remain unclear whether these would be appropriate sources for the core curriculum or whether they would be relegated to the supplementary curriculum. If such materials are given the status of mythology or art by Carlson, then it would seem to be material for the supplementary curriculum only. A large problem remains however – if the educator is meant to enable an objective, disinterested appreciation of the natural environment, even conceptualising the process as a story of varied landscape use seems a rather subjective

³⁸⁹ Carlson, 114.

³⁹⁰ Carlson, 155.

³⁹¹ Carlson, 115.

³⁹² Carlson, 115.

and artistic approach to take. Outside of Carlson's constraints this would seem to be a valuable educational approach. Within the logic of his argument however, this seems to be somewhat confused.

CONTEMPORARY LANDSCAPE USE

The central distinction made between historical and contemporary uses of the landscape, within this model, relies on the consideration of the varied roles and functions of landscape in contemporary human life. The educator must consider the uses and meanings of the landscape in the *here and now*. Again, as with the multi-disciplinary nature of the historic use of the landscape, contemporary uses, historical use and natural history all run alongside each other in capturing the ongoing production and meaning of the landscape. Social sciences, history and sociology all enable one to explain the shaping of the landscape. Carlson positions historical and contemporary landscape use as separate within the curriculum. Insights about contemporary use may significantly influence aesthetic appreciation:

[...] knowledge of the contemporary use of landscape has an essential, perhaps even somewhat special, place in the curriculum for the appropriate aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, especially since it is particularly useful in dealing with the ambiguity of aesthetic value that infects much of contemporary human environment.³⁹³

In other works, Carlson explores features of the aesthetic ambiguity of human environments when architecture aesthetics and designer aesthetics are used, often incorrectly, to appraise the human environment. He favours an ecological mode to landscape aesthetics, which enables the perceiver to recognise how the human landscape and human culture operate much like co-dependent and relational features of an ecosystem.³⁹⁴ This is all the more important in contemporary uses of landscapes as changes can often elicit *aesthetic dismay* - seeing the uses or abuses of one's local landscapes, or devastation of landscapes and places of particular importance to their lives.³⁹⁵ Changes in the landscape and our reactions to them are important, as Carlson concludes: '... without this knowledge... we will surely misunderstand and misappreciate it.'³⁹⁶ Interestingly, I see Carlson appealing to the affective domain of aesthetic appreciation. Engaging with devastation, misappreciation, dismay, would seem to lead to a grounded emotional response to the natural environment, which Hepburn showed to be valuable in the previous chapters and narratives. One reading of Carlson's argument could interpret his position through out-and-out rejection of the affective. However, I argue by bringing ecological knowledge into the sensible sounding language for aesthetic appreciation could enhance the educator and learner experience. This has, to some degree, been seen in outdoor education practice.

Place-based educators such as Beames and Ross sought to enable children to undertake journeys in their local cityscape,³⁹⁷ the journeying educator may be able to capitalise on this multi-disciplinary place-based learning. When journeying through landscapes, for instance, the learners and educators could be primed with historical, sociological, political,

³⁹³ Carlson, 118.

³⁹⁴ Carlson, 'On Aesthetically Appreciating Human Environments'.

³⁹⁵ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 118.

³⁹⁶ Carlson, 118.

³⁹⁷ Beames and Ross, 'Journeys Outside the Classroom'.

ecological, of course, aesthetic knowledge, to articulate responses and appraisals of the landscape.

Learners will need to be supported in transforming their common and disciplinary knowledge to appraise the landscape with accuracy. As Natural History and Ecology are invoked as the most appropriate theoretical groundings for aesthetic appraisals of environments, according to Carlson, it is hardly surprising that he takes an interconnected approach to aspects of appreciation in recognising that 'nothing in our human environments can be appreciated adequately in isolation.'³⁹⁸ This would suggest that he is at least, in principle, open to the idea that ecological knowledge cannot be isolated from the affective domain. He pursues this, to such an extent, that he invokes the evolutionary principle of the survival of the fittest, which he takes to mean the survival of that which best fits its environment:

For the aesthetic appreciation of our human environments, a comparable principle suggests that we may find the greatest aesthetic interest and merit in that which best fits within its environment and therefore looks as it should.³⁹⁹

There are two points that I wish to draw out here based on Carlson's own commitments in his model. The first is how his view – of best fit – could in fact not be a 'best fit' with his own common sense/scientific informed approach. The survival of that which best fits in any given environment is a complex affair, and one based on a particular set of material affordances. In recent years, many ancient trees have been cut down on the route of the high-speed rail link 2 (HS2), as well as on the streets of Sheffield (UK), to reduce maintenance costs. The survival, or not, of these living organisms in the environment is based on the common sense perspective and drive of planners and politicians with agendas nestled in a whole range of other interests and goals that impact an understanding of 'what looks as it should'. Common sense views of 'what looks as it should' are by no means settled. Percipients may agree on criteria of 'best fit', which arguably reduces such a position to that of subjective preference. This is an avenue that Carlson does not wish to go down, but his position leaves him open to this confusion and criticism.

Second, the educator will be required to handle the ramifications of this point with considerable care. They will need to counter any notions of aesthetic or ethical indoctrination. This is where Carlson's model can provide the educator with valuable insights. Education of 'best fit' could lead to strong moralistic impressions about fellow humans – such as those without a fixed abode, differences of any kind from the majority (skin colour, disability, pronoun choice) – or nature, such as non-native species. Carlson does not address these kinds of very real and ultimately aesthetic considerations that can have profound ethical consequences. As Saito discusses – and as I describe in the Everyday Model below – imperial Japan and Nazi Germany based significant political decision-making on similar aesthetic tactics for disastrous and ethically abhorrent ends.⁴⁰⁰ More recently, in contemporary English politics, the idea that refugees are not a 'best fit' in the UK and are better placed out of sight in Rwanda is a further case in point. The 'best fit' approach has been misused throughout history. Yet, Carlson's model could enable an ecologically grounded common sense that educators can use to problematise the

³⁹⁸ Carlson, 'On Aesthetically Appreciating Human Environments', 63.

³⁹⁹ Carlson, 63.

⁴⁰⁰ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*.

politicisation of 'best fit' ideologies in the contemporary landscape, while acknowledging more nuanced and ecologically informed appraisals of the environment.

SUPPLEMENTARY CURRICULUM

LANDSCAPE MYTHS, SYMBOLS AND ART

The supplementary features of the curriculum draw on Mythology, Symbolism and Art. Carlson accepts that these are important ways that many humans engage with, and make meaning from, their landscapes. I discuss them together in this section. Myths can be important motivations for visiting and protecting environments, such as Loch Ness and the infamous Loch Ness monster. Carlson recognises that the arts are ways of capturing the symbolic and mythological importance of the landscape. The model accommodates these three features in recognition that many stories and artworks not only depict the landscape but are often created in situ, which can have a powerful influence on our aesthetic appreciation.

Carlson accepts that works of art can imprint on us, on our ways of seeing and relating to landscapes in profound ways. Although Carlson does not give this example, the following one is illustrative of his point. For the millions of people who visit the English Lake district each year, who take home postcards, artworks, illustration books and guides to display in their homes – as an act of love and significance for place – are likely to defend it from contested developments. This has been the case against proposals such as coalmines⁴⁰¹ and of a zip-wire across valleys.⁴⁰² Often cited are personal stories vivid in imagery, with defenders citing impressions and meanings generated through experiences of the landscape and the reminders of important experiences through artworks. As Carlson recognises, landscape myths, symbols and art are not part of the production of the landscape itself. They can, however, influence explanations of the way landscapes are perceived and appraised, especially to those captivated by the imagery. Although Carlson does not make this point explicitly, artworks and landscape stories are likely to be primary sources informing common sense understandings of landscape.

⁴⁰¹ 'Two Legal Challenges Have Been Launched against a New Lake District Coal Mine - Canary'.

⁴⁰² 'Lake District Zip-Wire Plans Abandoned after Protests | Lake District | The Guardian'.



FIGURE 1 WATERCOLOUR PAINTING OF ASH GILL – BY LEWIS STOCKWELL

The Ash Gill painting above (Figure 1) and the process of its production is illustrative of the common sense understanding. When painting it, I was captivated by the flow of the water, how it impacted the carving out of lines in the rock, and I considered the water's power as it descended to the sea. Not only was the painting created in the landscape, but it also enabled me to consider aesthetic and ecological features of the environment. As such, the curriculum acknowledges the importance of ways of knowing to inform aesthetic appreciation:

[...] we might say that the mythical, symbolic and artistic uses of landscape make and remake not the actual landscape, but the landscape images of individuals, groups, or whole cultures. We might characterise them as making and remaking imaginary landscapes in the individual or the collective mind. And thus knowledge of these uses does indeed explain the way landscapes look to certain individuals or to members of certain groups or cultures.⁴⁰³

Nuanced and personal appraisals of landscapes must, however, be considered carefully in this model. We should not read the quotes and descriptions above as heading toward an aesthetic subjectivism. Carlson argues against this as it undermines the necessary objectivity for aesthetic appreciation in his view, claiming that such an engagement with depictions of the landscape (rather than the physical landscape itself) should not be read as a form of relativism, but as landscape pluralism.

Some meanings will have priority over others; there are – just like in the aesthetics of artworks – privileged readings of landscapes, with some more appropriate than others, in his view. This enables the model, the curriculum, and by extension the educator and learners, to not violate the principles outlined in the natural environment model. For instance, Carlson sees histories of landscape production as taking precedence in aesthetic appreciation over knowledge of contemporary uses. Furthermore, the model prioritises common sense and scientific knowledge above the histories of landscape use and production. This is essential, Carlson suggests, as myths, symbols and art, will be important in some but not all cases in aesthetic appreciation of natural environments. It

⁴⁰³ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*, 125–26.

can be concluded that, contextually privileged aesthetic appreciation can be misleading and could lead to the appreciation of nature as something other than itself, i.e., the human story or as a piece of landscape art, or a location as *representing* a mythology rather than displaying scientifically informed aesthetic qualities. Yet, Carlson does recognise that the ways in which environments are likely to be understood are, quite literally, in the *reading* of nature writing by authors such as Thoreau and Muir (see the plumbing above). This rather confusing set of curriculum parameters could leave the educator both inspired and confused; inspired that they have at their disposal a range of disciplinary tools to nurture aesthetic appreciation; confused that some readings should be privileged over others, which could conflict with the percipient's experience of common sense interpretation of the landscape. If the end goal of the curriculum is to use aesthetic appreciation for the more ethical treatment of the environment, then such a hierarchy of educational insight might not match with common sense experiences when in the canoe journeying experience.

SUMMARY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

At this point in finding my thing, I am left somewhat frustrated with my canoeing companion, Carlson. I do not want the reader to misinterpret my frustration as a motivation for jettisoning his ideas from my thesis. From canoeing on The River Great Ouse, the reader has seen that interesting insights are available to the aesthete and educator alike. Instead, my reflexive and analytical response encapsulates what I have sought to show – at least in part – namely, the value of scientific cognitivism to the educator. My response emerges from the canoe seat, as I have interpreted how the educator could put aspects of the model to use in their own development and in the education of their students. Here my summary is more like a portage point. The reader and I are carrying our canoe above our heads – not an easy, but a necessary, task if we are to carry on. As we move from the lake back to the river, we are considering our privileged reading of Carlson's Natural Environment aesthetic. In doing so, I hope to consolidate aspects of these ideas into a bold aesthetic education interpretation, as the graffiti artist's generous offering of E.O. Wilson provoked me to do while canoeing with Carlson.

The role of the educator becomes one of metaphor. They appear *as* director, or curator, directing the learner to what is important and what counts as worthy of appraisal. A consequence of the model is a demand on the educator to have a heightened understanding of what counts and what is to be excluded as acceptable material for aesthetic appreciation. An implication of this is that the journeyers (students and teachers) may have to disregard key aspects of an otherwise educative experience, because perhaps it is deeply emotive. The model does not account for the affective responses often captured as being important to the meaning-making opportunities on the journey. The artificial separation, while sometimes useful for philosophical or scientific analysis, could lead to seeing the river *as* maimed due to pollution – as the reader will recall in the narrative above – but without emotional response or motivation for moral action. This, to me, seems counter to Carlson's end goal and it further appears as a missed 'paddle stroke' for the canoeist in exercising their responsibilities to the more-than-human world. As Carlson rightly accepts that humans are part of the ongoing history of production of landscapes, I think the educator has an opportunity to nurture an aesthetic and ethical approach in their canoe journeys. In doing so, like the heron in the opening of the narrative, the educator can become a positive marker of their influence in the landscape and waterscape.

The mark of a positive influence in the landscape rests on what an educator needs to know. As the reader will remember, Carlson claims that his must be the right kind of knowledge for the landscape in question. The educator will need to recognise when it is appropriate to draw on features of the supplementary curriculum to facilitate aesthetic education. They will need to ensure that symbols, myth and art clearly remain as secondary to common sense and scientific knowledge. The educator will need to be well versed in the boundaries for what counts as aesthetic and operate within these restrictions. Whereas, perhaps, Hepburn and other canoeing companions are open to various forms of aesthetic learning, Carlson's model runs the risk of the canoe journey becoming a tool for the facilitation of subject knowledge. Like aesthetic education for the purposes of art (see Chapter 4), where the curriculum tends to be means for subject knowledge acquisition, I fear that such an approach might inhibit the making and remaking of the imaginary aesthetic landscape of the learner's mind. My concern is that such approach ignores the potential range of aesthetic education experiences on offer. This perpetuates poor quality aesthetic education and experience, which is a significant concern shared by our canoeing companions so far – Hepburn and Carlson. It should be said though, that this remains my concern even though Carlson's is the only aesthetic model in this thesis to posit a curriculum for aesthetic appreciation of nature.

The reader will recall that Carlson posits a problematic relationship between the aesthetic and the moral – scientific knowledge should inform aesthetic appreciation. The appreciator will use this objective knowledge to inform their moral actions toward the natural environment. I have showed above that there are examples to the contrary, yet this does not mean that drawing on serious aesthetic appraisals could not be used for moral ecological action. As such, I see the educator needing to consider the relationship between the aesthetic and the moral very carefully. In following the model's logic, the educator will expect to see an improvement in the moral behaviour of the learners just because of the development of their scientifically informed aesthetic sensibilities. A wise aesthetic educator will need to draw on conceptual and pedagogical resources, not accounted for in the model, for this aesthetic-moral formation to become a reality when journeying through landscapes. This could be achieved in implicit and explicit ways, for instance when entering and exiting the water and attending to the beauty of the riverbank. The educator could model, as well as explicitly discuss, the ecological impact of overuse of a single entry and exit point. Drawing on ecological observations, raising awareness of what one sees and feels in the ongoing destruction, leading the learners to consider how to behave more wisely in the future somehow to bridge the aesthetic-ethic gap that the educator is left with in the model's current structure.

So far, I have shown the reader my frustration and my attempts to show the value of persevering with aspects of the natural environment model. If nothing else, they provide the reader and educator with opportunities to check-and-balance presuppositions and clichéd thinking. As a moment of further introspection resulting from the reverberations of this chapter, I must deal with an almost existential issue of this thesis because of the model - the educator may need to carefully consider the value of a journey if engaging with this model. The model offers the educator a range of knowledge and skills valuable for the aesthetic appreciation of natural environments. On Carlson's own terms however, it remains unclear how educative experiences within the model could operate. Journeying through the landscape for instance could divert attention away from the environment and provide learners with other meaningful aesthetic opportunities, such as those developing

canoeing skills,⁴⁰⁴ interpersonal communication,⁴⁰⁵ aesthetic and moral understanding and so on.⁴⁰⁶

Conversely, if the educator were to interpret the model with some charity, there are opportunities to enrich the aesthetic reward and sensible sounding language, which includes subjective and ecological language, when journeying through the landscape. While one reading the model's scientific underpinning could leave the journey open to a kind of reductivism that strips away the subjectively rich content, as identified by Hepburn above, acknowledging that subjective and objective thought models are always in view of each other can enhance opportunities for holistic outdoor education experiences. The educator will need to ensure however that the pursuit of a reductive science warned against by Hepburn and Midgely are checked and balanced in the learning experience. However, without this more charitable reading, Carlson's model may be interpreted by the educator that they ought to aesthetically appreciate the natural environment with ecological knowledge informing the serious beauty intuition in a reductive way. If the educator follows this route, they are left with few conceptual resources to draw on in the design and reward of the canoe journey.

There is one final consideration of the natural environment model before I canoe with a further companion – Yuriko Saito. The educator will need to model and explain the value of scientific knowledge in positively appreciating the environment where the journey is taking place. This may mean that in scenically challenged industrial landscapes, the educator will need to draw on the core and the supplementary curriculum to present a positive aesthetic narrative for the learners. This could be an enriching learning experience, as it would likely disturb the learner's common sense assumptions. In addition, it may challenge their appraising skills while enabling them to enhance, deepen and revise their insights through knowledge shared in the core and supplementary curriculum. In telling the stories of the landscape however, it remains unclear whether such an educative act would be aesthetic. Within the model, it may be that a journey is categorised as merely the experiential mode of another discipline such as geography, history and so on. Yet, the claim that can be made is that by canoeing through a variety of landscapes with their identifiable aesthetic qualities, the educator and learner can develop a form of aesthetic common sense that emerges from the canoe journeying. While there are philosophical and practical challenges to scientific cognitivism, these opportunities may well be worth pursuing in the broadening of aesthetic education I am promoting in this thesis.

⁴⁰⁴ Wattchow and Brown, *A Pedagogy of Place: Outdoor Education for a Changing World*.

⁴⁰⁵ Allison and Scott, 'Journeying in Outdoor Environmental Education'.

⁴⁰⁶ Carr, 'Moral Values and the Arts in Environmental Education: Towards an Ethics of Aesthetic Appreciation'.

Chapter 7. Canoe Journeying Narrative: Paddling with Yuriko Saito

ROOT WORD: 'JOURN' - MEANING
DAILY.
JOURNÉE (EXTENSION OF 'JOURN') =
IMPORTANT. CAPTURES NOTION
OF DAILY TRAVEL, TOIL, PRODUCTION.
'JOURNEYMAN' - RECOGNISED FOR
QUALITY OF LABOUR IN EXCHANGE
FOR DAILY WAGE. RANKED SOCIALLY
HIGHER THAN APPRENTICE; LOWER THAN
MASTER. NOT EXTRAORDINARY.

As an educator, attending to aesthetic features of my daily life could be liberating. Seeing beyond clichés of adventure and attending to features that make up the journey: route planning, kit choice, personal organisation, ambience, attunement, ethics... all have features that can be appraised aesthetically, that can make journeys better.

[EXTRACT: LITTLE GREEN NOTEBOOK]

PLATE 11 'JOURN' EXTRACT FROM LITTLE GREEN NOTEBOOK⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ OED, 'Journey, n.'

These words are from my little green notebook. I find myself needing to be reminded that as an educator I am not having the same experience as the students. In the past, I've worked with some outdoor educators and leaders who seek such experiences because of their own wants and interests, with students coming along for their ride under the guise of it being 'their adventure'.

I always try to learn from and with my students. Even though we will be in the same physical landscape, in canoes, the students could well be having special experience – something truly transformative – while I'm at *work*. It is their transformation, not necessarily mine, unless I am able to be open to different ways of seeing the learning experience. That's why I'm paddling today; Saito is going to help me... I just don't know how yet.

*

"Today smells weird", I mutter to myself as I look at my canoe kit strewn across a sloped riverbank of a murky River Nene. This isn't my local river, but it is a place I regularly paddle and bring students to. It is a place where locals often stop to say, 'hello', extending their hand of neighbourliness.

I am eastward, the hum of the city bypass in the background. I am in a flat unassuming landscape between the City of Peterborough and the 'sea'. About 500 metres away is a railway line to March and Ely. Three-coach trains pootle up and down, contrasted by long and heavy snakes of rail freight that take containers to and from the port of Felixstowe.

The trees are dense by the bank, and they need to be. The tight corner of the road above the dyke has no safety barrier. The tell-tale dent of the former chevron sign looks to have been hit by a car – only the bent posts are left bowing to an audience of Beech trees, sticky weed and a thicket of blackberries. The trees are the only warning that something is up ahead that one needs to turn left for. The road runs parallel with the river for the eastward stretch; sitting above the dyke, which has forced the river from its historical route. Both long, with only the slightest curve that partially obscures the lock about a mile east.

*

"Flask of hot water – red bag; river guide – green bag; teabags, coffee, sugar and milk – red bag; little green notebook – green bag; sandwiches – red bag; cagoules – one for me and one for Saito", I say in a somewhat childish and rhythmic tone, "biscuits and chocolate – red bag; first-aid kit – red bag; tarpaulin and lines – green-bag; canoe trolley – in the hull; two small sit mats – ah, I'll attach those to the seats, it'll be more comfortable".

The clouds are moving quickly overhead, presenting the illusion that they are being dragged along by the line of the river. The weather is more noticeable here, with the

land being so flat. Moving this way is a blanket of nimbostratus – a flat, layered cloud carrying droplets of water ready to soak all below it.

*

“Hello Lewis!”, Saito startles me as she makes her way through the sycamores and down the slanting narrow track. I finish faffing. I attach the two dry bags to the lashing loops of the canoe. I give them a little tug to make sure they won’t come loose.

“Hey, welcome, welcome!” I say, in a hopeful attempt to make her feel at ease. “I’m not sure the weather is going to be on our side today, but I’ve packed cags for us, which come to think of it, we should probably put on now...”.

She looks over at the houseboats opposite, seemingly appraising a different kind of domesticity.

I unclip the red bag... not there... I then unclip the green bag – “ahh there they are!”, I say, looking over the mess I had just a moment ago attempted to control. “The blue one or the orange one?”, I say, conscious of the strewn items across the hull.

She also looks over with a comforting smile, “The blue please... and don’t worry, mess is something we can control... and anyway you don’t want to be too precise about these things. You could think of the canoe like I’ve thought of our domestic space, *as a lived space that certainly should be cleaned, tidied up, and organised, but it should also allow some degree of mess and disorganisation. A space that is more relaxed and items a little askew, for example, may provide a point of respite and ease*”.⁴⁰⁸

“Well that’s reassuring”, I say rolling up the bags and stowing them once again by the clips, “my study is, however, a booming buzzing confusion most of the time so, so the canoe is respite for me, too!”.

We chuckle as we get our buoyancy aids on. Mine is blue, tarnished and a bit mucky with ‘river stains’. Saito is borrowing a new one from my wife. It is both purple and grey; pristine, and designed for a woman’s physique – a relatively recent development for female inclusion in canoeing.

*

Although the bank is steep, it is straight and the full length of the canoe can be held against it firmly. I use the painter trick and keep the canoe tight to the bank; the rope underneath the carrying yoke. I recite familiar instructions softly: “As you step in, keep your body low and keep as central as you can. If you can, put your feet in the centre of the hull. As long as your head is inside the gunwales, you’ll be sure to stay dry... well from the river at least, but not the rain! Get your bum onto the seat, loosen your hips and then you can get familiar with the movements of the boat”.

⁴⁰⁸ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 169.

She steps from the sloped grass effortlessly into the canoe. The stern raises slightly, indicating that it is time for me to get in.

Passing the painter back underneath the yoke and stowing it on the buoyancy block behind my seat, I get in cautiously but confidently. I am assured by Saito's conviction. In the last moment that my left foot is in the boat and my right is on land, I use my toes to push us gently sideways from the bank and point us into the flow.

We look around us to see if any boats are coming - none. In that moment, we realise we have been watched, as though in a show, by a man in his houseboat. Leaning out of his kitchen hatch having a cigarette he smiles and says with a puffing smile, he says "Nice to see you back, but that kayak is not for me... I'll stick to my barge".

I let the normal displeasure of the incorrect naming of our canoe slide, and we give him a smile.

"Does it smell funny to you?" Saito says, confirming that senses are not deceiving me.

*

We turn the canoe on the spot. Saito places her paddle on her left side in line with her hip and then draws it wide and forward, arcing in a sweeping motion – that's how it gets the name the sweep stroke. The surface of the water ruptures, with white splashes and then ripples hitting the side. I put my paddle in as far forward on the right, and sweep it back to the stern. Synchronised ripples bounce off the sides of the boat, which feel to be countering our movement. In two sets of big sweeps though, we turn 180 degrees.

"We are heading to the sea first. It is only a mile away and then we'll retrace our paddle strokes to the city. Does that sound OK?", I shout as the ripples of the water give way to the expanse of Fens. I feel a new moment emerge.

*

"We are going to come back this way? What does the journey look like today?" Saito asks. "Erm, yes. I thought we'd use the peculiarities of waters here, I suppose, so that we might talk about the possibilities for aesthetic education... It is a circular trip but with two points on the circle to visit on the way", I explain. "Are you all right with that?", I ask apologetically.

"Oh yes" she answers.

The sky is getting moody, with purples and pinks, as the clouds pass above us. To our right are three gigantic chimneys. From this low semi-aquatic position, they appear out of very large trees about a mile away.



FIGURE 2 CHIMNEYS AGAINST AN OMINOUS SKY (WATERCOLOUR BY LEWIS STOCKWELL)

*

“The way we started today, and the journey have got me thinking”, she says thoughtfully.

“The notion of orderliness and something being ordered” she says “is dependent on the context. Each context has a set of expectations imbued in it that influence what the recipient notices, what becomes their aesthetic experience. There is a perceptual complexity to such an experience which some philosophers think can *only be accessible after much training*.⁴⁰⁹ I disagree though, when making sense of the organisation of component parts of an aesthetic experience, the percipient creates an ambience through the order that you as the creator of the experience are managing”.⁴¹⁰

“Ok, so you’re saying that my choice to go this way and then back again, sets up a particular sense of order, a kind of feeling that the percipient paddler is going to create or receive?”, I say a little confused.

“Well, yes... unlike our experience of standard fine art objects, our everyday aesthetic experience is seldom directed toward a clearly demarcated object; hence, *it may appear to lack a unifying theme that organises various ingredients provided by different senses and associated ingredients. However, sometimes our multi-sensory and multi-dimensional experiences come together to provide a unified experience which becomes a source of aesthetic appreciation. When so many disparate, but not incongruous, elements come together under one unifying theme, such as a particular sense of place,*

⁴⁰⁹ Saito, 152.

⁴¹⁰ Saito, 122.

*season, time of day, or occasion, we often have a memorable experience even within our humdrum life. We savor the distinctive character of the place, the season, or the atmosphere associated with the particular occasion”.*⁴¹¹

*

The visual illusion of the river means that its almost uninterrupted length feels like no progress is being made. As we paddle around the curve, we see a huge structure directly ahead of us. The fractured roofs of corrugated farm buildings can be seen, obscured by the sharp gradient of the bank. The occasional car hovers by, wheels hidden behind the planting of roadside wildflower. Little brown and black dots – Bees, Wasps, Hoverflies and Flies – dance in and out of the buds. Some plants bow momentarily under the weight of little fat bees.

The clouds remain ominous, the chimneys continue steaming, that smell is still there. The lock gates and their counterbalancing structure comes into sharper focus with each paddle stroke.

“We are nearing the sea”, I declare wryly.

Saito turns her head in confusion but doesn’t say anything and doesn’t miss a paddle stroke. The meadow to our right has a familiar sight of a kestrel captivated by its next meal. Its head absolutely fixed; its body, wings and tail counteracting all the subtle challenges of the wind at the height of telephone lines. Without luck, it swoops to rest awhile on the telephone line. It watches us, seemingly realising that we are too big for it to eat, or that we might try to eat what it had spotted. It is soon bored with us and disappears toward the railway line.

*

“I’m just wrapping my head around this” I say somewhat puzzled, “so, the way I packed the canoe, spoke, lent you kit, and planned the route all come together unified by the paddling, and the river... even the choice of route today gives off aesthetic qualities?”

“Yes”, She says as she stops paddling, anticipating placing her hand on the approaching jetty, “We need to expand our aesthetic horizon. *Our aesthetic appreciation of objects (in the broadest sense, including season, time of day, place) for expressing their distinctive characteristics has important ethical and pragmatic consequences.* For an educator like you, you’ll want to nurture *an attitude of open mindedness by encouraging the learner to appreciate each kind of object for what it is, rather than imposing a certain predetermined standard of beauty. As a result, our aesthetic life becomes diversified; hence, enriched... Each kind of object (which includes this journey) has its own characteristics, the expression of which constitutes its own unique aesthetic value.*”⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ Saito, 122–23.

⁴¹² Saito, 129.

We come to a complete stop. I tug the painter from the webbing of the buoyancy block and weave it under the yoke. Taking the working end, I wrap it and tie it to a mooring post. The canoe secured, I get out first, sitting on the jetty with my legs dangling into the boat. This keeps the boat steady for Saito to get up. She rises nimbly, holding her paddle in her hand; she lightly jumps onto the jetty and looks down at me with a smile. I get to my feet using my paddle as a make-shift staff. The large Environment Agency sign provides information about the lock, its location, and a reminder to have a river licence and to check the tide times – I have fleeting thoughts about the agency of the environment and what the river might have license to do to us.⁴¹³

“Shall we go and stand beside the sea?” I say with a wry smile on my face and an awareness of impending drizzle. As we walk around the lock and the keeper’s cottage, we begin to descend quite a considerable drop, about 10 metres or so.

“Educators tend to be concerned with prescribed aims and outcomes, but perhaps less so in outdoor education; or at least they don’t seem to be manifested in the same way as in classroom-based education”, I say as my thinking and footsteps merge.

“I suppose, even with these journeys, I hadn’t really given voice to such qualities as aesthetic. Perhaps, a peculiar type of journey – like the one today – could serve as an opportunity to find its unique value, if we attend to it on its own terms rather than something else. I could see that happening with students as we paddle. Instead of it being captured as some kind of prescribed ‘adventure’ with its own manifestations of ‘beautiful’, an aesthetic canoe journey could be different. It could be an adventure, but it could provide opportunities to be something else”, I say as we descend.

*

Standing on the lower jetty, we take in a visually unassuming site of sandy black sludge. The tide is out. Dark green waters trickling down the vegetation growing on the exposed sluice gate. The unidentified smell gives way to regular whiffs of putrefying egg from exposed seaweed, latched to the jetty posts. Here ‘sea’ translates as ‘smelly river’. Yet wading birds find an abundance of nutritious food here as swans and gulls tuck into the green sludge. It looks like the kind of stuff that might be sold as ‘nature’s anti-something serum’. With that thought I am reminded that the everyday use of the term ‘aesthetics’ is much more associated with the beauty industry than it is the arts, nature, or journeying. It reminds me that still, even now, humans try to control aspect of nature – whether embodied or environmental.

⁴¹³ This place is called Dog-in-a-doublet. It makes me think of MacFarlane’s book *Landmarks* in which he maps important nature- and place-writing with the almost forgotten words and names of the landscape. This place doesn’t get a mention though. Local legend has it that the pub up there was built to serve the Dutch when they were draining the Fens. The old landlady had a terrier that went for a swim down below the lock and lost its fur. She knitted it a little coat, a ‘doublet’. So the pub, the bridge, and the lock all share the same name.

The freshness of the drizzle dampens the sludgy overwhelming whiff. “Not an awe-inspiring landscape” I say.

“And not particularly *special* to look at”, she responds, and then says, “yet I imagine it is unique in being able to teach many things about humanity’s drive to control the environment and its attempt to ignore the smelly and unassuming features that make-up this place”.

“I think you’re right” I say, “the only houses here are the lock keeper’s cottage and a pub... this place feels forgotten and yet it is aesthetically rich. I’m now thinking of opportunities to deal with negative aesthetic qualities such as disgust, or to deal with complex feelings about value of the environment and notions of value and beauty”, I say.

*

Thought-provoked by the aesthetics of the unassuming scene, we return and board the canoe. I untie the painter and stow it. We begin retracing our paddle strokes. A fallen rowan is in process of having its berries ravaged by blackbirds and a pair of jays. They have a striking blue flash on their wings.

As we near the smoking house boats again, this time from a stove chimney, two distinct sounds emerge: the patter of rain and the mooing of cows drinking together at the water’s edge.

Saito’s paddle strokes are purposeful and attentive. We stop underneath the shelter of a new and yet rusting bridge. Saito reflects on the ethical qualities of the journey’s ambience: “*It has to do with paying our respect to what the object is and experiencing it for what it is, rather than using it as a means for gaining an aesthetic kick. We have to go out and meet the object on its own terms, rather than demanding that the object come and meet our expectations and satisfy our desires.*”⁴¹⁴

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We start paddling again, the drizzle doesn’t bother us. Cows and farmland on the left and the railway getting closer; concrete riverbank on the right and a wide cycle path heading to the city centre. Decaying, partially sunk house boats are held up by their strained mooring ropes. Getting closer to the city centre, I notice the lines of sycamore trees accented by tents, shopping trolleys and makeshift communities of homeless people. Some wave and smile as we pass; in unison Saito and I often stop paddling to wave and say ‘hello’.

I reflect aloud to her and to the environment around us: “the notion of orderliness seems stark here. The controlled water, the sharp line of concrete, the purposefully planted trees all indicate humanity’s attempt to give the place order. I imagine the local

⁴¹⁴ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 130–31.

authorities are not overly happy with the supposed disorder of the tents and belongings”.

‘No, I guess not’, she says despondently, “but I bet the authorities are happier that they are here, out of sight, than in the city centre; there’s always a hierarchy to these kinds of aesthetic judgments”. We paddle in silence for a while.

We pass a junction on the left which is engulfed by the shadow of a railway bridge. We continue ahead for about one hundred meters and tie up our canoe in a mooring loop. Behind is a park where children are playing, a coffee hut with no customers, and a thumping road of cars, buses, and the occasional lorry. The sound reverberates off the sides of the stone road bridge made for earlier and quieter times. There is no bank opposite, rather the water meets the wall of a disused factory. Windows smashed, metal grates with weathered peeling white paint, adding to the steeped detritus captured in a barge loading bay. A dead pigeon hangs from netting probably once placed there while the factory was in operation. It is a complex but overly dismal scene, dotted by the kicking of footballs, shouting and laughter. We don’t stay long.

*

We retrace our paddle strokes a short way, turning right at the junction under the bridge. A long freight train thunders over us. The astonishing sound of steel on steel makes us paddle faster; the reverberation through the structure is felt in the water and passes through the hull to my knees. “Here’s a great example”, Saito shouts, “of how sensory perception influences the way we act in the world”; the last few words quieten and the train winds quietly away.

The bridge gives way to sights of manicured gardens backing onto the river. It appears that the owners embrace a life oriented toward the water and its offerings. Nearly every garden is paved and has a seat or bench facing the river and the meadow beyond. We spook a hidden cormorant. It takes flight and its black dart-like form is lost to where I know we are heading shortly. “Our actions are always in a context” I say.

*

The drizzle is getting heavier, and I use my hands to bail a small puddle of water back into the river. “We have a challenging portage coming up on the left” I say, “the get-out and get-in is pretty easy, but we have to get to them first”.

Instead of stopping at Stanground Lock where the approved navigation continues, we stop short beside a single sluice gate, which serves as a water in-let for a wide drainage ditch. We get out amongst a slightly soft bank of nettles. Remnants of a track can be seen between the upper and lower levels, perhaps used by other paddlers. Saito holds the rope, acting as an anchor as I lift and drag the canoe from the pitter-pattering water. Although grey directly above, there are hopeful accents of blue sky westward. Compressed droplets and grasses squeak under our vigilant footsteps.

Together, we hold a gunwale – one on each side of the bow – and begin to drag it up the steep bank that acts as a flood defence to the meadows that we’ve been paddling around today. At the top, we pause for a moment to take in the flatness of the fens.

“That smell is back, Lewis”, Saito says as we take in the three steaming chimneys and the now visible infrastructure that surrounds it.

On the descent back to the water, I am the anchor with the painter, holding the canoe from sliding away from us. Saito holds the top handle, so that if she does let it go or slips, she will not be harmed.

“You can let go now” I say to Saito, as I let the canoe take a controlled slip down into the get-in spot.

“Isn’t it interesting” I say, “that the quality of rope, the gunwales, the layout of the canoe, whether it has scratches or not... can really impact our actions with it. I was so upset when I gave it its first scratch. I felt so annoyed. But I was precious before that. It was almost as though it had to have scratches and dents, so that I could use it properly... to not fear it”.

“And yet” Saito replies sagely, “the same cannot be said of clothes, or other items where people seek that fresh and new experience”.

“You’re right” I reply, “but I do wonder whether there is something that we can learn from a dented and dinked canoe that could educate and celebrate the notion of a well-used life”.

“Yes” She says excitedly, “it could be a source of the green aesthetic notions of durability and longevity. We can come to appreciate not only the fact that the object is made for longevity and durability but also the way in which its design reveals these ecologically important values.”⁴¹⁵

*

The ditch is straight, but its lines are disrupted by thick grasses, flowering plants and reeds that we have to push through in places.

“The human impact of this place isn’t just felt by the very existence of the human made and seemingly forgotten ditch”, I say as I point to a bloated fish that appears to have part-ingested a biodegradable spoon, without any irony, from a submerged container of a fast-food outlet.

“Everything has aesthetic qualities to it”, Saito says, attuning herself to my anguish.

“As we’ve experienced today, we can attend to the power of the aesthetic in the making of the journey. Given the potent power of the aesthetic, not utilising it and steering it toward better world making seems like a missed opportunity to me”, Saito continues to

⁴¹⁵ Saito, 89.

counsel, “I might class you as one of those professional world-makers, like designers, cognizant of this power of the aesthetic, who have been advocating uniting the aesthetic appeal of design with other values, such as environmental and social; you might be a designer of aesthetic journeys”.⁴¹⁶

“I’ve been struggling with giving voice to that”, I say, as we paddle among the dollops of moisture, indiscriminately hitting the water and bouncing off burdock leaves.

She turns back and look directly at me and speaks: “I understand that, but don’t underestimate your role in educating this way. *I propose that everyday aesthetics engage in a normative discourse to guide non-professionals, students, the public at large, among us toward more informed aesthetic judgments which move our decisions and actions toward better world making*”.⁴¹⁷

“As an educator”, she continues, “you transmit ethical values in the placement of objects, the direction of your attention, to the way you move among the learners on the water to check on their wellbeing. You create an aesthetic ambience to the journey; in those moments you are practicing world-making”. Her voice grows in passion: “Just like now, we are journeying down a drainage ditch! You’re creating opportunities to see the everyday journey through a broader aesthetic framework than previously imagined. *Everyday aesthetics, I firmly believe, has to be a part of the strategies for the project of world-making, to which all of us in some way participate, both personally and professionally, sometimes quite consciously and some other times unwittingly.*⁴¹⁸ We need to make use of relevant knowledge for different kinds of aesthetic experience so that educators, *and their students*, can realise the *possibility of engaging in critical discourse and educating one’s aesthetic sensibility through scientific study, nature walks, nature writing, and works of art that represent or comment on nature*. Yes, while there are debates about the *relative importance of scientific, historical, mythological, poetic, and imaginative associations in nature aesthetics*, there is a sense in which these insights do *render our aesthetic experience of nature richer, possibly more appropriate, and less trivial*, just like Hepburn said.”⁴¹⁹

She offers a caring smile, turns around and she picks up the rhythm of my paddle strokes.

“It’s my job to bring those associations and insights with us on the journey?” I ask, seeking confirmation.

She replies with a characteristic cut-through clarity of the value of the mundane. “The seemingly monotonous and boring appearance of this river, or a salt marsh, becomes richer and more complex when we associate its diverse environmental functions as well

⁴¹⁶ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, 198.

⁴¹⁷ Saito, 199.

⁴¹⁸ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 244.

⁴¹⁹ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, 200.

as its rather complex structure that negotiates varied content of the water, whether the saline content at the lock earlier, or detritus here”.⁴²⁰

*

We approach an impassable bridge. It is made of two concrete sewer pipes like portholes. The fragmented brick surround and cement looks to have been thrown at it. We are aiming for a small bay of grass and shingle on the left, where cows come for a dip and sip. We alight from the canoe and our feet crunch under the shingle. We drag the canoe slightly and we notice its many scratches. We sit awhile on a perch of grass, under which layers of soil and rock have been exposed, probably by hooves. We are trespassing, and that’s normal here. The road to the bridge over the River Nene is about 70 meters away.

“We’ve got a little weather window; would you like a tea?” I ask.

“That would be lovely” she replies, “but shall we have it where we got on?”.

A few moments later a 4x4 truck comes past. Its dirty wheels and dented doors can be seen from the fractures in the bridge.

“Trespassing again” the driver says laughing away, “Can you smell the oven chips from the McCain factory, the chimneys are going full pelt today!”.

“Oh that’s what that smell is!”, both Saito and I say in unison.

“You best be getting up the road, the farmer was on his way down with the tanker”, the driver says, honking his horn as he departs.

“The smell reminds me of my grandparents’ house”, I say to Saito as we carry the canoe over trampled barbed wire.

“It makes me think about cooking”, she says.

Lifting the canoe one last time, we place it on the trolley and I tie the strap over the carrying yoke. The irregular squeak of the wheel tells me that it needs an oil, but more so that it can completely change the ambience, the feel of the journey’s character.

Walking over the bridge, we reach its peak and see the railway, the sunken boats, the skyline and, to our right – down below – our get-in spot from earlier. We both look at the burned umbers and oranges of the rusting bridge, mixing in the drizzle. Liquid rust drips into the river below and dissipates.

I find myself wanting to speak with Saito more, “I think that the canoe journey could be a corrective to the ways in which we ignore aspects of the aesthetics’ influence on human behaviours”.

⁴²⁰ Saito, 201.

She replies “You can go much further than that; it isn’t ‘a nice to have’, Lewis. It’s a ‘must have’: unless we change our current aesthetic paradigm, the future generations will have to contend with more ugliness caused by deforestation, burgeoning landfills, and aesthetic deprivation of sweatshops, and I believe that everyday aesthetics has a responsibility to address this issue, and by extension so do the educators whether in the aesthetics class...”,⁴²¹ “or on the canoe journey”, we say laughing together.

*

On the descent, the drizzle starts again and as I place my hand on the bridge, I too become part-rust.

I say to Saito, “an everyday canoe journey to me is about giving voice to, and practising with, a vivid awareness of aesthetics and ethics.”

We meander down the final bending slope from the bridge. Seeing the trees that obscure the house-boater to whom we were a spectacle earlier, we stop squeaking. We turn the canoe on its side against the trees and I put a tarp up to give us some shelter. Saito has tea, and I have coffee. Breathing in the steam from our drinks, she looks at me with a seriousness as considered as her paddle strokes.

“Canoe journeys like ours” she whispers, “can be put to work to maximise awareness of the indispensable function of perception and aesthetic thought in our lives. It can join the wider task of *everyday aesthetics to continue developing a critical discourse to improve our aesthetic life beyond art and nature appreciation, so that we can become better equipped to participate in the collective project of world-making*. It can help our need to *reclaim aesthetics’ prominent place in the project of world making and its inseparable connection with the rest of life*”.⁴²²

We sip our drinks while looking and listening to the patter of rain around us from our shelter. There is a smell of chips in the air and a kestrel flies away toward the railway line with a morsel of something in its talons.

⁴²¹ Saito, 204.

⁴²² Saito, 218.

Chapter 8: Everyday Aesthetics

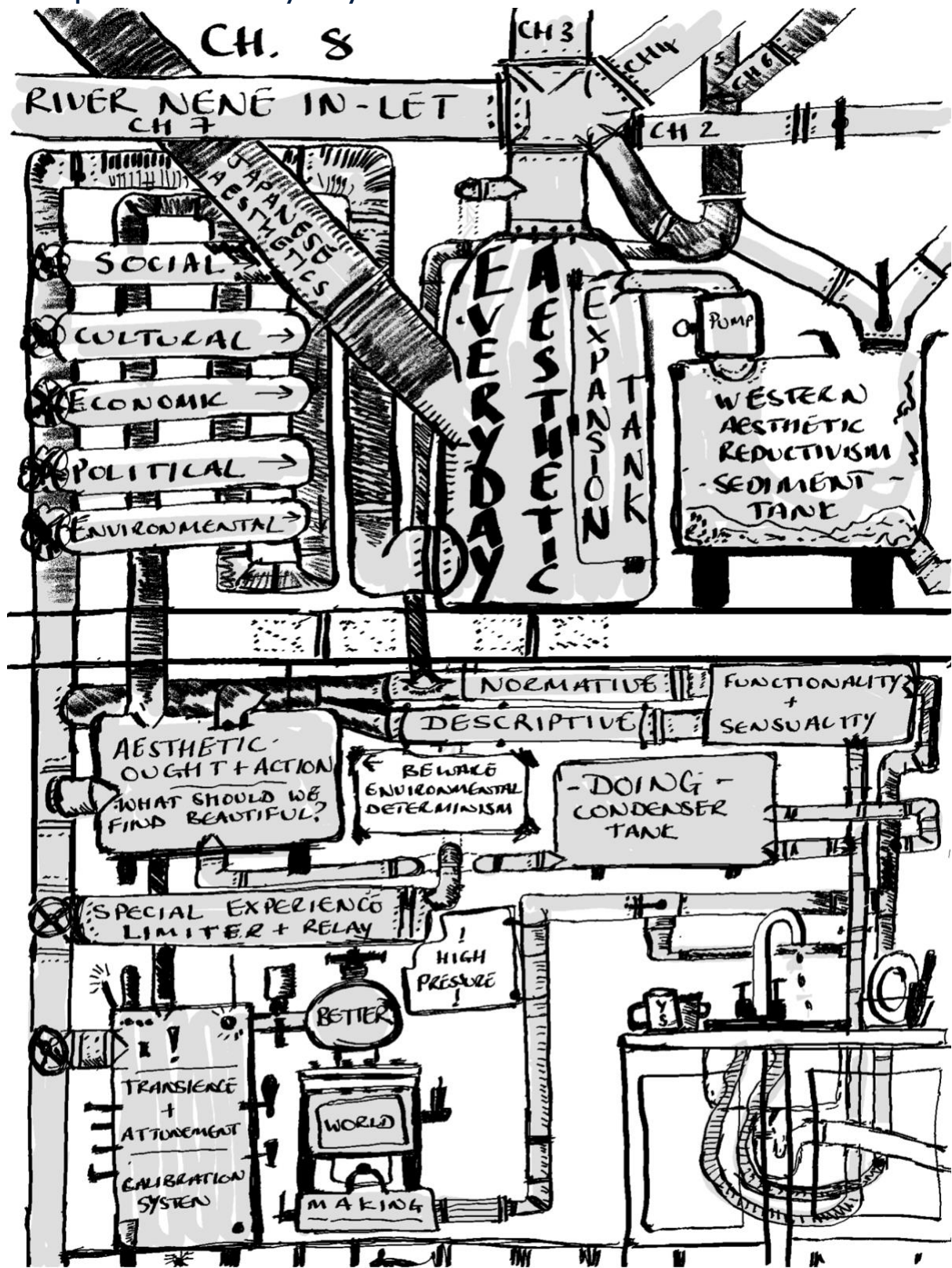


PLATE 12 CHAPTER 8 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING

I must confess to the reader that the River Nene journey, with Saito, has expanded my aesthetic horizon in ways that I'm still processing, and likely to continue processing beyond this thesis. In attempting to understand the educational possibilities of journeying, I have gained new perspectives about the everyday – the tasks and activities of the *journée* – and their aesthetic significance. This stage of 'finding my thing' has put me into a position of coming to be aware of aesthetic features of the mess and orderliness of the educational opportunities of the canoe journey. The canoe journey with Saito created a point of respite from which to embark on further aesthetic and educational analyses, which are represented in the philosophical plumbing of this chapter.

As Saito's concern showed, everyday aesthetics are focussed on the perception and reaction toward the 'sensuous and/or design qualities of any object, phenomenon or activity'.⁴²³ Being able to perceive objects, phenomena and experiences for what they are and the impact they have was a point of discussion while on the water. A key question that is driving the exploration of this chapter is: in what ways could an educational journey be understood and experienced through everyday aesthetics? This exploration can be seen in the pipework that indicates the expansion of the aesthetic and its permeation into everyday social, cultural, political, economic and environmental features of life. As readers engage with the discussions, they will encounter the broader implications of aesthetic ideas shaped by the influence of Japanese aesthetics, which Saito extensively references. Conversely, the reader will have the opportunity to see some ideas swept aside, such as the prevalence of the special aesthetic experience - and the disconnection between the aesthetic and moral - as indicated in the 'aesthetic ought and action' tank.

Unlike many associations of the aesthetic with the beautiful, scenic or positive sensory qualities, Saito's approach accommodates positive and negative qualities that are part of the percipient's aesthetic reactions. Reactions to mundane, dirty, dank, dingy objects, not just beautiful ones, can lead to a range of emotional responses such as disgust, which Saito and I experienced at points on the River Nene journey. In contrast to typical western aesthetics, everyday aesthetics recognises that one can have unsophisticated (non-intellectualised) and yet essential responses to aesthetic qualities and experiences.⁴²⁴ All humans experience sensuously and make judgments as a result, wittingly or unwittingly; it is not just the domain of the artistically inclined or educated. As the discussions below will show, Saito pays respect to the value of attending to the often-neglected mundane aspects of our sensuous lives. The function of an object and the doing of a person with an object - or in an experience - are two elements discussed in some depth. The pipe work shows that much of the system flows through these aspects of everyday aesthetics. The atmosphere in this chapter is one open to the improvement of the aesthetic features of the lives of learners and educators in and through the canoe journey. Such an aim is in stark contrast to traditional western-influenced models of aesthetics that, as we have already seen, rarely acknowledge aesthetic qualities beyond the boundaries of the arts.⁴²⁵

The canoe conversations have shown that a search for aesthetic diversity is a messy and rewarding task. In this chapter, I continue the search for aesthetic diversity in canoe journeying. Many canoe leaders and outdoor educators typically spend time in the canoe and familiar landscapes. It is good practice for leaders of canoe journeys to undertake preparations by paddling the river before taking paddlers with them. They will view the

⁴²³ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*.

⁴²⁴ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, pt. 2.1.2.

⁴²⁵ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*.

river with their group being held imaginatively in their mind. The educator will look for learning opportunities, consider entry and exit points, and evaluate the risk benefits of features of the journey. The notion of a special aesthetic experience is not something that is often on my mind when leading groups on the river. I have a job to do. As such, the specialness of natural objects and their qualities can gradually fall away into the background of my mind. Sometimes, the vivacity of the sensuous qualities diminishes through this necessary familiarity, which is a pay-off through risk management. The objects and experiences may lose their lustre. This can be particularly problematic for educators who may journey in landscapes and waterscapes that become intimately familiar. Yet, as the canoe journey with Saito shows, there are opportunities for aesthetic education for the educator and the student – a special or novel experience does not have to be the basis of an aesthetic experience.

In this chapter, I propose a further expansion of the *aesthetic*, which I continue to build on throughout the coming pages. From this point, I share Saito's position on the relationship between the moral and aesthetic – the discussion of the *Aesthetic Ought*. I then move the discussion to develop an understanding of the challenges of special aesthetic experiences, which I show could be problematic for the educator on the grounds that they are leading special experiences, not actually in them. I then move into a discussion that relates to much of the movement and propulsion within the narratives so far, that of the aesthetics of doing – an often neglected area of aesthetics but central to much of how practical skills are taught and valued. Finally, I discuss Saito's position on the ethical dimension of everyday aesthetics – the notion of better world-making - and reprise features of our time canoeing together. First, however, it is time to broaden the aesthetic further.

EXPANDING THE AESTHETIC HORIZON

Saito holds to the view that aesthetic appraisal plays a significant role in our everyday existence: the clothes we wear, personal presentation, the objects we purchase and their placement in our homes and offices are all influenced by one's aesthetic sensibilities. The sensuous and practical features of a canoe or paddle, their quality of finish, the material (wood, plastic, polycarbonate), any artwork or markings, as well as environmental impact and cost will contribute to the choices made by the paddler. In expanding the aesthetic horizon – symbolised in the aesthetic expansion tank and the pipes flowing from it (see Plate 11) – Saito aims to move beyond the typically limiting and compromising western aesthetic that reduces the topics valid for inquiry to the art realm, as I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Being 'cut off from associations with the material and aims of every other form of human effort, undergoing and achievement', is not an acceptable position for Saito.⁴²⁶ It is this position, this error, that she sees in much of western aesthetics. Such a position does however require revisiting past insights while maintaining a view on the horizon. It is this challenge that I have been confronted with in this stage of *finding my thing*.

As does Carlson, Saito agrees with Hepburn's argument on serious aesthetic appraisal which includes both a sensory component and thought component. The thought component is however distinct from Hepburn's and Carlson's, in that there is no requirement in Saito's everyday aesthetics for cognition to lead to contemplative

⁴²⁶ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 28.

appraisals.⁴²⁷ The appraisal and reaction *can* have this component, but it is not a requirement. Aesthetic dimensions of everyday life are informed by aesthetic qualities through judgement formation, nurturing preferences toward objects and experiences, the design of objects, and the actions – the doing – associated with them. These aspects can often go unnoticed; “off the conceptual map” as Hepburn might say. Yet these features may deeply influence quality of life, thought patterns, behaviours and action. The reader will remember that my own aesthetic horizon was being challenged when canoeing with Saito – attempting to understand the concept of ambience, for instance, is a good example from the latest journey of how aspects of experience can be deeply influential on conscious and subconscious responses.

The extent of the issue for Saito rests in a familiar argument that I’ve engaged with above: western aesthetics in modernity has tended to focus on the arts. Even where those discussions are broadened, art objects are still typically used as the primary focus in the aesthetic realm. Unsurprisingly then, aesthetic education tends to be available in limited classes such as art, music and literature, which again focus on analysing art works as paradigm cases. Such cases are often presented as a liberated embodied state from practical everyday living.⁴²⁸ Yet, aesthetic experiences are life affirming and life forming for young children and are ‘powerful in forming and informing minds’.⁴²⁹ Saito challenges the dominant and reductive western culture of art-based aesthetic (including aesthetic education in its broadest sense) and works against the limiting scope of the art-centred – and art-informed a la Carlson – approach which misconstrues the place of the aesthetic in our lives. We are reminded however that the aesthetic plays a central role in our social, cultural, economic and political lives, with aesthetic qualities serving political and social issues in the range of ways which determine the state of the world and quality of life.⁴³⁰ More positively, acknowledging how life affirming and life-forming aesthetic experiences are for all – not just for the young – shows that the aesthetic and the moral are cooccurring qualities, enabling a synergistic understanding of the good life, which I turn to below.⁴³¹ It is important however to recognise, in a similar vein to Hepburn, that the limited conceptual resources one has for everyday aesthetic appraisal can have significant consequences in the world. This chapter aims to contribute to an expansion of the conceptual plumbing in the realms of aesthetic education and educational journeying.

It is telling that the way in which some cultures appraise landscapes – a key feature for consideration in outdoor education – is geared often toward environments which are seen as beautiful. They have been given greater legal protections than those which are aesthetically or scenically challenged. This is the case for landscapes as well as objects. In relation to the aesthetic and the ethical combining, the beautiful takes precedence over the unsightly.⁴³² This means that the art aesthetic is still often in play in our everyday life: the most beautiful animal is the best, the picturesque landscape is the best; both worthy of protection because of their highly valued status. In a helpful example, Eaton notes the problematic impact that human sentiments have wielded over the management of the deer population because of Disney’s Bambi.⁴³³ An animal that is otherwise quite destructive

⁴²⁷ Hepburn, ‘Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature’; Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 11.

⁴²⁸ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*; Tabrea, ‘Menaces of Liberal Education: M. Oakeshott’.

⁴²⁹ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 14.

⁴³⁰ Saito, 57.

⁴³¹ Saito, 15.

⁴³² Saito, 64–65.

⁴³³ Eaton, ‘Fact and Fiction in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature’.

to forest and pasture has been valued as ethically and aesthetically valuable as a result of the anthropomorphic story and imagery.

Conversely the unassuming, often the local or scenically-challenged, are often undervalued and unprotected in Saito's view. This highlights how aesthetic values can be at odds with ecological necessity and values. In cases where the natural landscape is used for resource extraction, "natural resource" is often moved out of the perceptual field⁴³⁴ – it is often unseen e.g. the mining of cobalt for smartphone manufacturing; or factory farmed chickens housed in large enclosed industrial units. They remain out of perception in other ways too, whether by means of enclosed transportation or through lack of insight by journalism and media attention. The impact of this kind of aesthetic-ethical thinking is significant: environmental boundaries are drawn and redrawn for human needs and wants. Such aesthetic appraisals are often connected to economic appraisals – one might overhear a conversation of a land sale with the following sentiments: "This landscape is devoid of beauty, get it on the cheap – it'll be good for building houses on." These factors drive action under the influence of aesthetic appraisals, leading to countless examples of colonising, degradation and habitat loss.

There are problematic disconnections between aesthetic standards and environmental standards. As Saito reports, sporting venues such as golf courses are often artificially greened or the waters in the lakes or ponds are chemically dyed to make them more appealing. There is little regard for the environmental hazards or waste. Consequently, in certain aspects of social, cultural and political lives, there is a disconnect between aesthetic taste and moral goodness; the need for vivid colours and slick appearances drive consumer behaviour. This is not to say that all aspects of places like the golfing green are 'bad' *per se*, after all insects and other living organism can co-exist on the fairway. Yet such consumer behaviours can run counter to the ideology of environmental interest.⁴³⁵ It is important to recognise that these issues are present in our everyday lives from which education is inseparable. There is a need (an urgent one) to reappraise the aesthetic through the possibilities of quotidian appraisal, to experience everyday sensuous qualities and participate in world-making in more considered ways.⁴³⁶ This is representative of Saito's sustained position throughout her texts:

Particularly with respect to environmental aesthetics, the aesthetic judgements are subject to deeper visions and commitments regarding social and political issues, such as economic justice, capitalism, the notion of the good life, and the like. They are also amenable to change with new scientific discoveries. However, what I want to point out, is that aesthetics does have a surprisingly important, if not decisive, role to play, and our current neglect needs to be challenged and corrected.⁴³⁷

The reader might feel that this sentiment seems somewhat like one of earlier canoe companions, Carlson. With new scientific discoveries, aesthetic judgments could change – a view held by both Carlson and Saito. It is important to note here, however, that Saito's position is much more accepting of a wider range of issues influencing aesthetic perception and action, whereas science provides only a conceptual map of interrelated other maps. Carlson would not accept that a core part of an aesthetics of nature should be influenced by political or economic justice, which would in turn influence the way one perceives and

⁴³⁴ Evernden, *The Natural Alien: Humankind and the Environment*.

⁴³⁵ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 68–69.

⁴³⁶ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, pt. 2.2.3.

⁴³⁷ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 102–3.

values natural objects or experiences in nature. While Saito does not limit herself to a set of objects or experiences within the domain of nature, her model includes all aspects of the human environment in a more expansive way than any of the canoe companions, so far. As such, the reader is being led to a view of Saito's aesthetics, which shows that human ethical actions can be motivated by aesthetic sensibilities and knowledge.

NORMATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE ELEMENTS

There are two prominent functions of the conceptual resources posited by Saito. First is the *Normative Function*. This involves the tendency to appreciate everyday objects by removing them from their practical concern by appreciating their sensuous qualities. This is much more in line with mainstream aesthetic appreciation where arts and objects are appreciated in terms of their form, tactility, musical timbre, etc. The second is the *Descriptive Function*. This involves engaging with the object, its everyday use, in an everyday way. This requires tending to the aesthetic response in a situated, typical, but not necessarily 'simple' way.⁴³⁸ Saito draws on a range of examples in her works, one being manicured lawns, or golf courses (as articulated above), and kitchenware. In the case of a kitchen knife, we would not only be concerned with the 'pure' and 'free beauty' as espoused in the work of Kant's aesthetic. Instead, those sensuous qualities remain with the practical restored as part of these considerations. Thus, our appreciation of useful objects is both practical and sensuous – 'does the knife cut well?', 'is it comfortable to hold?', 'does it rust?', 'does it clean easily?', 'does it hold its edge?', and so on. To divorce the practical and the normative distanced forms of aesthetic appreciation is to miss significant aesthetic value integral to many utilitarian contexts:

The appreciation here is not simply directed toward the fact that the knife functions well; it rather concerns the way in which all its sensuous aspects converge and work together to facilitate the ease of use. If I appreciate this knife exclusively for its cutting performance, I don't think I am appreciating it aesthetically, because as long as I can derive the same degree of cutting capability from any other knife, the specific sensuous qualities do not matter [...] exclusive attention to functionality steers us away from attending to the sensuous surface of the object.⁴³⁹

Functionality and sensuality are inseparable qualities in all aspects of our lives, whether in cooking or the canoe. The two modes, central to aesthetic appreciation in the everyday are typical of what Saito calls *integrated aesthetic appreciation*. Interconnected concerns for the quality of outdoor experiences and clothing or kit are appraised in an integrated way. For instance, my deep-water paddle may look very similar to my colleague's paddle, they could even have been made in the same workshop, by the same creator. They could be interchangeable and get us to our destination very well. But, my colleague's paddle just is not the same. It hasn't been with me, its value hasn't been formed by the same uses, it had different dinks and scratches; I am not just appreciating it for its ability to propel me – although the way it sends messages into one's hands, muscles and joints is also a key everyday (aesthetic and utilitarian) consideration that ought not go unnoticed. The key challenge, however, is not necessarily identifying what qualities to appraise and what they mean; it is rather the need to negotiate between the normative, descriptive and background contextualisation that are important in a grounded aesthetic appraisal.

⁴³⁸ Saito, 245.

⁴³⁹ Saito, 27.

As Saito argues, one of the tasks of everyday aesthetics are to judge when to make the 'ordinary extraordinary so that we can derive maximum aesthetic value', and whether an object needs to have its mundanity and, 'seemingly non-aesthetic reaction' preserved. To neglect this important task is to lead to 'indiscriminate aestheticization' that moves our aesthetic lives away from our typical day to day contexts, making the knife or the paddle much more like an art-object and art-experience, which is antithetical to existence of the everyday model.⁴⁴⁰

ENCOMPASSING AND CHALLENGING

Although Saito does not use this term in either of her major works, the term 'encompassing' is representative of her stance of everyday aesthetics. First, she challenges the dominance of the western approach in contemporary aesthetics, as discussed above, especially regarding disinterestedness. Additionally, she wants to reinvigorate the aesthetic to include a much broader range of objects and experiences; as we have seen this includes cutting knives, gardens, golf courses and much more, including clothes washing and sky art.⁴⁴¹ As has been hinted at, there is much to be challenged in her approach, especially against the significant tradition of aesthetics as art experience and appreciation. I introduce several types of aesthetic experiences that illustrate the wider possibilities for enriching educational journeys. I delve into additional implications of this model that educators ought to consider, benefiting both their students and themselves.

SPECIAL AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

With reference to the normative and descriptive modes of aesthetic appreciation, discussed above, there is a further important underpinning issue with traditional aesthetics that the everyday model is pushing against: the negation of the everyday in favour of the special. Aesthetic experience is often associated with something that is 'out of gear', atypical in our everyday sensuous experience. This is most notable in the way that art objects are positioned in galleries and museums. First, we don't live in museums or galleries and therefore these are outside of the bounds of most people's everyday experience. Second, if one happened to work in or frequent such places every day, it might be reasonable to suggest that many aspects of such an experience become the background. The uninteresting and non-disruptive fall away from sensory prominence, as they would in any other environment. The notion of the special aesthetic experience is contra to the everyday, or as Dewey put it, the 'open-ended' or 'humdrum'. The everyday experience does not have the Deweyan utility, where there is a unity of quality, where one moment leads to the next, with a unified central element made of constituent parts. The aesthetic experience is seen to be a highly specialised type of experience, cut-off and an exception to the everyday.⁴⁴²

In educational terms, this has been put to good use in outdoor activities. The very term 'outdoor' in the English education system is associated with 'addition' or 'exceptional'. Similarly, 'Forest School' in the schooling system is a special experience that typically disrupts the flow of everyday learning, associated with the classroom.⁴⁴³ Although Saito

⁴⁴⁰ Saito, 245.

⁴⁴¹ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*.

⁴⁴² Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 44–45.

⁴⁴³ Harris, 'The Nature of Learning at Forest School: Practitioners' Perspectives'; Leather, 'A Critique of "Forest School" or Something Lost in Translation'.

does not mention these educational examples, they are sound educational examples for her argument.

As Saito points out, in acknowledging the normative model, there is a value in distanced and special experiences jarring with our everyday ones, but they are inadequate for a broad, encompassing aesthetic. This leads us to *defamiliarize* ourselves with everyday experiences, reframing them as special. This counters Dewey's criticism against the humdrum as indistinct and monotonous. In making the everyday special, it no longer has the prerequisite everyday qualities, experienced in an everyday way. In effect, seeking an everyday aesthetic based on the normalisation of the special will ultimately fail: 'by making the ordinary extraordinary and rendering the familiar strange, while we gain aesthetic experiences that's made possible, we also pay the price by compromising the very everydayness of the everyday'.⁴⁴⁴

This can lead to interesting practical and linguistic tensions at the confrontational end of the aesthetics of the everyday, in Saito's view. For instance, stating that we are 'visiting' everyday environments can be contradictory; these are supposedly places associated with low culture or are categorised trivial. We don't 'visit' everyday places where we literally live and work, rather we 'go' to them; I *have my desk* in *my* office. This raises two interesting points: first there is a need to consider how to engage in aesthetic education without losing the ordinary to the extraordinary and secondly, greater awareness is required of the aesthetic categorisation put to work in discussing (and educating) through and about these experiences i.e. the extraordinary quality/ies of the everyday experience and the supplementary. There is then a need to consider the framing of the 'special' in framing such experiences and in the development of aesthetic sensibilities.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE SPECIAL

The tendency for the special to eclipse the ordinary is an important consideration for the aesthetician (and educator) to bear in mind and body:

By neglecting the other aspects of our aesthetic life which is embedded in our everyday judgments, decisions and action, we lose not only the opportunity to enrich the dimension of aesthetic inquiry, but also the potential for improving the quality of life and the world.⁴⁴⁵

Not only does Saito show the bonded qualities of the ethical and aesthetic (which I address below), she further articulates that by referring to the special as the only (important) feature of the aesthetic dimension of our lives, we are likely to be neglecting an important ethical dimension of how we can become better life- and world-makers. Saito continues:

I want to be faithful to the diverse ways in which we engage with the diverse aspects of the world aesthetically.⁴⁴⁶ ... I believe that we have more to gain by recognising and appreciating the diversity within our aesthetic life than applying mono-theory to art-centred or special experience-oriented theory to different aspects of life.⁴⁴⁷

There is therefore a need to reconsider and, importantly for this thesis, educate in a paradigmatically different direction from those promoted within contemporary western

⁴⁴⁴ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 50.

⁴⁴⁵ Saito, 52.

⁴⁴⁶ Saito, 51.

⁴⁴⁷ Saito, 52.

aesthetic theory. The legacy which has been profound, was articulated by Hepburn's opening sentiments in his *neglect of natural beauty* paper in the 1960s. By moving away from faulty applications of theories of art or the special-of-everyday, we are open to the charge of disservice to our everyday life and shut down important sensual data influencing our everyday existence. We can draw out,

[...] a wealth of aesthetic issues that are not shared by, or relevant to, our experiences of art ... we can come to appreciate the ways in which our lives and world are profoundly affected by aesthetic concerns, different from the way in which art or memorable aesthetic experiences exert their impact on our lives and the world.⁴⁴⁸

In contemporary society, such influences are wide ranging and could include (but not be limited to), building design, landscape gardening, rewilding, purchasing habits, political elections, clothes design and wearing, bodily appraisals (including 'fat-shaming' and 'body positivity'), and the speed at which we live our lives (such as the 'slow movement'). While defamiliarization of the everyday through the special can be used well in a range of circumstances (including in learning and teaching in urban outdoor education⁴⁴⁹), there is a need to ensure that the cognitive exercise of reframing and disrupting the aesthetic experience is integrated into our experiencing the newfound awareness of the everyday, into our everyday and embodied ways of being and becoming.

AESTHETICS OF DOING⁴⁵⁰

Saito's more recent work on the aesthetics of the familiar, a continuation of her earlier project, promotes the appreciation not only of the aesthetic object and perceiver's experience, but it also increases consideration of the creative powers that enabled those objects and experiences to be as they are in that moment. Sitting back and observing a finished or completed object may mean that we miss the opportunity of empathy toward human creative capacities or more than human forces. When appraising from the creator perspective, decisions and judgments are informed by the perceiver's knowledge and capacities, as is the case for art-objects. There are three central challenges to an aesthetic that addresses practicality, suggested by Saito: first, bodily engagement is, overall, dismissed in Western philosophical aesthetics; second, the worthiness of everyday activities does not fall within the purview of western aesthetics; and third, doing is not recognised as there is no way to evaluatively judge it - there is no clear object of experience possible for aesthetic judgement. As recognised by Saito, the dimensions of aesthetics that take prevalence in western aesthetics are only some of the dimensions that the aesthetic can speak to. As Hepburn made the case in the 1960s, there are realms of the aesthetic which are off the conceptual map. Saito shows, in contemporary aesthetics, that there are wide-ranging objects and experiences outside of aesthetics as art experience and criticism. In fact, Saito makes the case through food, whereby she argues that meaning can be found in the act of creating a meal not just its consumption - this involves actively turning something into an aesthetically rich everyday event.

With specific reference to 'doing' and canoeing, we might well consider *inter alia* the quality of paddle stroke, the position of the body in the canoe, or the educational affordances of gaining such skills might have in the individual or collective development of the learner or

⁴⁴⁸ Saito, 53.

⁴⁴⁹ Nicol and Sangster, 'You Are Never Alone: Understanding the Educational Potential of an "Urban Solo" in Promoting Place-Responsiveness'.

⁴⁵⁰ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, pt. 2.2.2.

learners (including the educators). Again, within canoe training paddlers' practical skills are assessed using aesthetic concepts; in my own recent British Canoeing assessment for paddle sport touring leadership in 2022, I was commended by the assessor for the edging of my canoe but critiqued for the noisy follow-through of my paddle strokes. Similar considerations are found in many aspects of everyday life, especially where one takes an empathetic view towards the skill of say a film actor or sports person. The appreciator may say (in both cases) something like, "It must have taken so many shots to get that right". Everyday aesthetic judgments do not solely focus on appraising the finished piece alone - as is the case in traditional aesthetics - but incorporate a deeper reflection and empathy toward the powers that enabled it to occur (whether human or more than human). These insights not only broaden the opportunities for aesthetic appraisal, but they also influence how one may perceptually orient themselves towards objects and experiences in the world.

TRANSIENCE AND ATTUNEMENT

Understanding and coping with change is a de facto feature of the human and more-than-human world. In some circumstances change is embraced, say in the cleaning of a river of litter; in other circumstances it can be more complicated such as in human ageing. In the case of the arts, many paintings are restored to preserve them from the decaying environmental powers. Transience in the context of canoe journeying, and educational processes more generally, involve change and would benefit from further inquiry. Saito states that,

With some effort and practice, we will indeed be able to find positive aesthetic values and things and qualities that are usually regarded as aesthetically negative. At the same time, however, the inquiry into everyday aesthetics should also challenge an attitude of indiscriminate aestheticizing. While acknowledging the possible existential reward of aestheticizing transience, imperfection and insufficiency, we should also pay due regard to our all-too-common negative response to those qualities, particularly when such familiar responses do not lead to problematic consequences. Finally, given the power of the aesthetic to influence people's attitudes, and determine their actions, and in light of the past precedents of using it for socially and politically problematic agenda, everyday aesthetic should also highlight the importance of being vigilant about the way in which aesthetics is utilised.⁴⁵¹

We may notice change in a host of ways and, of course, change can sneak up on us in unimagined ways, too. In the case of ageing, as Saito remarks, the language often associated with it is negative and is synonymous with decline. To be able to recognise the decline it requires a contrast with the optimal set of conditions; in the case of material everyday objects this is when they tend to be brand-new and one understands how to use them. In the case of human beings, there is no clear sense in when this might be, except with socialised ageing hallmarks of between one's 20s and 40s. In all cases of ageing, however, it is one directional; once the ageing process starts, there is a time when things have been appraised as past their prime. Depending on the cultural and societal norms, there may be a need or want to repair, restore or eliminate the objects.⁴⁵² In line with the considerations of green aesthetics and everyday aesthetic world making, it may fall to the

⁴⁵¹ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, pts 203–4.

⁴⁵² Saito, pt. 150.

educator to raise consciousness of ageing and what may contribute to wise and healthy growth and 'demise'. Similar considerations are made for mess.

Battling with mess, within physical objects or organisation generally, is a relatively common phenomenon. No matter how hard I try to have a tidy office or a well-organised canoeing kit-bag, I personally must find ways of engaging with mess – the reader will remember this topic in the canoe journey with Saito above. This means we also gain an understanding of whether something (or someone) is out of place. This is however, according to Saito, an indication of decline in an ideal state of affairs i.e. tidy, which indicates organisation. Mess, again, indicates a process away from optimal states. With mess, unlike ageing, one can work toward the erasure of mess – with ageing it can only be delayed – either through surface-level surgeries or engaging in healthy diets and lifestyles. The acts of cleaning, tidying and repairing are, according to Saito, central qualities of human everyday life.⁴⁵³ As Saito concludes:

The task of arresting the aging appearance, of renewing, repairing, restoring, cleaning, tidying, organising, therefore, is a way of combating the natural course of events, and it is a way of showing that we are in control, exerting our stamp and power over the way things naturally become.⁴⁵⁴

To exert control in everyday experiences – remembering that sometimes this will involve conscious or unwitting acts – one needs to understand whether the object or experience is in a state of decline or decay, requiring an understanding of its peak. Furthermore, it requires understanding the categories of appropriateness for something within an environment, thus it requires knowing whether something is out of place. This is carried out through the process of systematic ordering and classification of matter, where things are characterised as in/appropriate for that place.⁴⁵⁵ Displacement does not have to be characterised as aesthetically or morally deficient, as moving objects and people from familiar environments can lead to new insights; as with Hepburn's journeying, it can lead to one gaining new insights about their world.⁴⁵⁶

That said, displacement requires an understanding of appropriateness of the object or experience in a particular environment. There are typical behaviours associated with the organisation of objects and experiences in relation to the typical practices occurring in that particular environment. Canoeing down a canal with young paddlers singing away merrily, as they pass a cemetery where a funeral is taking place, should lead to an appropriate change of behaviour, amending the overall aesthetic qualities of that moment. While this change may not happen in a seemingly spontaneous way, regarding our everyday, reactions to objects are deeply influenced by the context. A canoe paddle on a wall in a museum is an object of visual appreciation only – an art object. Conversely, the canoe paddle in my hand is subject to a holistic aesthetic appreciation. As Saito argues, responses to such aesthetic qualities may be without specialised knowledge, but are in no way simple they are not just reactions to the sensuous surface.⁴⁵⁷

Recognising when something has run its course is an important quality for all to consider, but more so the educator. Understanding that features of the educational experience have a quality of impermanence – like all things – is not only a great democratiser of all matter

⁴⁵³ Saito, pt. 152.

⁴⁵⁴ Saito, pt. 163.

⁴⁵⁵ Saito, pt. 155.

⁴⁵⁶ Hepburn, 'Truth, Subjectivity and the Aesthetic'.

⁴⁵⁷ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, pt. 158.

in existence, it is an indicator of the appropriate exposure to experiences and objects. 'Time' as Saito remarks, 'works relentlessly, but democratically, on all of us and all of our creations and possessions'.⁴⁵⁸ In the planning of activities – educational or everyday – one could recognise the preciousness in the uncertainty. Saito remarks that the uncertainty and instability in all aspects of our lives is what gives them their precious quality. Pertinent to canoe journeying experiences, is the way something is organised and carefully managed – like a Japanese tea ceremony, *wabi tea*, which Saito draws on extensively, can have an important and chance element to it; there will be uncontrollable and spontaneous features created by fellow humans. In the case of canoe journeying, this will involve human and more than human contributions. There is a sense in which the experience becomes an *ichigo ichie* – one change, one meeting.⁴⁵⁹ This enables the orchestrator of such experiences to vocalise and incorporate the value of transience, chance and endings into the everyday educational experience. It enables, as Saito recognises, transience to become a form of aesthetic and existential coping.⁴⁶⁰

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS OF EVERYDAY AESTHETICS

In much of what I have shared of Saito's model with the reader, the ethical dimension of everyday aesthetics has been prominent. I discuss this in the following pages of this chapter. The aesthetic dimension to the ethical, and vice versa, can be seen in the way that objects and activities express moral judgments.⁴⁶¹ For instance, whether an object or even a person, *belongs* in this or that location. To judge whether something is better or worse placed requires both aesthetic and moral judgments. Such judgments require both an understanding of the object and the context that the object ought to be found in, such as salt and pepper sellers in a bathroom, or plant growing 'out of season'. Messages from the way clothing *ought* to be worn through advertisement, or best kit to be taken on canoe expeditions advised by a tutor, to whether I *should* be canoeing a particular river - these require that one gains an understanding of the moral expressions in the aesthetic objects and experiences.

THE AESTHETIC OUGHT AND AESTHETIC ACTION

So far in this thesis I have aimed to show that aesthetics has a decisive role in our lives, in education. A central feature of my own teaching practice is ensuring that outdoor education experiences are meaningful and sustainable. While the term 'sustainability' is hotly debated, it captures an atmosphere of a mode of life that is, as much as possible, attempting to operate within a set of aesthetic-ethical parameters that ensures the durability and longevity of a flourishing of life. The ideal pursued is one of harmony with, not exploitation of, the more-than-human world.

Saito sees such a position as leading to an even stronger bonding of the aesthetic and the moral. The claim bears some similarity to Carlson's position of science-informed aesthetics leading to better human treatment of nature. In borrowing the phrase from Eaton, the stronger bond is characterised as the 'aesthetic ought'. This requires asking not just what people find beautiful, but what they *should* find beautiful, to lead them in creating sustainable environments.⁴⁶² The distinction between Carlson and Eaton however is that Carlson asserts an almost automatic relationship between ecological knowledge and

⁴⁵⁸ Saito, pt. 184.

⁴⁵⁹ Saito, pt. 18.

⁴⁶⁰ Saito, pt. 190.

⁴⁶¹ Saito, pt. 234.

⁴⁶² Saito, 77.

improved ethical action toward the environment, Eaton does not. While my interpretation of Carlson has brought the objective and subjective together through Hepburn, Eaton's position draws on a holistic interpretation of aesthetic sensibility. A consequence for aesthetic education is that its conceptual plumbing combines and flows between the aesthetic and moral: Aesthetic education can then also take the form of moral education, but Saito sees such a synthesising as absent in educational practices:

[...] this strategy contains a missed opportunity for education. That is, if our popular aesthetic taste is perpetuating ecologically unenlightened perception and ultimately actions, a new aesthetic sensibility should be cultivated to educate us about the consequences of our aesthetic preferences. As a number of thinkers advocate, starting with Leopold's land aesthetic, green aesthetics must be scientifically informed, rather than exclusively directed toward the sensuous surface. Green aesthetics has to include conceptionally based aesthetic value, variously described as "thick" sense, "expressive 'beauty'", "life values", or 'serious' appreciation", which then informs the appreciation of the object's sensuous surface.⁴⁶³

Earlier in the thesis I discussed the prominent and powerful ways similes and metaphor connect with aspects of the canoe journey. The reader will remember how canoe journeys can evoke a sense of unity between self and the environment, as well as with cultural and spiritual entities (see Chapter 4). A thick concept such as unity, as discussed from the perspective of the canoe journey and Hepburn's own analyses, shows the need and value of such analyses in developing practice and philosophical thought.

A consequence of the thick concepts contributing to aesthetic value in education is, on my reading, the need for an educator to have a broad, if not creative, understanding of various forms of knowledge that feed into the notion of the *aesthetic ought*. In an example shared by Saito and Eaton, a mission of the green aesthetic, within the everyday, is to show that attractive objects may not actually be so, especially if they are found to contribute to severe environmental harm.⁴⁶⁴ Neither Saito, nor Eaton, discuss the pedagogical implications for this position, however deferring to a singular disciplinary map would seem to be the wrong direction of travel. For instance, ecological literacy is necessary but not sufficient to change aesthetic taste. Knowledge and education of natural biology is important, but the aesthetic response must be recognised and analysed as playing an important role in human actions and decision-making. Saito suggests returning to Aldo Leopold's fundamental proposition in terms of ethics and aesthetics of conservation: 'The thing is right when it preserves integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community'.⁴⁶⁵ In developing an aesthetic-ethic of care for the landscape, Saito argues that it would in turn be culturally sustainable. This means environments will not need to be interfered with to be appreciated. This can enable an emotional attachment and deep affection for places.⁴⁶⁶

Scientifically-informed aesthetic appraisals will be put to work by the educator, as part of other forms of learning, to inform critical judgements central to sustainable actions in the everyday. This could, on Saito's view, lead to a normative function of this kind of aesthetic education. This could enable non-scenic landscapes to be appreciated with this knowledge - unattractive rivers or canals that lack beauty can be appreciated for their defiant

⁴⁶³ Saito, 78.

⁴⁶⁴ Saito, 85.

⁴⁶⁵ Saito, 70; Leopold, *A Sand Country Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*, 280–95.

⁴⁶⁶ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 72; Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values*.

biodiversity within an urban landscape. The power of this learning is realised through experience – a kind of action in the world – such as nature walks, which can be guided. Saito offers a way through some of the concerns raised above with scientific cognitivism. That said, the two models are incompatible as everyday aesthetics does not require a cognitive element for an appraisal to count as aesthetic. The aesthetic-scientific educator enables the learner to understand what they are perceiving and see how the various facts are 'embodied, expressed, or even concealed or contradicted by the sensuous appearances'.⁴⁶⁷ Again, Saito's everyday aesthetic enables the educator to see a way of educating about these issues in the environment.

Drawing on Brady,⁴⁶⁸ Saito articulates the essential quality that imagination plays in relation to scientifically informed aesthetics, such as that developed by Carlson (see above).⁴⁶⁹ This challenges the purity of objectivity that is expressed in scientific cognitivism. The reader will remember that the various forms of metaphysical and ecological imaginations can play a significant role in the expansive approach to aesthetic education journeying that I am offering in this thesis. As discussed above, imagination is required to aesthetically appreciate the forces placed on objects and landscapes. But, considering a natural object or experience in nature in isolation is not enough. In considering objects seriously and deeply, in aesthetic terms, one must consider the forces that made them into their current state. Not to do this, as Hepburn would say, would lead to a trivialising of aesthetic perception and a reduction in aesthetic opportunities.⁴⁷⁰ Consequently, acknowledging the role of the imagination further enlarges the scope of the aesthetic.

The enlargement includes appreciation of objects typically neglected. Saito explains that, in nature contexts, appreciating dead animal carcasses, maggots, scenically challenged environments, and the like, all gain the opportunity for aesthetic appreciation. This is not however a deterministic outcome; just because there is an ecological value to an object, for example seeing decay of a carcass and appreciating the value of that to the range of living organisms in the ecosystem, does not automatically determine its aesthetic value. Saito challenged environmental determinism in prioritising the primacy of direct perception in aesthetic appreciation. Her position is informed by Berleant: information regarding landscapes is 'necessary, but not sufficient, in understanding it until we 'relate this information to perceptual experience''.⁴⁷¹ Thus, in-keeping with aesthetic appreciation in the everyday, and arguably in all forms of serious aesthetic appreciation, we are required to make effort in aesthetically appreciating objects, landscapes and experiences that would have been previously ignored or misinterpreted for their aesthetic qualities. We are required to put conceptual resources to work. We are not required to appraise objects, for instances a rotting carcass, *as beautiful* but we are required to attend to their sensory qualities.

MORAL AND AESTHETIC JUDGEMENTS

In attending to the moral-aesthetic sensibilities, it becomes clear that self-interest is not the only concern. Moral-aesthetic judgments are other regarding. Attending to such qualities entails a heightened sensitivity to the aesthetic impact and influence of the other.

⁴⁶⁷ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 81.

⁴⁶⁸ Brady, 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁴⁶⁹ Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*; Carlson, 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment'.

⁴⁷⁰ Hepburn, 'Trivial and Serious in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁴⁷¹ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, 83.

Inattentively and insensitively engaging with someone as 'out of place' could have wide-reaching consequences. For instance, a black British-born student being asked, "where are you *really* from" by their professor, indicates a racial and cultural insensitivity (moral) based upon certain qualities and characteristics the professor has incorrectly placed upon them (aesthetic). Attending to moral-aesthetic sensibilities in a truly 'other' regarding way moves the appreciator outside of their ego-oriented (other-disregarding) position, to consider how the action will impact others.⁴⁷² More so, it requires a heightened sensitivity informed by attending to aesthetic considerations, minute details and their potential meaning,⁴⁷³ as well as their contribution to the quality of the overall experience.

Integrating aesthetic sensibility and action is conveyed through a caring attitude, which is expressed by aesthetic means. In the case of my canoe stroke above, I was inattentive to my paddle stroke and conveying something other than a caring attitude to the instructor. In the case of the 'questioning' professor, there was a serious lack of care toward the student's identity, which was further charged by projecting (incorrectly) meaning onto certain aesthetic qualities. Attending sensitively to objects and experiences with a caring attitude leads to a reciprocal recognition of sensitivity and considerateness, according to Saito, in both the object itself and actions themselves.⁴⁷⁴ When in canoeing activities a leader with sensitivity and considerateness is likely to prioritise purpose-built portage points to enter and exit waters to minimise damage to riverbanks, vegetation, and eco-systems, for instance. Such actions communicate to participants that the canoe experience should not cause damage to the environment (moral) nor leave a trace of them being there (aesthetic).

Saito further explains the interwoven nature of the aesthetic and moral and the importance of reciprocity in communication:

Communication here, however, is not that of a certain idea, ideology, religious feeling, or the like, as maintained by the so-called expression or communication theory of art in Western aesthetics. It is rather moral virtues, such as thoughtfulness and considerateness, which are conveyed and acknowledged through specific design features. Communication is not possible, if it is a one-way street. What is communicated must be appropriately received and appreciated by the users, guests, inhabitants, and recipients, and this requires them to be endowed, with not only an aesthetic keenness but also a moral sensibility to gratefully acknowledge, and reciprocate, the considerateness and respect.⁴⁷⁵

What can be learned from this is that aesthetic sensibility, in the everyday at least, can indicate a measure of moral capacity. The sense in which the aesthetic is 'other' regarding, concerned for the welfare and engagement of those around us, highlights the significance of aesthetic qualities central to human life. Saito refers to the notion of aesthetic welfare as an extension of other features of a welfare state, which focus on: beautiful living environments, rich cultural lives, engagement with arts, tending to the basic conditions of life, along with meeting people's needs in a sensitive and truly other regarding way.⁴⁷⁶ Tending to the aesthetic can be a mark of tending to the moral.

⁴⁷² Saito, pt. 235.

⁴⁷³ Saito, pt. 236.

⁴⁷⁴ Saito, pt. 237.

⁴⁷⁵ Saito, pt. 238.

⁴⁷⁶ Saito, pts 238–9.

BETTER WORLD MAKING

Saito's aesthetic model strives for a greater sense of moral action. She sees aesthetic sensibilities feeding into ethical action that influence humanity's on going project of world making. Saito and I discussed this during our journey together. She claims that people like 'artists, designers, architects and other creators' are typically seen as world makers.⁴⁷⁷ I argue that educators should also be prioritised in this inexhaustive list for the ways in which they open opportunities for seeing and acting in the world. While Saito doesn't claim that educators have this role, she commits herself to a broader claim that 'we all contribute to this world-making enterprise and aesthetics plays a surprisingly important, indeed crucial role'.⁴⁷⁸ It is through the aesthetic sensibilities that are gained by people, which guide their decisions and actions, that influence the way the world is. These insights are exploited by psychologists, advertisers and propagandists, but she claims that aestheticians have missed this opportunity. She argues that a shared understanding of the relationship between the aesthetic and moral needs to be surfaced so that the major determining factors in the project of world making – human aesthetic preferences – are used wisely to shape the state of society. The arguments I have developed so far, and continue to develop in this thesis, are derived from an educational position that is, I claim, synonymous with that which Saito advocates:

Our aesthetic life is an important instrument for shaping the state of society and world and improving the quality of life. Thus, it behooves [sic] everyday aesthetics to continue to develop a critical discourse to improve our aesthetic life beyond art and nature appreciation so that we become better equipped to participate in the collective project of world making. In conclusion, we need to reclaim aesthetics' prominent place in the project of world-making and its inseparable connection with the rest of life.⁴⁷⁹

As Saito stated in a more recent article: 'If aesthetics can be a powerful ally in enhancing [...] human flourishing, I cannot think of any good reason for not utilizing its powerful influence'.⁴⁸⁰ For instance, identifying where educators and paddlers engage with aesthetic qualities of care, ambience, and kit, as well as the overall purpose of the educational journey could exhibit moral concern and action. The value here is that attending to the aesthetic design features of the journey experience can lay the aesthetic-moral groundwork for better world-making and increased aesthetic reward.

HEPBURN'S AESTHETIC-MORAL CAUTION

So far, the reader and I have taken a charitable view of the relationship between the aesthetic and moral, as posited by Saito. This is not to say that there are no philosophical critiques of joining, or assuming close causal relationship between, the aesthetic and moral. My canoeing companion, Carlson, has already outlined his position on this. Hepburn, however, has not made his position clear, although there is some evidence to suggest that he would take a similar position to Saito's. For instance, the reader will remember that he is concerned about the ethical issues of ignoring forms of knowing to act carefully and responsibly toward natural objects. It is, however, too much of an assumption to think our philosophical companion would go as far to accept a causal link between the aesthetic and moral. Hepburn accepts that the aesthetic and moral may be

⁴⁷⁷ Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*, 141.

⁴⁷⁸ Saito, 141.

⁴⁷⁹ Saito, 218.

⁴⁸⁰ Saito, 'The Role of Aesthetics in World-Making'.

interlinked. Great art, Hepburn suggests, can inform our moral imagination and action. Aesthetic concepts like harmony, in the listening of music, can extend into considerations of harmonious human relationships and action. However, contra Saito, he does not accept that one must necessarily lead to the other:

It can be plausibly argued that the taking up of an aesthetic attitude, and the aesthetic experience that follows, can involve transformations of consciousness which carry us virtually to the moral standpoint. The objects of our aesthetic regard and enjoyment themselves hold us in a posture of respectful other-affirming and other-valuing, and that posture may seem to merge with the moral recognition and respect for the other, the neighbour in the morally relevant sense.⁴⁸¹

Considering Hepburn's point with care here is essential. It has an important broader bearing regarding the actions and limits of an educator. If an educator is teaching about the ecological death of a river – for instance, due to the run-off of factory farmed-chicken guano into the water system – then it is plausible that the student will gain awareness of the ecological implications. As part of that learning, they may gain skills to draw on thick aesthetic concepts to engage in serious aesthetic appraisal to enable other-affirming and other-valuing postures. The role of the educator, until this point, is to provide ways of appreciating what one perceives through a range of different disciplinary frameworks. To move into a kind of aesthetic-moral education – a pedagogical operationalising of the *aesthetic ought* – will have to be an active and conscious process by the educator. If it is not active and conscious, it could be considered as imposing unreasoned forms of thinking on learners, which would enter a process of indoctrination rather than education.⁴⁸²

While Hepburn does not draw on the concept of indoctrination, his position is concerned with the notion of concealment of the moral to the adopter of the aesthetic posture. Hepburn implores would-be adopters to recognise the affinity between the aesthetic and moral in some cases. This, however, is not the same as claiming that the aesthetic must bring one to a moral stance. A moral action of cleaning the river from detritus or raising public awareness of poor river health may follow from an aesthetic standpoint; but it is precisely in the use of the word 'follow' that is important. For instance, it might be the case that I wish to preserve what I believe to be the beauty of the river. In stating this seemingly laudable aesthetic cause, I am not sharing the basis of the moral stance I have taken – it could be for my own future exploitation or it could be for the creation of a wildlife haven. As Hepburn states in an analogous situation about the aesthetic appreciation of another person: 'That awaits an avowal of a distinctively moral nature.'⁴⁸³

It would be unfair to say that Hepburn does not entertain a synthesis of the moral and aesthetic into the way humans live. However, he does commit himself to this position, like Saito and Eaton do in terms of the aesthetic ought. Where some similarities do emerge however, is in another way of considering the aesthetic and moral in the way one understands their own life. When considering the aesthetic-moral qualities of life, we might ask "what brings meaning to your life?". As aesthetic qualities are often a display of moral norms, according to Saito, there is a strong sense that aesthetic qualities – such as engaging in projects of meaningful worth (a key designation of meaning in life) – will be central to the good life.⁴⁸⁴ Outside of self-regarding concerns, attending to others – seeing

⁴⁸¹ Hepburn, 'Aesthetic and Moral: Links and Limits Part One', 58.

⁴⁸² White, 'Indoctrination'.

⁴⁸³ Hepburn, 'Aesthetic and Moral: Links and Limits Part One', 58.

⁴⁸⁴ Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life'.

the other, empathising and caring for them and the collective good – is a foundation of a flourishing society.⁴⁸⁵ Consequently, this can lead to a sense of belonging to a place and to a community. It may facilitate the building of reciprocal relations and the potential for collective responsibility and action.⁴⁸⁶ Engaging in everyday life with aesthetic sensibilities often invokes the moral. Accepting that the aesthetic invokes the moral could still satisfy Hepburn's concerns. As Saito clarifies, while aesthetic life has a domain of its own, it is inseparable from our everyday, moral world.⁴⁸⁷ Everyday aesthetics are, however, a foundational requirement for better world-making.

SUMMARY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The philosophical plumbing of Saito's development of everyday aesthetics has been a rewarding and challenging attempt to understand its features and examine its flows and directions. It has been a disruptive deepening of my latest stage of trying to 'find my thing'. The reader will remember Saito's position on the need to enlarge the aesthetic beyond what she sees as a severe limitation of western aesthetic theory. Turning to educational implications, Saito's work already takes a carefully proposed view about the need to move beyond a limited form of aesthetic literacy, which typifies contemporary western aesthetic education. Saito's expansion of aesthetic concepts and practices does not just concern the experience of the learner – the student or the paddler – rather Saito's model enables me – as the educator – to articulate significant aesthetic features of my experience.

Within the aesthetic framing of the educational journey, the canoe continues to be a focal point for aesthetic education. As an object, its aesthetic importance can now be surfaced as part of the journey, if only as a means to a significant broader end. The paddler can attend to the significance of the vessel while being attentive to the goal of the journey itself. Instead of narrowing opportunities for serious aesthetic appreciation, Saito's model expands the material that is valid for contemplation and appraisal. I go one step further and claim that the material available for education, too, has expanded. One consequence of this realisation is that objects and experiences that relate to safety, comfort and ambience are worthy of consideration in the educational journey.

Affordances of objects and environments can become aesthetically significant as the journey continues. As moments of serious aesthetic appreciation accumulate, the greater the breadth and depth of materials the learner and the educator can draw on, integrate, and nurture into the continued realisation of the journey. My canoeing companion and I exemplified this in our journey on the River Nene. The educator can use Saito's expanded, non-exclusionary, aesthetic insights to evaluate the ways the journey activities are experienced – by both paddler and educator. For instance, recognising that certain types of often highly valued objects and environments are sought for educational purposes may reinforce stereotypical aesthetic norms. The educator can choose to continue to reinforce these qualities or offer a counterpoint through sensitive attunement and the subtle manipulation of the journey's ambience. I claim that the potential for long-lasting influences on nascent learners, as evidenced in the tribal canoe journeys, may have an enduring impact on the values that learners gain in relation to places and objects.

⁴⁸⁵ Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs to the Humanities* Saito does not make reference to Nussbaum in this work, although both make reference to regarding others as central to a flourishing society.

⁴⁸⁶ Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics*, pt. 240.

⁴⁸⁷ Saito, pt. 242.

The role of the journeying educator is already a complex one – the everyday aesthetic model has provided sensible-sounding language in which to give voice to that intricacy. As discussed throughout this thesis, there are many hitherto under-explored features of aesthetic education in the context of journeying. Everyday aesthetics provides the educator with a greater range of source material to draw on for the education of their paddlers. More so, everyday aesthetics provides the educator with an opportunity for greater introspection in relation to their own practices. The reader will recall two ways in which the special experience need not be a defining feature of the aesthetic: (i) the attention to doing, such as the quality of paddling or portaging a canoe over land; and (ii) conceptualising transience - being in states of continual change. All of these are evidence of a much broader set of sensible-sounding language for the educator to draw on. The educator can turn the concepts and their associated behaviours onto themselves and the design of the experience. They are also able to reflect and react to the way the journey may be assimilated and realised by the paddlers. The everyday aesthetic awareness can be used in considering the aesthetic qualities of the paddling and the environment, but also the moral messages travelling through the objects and the type of journeying experience sought (i.e. an adrenaline filled white-water adventure or slow-moving creek journey). Understanding the selection of environment(s) for the journeying experience may indicate much more than just a special backdrop for the activity and instead show careful aesthetic and moral consideration.

The reader will remember the discussions of the normative and descriptive elements of the everyday aesthetic, along with features of aesthetic-moral that is a central strand of Saito's work. The educator will have to confront and be aware of their own aesthetic sensitivities if they are to maximise aesthetic reward. Part of this process will require acknowledging the central role aesthetic plays in the educational process, to which the moral is its companion. Like my canoeing companions who influence the way I practice and live my life, the moral is influenced by one's capacity for serious aesthetic appreciation. I claim that educational journeying can compensate for the 'missed opportunity' for aesthetic education to nurture meaningful relationships with the landscape. However, this is not a causal relationship or requirement. In line with Hepburn's warning, the educator needs to make a conscious and considered decision when to make the avowal of a distinctly moral nature. Nonetheless, the reality of the pedagogical relationship and the journeying experience is that the moral will always be present, just like the aesthetic. I claim therefore, that the aesthetic and moral are central features of the educational journey. The challenge in the lived experience of the journey for the educator is to see the aesthetic and moral in the educational journey as moving – physically, geographically and metaphorically - toward opportunities to engage with emergent aesthetic oughts. The aesthetic ought to be *the* primary and explicit purpose of the journey, but this may not necessarily be so, especially if this happens to violate the everydayness of the educational experience. The moving may have to be away from the moral in necessity of the aesthetic, especially if the urge to move toward the moral – with the paddler – is without grounds.

The reader may remember that I had a guiding question to this exploration: in what ways could an educational journey be understood and experienced through everyday aesthetics? While regular exposure to canoeing experiences will be pivotal, worthwhile and rich in various aesthetic and moral learning, Saito's model provides an important distinction between the educator and learner. The educator prepares and experiences the aesthetic canoe journey under the descriptive function of everyday aesthetics, thus embracing and acknowledging the potential everydayness of repeated educational canoe journeys. As the

educator, I simultaneously acknowledge the descriptive and normative function – at least in the early stages – of the journey for the learner. This may require embracing the specialness of the activity initially for the learner, after which, the educator's role becomes one of integrating and acknowledging the specialness of the aesthetic experiences as valuable for the learners' lives. I cannot deny that, when in the role of the reflective learner, my paddling companions in the narratives throughout this thesis have made the journeys special. Yet, when I am leading canoe journeys with students, I am 'at work'. The specialness – at least in the first instance – is something to be capitalised on for the aesthetic and moral educative affordances. From this standpoint, I am then able to frame the learning experience for the learner to integrate into their everyday lives.

In attending to the overall quality of the journey and its progression over time, the educator attends to the aesthetic qualities of key moments – such as preparation, embarking, the peak of the journey – that could be indicated by time, location or challenge or some other quality pertinent to the purpose of the journey. I claim this requires the educator – me and/or the reader – to carefully reconsider the kinds of language associated with the ending of the journey. The sense of the *decline* (back) into a lifestyle and aesthetic norms in such stark contrast from the everyday on journey will be better to be realised as *part of life*, rather than separate from everyday existence. In this stage of finding my 'thing', I find this a powerful tool to enable my critical thinking about previously unnoticed phenomena in the learners' lives and my own life.

The philosophical plumbing explored in this chapter has, by no means, exhausted the possible educational journeying discussions. I suspect that there are many examples and opportunities for education and journeying that I have yet to consider and converse with companions about, as I continue to find my 'thing' outside the limits of this thesis. I conclude this chapter a little more confident as an educator. I claim that the experience I create in the journey for the paddlers is not the same as the everyday experience I have in the process of the managing and creating a journey for others. I argue that my contextualisation of Saito's model will enable the aesthetic journeying educator, while on the journey – and before and after – to consider the other-regarding nature of the everyday aesthetic that can first maximise the aesthetic rewards from the journey. The educator can enable learners to characterise their aesthetic canoe journey as a project of meaning in their life – in a similar way as the leaders of the tribal canoe journeys have discussed. Nurturing a heightened aesthetic regard toward others and integrating these into the learner's developing existential coping, is a powerful opportunity to be realised in the educational journey. This may also go some way to see the journeying experience as something central to everyday existence, even after limited specialness has worn off.

So far however, neither Hepburn, Carlson nor Saito have delved deeply into articulating an aesthetics of experience in natural environments. It is to my final canoe companion – Arnold Berleant – who I turn to as I return to the River Ivel, where I first canoed with Hepburn.

Chapter 9. Canoe Journeying Narrative: Paddling with Arnold Berleant

Boat of no dreams, you open spaces
The mind can't think of till it's in them,
Where the world is easy and dangerous and
Who can distinguish saints and sinners?

Sometimes that space reaches out
Till I'm enclosed in it in stony Edinburgh
And I hear you like a barrel thumping on head waves
Or in still water gurgling like a baby.

Norman MacCaig – Praise of a Boat.⁴⁸⁸

A far cry from Edinburgh where my doctoral story will eventually end, I am back at Langford Mill Pond. I was last here with Hepburn on my first canoe journey. Today will be my last, for a while. With it being summer, the water is lower, making the river more technical. There are flows within flows, ripples diverting and darting. Water swirls into eddies, leaps forward and then catches the flow again. Islands have emerged that do not exist in spring. The movement of the water is the foreground; the background of the riverbed hints at technical know-how required to journey today. The possibility to paddle differently, or with a different paddle, is likely. We may stand instead of kneeling. We may need to swap canoe paddles for canoe poles. We may extend ourselves through 11ft shafts of spruce that connect us through the murky water to the riverbed below. The canoe pole can send back otherwise lost communications from mud, stone and vegetation that is rarely stroked by the paddle or the hull of the canoe.

Today I am paddling a smaller, 12ft pack canoe. It is old, scratched, dented; full of memories and marks from occasions past. It is green with yellow lacing from stern to bow. It is designed only to be paddled solo; in the bastardised plastic image and wisdom from indigenous cultures, so often forgotten in UK recreational canoeing. It is mercifully light. I can carry it by my side with one hand. One seat and plenty of space for journeying kit; it is ideal for paddling solo. I often imagine MacCaig discussing how

⁴⁸⁸ The final two stanzas of MacCaig, 'Praise of a Boat'. Reproduced here by permission of the University of Edinburgh for non-commercial purposes.

the canoe opens spaces; his words bobbing on the flow. My thoughts reach out into the river, harking back to when I'm enclosed at home or, studying in Edinburgh. I remind myself of the gurgling of the river, the taps of the paddle on the gunwales and my fleeting excitement of being in the presence of Heron, Kingfisher, Otter and Cormorant.

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My fellow paddler, Berleant, is bringing his own canoe and kit; he said he could canoe his way down to meet me. We'll be paddling together, and solo. It is one of those peculiarities of canoeing, where it is possible to undertake something 'solo' but be in the company of fellow paddlers. So far on these journeys, I've paddled tandem, sharing the canoe and the journey with philosophical paddlers. Today we share the journey. Like being solo and together, today is similar to and different from past canoe journeys. I've paddled here before – with Hepburn – but not with the paddler to my side in their own boat. As we paddle together today, I hope that Berleant and I will have some time to enjoy this place. I hope to gain some aesthetic education lessons that his insights and this world of water may offer us.

It's warm with a forecast of blue sky. There are a few clusters of cloud. Grey wagtails jig up, down and across the mill pond, their long tails seemingly moving independently from the rest of their forms. Above the bushes obscuring a well-trodden pathway, a tall figure, hidden by the most glorious cedar strip canoe, wades through shingle. It can't be heard over the flow of the water from the mill pipes. The challenge of walking can be seen by the embodiment of care in each step. The stones eventually give way to confirming feedback of concrete; the stride gains a confidence. To see this portage, with such careful attention whilst under such pressure from the canoe, is a heartening sight. Berleant's canoe shows no sign of mistreatment, but of purposeful use. In canoeing, mistreatment can include pristine non-use – the canoe showing no signs of activity at all – along with ruptured hulls and rotten decks, the consequence of throwaway mentalities. Berleant makes his way around to the get-in where I'm standing. He is momentarily lost to a sprawling partition of bramble between the path and millpond; its blackberries will be shared by human and sparrows in a few ripening months.

*

"Berleant, what an entrance!", I say excitedly, as he lifts the canoe from his shoulders and rests it with care on a tuft of grass, defiantly growing through fractured concrete.

"Thanks for coming today", I say as he begins to untie his paddles that he bound to his seat and yoke with the painters.

"I appreciate it, Lewis. I hope today is going to be an enriching opportunity for *active engagement* with the river. I've paddled much closer to home, on the Genesee River⁴⁸⁹ and The Bantam River before now, but never here.⁴⁹⁰ I'm hoping we'll be able to

⁴⁸⁹ A descriptive account of this canoe journey is found in: Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, chap. 6.

⁴⁹⁰ A descriptive account of this journey is found in: Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, chap. 3.

broaden our aesthetic experience and discover aspects of the aesthetic character of our canoe journey together”, he says with a considered smile.

Attached to the hull of the *gleaming varnished interior* of his boat is an 8ft *pole of spruce* to aid manoeuvring through obstructions and *thin places*.⁴⁹¹

“You might need that today, looking at some of the water on this stretch”, I say as I put my rucksack on my shoulders and carry the canoe to the water’s edge.

My pole is fastened to the gunwale and deck with bungees. Warblers are visually hiding but chattering away and a brilliant-white little egret watches us from the seasonal shingle island. Its submerged yellow feet lost to the stone; its legs look like reeds.

“That’s good to know, I’ll not pack it under my things, then”, he says as he looks around and intimates his move onto the bubbling water of the mill pond. “What a glorious day! The river is inviting us. Shall we break-in and use the flow to take us down stream?”, he asks.

*

Instead of keeping my feet dry, I place the canoe on the water and my feet in it. Water flows over the top of my shoes and down to my toes. It might be summer, but the water is refreshingly cool. Berleant is more graceful than I. Placing his canoe with quiet purposefulness on the water, he ties his kit in the hull by the empty seat at the bow. From the concrete edge, he slides himself in, holding on to both boat and side, keeping himself from being pushed up the eddy and into the main flow. I lean over to the far gunwale and stretch my right leg over the closest gunwale, while my left is still partially submerged. I catch a glimpse of small chard investigating my temporary aquatic installation. It darts away as I bring my body into the buoyant object.

Berleant draws his *beavertail paddle*, ideal for these shallower waters. He paddles beside me while I adjust my kneeling and edging position. As the waters are shallow and I’m solo, I edge to the right side of the canoe. The left side of the hull now sits about 10cm above the water’s surface. My knee snuggled to the right of the hull, which rests below the waterline. The right gunwale sits low, about 5-7cm above the flowing water. It is a reminder of both the skill and precariousness of canoeing this way.

⁴⁹¹ References to these items are found in a descriptive account of ‘A paddle on the Bantam River’ in Berleant, 29–34.



PLATE 13 REFINING THE EDGE

Paddling this way is more efficient and the boat more manoeuvrable, as only a small portion of the hull makes contact with the water.

Berleant somehow sees these thoughts in my body and says “Experiencing the world from the water provides an unusual perspective and one that varies with the particular kind of water environment we participate in. For a water setting can influence how we

understand ourselves and our place in the world. I think you might be onto something with educational journeys, Lewis... this aqueous perspective can contribute to environmental and aesthetic education”.⁴⁹²

“I have worried that people just think this is self-indulgent”, I say over the sound of water, but perhaps that is the issue with the general misunderstanding of the aesthetic in the first place.

“It is definitely not self-indulgent”, He replies, “There is an aesthetic feature to every experience but that is not always attended to. We often ignore the subtle qualities of perceptual experience, which after all is what the aesthetic actually means. *We should be concerned with the quality of sounds, smells, sight, touch, or bodies, our collective ways of perceiving and experience.*”⁴⁹³ You know, there’s no environmental perception without a person doing it”.⁴⁹⁴

“I feel that this is one of the tasks, and opportunities of the educational journeys”, I say hopefully.

*

“Let’s get physical and let’s get liminal”, I holler in a moment of playfulness.

We are between both start and end of this journey and our beginning is characterised by the effervescing water pounding out of the mill pipes.

“If you go first, Berleant, once you break in, you need to take either the extreme left or extreme right channel... otherwise you’ll run aground”.

He nods; paddles forward, crossing the eddy-line. The bow thrusts forward with just two strong strokes of his paddle. The third stroke follows through to the stern and becomes a rudder. The hull bounces on the speeding water. The canoe bobs up and down as the flow pushes the boat around and then downstream. He commands the canoe with graceful, minimal adjustments. He takes the extreme left channel and passes over where I’d been standing just minutes before. The little egret stands stock still. Berleant puts in a silent stroke on the now contrastingly calm water, to not frighten it. He paddles slowly out of view, hidden behind a mass of Hawthorn on a pointed jut of land separating the mill pond and the mill overflow channel.

Following, I break across the calm of the eddy-line into the enduring power of the water. As it takes me round, I glance into the pipes and see the remains of the old turbines. I shouldn’t have done this; it takes me off-balance. I rapidly feel the push of the flow catching the left side; the side that is meant to be raised to allow the water to pass underneath. I avert a swim. I berate myself. I cut across the flow to the left-hand

⁴⁹² Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, 57–58.

⁴⁹³ Similar discussions about aesthetic embodiment can be found here: Berleant, *Re-Thinking Aesthetics: Rogue Essays on Aesthetics and the Arts*, chap. 6.

⁴⁹⁴ These comments can be found in a recorded interview: *Arnold Berleant - Aesthetics beyond the Arts/Estética Além Das Artes - YouTube*.

channel. The Hawthorn to my left, the little egret and island to my right. A relaxed Berleant comes into view; he is observing the almost imperceptible yet knowing transformation of three cygnets, along with their protective majestic parents. I try and shake off the feelings of error. I remind myself that we are all between swims, as my canoeing colleagues often say.

I pull alongside him, watching the elegances of the swans. “The side of your canoe is rather wet” he smiles knowingly, “did you nearly have a swim?”.

“I was trying to get a glimpse of the workings under the mill... I may have become more intimate with it than I’d have liked”, I say channelling cheerfulness.

“It is such a unique reminder of our embodiment in *balancing against the wobble*. Entering the canoe can mark that moment of growing as a new entity on the water. It shows *itself in an intimacy with this private* place on the water. There is a sense in which we are, as you said earlier, in a *liminal state between the different order of things* - the water and land. When I’m in the canoe *I am floating on an invisible plane between two perfectly symmetrical worlds*”⁴⁹⁵, he says.

“The wobble is a good way to think about disturbance and transition. It’s a reminder that the way we perceive sometimes needs to be jolted out of a kind of anaesthesia, propped up by education and socialisation in the ignored familiar, the comfortable...”, I say, as we start paddling again.

*

The left-hand bank, which leads to meadow and planted woodland, is littered with recently pruned geese and swan feathers. Berleant picks up a large floating white feather; I pick up an umber-coloured goose feather.

“Great for drawing with”, I say, stowing mine underneath my rucksack. He puts his safely between his shirt and his buoyancy aid.

We paddle around the chicane, right then left. I pull back as there isn’t a great deal of space for side-by-side paddling. The brambles and beech trees have grown so much that it is only from this vantage point that the water can be seen. The footpath has been completely closed off to the water world. The momentary coolness is welcome underneath the nearly completed mesh of sharp extrusions and broadleaves some height above.

“Our turning is on the left”, I say leaning forward in the hope Berleant can hear me. He gives me a thumbs up as he nears the navigation ‘T’ Junction.

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⁴⁹⁵ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 29–30.

“Welcome to the forgotten waters”, I say as we are side by side again for a moment. “It might look straight, but if you look again, you can’t see all the way down. It’s going to be a bit technical, but in using our skills we might be able to capture our thoughts together”, I suggest.

“Good idea” Berleant says as we begin to paddle up the channel, against a light flow.

The original channel would have been about 30ft-wide in its days of coal and wheat transportation; now it is about 20ft between the banks at its widest point. The vegetation disrupts the straight line of the map and fallen trees remind us that there is little to no need for them to be cleared. Boats of any industrial or economic importance haven’t been on these waters since the 1870s. The only time it is clear of weeds is in the lead up to flooding season. The navigation now serves the environment as a ‘drain’.

“I’ve been thinking that educational journeying need not rest on the idea of the education of a group or a single person. I think the focus should be on the kinds of activities that enable rich aesthetic awareness. These could be used with a community or solo”, I say starting us off with something that’s been on my mind for a while.

“What did you have in mind?”, he says as our view of each other is disturbed by a patch of tall reeds.

“Let’s take your idea of aesthetic descriptions and put it in the context of the water world we are in. I see this as being a gateway for kinds of aesthetic education central to the canoe journey. To start with description seems to make sense. We are trying to give voice to what we perceive through the body in any given place in environment”, I say.

Berleant listens with sincerity and a good few paddle strokes pass between us, slowing down time to dwell on our thoughts and our water-place.⁴⁹⁶ “What I’ve found in the past to be *most striking in a descriptive account of the water world of a small river is how predominantly sensory a domain it was. All the senses joined in an acute awareness of the perceptual qualities of that environment: site, smell, hearing, tactility, kinaesthesia, all inseparable in our sensory immersion in the riverine setting. My previous trips like this one, combined several interests - research, the practical demand of guiding the canoe and finding a suitable place to pull out each night, and recognising animals, birds, and the other things we encountered. But most pervasive and powerful was the aesthetic character of the experience, a character that was always present and dominated all other interests*”.⁴⁹⁷

“Do you think there is a unifying feature to it?”, I ask

“Indeed, the perceiver – the learner and the educator, perhaps they are sometimes one and the same – bring their synthesising to the ‘doings’ and ‘under goings’, as Dewey would say, when they canoe. We can take the time to learn *how our experiences* are

⁴⁹⁶ Berleant claims that when on the water becomes elastic in relation to movements on the flow and in place: Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, 64.

⁴⁹⁷ Berleant, 60.

transfigured when we consider the land from the standpoint of water. We realise not only that we are continually part of a constellation of motions but that, because of our ever-changing position, we must constantly reconsider how we stand in relation to everything else. Basic experiences are transformed. We become intensely aware of the process of entering and leaving, whether a dock or a harbour, or an eddy. Our eyes continually search the horizon and the sky for signs of changing weather. We find ourselves constantly reassessing our direction and distance in the light of changes in our position and the conditions of sky, wind, and water. Even moments of rest are only temporary... our neighbours and surroundings are themselves constantly in flux”, Berleant muses.⁴⁹⁸

“Searching for that understanding of the perceiving self in relation to the rest of the world, their world, to me seems like a such a rich place to start this kind of education. It might centre on perception, but seems to expand to a feature shared among Hepburn, Carlson, Saito and yourself – that we can enhance our aesthetic perception through attending to the quality of experience. And such experiences can be understood through a range of tools, disciplines, knowledge systems and skills”. I fall silent for a moment and let the paddle strokes work through my body.

“I think”, I say “that there is a striking and diverse opportunity for aesthetic descriptions in the varied examples of nature writing, poetry and arts.”

Just then, something scrapes the bottom of the boat.

We approach an outcrop of dense alders and white willows, so thick that all we can hear are the sounds of warblers; they are mischievous at the best of times and tease any human passer-by no matter how light the steps or quiet their paddle strokes. They are an elusive feature of this secret water world.

*

Just then, I grind abruptly to a halt. Berleant puts in some sharp reversing paddles to stop his canoe so that he does not hit me.

“Well... this is one of the interesting consequences of being in a forgotten place”, I say pointing to the now visible culprit: a log with a protruding branch the thickness of the paddle has lodged me in a stationary position.

“Yes indeed” he says, “It is also a reminder that sometimes what we think we see doesn’t always marry with the reality of the environment... I think I can get round if I paddle through the reeds. Can you get yourself clear?”, He asks as he paddles past me toward the bank.

The Warblers go deafly silent. We unsettle their chattering in my sabotaged flow of thought and paddling.

⁴⁹⁸ Berleant, 62.

I put in a few strong power strokes... nothing happens except a lot of splashing. I change tack... I see if I can hold the submerged trunk lower. I can and try to push myself across it; I only push myself further into the now eerily silent scene of invisible warblers.

“You’ve got your pole”, Berleant shouts from an eddy lavished by purple loosestrife.

“Cheers”, I shout back definitely making myself known to all water life that lives above and below the water.

I untie bungees holding the pole to the canoe; it springs straight and lands in my lap. I wield this huge pole, initially from my kneeling position. I put it slightly behind me, between the bush and the canoe. At the same time, I kneel toward the front of the canoe so that the stern raises to reduce the weight and friction on the trunk. One push... a little movement; another push, the scraping on the hull is felt in my knees; third push, I am jettisoned toward the purples obscuring Berleant.

“Well that was rather in-pole-lite of that tree”, I say punning my way to his side.

Berleant, has his pole in his hand and carefully stands.

“If that experience is an indication of the technicality to expect; let’s try to avert it by making ourselves more pilotable”, he says.

Now standing in the canoes, we use the poles like long kayak paddles. In doing so, our horizon is elevated. We see into the farmer’s fields on the right; we peer into the woodland on the left. A red kite is circling in thermals above a fallow field. We make huge 4ft to 6ft circles as each end hits the water and then arcs to the sky. Up and down. The whole movement requires an embodied sensitivity to the boat, sending feedback from the water through the hull, through my feet and legs and into my inner ear, ensuring I remain balanced as we move.

*

“This is a good example”, he says, “of us gliding along a secluded river and the river being a sensory domain, combining interests and skills. The aesthetic character of the river is made accessible by the canoe”.⁴⁹⁹

“It is such a rich way of engaging with the water and land; one that can jerk us into different ways of thinking. That, I think, is one of the goals I keep holding onto. I want to enable the educator and learner to find ways of bringing these experiences to life for others to ‘experience’ through empathy and imagination, or better still... to join the journey”, I say.

“That’s the task,” he says, “my idea of aesthetic engagement identifies this participatory experience, focusing on the wholeness, the integrity of the situation. *It combines with*

⁴⁹⁹ Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, 59-60.

equal concentration the directness of perception and its residual meanings, these two fused into a unity. Aesthetics can describe how this takes place on particular occasions, with nature as well as with art, and helps us grasp their theoretical significance".⁵⁰⁰

"I can see learning through things like nature writing, poetry and art – as you say – and perhaps other modes of thought can enhance perception: understanding the embodied mind, along with ecology, history and like. It might be possible in formal education, but I think the expansiveness and freedom of outdoor education has a real opportunity here?", I say, as our poles strike the water.

We start to push through tranches of robust reeds, adopting a punting motion.

"The water level has dropped", I say.

"Or perhaps the riverbed has risen", Berleant says, sharing a different perspective.

I feel the end of the pole press into the clay riverbed, then feel the crunch of stone. The water shimmers in front of us, mirroring the veiled blues and greens from the canopy. Trees give us a little respite in this challenging, warm work.

"The descriptions you're aiming at, then, need to be put into a critical frame, if criticism isn't already present in the perceptual description. Let's not forget, this kind of task isn't just about recounting or accounting for what's gone. *Aesthetic criticism may not only describe the object itself but may relate how it operates, the course and character of our experience of it. In as empirical an activity as art, description encompasses a broad arena. It is, moreover, a prerequisite for every other critical function*", Berleant proffers.⁵⁰¹

"So, the participatory nature of canoe journeys can serve as rich material for aesthetic descriptions, or explanations, and appraisals?" I say.

"I would think so" he says, "as the strict divisions between the arts and environment in western aesthetics are gradually dismantled, we can draw on an environmental appreciation that is *interactive and engaged*, that too recognise *continuities between art appreciation and environmental appreciation*. We need to resist the separation between the *physical and psychological*. We need to recognise what appears in the physical environment and the aesthetic satisfaction that results from an appreciative engagement with environment. I think the kind of activity you have in mind can help in *developing an aesthetic appreciation of environment that is as sophisticated as that of any art. And it can promote efforts to design and otherwise shape environment in ways that recognise the importance of its aesthetic value. As environmental criticism builds a literature of its own, it will gain in authority and influence that matches the pervasive importance of its subject matter*. The learner, the canoeist, can with help *appraise the environment with sensitivity, recognising its aesthetic value in the difficult process of humanising*

⁵⁰⁰ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 38–39.

⁵⁰¹ Berleant, 135.

our civilization. That seems to be a broader environmental, aesthetic, and ethical task. What do you think?”⁵⁰²

*

The flow picks up, and the bed of the navigation rises with each push of the pole.

“You’re going to want to head river-left, over to the right” I say.

The way the paddler often orients themselves is to the directional flow. ‘River-left’ means the left side of the river in the direction of the flow. This often requires quite careful thought and can disorientate the novice paddler. It does however show that frames of reference we typically take for granted can be reinterpreted, changed, and learned from different perspectives. I avert the scraping of my hull as I come into line with Berleant’s stern. I focus on not colliding with his boat. Just then, my fixed eyes and paddling thoughts are disturbed.

“Duck!”, he calls, as his form reduces from tall canoeist, to praying paddler.

Another call, “Watch out, there’s a fishing line and hook”.

“I can’t see it”, I call as I fall to my knees.

I force the pole underneath the bow buoyancy block. I duck as I nudge myself into the strainer-like form of the tree – this is the only navigable route. Something snags my buoyancy aid. At first I think it must be a branch, but when I stop moving entirely, I realise that a long-gone fisherman has likely caught their largest catch *in absentia*. Mercifully, the hook has just missed the skin of my neck. A fleeting coldness of the rusting hook makes me shudder in the warm sun.

Berleant comes back and holds my canoe while also holding us secure by another branch of the same tree. Only then can I relax my tense body. My legs, hips and torso no longer need to work as hard by edging the canoe out of the flow.

“I’m just getting my knife and I’ll cut the line from the tree. I might as well try and remove as much of it as possible”, I say to Berleant, who nods in agreement.

Unclipping the pocket of my buoyancy aid, I pull out my water-knife. It has a small triangular piece of fabric through a loop; it affords putting it to my teeth and I flick it open with a clenched bite. I fumble for the line. It is close to my ear and shoots straight up to the branch about 50 centimetres; it is bending with my movements.

“It reminds me of invisible wire that they used to use in children’s TV programmes”, I say talking nervously.

I get the line between my fingers and reach nearly as high as I can; with my left hand I grip and cut just above that... all by feel. I don’t want to move my neck too much, just

⁵⁰² Berleant, 144.

in case the hook cuts my skin. The remainder of the line floats over my shoulder, at the mercy of a light breeze. I take my buoyancy aid off and see a lead-weighted barbed hook in the webbing. I pull it out and hold it up to show Berleant.

“It is not often”, I say, “that I get a glimpse of what it must feel like, just a little, to be fish”.

“That’s an aesthetic education of a very particular type”, he says, smiling and checking to make sure I’m all right.

I wrap the line around the hook and place it into the webbing of the buoyancy block for safe disposal later.

“Can you hear that? The water in the lock chamber? It’s just around the overgrown trees”, I say as the sun pierces through the intricate branches of planted sycamores, oaks and beeches, some 40 metres back from the watercourse.

*

“What you said before?” I question, as Berleant turns around. We can paddle side by side as the hollowed workings of the old lock basin start to emerge, “I think that the features of the aesthetic education in canoe journeys, say as distinct from just paddling about or in the mode of hedonistic adventure, has an important opportunity to add to what we might think of as ‘aesthetic education’ more broadly. Developing rich and broad perceptual experiences that can lead us to actively seek improvements to life and the conditions that sustain life, is the job. For me, I think a project of meaning of my life, to use a phrase from Wolf,⁵⁰³ is to work toward educational change. That means attending to aesthetic education, but education more generally speaking”.

“I think you're right. Moreover, I think the water environment can make a special contribution to environmental education. It is an education not only about environment, but about how we might live harmoniously in the world. The water environment encourages attentiveness to details and signs in nature: it teaches perceptual acuteness. Part of the special pleasure we find in the water is that every change of wind, light, water surface, and motion is experienced immediately. Attending to a broader concept and prospect of education, specifically aesthetic education can foster a culture of perceptual acuteness.”, I say, taking his ideas in.

“These challenges” he replies “tell us much about the particular environment we are part of and how it's shifting appearance both reflects what may be hidden and anticipates what may happen. This leads us to realise that things are not always what they appear to be. As we've seen today – we can't always see the things in the environment that influence our action... the log, the hook! Experiencing water environments teaches us to place in question the meaning of the obvious, especially the regularity and predictability of the land. Appearances may be deceptive and very

⁵⁰³ Wolf, 'Happiness and Meaning: Two Aspects of the Good Life'.

different meanings may lie beneath the surface. This is a valuable aesthetic education not only for knowing nature but for politics and social life, as well.”⁵⁰⁴

The old bridge over the lock structure comes into sharper focus with each paddle stroke. Dark browns, greens and greys adorn the handrail and exposed red brickwork. They have been subject to the kind of weathering from moist air. These colours are temporarily dried in this season, looking like cracked paints on a forgotten watercolour palette. The vegetation is dense on both sides. The woodland on the left begins to thin out as a vibrant multicoloured meadow of wildflower transforms the upper bank with each paddle stroke.

*

“Canoe journeys do provide us with opportunities to leave us lastingly disturbed, like Hepburn said of walking the familiar country path”, I say, feeling an idea brewing.

I think that kind of disturbance is educational. We can think about our bodies – that zero point of perception, you’ve discussed in the past – along with thinking about our reciprocal relations with environment. They include attending to our own perception, along with the potential outcomes of being able to perceive collectively, in the learning community, socially and as a global population of humans, and more-than-humans. It might be an overly grand thing to suggest canoe journeys can do this. No doubt other modes of journeying can too, but I do think there is something significant in the embodied disturbance, in the wobble so to speak. With each paddle stroke, with each conversation, it enables us to participate with otherness, of ourselves and objects in environment. Honing sensory perception and attention to enrich our aesthetic lives can lead to much broader educational, ethical, political changes needed, so that we can live well. We’ll be able to *see* and *feel* the way structures and experiences operate.”

“Gosh, that must be all the poling that’s led to that”, I say having surprised myself. I feel a relief like I’ve just exhaled these ideas having held my breath for a 5-year gestation period.

*

We sit awhile at the mouth of the old lock. Wild roses dangle on thorny strings. The masonry is surprisingly intact, showing few signs of degradation since it fell out of use in the late 1870s. A constant curvaceous flow swoops down over the old sill; the wall sill marker paint can just be made out. The air is cooled by the light spray of water. The sun is on our backs as we hold the brickwork where the old lock gate used to be. The odd passer by looks over the bridge above us. One passes with their dog, music playing compellingly from a speaker. Joni Mitchell: “Hey! Farmer, farmer put away your DDT/ Don’t care ‘bout spots on my apples/ Leave me the birds and bees, plea-ease...”.⁵⁰⁵ The

⁵⁰⁴ Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, 64–66.

⁵⁰⁵ Mitchell, *Big Yellow Taxi*.

song continues in my mind as the white noise of water consumes it, as the passer-by passes by.

We pull back a little to warm up in the light, dry shade of the lock basin.

*

After a short rest, we decide to stand and begin poling back with the flow.

Berleant turns to me, replying earnestly to my last thought: “There is a world of discovery to learn how to appreciate the arts, environment, people, and situations... This enables us to live a more fulfilling life. It can renew our world. It may not always be positive or beautiful; we also attend aesthetically to tragedy, drama and pain; aesthetic experiences can enlarge your world... They can transform your world. Aesthetics is one of the most fundamental values of human life.”⁵⁰⁶

“I hope that canoe journeys are a part of it”, I say hopefully... somewhat seeking confirmation.

“Don't underestimate it” Berleant replies as we begin to paddle back to the put-in point.

“The constant activity of perceiving, understanding, and responding to the situation gives us a rich and valuable lesson in living within the processes of the natural world. In particular, it exemplifies the reciprocity of natural forces and conditions, how these are not discrete objects and events but are interrelated and continuous. Most of all, the water environment forces us to see ourselves as an inseparable part of those processes”, he says.⁵⁰⁷

“I can see that with every paddle stroke we are in relation... a part of the places. That relationship does not end once paddling has stopped”, I say as the warblers stopped warbling and the red kites fly curiously over us.

Berleant continues: “Yes, we are immersed in the world, which is at the same time a world transmuted by human agency. We come to discover the ultimate unity of nature and to recognise that the human place is a part of the natural world”.⁵⁰⁸

As Berleant speaks, I begin to vividly imagine varied opportunities for aesthetic education. The different types of journeys and frames stream across my mind. I see how various forms of knowledge can enable the aesthetic experience to come alive. I envision the embodied sensory sensitivity emerging from the canoe and beyond.

“Being on the water” Berleant says, “gives us a sober sense of human proportions and limitations. Because water environments are not largely human made, and so are not in the image of human culture, we're forced to recognise the strains on our power. Recognising this with our bodies, as well as with our understanding, is a profound

⁵⁰⁶ Arnold Berleant - *Aesthetics beyond the Arts/Estética Além Das Artes* - YouTube.

⁵⁰⁷ Berleant, *Aesthetics and Environment: Variations on a Theme*, 66.

⁵⁰⁸ Berleant, 66.

environmental aesthetic lesson. To live, then, as a harmonious part of the natural process is to be most truly human. Perhaps the world from the water can best help us grasp this most important lesson of all.”⁵⁰⁹

*

The sun now behind us, we pole side by side down the long, diffused channel. As we return to our entry point, Berleant reminds me that the act of returning is special. ‘The same place’ he ponders, “*is completely altered. Everything is overlaid with memory and a sense of return.*”⁵¹⁰

“Perhaps,” I say, our poles dipping among the reeds, “that gives us an opportunity to look again with fresh eyes. Instead of always looking forward, we might return, we might revisit. We can challenge the metaphor of the journey as linear progress. We should be able to catch a glimpse of ourselves in the process of seeking unity and synthesis, our powers of perception can grow through disturbance”.

A tawny owl jerks into flight from a cavern in a dying oak tree... a reminder that on the return journey new spaces can be opened, new ideas can be had by the reaching out of the environment. The job of the educator is to coax in others the willingness to perceive, in safety or danger, its thumping, or gurgling calls.

⁵⁰⁹ Berleant, 66.

⁵¹⁰ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 33.

Chapter 10: Experiential Aesthetics

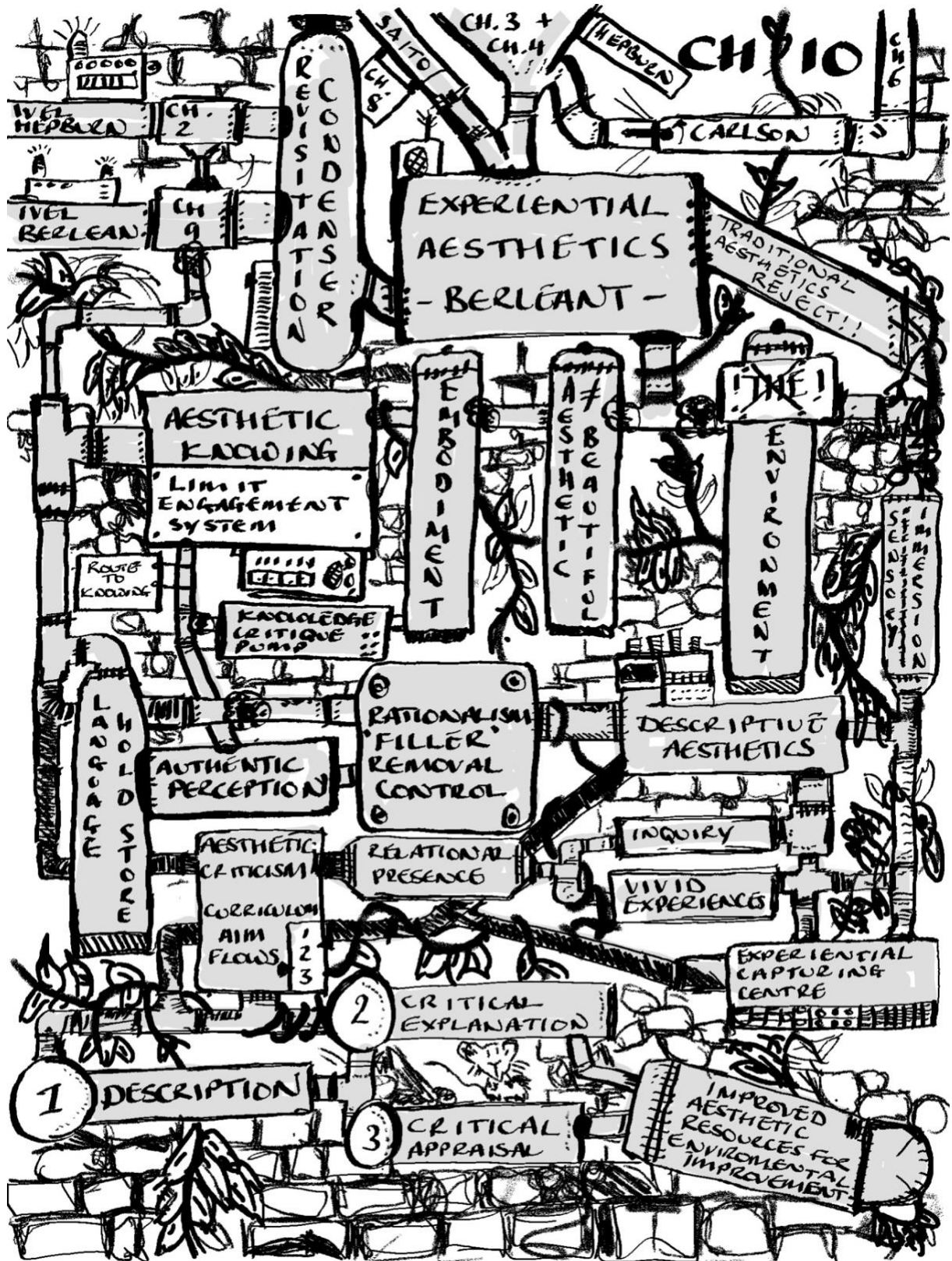


PLATE 14 CHAPTER 10 PHILOSOPHICAL PLUMBING

The canoe, as a craft of aesthetic education and research, has become a vessel that has opened spaces for thought far beyond what I had initially imagined. In the latest stage of 'finding my thing', I have developed an appreciation for the concept and practice of returning. The reader will remember that Hepburn noted this – a significant difference between those who have journeyed from those who have not, is their transfigured experience, memory and identity. They return differently. The philosophical plumbing in this chapter returns to the etymology of 'aesthetic' and builds a further expansive understanding of aesthetic experience and aesthetic environment. As the philosophical plumbing image above shows, the work the reader will engage with in this chapter serves as a way of integrating some features discussed by the canoeing companions we met earlier in this thesis, namely Hepburn, Carlson and Saito.

The following discussions keep the reader in the *liminal* space between the balance and wobble - the security of certain features of educational journeys - while being in the fruitful, and yet challenging, position of reassessment. Part of that process of reassessment involves the reader travelling through early concepts with a new acute awareness of the discussions above. It will help to remember that aesthetics is associated with knowing through the senses, with the beautiful, and the immediacy of perception of an unobjectified environment. This has been portrayed in the filters to the right of the 'aesthetic knowing – limit engagement system' in the plumbing image above (Plate 13). Other elements of the discussion below require the reader to stand in relation to their own education practice, as the discussion of educational journeys and aesthetic education takes the form of a curriculum, which I have created considering Berleant's analysis of aesthetic criticism of environment. The curriculum aims are presented as 'flows' from a central unit that connects features of Berleant's models into interconnected tanks: (i) aesthetic description; (ii) critical explanation; and, (iii) critical appraisal. To my knowledge this has not been developed before. The philosophical concepts that feed into these aims are presented in the pipework above the flows and are discussed below. By way of conclusion, I explore the educational implications of Berleant's model for education, and educational journeying. Before that though, the first part of the philosophical plumbing work for the reader to explore is a revived conceptualisation of the aesthetic developed by Berleant.

REJECTING TRADITION; REASSERTING THE *AESTHETIC*

After Hepburn's *neglect of natural beauty* paper, opportunities for new directions in aesthetics were seized. New models and debates emerged that were sympathetic to Hepburn's ideas, many of which contrasted significantly with Carlson's scientific cognitivism. The reader has already seen one development in the form of Saito's everyday aesthetics. Arnold Berleant developed a different response to scientific cognitivism, which built upon Hepburn's works, with his aesthetics of environment. Dissenting from aesthetics informed by dualisms of subject-object found in arts- and science-inspired aesthetics, experiential aesthetics or aesthetics of environment (the names are used interchangeably in the discourse) offers the return to the *real* meaning of the aesthetic, Berleant argues. This homecoming accommodates a range of human experiences of phenomena that are left unresolved in traditional aesthetics and within other prominent models, such as the contemporary scientific cognitivism model. Berleant's experiential environment model involves attending to, and taking seriously, often neglected aspects in aesthetics such as the role of the body, the perceiver, and the courage to relinquish unhelpful concepts in prevalent aesthetic appraisals. He continues Hepburn's striving for the *sensible sounding language* for aesthetic experience. I turn to Berleant to consider how reinvigorating

aesthetics in this liberated way could enable greater understanding and use of aesthetic journeys.

By starting with the principles of traditional aesthetics, and understanding how aesthetics has (to borrow a term of Nussbaum about democratic education) '*lost its way*',⁵¹¹ Berleant reminds us that the aesthetic *as art* seems so far from the aesthetics of environment. Yet, it is often easily forgotten that modern western aesthetics, developed from Kant, readily included the natural world as a topic for analysis. Even today, we draw on aesthetic concepts in attempts to understand experiences in natural environment. As Berleant states:

Applying concepts such as beauty, appreciation, and sublimity to environment forces us to rethink our creation and, indeed, human experience in general. The usual explanations that were formulated in relation to the arts failed to respond to the demands of environmental experience.⁵¹²

This leads the model to do two key things, which are explored in relation to the purposes of this thesis: (1) to consider what is to be meant by 'environment' and (2) what ought to be understood as 'aesthetic'.

To do justice to these two considerations, I have structured the discussion into three areas of focus. I first discuss Berleant's approach to rejecting the recent tradition of aesthetics, which presents his commitment to an historically accurate understanding of the term 'aesthetic'. This moves into his analysis and argument for thinking of human and non-human space as an encompassing *environment*. This contrasts with a common sense notion of an objectified conceptualisation of our surroundings, often discussed as *The Environment*. This area of focus then moves into a further reassertion of the ways in which one might typically use 'aesthetics' as a shorthand for referring to only 'beautiful' objects and experiences'.

The second area of focus relates several themes previously discussed in this thesis – the implications of the disembodied aesthetic. I analyse Berleant's arguments concerning the problems of disembodiment. I then move the reader into discussions of the concept of aesthetic knowing and coping with aesthetic knowing that has reached its cognitive limits. I then discuss Berleant's position on developing 'aesthetic argument', which leads the reader into his work on developing *Descriptive Aesthetics*.

ENVIRONMENT, NOT 'THE ENVIRONMENT'

For Berleant, the notion of an aesthetics of environment is problematic only if we consider it within modern notions of aesthetics and environments. I'll turn to features of aesthetics below; here I will briefly discuss 'environment', as articulated by Berleant. To consider the environment as something outside of ourselves, that which surrounds us, suggests that as human beings we can remove ourselves from environments. According to Berleant, this is a misapprehension, as no environment is inseparable from our impact, even those we may never be directly in. Thinking of our environment as 'surroundings' does not present a viable solution either. Such a position is perpetuated in science and arts – namely, there is something out there to be observed, appraised or measured, for instance. This too, is perpetuated in areas of philosophy where there are descriptions, or conceptualisations of a 'physical environment', a 'cultural' one, or 'spiritual' setting. Our everyday language

⁵¹¹ Nussbaum, *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs to the Humanities*.

⁵¹² Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 2.

would suggest that the environment is an *object out there* separate from our subjective selves, but one with which we interact at an appropriate distance depending on the framing discipline or task.

This is made manifest in the small yet significant use of the definite article preceding the term 'environment'. To use 'the' is indicative of there being something disconnected from the self. In English, we wouldn't say 'I am looking at *the* hand of mine', we would say 'I am looking at *my* hand'. In a similar way, we are confronted by the use of language and where one locates the environment. Berleant suggests that we have an issue with clearly delineating environments. From attempting to define indoors and outdoors, to the limits of the space I inhabit – whether that's my room, home, our land, this country, our planet – I must recognise that my inner world, my consciousness, my reflexes, are part of environment. It is, Berleant argues, one of the last survivors of the mind-body dualism. *The environment has become misrepresented as a,*

[...] distant place which we think to contemplate from afar, [which] dissolves into a complex network of relationships, connections, and continuities of those physical, social, and cultural conditions that describe my actions, my responses, my awareness and that gives shape and content to the very life that is mine. For there is no outside world. There is no outside. Nor is there an inner sanctum in which I can take refuge from inimical external forces. The perceiver (mind) is an aspect of the perceived (body) and conversely; person and environment are continuous.⁵¹³

Reminiscent of Hepburn and his concern for the limitation of language and 'ready-made' concepts, Berleant recognises that we have a long way to go in developing a language of inclusion and continuity with environment. Terms such as 'landscape' while implying a visual scene as a focal point for aesthetic appreciation, also indicate 'human attitudes, meanings, values, and sensibilities on their natural habitats'.⁵¹⁴ By digging deeper into such terminology, Berleant can claim that 'entering and participating in the landscape requires full sensory involvement'.⁵¹⁵ While not the centre point of the discussion in this thesis, the movement towards synaesthetic engagement with environment calls into question the Lockean notion of nature as something apart from humans.⁵¹⁶ Instead, it embraces a view of nature as all-inclusive and embracing the consciousness of the human being, as argued by Spinoza.⁵¹⁷ For Berleant, everything – all places, objects, events, etc. – is experienced by an embodied and aware being, with the capacity for 'sensory directness'. Thus the embodied being, engaged in environment, will attend to the aesthetic features always present, whether that be in predominantly human landscapes or landscapes of predominantly more-than-human nature.

Nature, in this model, is 'everything that there is... a total, integrated, continuous process'.⁵¹⁸ This goes beyond Hepburn's early views about nature as 'all *objects* that are not human artefacts',⁵¹⁹ (my emphasis). Nature encapsulates ugliness and beauty, the explainable and the wonderful. Furthermore, the values humans construct *about* nature are not undertaken in a quasi-objective perspective *sub specie aeternitatis* (from the view

⁵¹³ Berleant, 4.

⁵¹⁴ Berleant, 6.

⁵¹⁵ Berleant, 6.

⁵¹⁶ For synaesthesia see pp.57-72 & 123-139 Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*.

⁵¹⁷ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 7.

⁵¹⁸ Berleant, 9.

⁵¹⁹ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 34.

of the eternal). All our actions, beliefs and the ongoing processes in and around us are situated in each other, whether we always know it or not. In the experiential model, humans are required to accept the 'inclusiveness of nature' and understand the reciprocal and relational influences within in, to lead toward a form of harmonisation. In doing so, Berleant posits that we will gain a respect, deference and humility for environment. Consequently, Berleant suggests that humans will be able to recognise when they fail to understand something in material nature, they should not intervene. He conjectures that 'the limits of our reason are not the limits of the universe'.⁵²⁰ The way humans should think about the environment is as 'the natural process as people live it, *however* they live it. Environment is nature experienced, nature lived'⁵²¹ (original emphasis). This requires moving beyond the limits and framings of traditional art or landscape aesthetics, requiring the recognition of the all-inclusive feature of all human experiences as they happen in environment.

ON MISREADING 'AESTHETIC' AS 'BEAUTY'

It is a common occurrence to conflate 'aesthetics' and 'beauty'. As we have seen, different aestheticians have been working to enable a better understanding of aesthetically challenging or scenically challenging environments.⁵²² In addition to definitions in Chapter 4, 'aesthetic' concerns primary experience that must include the beautiful, the ugly, the awesome and the awful, the sublime, and other important sensory qualities. It is often associated with immediate and direct experience of pure form, otherwise known as 'perceptual apprehension'.⁵²³ It is the basis of, and present in, all experience. This requires that we remove the judgmental aspect in understanding the basic features of the aesthetic; it is sensory experience in its neutral form that offers perceptual information. The status of 'aesthetic' does not change over time, in Berleant's view. As such, all humankind has the capacity for perceptual experience.

Berleant recognises that while we operate in environment, our experience of environment is mediated through cultural beliefs and values. This means aesthetic experience is more than just sensation - not just pure form - it is a set of sensations which is 'mediated, qualified, apprehended, and shaped by psychology and cultural characteristics and patterns of apprehension, and by the multitude of forces that are part of everyone's world'.⁵²⁴ The experiential qualities of the aesthetic, what the human element incorporates into the experience, moves far beyond pure form. It can include sensuous delight, emotional change, marvelling, connection making, wondering, and the 'capacity for distinctive aesthetic experience'.⁵²⁵ This moves beyond engaging with pure form and shows the importance in engaging our full range of perceptive powers. In doing so we will be able to enliven our experiences of the world:

The goal, then, is an expanded but discriminating awareness as part of a totally engaged organic, social life. This requires alertness, intelligence, and active

⁵²⁰ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 9.

⁵²¹ Berleant, 10.

⁵²² See: Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*; Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*; Brady, 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'; Eaton, 'Fact and Fiction in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature'.

⁵²³ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 34.

⁵²⁴ Berleant, 36.

⁵²⁵ Berleant, 36.

involvement in the full scope of experience. The aesthetic sense of environment is a central aspect of such a life.⁵²⁶

CHALLENGING THE DISEMBODIED AESTHETIC

In the gallery, we view paintings from an optimal distance, for example. But when we move into nature, things are often quite different. Unlike a painting, which is content to hang immobile on the gallery wall, the natural environment that you are trying to appreciate may well blast you with icy winds and drench you with rain, or surprise you with a sensation of warmth when the sun suddenly breaks through the clouds on a chilly day. The basic difficulty is that, given its tendency to envelop us and impinge upon us, it is more difficult to maintain physical distance from nature, therefore, more difficult to attain the contemplative, disembodied pleasure required for aesthetic appreciation.⁵²⁷

Traditional aesthetic of the arts, and contemporary environmental aesthetic models made in the image of the arts (such as scientific cognitivism), have an important issue they must face. As noted, a whole range of sensory experiences are often ignored in the art gallery that cannot be ignored elsewhere. Such additional sensory qualities help to create the overall characterisations of experience. Those characterisations could be narrative, poetic or verbal accounts produced through the descriptive aesthetic approach, not dissimilar to those used by educators such as Higgins and Wattchow post-journeying from the River Spey.⁵²⁸ The objects in nature, to draw on Hepburn, are not 'framed' or set apart by physical boundaries like they are in galleries.⁵²⁹ The kind of experience Berleant, and Parson (above), recognise, is the frameless quality of natural objects and the need for the perceiver to accommodate perceptual intrusions, which lead to a modification of the experience.

While there is a sense in art experience of the contemplative disembodied pleasure, in nature experience, the contemplation of nature offers a return to 'unpredictable perceptual surprises; and their mere possibility imparts to the contemplation of nature a sense of adventurous openness'.⁵³⁰ Berleant has intimated, along with Hepburn before him, that a distinct feature of the engaged, rather than the 'distanced', aesthetic experience leads to accepting the 'provisional and elusive character of aesthetic qualities in nature' which, 'creates a restlessness, an alertness, a search for ever new standpoints, and for more comprehensive gestalts'.⁵³¹ Here we might read 'more comprehensive gestalts' as the knowing gained from the synaesthetic aesthetic experiences and descriptive accounts. Ultimately, the experiential model rejects the need for subject-object divide to facilitate contemplation, particularly those features where aesthetic pleasure is (supposedly) not felt in any region of the physical body.⁵³² To pick up on a theme in the section above, then, Berleant views environment in a way that rejects the subject-object framework, and which emerges from active engagement:

⁵²⁶ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 24.

⁵²⁷ Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 82–83.

⁵²⁸ Higgins and Wattchow, 'The Water of Life: Creative Non-Fiction and Lived Experience on an Interdisciplinary Canoe Journey on Scotland's River Spey'.

⁵²⁹ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 13.

⁵³⁰ Hepburn, 15.

⁵³¹ Hepburn, 14.

⁵³² Parsons, *Aesthetics and Nature*, 82.

*Environment arises out of the reciprocal interchange between my self as the source and generator of perception and the physical and social conditions on my sensations and actions. When these coalesce into coherence, we can speak of an environment. Environment is not the construction of a perceiver of the geographical character of a place, or even the sum of these. It is their original unity in active experience (emphasis added).*⁵³³

In an example of environmental unity, Berleant recognises that human concepts and distinctions are rarely clear cut. Yet we use them to enable a coherent narrative or account of our experiences; we need to recognise, though, that the distinctions are not always going to be clear. For instance, in the distinction between places, or types of 'environment', categorisations tend not to be clear cut. When does a hill become a mountain? A woodland become a forest? A stream become a river? We use distinctions, often arbitrarily, to function well in environment. This leads to an often-held error that, because humans can create and understand such concepts, and because the human position is the perceptual source of the environment, there is a tendency (incorrectly) to elevate the human above environment – to hold onto the subject-object divide.

Historically, as well as contemporaneously, the ontological and epistemic divides that structure and influence our experiences have been well documented. The subject-object, the mind and body, and educationally speaking the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge, regularly feature in common parlance in aesthetics and education. In the later work of Berleant, his views become much clearer on this point.⁵³⁴ Drawing back to the ancient Greek distinction between *theoria* and *phronesis*, *theoria* – associated with detached contemplation – has a long history in upholding dualisms as the basis for aesthetic and educational activities. For instance, liberal education – *liberalia studia* – is based upon gaining knowledge through the detached contemplation of information away from the practical concerns of everyday life.⁵³⁵ Theoretical inquiry has, for a long time, been associated with higher forms of learning. *Techne*, which can also be associated with cultivating theoretical and technical knowledge, can be seen as a conduit between the theoretical and the practical, but is not itself completely separate from either *theoria* or *phronesis*.

Phronesis, which is often described as 'practical wisdom', is the practical engagement of knowledge in action. It is the application of abstract principles in tasks in environment. It can be associated with 'applied' practices, such as teacher training where trainee teachers learn pedagogical principles and are then tasked with using them practically in their settings.⁵³⁶ In the realm of aesthetics, *theoria* and *techne* are valorised and placed in a hierarchy because of the distinctions made between the distal and proximal senses. Those of quiet contemplation being associated with *theoria*, focussing on isolated objects. Lower in the hierarchy being the proximal, for their often practical and, importantly, physical engagement with the world. The ramifications of such classifications should not be understated and, while outside of the boundaries of discussion in this thesis, state education systems have utilised these characterisations in curriculum design,⁵³⁷ school cultures and the collective arbitration of cultural capital i.e., those who have certain kinds

⁵³³ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 132.

⁵³⁴ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*.

⁵³⁵ Tabrea, 'Menaces of Liberal Education: M. Oakeshott'; Cuypers, 'The Existential Concern of the Humanities R.S. Peters' Justification of Liberal Education'.

⁵³⁶ For example Birmingham, 'Phronesis: A Model for Pedagogical Reflection'.

⁵³⁷ Young, 'Overcoming the Crisis in Curriculum Theory: A Knowledge-Based Approach'.

of qualifications and skills are revered while others are denigrated. We see this more so, perhaps, in the fine arts and natural beauty (viewed at a distance), according to Berleant, because of the value of non-practical, non-utilitarian and non-functional considerations held typically in aesthetics of art.⁵³⁸

When concerned with value judgements, aesthetic knowledge and the status of the body, issues with the separation of *theoria* and *phronesis* in aesthetics are highlighted further. *Theoria* is highly prized and elevated above experiences which rely on the acknowledgement and training of body and direct understanding gained by experience in the world. This perpetuates historic distinctions between 'book learning' and 'experiential learning'. Berleant pursues a line of argument that raises the status of the body as a sense-making organ at the centre of perception.

In Berleant's model there is no view of 'pure' unmediated sensation. Our ways of perceiving incorporate judgment-making practices. It is near impossible to separate perception and judgment because of the influence of language and meta-cognitive function that permeate all acts of perceiving and judging. One doesn't just see a mug, one sees a tool for doing something with, which will have certain qualities comparable to other objects of the same type. First, such considerations are typically discounted from aesthetic experience because of their mundane subject matter;⁵³⁹ second, the pursuit of higher order, higher quality, subject matter is socio-culturally valued much more than attending to the design features of the mug, which is to be *used* by the embodied being. The highly prized forms of thinking are, again, associated with *theoria*. The model recognises that aesthetic *perceptions* may ascribe moral values to the experience, whether that is of art or environment. The role of aesthetic analyses not only looks outward to the categorisations of an objects' and experiences' qualities, it turns inward to consider the role that the aesthetic plays in epistemic processes (e.g. learning, theoretical position building and verification). Berleant argues that as perception is mediated by a range of epistemic frameworks, one should be seeking the authenticity of perception. He holds the view that the perceiver ought to not read more into their perception than that which is actually there.⁵⁴⁰

Attending seriously to the power of the aesthetic leads Berleant to recognise the primacy of experience in verifying theoretical frameworks. As all objects and experiences have aesthetic qualities to them, Berleant reminds us that one should not assume that there is, nor should be, a uniformity of aesthetic experience. Just because the aesthetic is universal it cannot imply sameness in the approaches to appreciation of objects or experiences. As such, we are left with an interesting problem that means different arts or different experiences cannot be compared; such comparisons will lead only to unresolvable arguments. Why does this matter?

It is precisely because of what Berleant sees as the central question in aesthetics: 'how are we to judge?'. Here Berleant is concerned with how similarities and differences between experiences might be missed because of the preoccupation with normative judgement and disparities about valuations of art objects and experiences. As he states, 'a democracy of the arts would allow each art a legitimate place without imposing an external normative standard on it'.⁵⁴¹ He takes the view that one must have genuine experiences to be able to determine value. Such normative judgments are not produced alone, but with those

⁵³⁸ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 34.

⁵³⁹ As discussed above. See: Saito, *Aesthetics of the Familiar: Everyday Life and World Making*.

⁵⁴⁰ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 58.

⁵⁴¹ Berleant, 47.

broadly shared concerns and beliefs. All are legitimate, even though great divisions about the value of one kind of experience or art over others may continue, without end, across the social and intellectual strata. For Berleant, the important point however, is that it is the experience, with rich descriptions and surfaced meaning, that provides the checks and balances in epistemic and normative practices, not the other way around.

REASSERTING THE AESTHETIC: AESTHETICS AT THE LIMITS OF KNOWING

In summary of Berleant's project so far, it has taken us through the neglect of traditional notions of the aesthetic, through to the expansion of *environment*, then considering the distinct relationship between aesthetic and beauty, onto the value of developing a descriptive aesthetic. This in turn led to the challenging of a familiar and disembodied aesthetic. Now I move to an element of Berleant's project seemingly more disruptive. The engaged aesthetic model requires us to think about how one might come to know and learn about the world. The argument requires the consideration of the centrality of the aesthetic, as Berleant has described, in truthfully engaging in and as part of environment. This will lead us first to consider the role of the perceiver in coming to appraise features of environment; then it will lead us to consider Berleant's critique of the systems human beings rely on to learn about and know through the enlarged aesthetic. First, I turn to processes involved in perception.

Berleant posits bodily sensory awareness as the starting point for perception of environment. Noting the work of Gibson's affordance theory,⁵⁴² Berleant relays that affordances are both facts and behaviours; affordances point to observer and environment and are inextricably linked, stating that: 'Substances, objects, persons all have different affordances for different activities – nutrition, production, manipulation, interaction, meaning'.⁵⁴³ This returns to the point above, acknowledging that perception is mediated by a host of factors, some of which the perceiver can recognise and at other times they are not conscious of. Bodily sensory awareness is characterised as a unified activity, requiring synaesthesia, in the engagement model. The separation of senses found in other – traditional and scientific – models of aesthetics face an important challenge here, according to Berleant.

Instead of promoting one kind of sensory perception over the other, the model recognises that senses are unified although our awareness of them is channelled separately. This can explain why one might often consider senses to be separate; language often limits the subject of discussion, and readily available language is significantly limited when attempting to engage in synaesthetic descriptions. Yet, in typical cases when we *touch* an object, for instance, we are also *seeing* the object and *hearing* the interaction, conscious of the temperature and humidity, and so on. The reader might rightly recognise that such an insight raises questions of an inclusive type, especially for those who might be deaf, blind and or have central nervous system issues – this is outside the scope of this thesis, but future aesthetic and education research is needed. This leads Berleant to the view that the perceiver is the zero point of perception and is part of environment. This '...develops a unity of person and situation'.⁵⁴⁴ This is reminiscent of Hepburn's view of the perceiver being 'actor' and 'acted upon' in aesthetic situations in natural environments but goes beyond his view. For instance, recognising that the way we speak of environments is likely to be, according to Berleant, *abbreviations of experience*. When we attend to the surface,

⁵⁴² Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*.

⁵⁴³ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 150.

⁵⁴⁴ Berleant, 150.

space or volume of an object or experience, we are attending to a description of the object. This is a kind of short-hand capturing of the prominent qualities the perceiver recognises in the object or experience.

The human is the perceiver and they perceive qualities of environment. Such qualities include but are not limited to, weight, mass, volume, space, distance. Such qualities make themselves known through the body, through not only the eye but through other physical sensory awareness, leading to a fusion of the senses as part of participation in environment. Objects and their qualities convey meanings which are often felt when entering places, such as office corridors, manager's offices, war memorials, fuel stations, and of course the canoe, etc. Being a perceiver of qualities of environment is also being a describer and the judgement maker of qualities of environment, hence the model's development of a descriptive aesthetic. Being a perceiver of environment is to acknowledge the meaning of those descriptions and judgments, with their significance for the self and other. The engagement model tasks one to think again about what we are *perceiving* in any moment of time, and to consider its meaning.

The perception of time, for instance, is apparent in many aspects of environment. It can be recognised in the weathering of buildings, in the growth and decay of plants, in the tarnishing of clothing, in catastrophic events. Time is a significant concept that influences a range of decision-making processes and aesthetic judgments. This offers an interesting challenge to the characterisations typical of paintings or sculpture; we do not see, nor do we ever see, an object in stasis. We are in fact viewing change to the qualities of the object over time. In some cases, the period of time maybe incredibly small, occurring in a flash moment, in other ways it may take hundreds or thousands of years to recognise a discernible change in an object or landscape – this would require the use of historical record (whether descriptions, images or videos). But change is still happening, in the moment(s) of perception. In recognising the passage of time in environment we can begin to build much more sensitive relations between person and place according to this model. There is a potential for reciprocity between person and place, including human actions and responses with environmental features and qualities. Berleant takes the view that there can be a recognition of the often unnoticed. Furthermore, developing and using aesthetic sensitivities to such things that typically go unnoticed, because of framing used to engage with objects and experiences in environment, enables one to recognise the role of the perceiver in environment and the role of environment in perceiver. In Berleant's view, this is essential to understanding that environment is not 'surroundings'.⁵⁴⁵ Environment is penetrative of body, perception, rationality, imagination and more besides, in a similar way that humans penetrate environments.

The perceiver is the co-creator of an aesthetic experience. The experiential element is key to the engagement model and the interpretation of aesthetics to which Berleant ascribes. The model draws significantly on the experiential concepts of phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty and pragmatism of Dewey. Berleant is also concerned with the kind of aesthetic experience can be at the limits of one's knowing. This is not to be taken in the typical sense of 'ignorance', rather it is to capture what one commentator calls of the 'virtue of unknowing'.⁵⁴⁶ The capacity to sit with wonder and enchantment in environment through enriched and heightened sensibilities is, again, a theme that travels through the aesthetic

⁵⁴⁵ Berleant, 154.

⁵⁴⁶ Smith, 'The Virtues of Unknowing'.

outside of the arts.⁵⁴⁷ One may be able to recall a moment where deep questions about environment, the world and the inner world collided, leading to a sense of wonder:

Aesthetic experience encompasses our unending wonder at the beauty of nature and our awe of the power of the arts to penetrate deep into our emotional lives, encounters that lie at the high point of aesthetic value. At the same time experiencing the aesthetic can make us aware of the delights of ordinary life that may hold our pure attention for a moment - the glint of sunlight on spring leaves, the full moon rising above the horizon at dusk, a child's ingenuous smile. In all such things the force of the aesthetic lies in its capacity for distinctive perceptual experience.⁵⁴⁸

Feeling the force of the engaged aesthetic is a reminder of its power to grab the attention, to create and hold onto moments that contribute meaning in our lives. Meanings which may not, nor ever be fully understood, but are acknowledged in a felt way, at the core of such experiences.

In stark contrast to ancient and modern views on the aesthetic where the body tends to be relegated to something *other* than the powerful rational mind, the historical ontological models that separate the human from nature and the mind from the body are still powerful in common language today. Whether one is referring here to Descartes' substance dualism⁵⁴⁹ or earlier still, Plato's theories of the soul (psyche) and the justice of the state, such ideas hold an important place in common parlance and educational structures. Although we should recognise in Plato a slight confusion between the realm of the soul and the realm of the body, for the soul was imprinted with natural material elements of gold, silver and bronze.⁵⁵⁰ The soul (the mind) thus required materiality for its existence even though it was only the soul that could enter the world of the forms. Within aesthetic discourse, the separation of mind from body had a strong hold on the aesthetic attitude, which emerged as 'contemplative detachment', especially toward art. Berleant reminds us that such a contemplative attitude is significantly swayed by cultural norms and institutional theories of art, which determine whether something is an 'art object and not a "mere real thing"'.⁵⁵¹ To hold onto an integrated and engaged aesthetic attitude is, in Berleant's view, to challenge the endemic persistent western culture that makes it difficult (if not impossible for some) 'to seriously question its ontological frame'.⁵⁵²

The integrated and embodied approach challenges the division of the mind-body dualism that promotes distance between self and other, valorising the distal senses and subject-object divide. Entrenched views like the separation of mind and body can go on to characterise aesthetic experiences as highly subjective, utilising detached contemplation, and aesthetic disinterestedness.⁵⁵³ These are seen by aestheticians in the institutional model of art aesthetics to be appropriate for the appraisal of some arts, but this is highly debatable and counter arguments in the engagement model have been discussed above. Yet these issues presuppose that what one perceives and appraises will be recognisable

⁵⁴⁷ MacAllister, 'Ronald W. Hepburn on Wonder and the Education of Emotions and Subjectivity'; Hepburn, 'Wonder'; Kearns, 'Subjects of Wonder: Toward an Aesthetics, Ethics, and Pedagogy of Wonder'.

⁵⁴⁸ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 36.

⁵⁴⁹ Descartes, *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*.

⁵⁵⁰ Plato, *The Republic*.

⁵⁵¹ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 38–39.

⁵⁵² Berleant, 39.

⁵⁵³ Berleant, 38.

and knowable through the senses and rational thought, which are mediated through language.

THE HOLD OF LANGUAGE – THE AESTHETIC ARGUMENT

Situated within Berleant's project of aesthetic engagement is the aesthetic argument. For Berleant, this is the need to return to direct experience to construct theoretical ideas, rather than accept the prevalence of the rational mind that articulates *non-real things*, which are subsequently applied to experience.⁵⁵⁴ Attending to basic experience is an act of liberation from the power of rationalism and can protect one to engage freely with existence without impingement from an imagined world. Berleant states, 'I believe that the aesthetic provides the firmest ground on which to acquire an understanding that makes a meaningful and significant life possible...'.⁵⁵⁵ On this view the aesthetic is to be used as the basis of knowledge creation, which significantly challenges the prevalence and valorisation of rationalism. From a position of participatory experience of wholeness, Berleant challenges the assumption of the primacy of rationalism by asking the following question. If something cannot be experienced then how can we be sure we can accept the *knowledge of the imagination*?⁵⁵⁶

By using the authenticity of perception rather than the formalism of reason, we cannot read more into experience than is actually there, and so experiences sometimes taken as self-verifying and compelling are accounted for in the least presumptive way. Thus visions turn into dreams, revelations into powerful intuitions, eternal verities into cultural dogmas, and objectivity into agreement that is socially grounded and widely accepted.⁵⁵⁷

Berleant recognises that it is impossible to have 'unburdened experience'; thought mediates experience and enables one to assume certain features of the experience and focal objects within it. It becomes the task of aesthetic inquiry to enable the perceiver to peel back the layers of rationalism that help to build assumptions, many of which go unquestioned, into perception (like those noted in the quote above). In this thesis for example, drawing on Midgley's metaphor of philosophical plumbing, is one way of visualising and challenging assumptions in thought.

For Berleant, knowledge based on direct experience is to be a 'filler remover' of the rationalism that obscures direct perception.⁵⁵⁸ In order to jolt the perceiver out of this kind of anaesthesia, two conditions need to be met to enable authenticity of perception for environmental appreciation:

1. There needs to be an account of cognitive constructions emerging from time and place.
2. Aesthetic experience should be used to critique established knowledge.

Through these two features, Berleant intends to decentre the power of established forms of knowledge. In returning to aesthetic awareness, experience and critique, Berleant proposes that the authority of rationalism will be able to develop a healthy coexistence with knowledge from experience, with aesthetic experience being a corrective for inadequate rational framing. While Berleant recognises that framing of any experience is

⁵⁵⁴ Berleant, 56.

⁵⁵⁵ Berleant, 57.

⁵⁵⁶ Berleant, 57.

⁵⁵⁷ Berleant, 58.

⁵⁵⁸ Berleant, 59.

inescapable - a recurring theme in his model - there is a recognition that awareness of language is necessary to attend to the cognitive construction of our world.⁵⁵⁹

Berleant recognises that language reflects the social world, that it is part of the human condition. The human condition changes as a result of environmental conditions and the human world is mediated by language and culture. This has been noted for millennia, for instance in the works of Plato where types of language and cultural art forms were to be limited to maximise the control of the state.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, in the work of Wittgenstein who argued that developing language enables world-making.⁵⁶¹ In literature, such as in *1984*, the dystopian work of Orwell, *Newspeak* – the policy and practice of reducing accessible language to simplistic forms – is articulated as one an essential component to fight against ‘thought crime’. In the English education system, the introduction of language and imagery under the ‘British Values’ policy, not only provides language and suggests images for speaking about celebrated aspects of British culture and landscape, it posits a set of aspirational moral and political values that are to be nurtured through all aspects of the school.⁵⁶² The purpose of these examples is twofold. First, to recognise that the language we use, and have been used to, has a profound influence on the ways in which we perceive, approach and act in the world. Second, through language construction, human beings create frames to accommodate needs and desires. Berleant sees this as being an important human capability, but the frames remain constructions, nonetheless.

Berleant’s line of argument continues to question such constructions. He regards these as being used to justify the existence of things that do not actually have a basis in sensory experience. As a result, a whole set of customs and activities cement many of these made-up things in reality. For example, Berleant reminds us that the term ‘soul’ (psyche) has been misinterpreted in history and, in fact its original meaning is much closer to a term meaning ‘breath’.⁵⁶³ Thus ‘soul’ becomes another construction on his view because experiencing the world does not require a soul, but in the case of human beings, it does require breath. ‘Soul’ has been used, then, to construct ethical behaviours, thought patterns, cultures and so on, to influence human experience of the world.

Berleant takes the view that consciousness has been turned into a concept, ‘soul’, which then requires justification for its existence, which will rely on one’s being *conscious* of, and our conscious working on, it. The circularity of the argument is a significant failure on Berleant’s view, primarily because if one were to return to the honesty of perception, there would be a much better relationship adopted toward the strengths and limitations of rationalism.⁵⁶⁴ Berleant is not being dismissive of language *per se*; rather he proposes a much more sensitive aesthetic perception that is mediated by attending to nothing but what emerged from the sensory domain. As such, the experiential model enhances learning from aesthetic experience and critique, which could serve as the basis of knowledge creation and education.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁵⁹ Berleant, 59–60.

⁵⁶⁰ Plato, *The Republic*; Williams, ‘Education: Plato and Education’.

⁵⁶¹ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*; Moyal-Sharrock, ‘Wittgenstein’s Razor: The Cutting Edge of Enactivism’.

⁵⁶² Department for Education, ‘Promoting Fundamental British Values as Part of SMSC in Schools: Departmental Advice for Maintained Schools’.

⁵⁶³ Berleant, *Sensibility and Sense: The Aesthetic Transformation of the Human World*, 65.

⁵⁶⁴ Berleant, 69.

⁵⁶⁵ Berleant, 73.

In challenging the view that humans are stable rational knowers, Berleant recognises the perceiver as a thinker, imaginator and creator by attending to the world through direct knowing. The perceiver is enabled to ask questions about what the knowledge of the world would look like and where that knowledge can stand in relation to environment. One thing that Berleant is clear on here is that whatever that knowledge looks, feels and is structured like, it is likely to show the ambiguity of boundaries, with some ambiguities being more serious than others. The model results in a greater aesthetic capacity to accommodate indeterminacy.

By acknowledging perception as the primary route to knowing, Berleant argues that as perceivers we need to cope with multiplicity. The reader will remember that a similarly argued position was discussed above in the discussion on 'unity' and 'unities' in Hepburn's work. Instead of dealing with the world under the superiority of one subject, such as history or biology, Berleant promotes the need to practise such disciplines as experienced. The educational journeys captured in this thesis do, I argue, provide an example of how philosophical aesthetics can be practised as experienced from the canoe.

Berleant offers a further reminder of the necessity for aesthetic engagement - that common sense is riddled with assumptions and is hardly defensible against manipulation:

Using the investigative and critical capabilities of the aesthetic with the help of the methodology of phenomenology and a pragmatic process of determining and evaluating meanings and consequences has a dramatic effect on our basic understanding of the human world. That its results are transformative is not the consequence of applying the aesthetic irresponsibly but of recognising the unfounded intellectual constructions that we have become accustomed to think of as 'natural' or a simple 'common sense' from the force of tradition, custom, and habit. With this powerful aesthetic instrument in hand, we can now pursue its critical and constructive use in rediscovering and reconstructing our human world.⁵⁶⁶

Although Berleant did not directly respond to Carlson's argument that posits science as an extension of common sense, the reader will recognise that Berleant's would be critical of Carlson's position. The reader will also remember that I was particularly critical of this aspect of Carlson's argument and drew on several philosophers – Mikkonen being one of them⁵⁶⁷ – to show that common sense is deeply influenced by falsities, and that our customs and traditions rely on a particularly limited notion of science. This does not help the aesthetician in appreciating the landscape of environment. The disruptive core of aesthetic practices transfigures experience into unusual, but often truthful, perspectives from which to learn and integrate into our ever-changing position. The task from this point is to find a way of capturing such descriptions of aesthetic experiences for the purposes of education and learning.

POSITING A DESCRIPTIVE AESTHETICS

Descriptive aesthetics is a mode of communication and inquiry. It is a way of testing meaning, communicating ideas, and providing examples of meaningful sensory experiences. These are then offered as accounts which can be philosophically debated. It becomes a mode of inquiry for the aesthetic of environment. Berleant develops descriptive

⁵⁶⁶ Berleant, 81.

⁵⁶⁷ Mikkonen, 'Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature and the Global Environmental Crisis'.

aesthetics to capture the diverse opportunities in environment, including arts and nature-based experiences. The arts are not separate from environment, they are a product of human capacity for which environment is also a contributor, Berleant reminds us. In blurring the lines between previously established frameworks, Berleant takes the view that our descriptive accounts of aesthetic experiences:

... may be partly narrative, partly phenomenological, partly evocative, and sometimes even revelatory. Efforts at aesthetic description occur most often as part of other kinds of writing - novels, poems, nature writing, criticism, philosophical aesthetics. These passages are not merely self-indulgent effusions but serious attempts to enlarge the understanding of the aesthetic domain by guiding our perception through it. Descriptive aesthetics combine acute observation with compelling language to encourage the reader toward vivid aesthetic encounters. It shares with criticism a normative interest, not, however, in its interpretive and judgmental modes, but in recognising the central place of aesthetic appreciation and in leading the reader towards such experience.⁵⁶⁸

Here the aesthetic of environment model offers the reader a further understanding of how to engage with environments aesthetically. The reader will remember that in Carlson's work (scientific cognitivism model) modes of aspection require specific forms of knowledge to aid in the serious aesthetic appreciation of the natural environment. To put Carlson's idea to work in a different way here, it suggests that the full bodied, synaesthetic, engagement in environment will draw on a multitude of skills and capacities to articulate the vivid nature of aesthetic experience. One can acknowledge previous learning into the direction of our perception. Additionally, one can capture such experiences through the appropriate mode of production, whether that is in prose, poetry, aesthetic criticism, or as a work of philosophy. In outdoor education practice, Higgins and Wattchow noted the importance of this by enabling students to capture their learning experiences through poetry; Nicol too has captured such learning through autoethnography and canoe journeying literature.⁵⁶⁹

Berleant would accept, too, the value of other artistic modes in capturing and retelling vivid aesthetic experiences, so that others could see them out. These could include narratives, biographical accounts and creative non-fiction literature.⁵⁷⁰ Educators often utilise a range of tools to enable learners to capture their aesthetic education experiences. In the case of educational journeying, the educator can devise activities that could attend to the aesthetic in authentic ways, respecting environment and learner experience. Remembering that from the canoe, as one example, there is an ever changing position, where everything is in flux, for environmental appreciation to take place. I will turn to this below in the discussion on aesthetic criticism as a potential curriculum.

Experiencing environment aesthetically then, is to attend to the distinctive sensory qualities of one's engagement with and of the terrain. It is the kinaesthetic pull of the environment on me, my movement, my intense awareness, my thoughts, my emotions and much more. Berleant suggests that this shows an understanding of our

⁵⁶⁸ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 26.

⁵⁶⁹ Higgins and Wattchow, 'The Water of Life: Creative Non-Fiction and Lived Experience on an Interdisciplinary Canoe Journey on Scotland's River Spey'; Nicol, 'Entering the Fray: The Role of Outdoor Education in Providing Nature-Based Experiences That Matter'; Nicol, 'Returning to the Richness of Experience: Is Autoethnography a Useful Approach for Outdoor Educators in Promoting pro-Environmental Behaviour?'; Nicol, *Canoeing around the Cairngorms: A Circumnavigation of My Home*.

⁵⁷⁰ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 135-36 This is raised later on the Berleant's argument.

interconnectedness with environment, showing human consciousness as continuous with environment.⁵⁷¹ The kinaesthetic pull brings one's body, movement, and senses together – synaesthesia – and recognises the richness and the resonances of such connections. This suggests profound meaning-making opportunities for perceivers when aesthetics is regarded as a descriptive and embodied form of inquiry.⁵⁷²

More so, the purpose of inquiry within the frame of descriptive aesthetics is to make an argument. Descriptive aesthetics 'encourages us to recognise our larger bond with the natural world where, indeed, we can re discover [...] that there is no nature apart from our human presence and nothing human separate from nature'.⁵⁷³ In whatever form the account takes, it focuses on understanding the qualities central to the relationship between me and other. The reader will remember that this formed an important feature of the canoeing conversation between Berleant and me. In learning from the other, environment and its features take on the 'role of educator', moving beyond theoretical boundaries and enlarging personal and social experience and understanding of environment. This leads not to a detachment between self and other, i.e. art object or environment, but an engaged and invested relationship.

This brings Berleant to a significant conclusion, the early suggestion of which was seen in Hepburn's work when considering nature based aesthetic experiences through the concepts of doing and undergoing - actor and acted upon in the aesthetic experience of nature.⁵⁷⁴ The conclusion reached is this: in focusing on the experience - the phenomenology - of environment, one is required to embody a radically different form of aesthetic appreciation. It is particularly distinct from traditional modes of aesthetic appreciation, like those focusing on art objects, which rely only on the distal senses and which ignore the body. Here I pick up on this theme and discussion from Chapter 4 – between Hepburn and Berleant - which centre on the power of the aesthetic of environment. Berleant concludes that,

if we take environment as an exemplar, it becomes a model of engagement, a kind of experience far removed from the tradition [of 18th C disinterestedness in the arts]. We must, then, relinquish disinterestedness, an attitude equally impossible to adopt in architecture and in environment without bifurcating experience and turning it into a subjective response to an external and alien world. ... By taking aesthetic experience of environment as the standard, we are led to abandon the aesthetic of disinterestedness in favour of an aesthetic of engagement.⁵⁷⁵

While Hepburn does accept that disinterestedness can be useful as a form of detached appraisal and aesthetic imagining, Berleant refuses to accept the need for detachment or disembodiment.⁵⁷⁶ For humans to undertake aesthetic criticism, they must recognise that they stand in embodied relation, not disembodied separation.

AESTHETIC CRITICISM: POSITING CURRICULUM AIMS

Before contextualising the engagement model in the context of educational journeys, one final discussion of Berleant's argument about the importance of aesthetic criticism needs

⁵⁷¹ Berleant, 26–27.

⁵⁷² Berleant, 27.

⁵⁷³ Berleant, 39.

⁵⁷⁴ Hepburn, 'Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty', 13.

⁵⁷⁵ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 157.

⁵⁷⁶ Berleant and Hepburn, 'An Exchange on Disinterestedness'.

addressing. The discussion of environmental criticism is not a roundly accepted proposition within the other models explored in this thesis. The primary issue taken up by the science-informed aesthetician Carlson is that because the natural environment is not human-made, it cannot be subject to criticism. Even though both Berleant and Carlson would independently accept that all objects can be viewed aesthetically, as is recognised by Ziff,⁵⁷⁷ they differ on the emphasis of position that art is human-made and environment is not.

Aesthetic criticism derived from art criticism relies upon an understanding of the object as created. Criticism within the arts generally reflects on the success or failure of the produced piece. Such judgments tend to draw on specific art traditions, history and socio-cultural knowledge, to make objective judgements. Carlson's view follows the logic here that if the object isn't made, it cannot be subject to the kinds of criticisms comparable to the art aesthetic. Berleant responds to such a position in the following ways: (1) criticism can be directed at both art and environment because both are experienced. And (2), there is a need to acknowledge a further similarity between art and landscape, which is that both go through genesis - they are made and remade, sometimes both by a variety of factors not just an individual actor. As we have seen above, Carlson also accepts that landscapes are never completed and go through continual change. The aesthetic appraiser needs to attend to the history of both art and environment, along with giving further attention to the ways in which humans interact with, and act on, both art and environment.⁵⁷⁸ In this penultimate section, I present Berleant's approach to aesthetic criticism of environment, which I suggest may go some way to serve as a useful curriculum for the educator of aesthetic canoe journeys.

A key feature of the aesthetic of environment, which is centred on enriching aesthetic experience, is not the blind veneration of beauty. Instead, Berleant begins by reconsidering aesthetic appreciation as something evaluative, even critical. Berleant sees aesthetic *appreciation* as being of significant value:

Appreciation is a good place to begin, for aesthetic experience of environment is the touchstone by which critical commentary can be judged informative and useful. We are [...] continuous with environment. We do not view it from a distance or discover it outside and around us. By participating actively in environment, we confront and respond to its various configurations. We can grasp its masses with our bodies, understand the contours of the terrain through our feet, sense its perfume or pollution with our noses and its movement, sun, or shadow with our skin. Environment is no region separate from us. It is not only the very condition of our being but a continuous part of that being. Appreciating environment requires a sensitivity to these undulating forces and currents of the world. An alert awareness, sensory acuteness, an understanding of the formative influences of the past that embrace present processes – all are part of that appreciation.⁵⁷⁹

Berleant's continued sense of the interpenetration between self and environment is helpfully summarised in the extract above. The self being the embodied, active and alert perceiver, and co-creator of experience. As part of perception, we are not in the position of passive sense-data collector, rather we are engaged in perceiving, judging, meaning-making and commentary producing. Through active participation one can cut through the

⁵⁷⁷ Ziff (1979) in Carlson, *Nature & Landscape: An Introduction to Environmental Aesthetics*.

⁵⁷⁸ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 140–41.

⁵⁷⁹ Berleant, 131.

assumptions of established aesthetic understanding (such as aesthetic and disciplinary traditions), and attend to the truth of what is being experienced. Appreciation on this view entails attending to environment through a conscious and active process of nurturing attention and considered judgement making.

Active perception has similarities with Hepburn's conceptualisation of *alert perception*. Both involve the ability hold the multiple features of an experience in a unified characterisation, a 'unity of feeling', which includes the immediate experience and environment, and the consideration of what waits for one at the end of the experience. It concerns not only the rational, but the emotional, and the ability to discriminate fine emotional differences resulting from the circumstances of self in environment. It could also be referred to as a kind of ambience, within the everyday aesthetic frame. In a particularly apt journeying example, Hepburn notes the emotional impact of what or who might await for one at the end of the journey: '... and the thought of meeting so-and-so, whom I dislike, at the end of my journey. My depression is highly particularised'; or if in love, 'an encounter with the loved one may acquire a specific, unrepeatable emotional quality'.⁵⁸⁰ In attending to such qualities through aesthetic criticism, in this example, one is enabled as Hepburn notes, to engage within a scale of increased emotional discrimination. It is not just the labelling of an experience as *such and such* that is of primary importance. Rather, appreciation involves judgment making that draws on ethical and aesthetic skill and knowledge. The interaction between heightened perception and judgment is a shared feature of aesthetic criticism in both the arts and environment.

Berleant takes the similarities between appraisals of art and environment as particularly important and helpful. Criticism, as an important practice in the arts, aims to improve, gain clarity on, raise awareness of, develop a consciousness toward, and nurture a refined language toward the objects, environments and/or focal experiences of the appraisal. These outcomes are essential to the act of criticism and it is a shared goal among aestheticians. Even in the diverse models presented in this thesis, there is a shared endeavour among these thinkers to raise consciousness and develop available conceptual tools (including language) to improve the aesthetic of natural environments and everyday places, especially for more sensitive human engagement in and for such places. To do this, Berleant proposed a three-staged approach to aesthetic criticism of environment, which I am proposing here as a curriculum, or set of educational principles, that journeying educators (and educators more broadly speaking) could use.

CURRICULUM AIM ONE: AESTHETIC DESCRIPTION

The first of the principles is the development of aesthetic description. Circling back to the discussion above (Positing a Descriptive Aesthetics), it is important to remember that 'description' is not only the retelling of an event, or providing an account or characterisation of the physical perceptual qualities. Descriptive aesthetics is a form of inquiry and communication. Ultimately, the descriptive strand of the curriculum could base itself in the 'phenomenal environment', which Berleant sees as part of the physical environment that captures the human experience: 'For environments are not physical places but perceptual ones that we collaborate in making, and it is perceptually that we determine their identity and extent'.⁵⁸¹ It becomes the role of the critic to describe the object, the environment or experience: 'Criticism may not only describe the object itself but may relate how it operates, the course and character of our experience of it. In as

⁵⁸⁰ Hepburn, 'Emotions and Emotional Qualities: Some Attempts at Analysis', 261.

⁵⁸¹ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 135.

empirical an activity as art, description encompasses a broad arena. It is, moreover, a prerequisite for every other critical function'.⁵⁸² Descriptions of this kind, as Berleant articulates, form the data – the basis – from which the other modes of criticism can function. The phenomenological account, as described in the *Descriptive Aesthetics* section above has a particularly strong power and important function to enable other modes of environmental criticism:

Environmental description requires the same acute sensibility as does art, for it includes not only the appearance of a landscape, and urban neighbourhood, or an interior, but an account of the responses and actions it enjoins and the meanings embedded in it. Of descriptive techniques, the phenomenological is an especially powerful means of approaching direct account.⁵⁸³

The developing of an 'acute sensibility' by attending to the sensory qualities of the environment can become a significant focus for the educator. To do this along the lines Berleant suggests, the canoe journeying educator may not only attend to language to facilitate accurate descriptions as close to the unmediated perception as possible, but they could consider the inner responses to those sensory qualities i.e. the judgments and meanings that those qualities convey to the learner. It may not be enough to have immersive experiences in environment, although they will be important for the attempt to enlarge the understanding of the aesthetic; the educator will have a role to show how attending to aesthetic descriptions can lead to vivid aesthetic encounters that both nurture, and are the product of, active perception in environment. This can be evidenced in tribal canoe journeys in north America, among paddlers in Australia that seek to disrupt human relationships with the environment by paddling to their place of work and wading through human-made waste.⁵⁸⁴ Berleant argues that having such distinct aesthetic experiences will lead to a recognition of the human bond with environment. This will further lead to a rediscovery of its important sensory qualities that will enable further educational opportunities. It stands to reason that aesthetic description ought to be used as part of an aesthetic education of environment. Once the feature of the experience is produced, Berleant argues that the next stage – of the curriculum, as I see it – involves critical explanation.

CURRICULUM AIM TWO: CRITICAL EXPLANATION

Berleant indicates that critical explanation can take several different directions. Historical knowledge can be used to explain the context of time and influences on objects and environments, for instance. Additionally, comparing and contrasting are a helpful way of producing distinctions between objects or environments. In relation to works of art, and in a manner that is also applicable to environment, is the opportunity for biographical accounts to enable one to understand how an object or environment was generated; the benefit of this is to help a percipient understand the processes that contribute to environment production. Technical knowledge, too, can offer insights into the structure of the formal qualities of the object or environment, which can lead the perceiver to become sensitized to 'their contribution in appreciation'.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸² Berleant, 135.

⁵⁸³ Berleant, 135.

⁵⁸⁴ Cushman, Daehnke, and Johnson, 'This Is What Makes Us Strong: Canoe Revitalisation, Reciprocal Heritage, and the Chinook Indian Nation'; Brown et al., 'Tribal Canoe Journeys and Indigenous Cultural Resurgence: A Story from the Heiltsuk Nation'; Miles, *The Backyard Adventurer*.

⁵⁸⁵ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 136.

The benefits of using explanatory frameworks in understanding the aesthetic data – through aesthetic description – are plentiful. They are a way of giving voice not only to the description but also to an attempt to understand their meaning produced in environment, i.e. by the collective populous and specialised contributions by those already attuned (such as, poets, artists, ecologists, nature-writers, environmental educators, and so on). Indicative in this approach is a levelling of the field of appropriate knowledge to guide meaning-making. In the arts, for instance, it is likely that critical explanation will be informed by the appropriate traditions found in art criticism. Yet, as indicated in Berleant's approach, one may be able to draw on a range of appropriate sources of information to delve deeper into the meaning of aesthetic perceptions. In other words, they provide the explanatory power that may enable the growth of the aesthetic experience of environment, which may otherwise be unobtainable. This is not to say that one sees environment as 'nature-writing' or 'art object', rather that they contribute to one's understanding and explanations.

While the educator may then be able to draw on a range of knowledge centring on the object(s) of perception, there is strong word of caution offered by Berleant. Remembering that explanation should aid understanding and subsequent growth of aesthetic experience, it should not intercede in it. It should 'guide analysis and appreciation' but not enter territory where there is 'the danger of interposing nonaesthetic principles and criteria on appreciation and judgment'. Thus interpretation of aesthetic descriptions should aid the perceiver in their appreciation 'without relinquishing the primacy of aesthetic perception and succumbing to dogma'.⁵⁸⁶ The educator then is required to be aware of their own preconceptions held within their perception, which is likely to emerge in learning and teaching opportunities. Again, they will also need to carefully manage the learning experiences and the knowledge that may be most appropriate for the experience as they move through places in environment. This knowledge should aid the learner to give voice to describe and explain their aesthetic experiences, but not force a particular reading onto it. A 'reading' (or writing) of the experience needs to emerge through careful consideration together with the learner, educator and environment. In doing so the educator will be able to nurture - in themselves and with their students - critical appraisals on their own terms.

CURRICULUM AIM THREE: CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Critical appraisal aims most directly at aesthetic education. Berleant aims to develop it to enhance the quality of aesthetic appreciation, which is what he characterises the art critic as doing. The critic takes on the role of the educator in the world of the arts; a key consequence – if not an aim – of their work is to enable the art public to have an enhanced educative experience of the art object or art experience. The critic of the arts, as with the critic of environment, has an important educational role to play in the enhancement of the aesthetic experience. The enhancement of the aesthetic experience becomes an important aim of the curriculum, which could be realised by attending to accurate descriptive language and having rich and contextualised aesthetic experiences, the latter in themselves could be identified as valuable educational aim. This could include both educating about what is meant by the aesthetic and enabling finer-grained understanding of the material included for aesthetic critique. As Berleant remarks,

⁵⁸⁶ Berleant, 136.

The critic communicates insights and perceptions, informing and encouraging others to enlarge their active response.⁵⁸⁷

As with Hepburn before Berleant, the necessity to move away from dull modes of perception, often reliant on clichés and outmoded or limited metaphors, is a key educative motivation for the critic. Instead of a sluggish and detached systems of aesthetic appraisal, the critic becomes a teacher in the eyes of Berleant, enabling the learner to develop an 'acuteness of sensibility'.⁵⁸⁸ The educational aspect of this should see the learner able to enter finer modes of description, discrimination and explanation influenced by the educator's ability to share in, and exemplify, critical appraisals. This appears attuned with Hepburn's notion of serious aesthetic appraisals and connects with Saito's view of aesthetics as contribution to better world-making.

The pedagogical mode of the aesthetic critic of environment is one of sharing and public contribution - hence better world-making. This is something Berleant claims the environmental critic could learn from the art critic:

A sharing takes place between critic and the art public, contributing toward experiences that hold much perception, meaning, and have value in common... The critic acts as a kind of teacher leading others toward an acuteness of sensibility and awareness that they might not achieve unassisted.⁵⁸⁹

Practising sensitivity toward the sensuous qualities of objects and experiences becomes an important role of the critic-educator. They are to work through an enlarging of language to attend to the truth of the experience. The aesthetic educator's role then is to nurture the learner's sensitivity to language but also of noticing, of feeling and attending, which is derived from the initial learning undertaken in aesthetic description and subsequent critical explanation. For such descriptions to not be fictitious, or reproductions of other's work, it would be reasonable to suggest that within this model there is a need for aesthetic experiences in environment, for which canoeing features in Berleant's descriptive aesthetic work.⁵⁹⁰ All of which go some way to increase the aesthetic value of environment, through enhancement of aesthetic experience. In doing so, in the words of Berleant, the critic develops a refined language that resists 'rife sentimentality' often found within aesthetic appreciation that typically valorises the 'beautiful'. As established above, there is much more to aesthetic appreciation than the veneration of the beautiful, the picturesque and indiscriminate positive aesthetic experience. As a result of the development of acute sensibility in self and other, the educator as environment critic, also sees an expansion of their role facilitated by the curriculum made in the experiential engagement model. Some considerations of which I now turn to by way of summary of educational considerations.

SUMMARY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This chapter has presented a reading of the experiential aesthetic model. I have described four key components of Berleant's argument, which invited reflection, firstly, on (1) the aesthetic being the basis of all experience. This discussion took the position of reasserting the broadened and enriched conceptualisation of the aesthetic outside the framing of the arts. It positions aesthetic skills as tools for rethinking human engagement in

⁵⁸⁷ Berleant, 137.

⁵⁸⁸ Berleant, 137.

⁵⁸⁹ Berleant, 137.

⁵⁹⁰ Berleant, 29-34.

environmental experience. In denying the power of modern aesthetic structures, such as those which rely on significantly limiting dualisms, the reader is pushed to consider the language that facilitates our aesthetic description of environment.

The second discussion (2) showed how Berleant's argument challenged such dualisms. It reflected on the failings of the disembodied approach to art aesthetics, that previously paved the way for the valorisation of distal senses and *theoria*. The denigration of the practical concern and appreciation, while an important feature of environmental engagement was seen to not be shared within art-based established notions of aesthetic appreciation.

Thirdly, (3) aesthetic judgments at the limits of knowing were discussed, considering insights from descriptive aesthetics, which is positioned as a mode of inquiry and argument development. While acknowledging that embodied sensory awareness is essential to aesthetic engagement of environment, and that synaesthesia is a key feature of such engagement, there is a recognition that what one perceives carries meaning. One does not just observe, but they judge, reflect on, evaluate, compare and contrast, and so on. The perceiver is co-creator of the aesthetic experience with environment. While one might experience a range of sensory qualities, they can be perceived in a felt way at the limits of our language and knowing. Thus aesthetics of engagement can accommodate an aesthetics of unknowing, as well as clearly delineated and clearly described experiences and appraisals.

Finally, (4) the discussion turned to Berleant's position of aesthetic criticism of environment as a curriculum. As Berleant sees the critic as educator whose primary aim is to enrich aesthetic engagement, there is an affinity between the aesthetic and the educational, in a broad sense. The educator-critic nurtures rich descriptions of experiences, supports and enables critical explanations through appropriate forms of knowledge, and then nurtures critical appraisals of such objects and experiences; all of which aim to expand and enhance the collective aesthetic experience of environment.

While some educational considerations emerged directly from my reading of Berleant, I want to posit selected educational considerations for this model that are likely to be particularly important for the canoe journeying aesthetic educator. In his final reflections, Berleant notes that his environmental aesthetic inquiries have led to a range of discoveries:

One of the most important discoveries emerges from these various inquiries is that the aesthetic values pervade environment. This carries powerful consequences: that aesthetic values, broadly understood, are a necessary part of environmental understanding and action, and these values must be included in any thoughtful proposal for environmental change.⁵⁹¹

An opportunity of this model for the educator is found in the broadening of what is included as an aesthetic experience. Berleant's experiential aesthetic utilises synaesthetic sensory descriptions, for instance. More than this, the educator will need to recognise that the educational environment has also been expanded because of the model, as he notes: 'If the aesthetic dimension has universal scope, it encompasses not only everything but every experience, every situation in which we are a contributing presence'.⁵⁹² Such

⁵⁹¹ Berleant, 179.

⁵⁹² Berleant, 178.

considerations have emerged already, in Saito's work. The canoe journeying educator will have concern for environment, which as Berleant has conceptualised, to diminish the distinction between the 'inner' environment of self and the 'outer' environment, for which the self is the centre point of perception.

It may be the case that many educators already have concerns about this; however, the canoe journeying aesthetic educator could capitalise on this larger terrain that diminishes the subject-object divide. For instance, as part of journeying through a range of landscapes, the educator could initiate learning opportunities that focus on describing environmental features, in order to generate rich aesthetic descriptions of their journeying through places; to bring a range disciplinary insights together as they are experienced from the activity of the canoe. Again, it is important to remember that the broadening of the aesthetic does not just include the veneration of, or immersive experience in, 'the beautiful'. We are reminded that:

...the range of the aesthetic is not only positive; it applies just as much as to whatever offends perception -- to what is distasteful, vulgar, dull, demeaning. There is such a thing as negative aesthetics, and extending aesthetic criticism across the entire human landscape results in condemnations of appalling extent.⁵⁹³

The educator could also initiate introspective experiential aesthetic learning that aims to analyse the positive and negative judgments learners make about environments and objects. This could lead to discussions about the human impact on the environment, whether such locations are urban centres or supposedly un-touched by human hands. Subsequent learning could engage in further inquiries aimed at elevating aesthetic discrimination skills. The aims of these discussions will be deeply personal, and share in collective ambience and characterisation of the kinds of environments being paddled through.

Berleant would likely want us to remember that aesthetic descriptions are inquiries and arguments too, and that such arguments can concern value of the landscape and how one ought to act in and for them. A task of the educator is to move between aesthetic description and ethical praxis. If aesthetic descriptions are generated because of careful consideration of the journeying environment, the journey too may become a kind of educational argument put to the learner by the journeying educator, such as tribal journeys. Such arguments can be subtle of course, not even necessarily explicitly stated, rather they can be nudged, teased-out, or generated with the group as the journey progresses.

This may mean that the journey develops a narrative style to which the educators and learners together, in a democratic mode, become authors of the accounts and its meanings. The journey as purposefully planned and presented is likely to lead to recurring aesthetics, among other, questions and themes being explored. For instance, if a journey focussed on the human impact on environment as observed from the canoe, then a range of observations, reflections and criticisms would likely emerge that become, if only in part, a lasting characterisation of the aesthetic canoe journey. Berleant remarks that his aesthetic model can enable one to question human values that have significantly impacted on eco-systems and landscapes. The model affords acknowledgement of different kinds of ethical values toward environment, beyond the utilitarian and economic.⁵⁹⁴ It should also

⁵⁹³ Berleant, 178.

⁵⁹⁴ Berleant, 182.

be recognised that, in probable contrast to formal educational structures that typically aim at the systematic answering of questions,⁵⁹⁵ the paddler – whether a solo canoeist, educator, or student is likely to confront elements of their unknowing.⁵⁹⁶

The canoe journeying aesthetic educator will likely find it necessary to develop their own skills, language and critical capacities to nurture alert perception and acute sensibility in their own learners on the canoe journey. This could be directed toward known objects and features of experiences, and the unknown. This is so that learners can engage in unadulterated aesthetic experiences and descriptions and that the educator's know-how does not intercede in the early stages of attempts to give voice to experiences of environment from the canoe. This may also entail that the educator learns from the learners' characterisations and experiences and draws on them as part of the developing discussions and narrative. This will enable the educator to be reminded of their own advancements in understanding while attending to what is *really there* in environment. While educating learners through aesthetic description, critical explanation and critical appraisal, they are also 'checking-in' their own appraisals to guard against any accusations of dogmatism.

In *the* curriculum I have proposed, there is internal pedagogic structure to it. One moves from description to explanation and then critique. Such a structure may prove useful in planning aesthetic education canoe journey. I take this position not only because of the helpful subject matter, but because of its useful signposting for the educator to consider the different kinds of educational opportunities and the epistemic, linguistic and ethical resources required throughout the journey. It could be that the canoe journey serves as a central channel for descriptions, preparations for which could have been made with the learners prior to the journey. Conversely, the canoe journey could sit in stark contrast to political and educational systems that, in Berleant's view, deliberately exclude such learning opportunities to maintain the status, 'convention and wealth' for whom environmental devastation is of economic interest.⁵⁹⁷ A range of material could be engaged with, from nature writing, poetry and natural history to information of aquatic habitats and the historical use of the landscape. The educator can provide the learners with opportunities to find focal points from which to descriptively 'leap off' in the immersion of environment.

Subsequently the rich material can then be explored through the different appropriate forms of knowledge prepared prior to the journey, and potentially developed by the canoeing community as the journey continues. As such, they may fill the remit for becoming such people who '... persist in pressing for the social importance of other values, including environmental ones: values in historical preservation, in natural resources, in unusual natural formations, in the beauty and wonder of landscapes'.⁵⁹⁸ The educator can then support the learners in aesthetically critiquing aspects of environment and their experience and, ultimately enable them to take a position. This is an important part of the model that ought not be missed or downplayed, otherwise the educator could be accused of promoting 'aesthetic blindness'.⁵⁹⁹ The experiential aesthetic model has a profound educational aim: the development of aesthetic resources to increase human capacity for

⁵⁹⁵ Smith, 'Between the Lines: Philosophy, Text and Conversation'.

⁵⁹⁶ Smith, 'The Virtues of Unknowing'.

⁵⁹⁷ Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment*, 181.

⁵⁹⁸ Berleant, 181.

⁵⁹⁹ Berleant, 181.

Chapter 10 – Experiential Aesthetics

aesthetic and ethical appraisals for environmental improvement in the broadest sense of environment.

The reader may be pleased to hear that we are very close to disembarkation. The egress point is not far now and you have been such an inspiring companion, among the four other companions I have paddled with. In these last moments I must gather my thoughts like kit that needs to be neatly stowed for a future journey. Plate 14 above shows just how far we have come through this thesis. The purpose of this concluding section is not so much to reprise what you have already just read. Rather, my intention is to articulate some of the implications of the ideas, discussions, narratives and imagery offered in the preceding pages.

I will first elaborate on practice-based conclusions and provide a resource to aid the reader (the educator) in the planning of educational journeys. The intention here is to show the reader how a journeying experience – understood using aspects of the aesthetic models engaged with above – can provide a rich and expansive set of pluralistic aesthetic resources or learning. The second part of this chapter brings the thesis to a close by addressing some contributions to knowledge - noted as C2Ks in the pipework of Plate 14. I will reflect on two resonating features of the discussion – Hepburn’s *Journeying as Disturbance* and Saito’s aesthetic approach to *better world-making*. In doing so I intend to draw out some implications for aesthetic education. Finally, I will reflect on *finding my thing* and *finding my voice* – which the reader may remember have been important aspects of this thesis since the introduction.

PART 1: PREPARATION AND PRACTICE FOR EDUCATIONAL JOURNEYS

A significant contribution (C2K) made in this thesis is the expansion of the aesthetic to include the practice of canoe journeying and journeying more broadly. The models explored in the pages above have shown how aesthetic concepts feature in the canoe journey and can confront the paddler – the educator and learner – leading them to experience aspects of the world with greater perceptual sensitivity. Entailed in the expansion of the aesthetic, the opportunities for aesthetic education have too been expanded. In Plate 14 above, the ‘Aesthetic Pluralism’ tank gives the reader an indication of the opportunities the educator has in selecting aspects of, or entire, models to frame, plan and develop educational journeys. This is seen in the plate above with the ‘Sensible sounding language selector’ and the note which guides the user to ‘Select 1 or more where appropriate’. I claim that the combination of aesthetic expansion and educational journeying understood together can enhance aesthetic reward. Together, the models and the context create, I claim, a system for serious aesthetic appreciation for journeying educators. A practical consequence and contribution of this thesis is a reappraisal of the influence and usefulness of the aesthetic in the aesthetic education in and of experience, which has been significantly neglected in literature and practice. Throughout the thesis I have attempted to consider the implications for each model *through educational considerations*. Here, I provide a glancing sheet (directly below) and a set of key terms to support educators in the design and practice of aesthetic education journeying.

<p>• HEPBURN •</p> <p>WE ARE SPECTATORS + ACTORS IN THE LANDSCAPE</p> <p>EMOTIONS ARE GROUNDED RESPONSES TO OBJECTS</p> <p>UTILISE: SENSES, EMOTIONS, FEELING, BODY + IMAGINATION</p> <p>METAPHORS ARE IMPORTANT TO FRAMING OF JOURNEY</p> <p>EXPLORE VIEWPOINTS + THOUGHT COMPONENTS</p> <p>SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR WONDER, NOT CURIOSITY</p> <p>STRIVE FOR REASONED EMOTIONAL COMMITMENTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION.</p>	<p>GLANCING SHEET</p>	<p>• CARLSON •</p> <p>HOW HAS THE LANDSCAPE BEEN USED IN THE PAST + RECENTLY?</p> <p>FORMAL FEATURES OF ENVIRONMENT ARE HELPFUL STARTING POINTS</p> <p>DRAW ON MYTHS, SYMBOLS + ART OF THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF ENVIRONMENT WILL BE CENTRAL TO YOUR PLANNING + TEACHING</p> <p>YOUR ROLE IS TO CREATE KNOWLEDGE + EXPERIENCES</p> <p>NATURE WRITING - PUBLISHED AND CREATED ON THE JOURNEY - CAN AID AESTHETIC APPRAISALS</p> <p>ENGAGING WITH SCENICALLY CHALLENGED ENVIRONMENTS CAN SURFACE AESTHETIC PREFERENCES.</p>
<p>SERIOUS AESTHETIC APPRAISALS CAN HAVE A THOUGHT-COMPONENT, BUT THEY DON'T HAVE TO</p> <p>AESTHETIC APPRAISALS SURFACE: POLITICAL, CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</p> <p>ATTEND TO DESCRIPTIVE FUNCTIONS I.E. HOW SOMETHING IS DESIGNED + HOW IT FUNCTIONS</p> <p>AS THE EDUCATOR, YOU ARE NOT IN A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE, BUT YOUR STUDENTS MIGHT BE</p> <p>HOW YOU + YOUR PADDLERS DO THINGS IS IMPORTANT TO THE QUALITY OF THE JOURNEY</p> <p>ATTUNE YOURSELF TO MOMENTS OF CHANGE.</p> <p>WHAT OUGHT WE FIND AESTHETICALLY VALUABLE?</p> <p>HOW CAN THE JOURNEY ENABLE BETTER WORLD-MAKING?</p> <p>• SAITO •</p>	<p>LEARN TO BELIEVE IN THE WORLD</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE IS GENERATED FROM AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE</p> <p>THINK OF ENVIRONMENT, WITHOUT "THE"</p> <p>ATTEND TO THE BODY</p> <p>AESTHETIC ≠ BEAUTIFUL</p> <p>EMBRACE AND LEARN FROM OTHERNESS</p> <p>ENCOURAGE DESCRIPTION</p> <p>BUILD TIME FOR CRITICAL EXPLANATION</p> <p>ENABLE CRITICAL APPRAISAL</p> <p>• BELLEANT •</p>

PLATE 16 AESTHETIC JOURNEY GLANCING SHEET

The glancing sheet above provides the educator with a set of stimuli in short-hand form. The statements and questions from each model are my summarised interpretations detailed in the preceding pages. As the main challenge from Hepburn is the task of finding sensible sounding language to enable serious aesthetic appreciation of nature, I claim that

I have shown the need for an aesthetic pluralism. This glancing sheet provides the educator with the means to realise such a goal in their journeying practice. In the planning of the journey, the educator is able to select features of the models that relate to the specific environment, and tasks, they are encouraging the learner to engage with. The educator can further use these while on the journey to stimulate aesthetic inquiries through different media – conversations, art, narrative, nature writing, ecological investigations or a combination of these. If I were leading a canoe journey, I would probably have this in my buoyancy aid pocket and have it close to hand to assist me. Instead of forcing a single aesthetic model to frame the education experience, the educator can utilise aesthetic pluralism (which I discuss as a further contribution to knowledge below in Part 2).

QUICK REFERENCE KEY CONCEPTS:

Between Saito's and Berleant's pipework, the reader will have noticed key terms: *Feel*, *Notice*, *Sense*, *Do*, *Believe* and *Strive*. These key terms provide points of reference for the educator, helping them to keep in mind questions, insights and knowledge along these themes in the planning and process of journeying. These can be used to ensure learning continues once the journey has ended.

Feel – I take this to focus on feelings and emotional responses that are aroused by the journeying experience. Attending to my own feelings as an educator can be useful in the way I orient myself to the task of educating, as well as those I am teaching and guiding.

Notice refers to those 'clock-able' moments and qualities that make themselves known to the educator and journeying learner alike. I might provoke reflection: 'I notice the colours of the landscape', 'The flowers growing defiantly on the well-trodden path', Or 'The strain on the arms as I paddle against the wind'? Noticing is an essential practice for the aesthetic educator; in many ways it has surfaced again and again throughout this thesis.

Sense is central to drawing on features of the aesthetic models. Here it can be thought of in two ways: (1) What senses am I using to perceive, make sense of, describe and appraise the environment? And, (2) How does what I notice, what I feel, do, believe and strive for influence the educational affordances of the journey?

Do reminds the educator that the way they and their students practice and engage in the journey matters. This applies at many levels: how they present themselves, the kit they use and value, the way they move through and appraise an environment, and so on.

Believe, in many ways, addresses another recurring theme that has been systematically addressed in each model – The educator might ask, 'to what extent is the journey upholding beliefs that may, or may not be, true about X?' (here X could refer to ecological features of the environment or human values of particular natural entities, political, cultural, economic and environment issues, etc.).

Strive is not a word that has been used much in this thesis. It goes beyond an alternative word I considered – *purpose*. Strive refers to the motivations underpinning and woven through a journey. The reflective educator could ask: 'What exactly am I and journeyers striving for in this journey?', 'What are we trying to achieve beyond getting to the end'? As the reader will remember, the relationship between aesthetic sensitivity and ethical behaviours has been discussed throughout. Thus, striving here is a way of the educator being reminded of the aesthetic-moral relationship that can curate and guide the ongoing

interactions with the more-than- human world. I believe this applies as much to education in its broadest sense as it does the practice of educational journeying.

The reference document, guidance notes and questions in the paragraphs immediately above show the reader just how far I have come in developing the concept and practice of canoe journeying. The intention is that, at this stage, the educator will be able to begin attending to the aesthetic features of their practice. As a result, along with the pipework plates throughout this thesis, the educator will be able to start attending to the sensible sounding aesthetic language in their own practice, and for aesthetical-ethical education for better world-making. I claim these are original contributions to educational practice and philosophy of education.

PART 2: IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNOWLEDGE (C2K)

In this final stage of *finding my thing*, I think it is important to surface contributions to knowledge that have been central to the structure and aesthetic experience of this thesis. I do this in addition to the consideration of some implications for education and opportunities for future research.

Before I come to discuss *finding my own voice*, it is important to recognise the voices of two philosophers who have aided me in my thinking throughout this thesis. One has been a canoeing companion – Hepburn; the other has been a plumbing companion – Midgley. It is not an overstatement that their work has never been brought together, nor has their work been brought into the realm of aesthetic education, nor canoe journeying. Hepburn's concept of journeying as disturbance has been a repeated touch point for other canoeing companions. Midgley's philosophical plumbing has provided visual, as well as metaphorical, stimulation to aid in the critical philosophical analyses of Hepburn, Carlson, Saito and Berleant's models of aesthetics, which I have contextualised into an expanded notion and practice of aesthetic education and canoe journeying. Except for Berleant, these philosophers have not written of their canoeing exploits (primarily because they have not had any to discuss). As such, in answer to Midgley's question: 'Who is doing the thinking when you're thinking?', I have supplied a robust answer in this thesis. Furthermore, the opportunities for engaging with these thinkers has led, I claim, to a reinvigoration of the concept of aesthetic education beyond the arts that can have practicable, expansive and meaningful influences on education and the more-than-human world.

Methodologically, the canoe journeying narratives have further articulated how an educator, a canoeist, or a generally inquisitive and playful person(s) can recognise the thinkers influence on cognitive and perceptual capacities. Remembering that journeys can be lived and literary, Hepburn too has played an important role in enabling a kind of philosophical writing that borders on travel writing, philosophical thought experiment, nature writing and journaling, creative non-fiction, autoethnography and first-person narrative. These have contributed to knowledge (and arguably practice) by bringing the reader alongside me in being actor and acted-upon as the author-paddler in these journeys. In future research, I intend to develop further analyses and examples of my narrative form of philosophy of education writing. It has been, in my view, a successful way of addressing Midgley's guiding question, undertaking the work of philosophical plumbing, and finding sensible sounding language to do justice to the ideas of my canoeing companions and my own.

The extent to which these ideas 'are my own' is of course to recognise the impact of the ideas of others in my thinking (addressed directly above). However, when I first started out on this thesis, I felt a significant strain on my metaphorical vocal chords – and a very real strain in my cognitive capacities – for how I would marry two approaches of educational research and practice that rarely meet in outdoor education: social sciences informed writing and philosophy of education writing. I struggled to find my voice because I failed – in the first instance – to attend to the aesthetic qualities of the literature I had been reading. I didn't need to *reduce* my voice, *my subjectivity*, to a preconceived set of rules about how this thesis was to be written. Instead, in *realising* that aesthetic pluralism could benefit education journeying and aesthetic education more broadly, I am in the position to claim that the narratives, images and 'traditional' philosophy of education analyses have come together in this thesis as a form of revivification. I have shown that varied forms of engagement provide different points from which to describe, explain and appraise. My job as the student-author has been to guide and curate these different forms of creation into something meaningful for the discourses and practices central to this work (see middle right pipes of Plate 14). This vocalisation is something that I will explore in further research. I hope it will be a conduit for aesthetically enriched journeys, outdoor education discourse, and the continual task of better world-making through aesthetic education.

As the reader nears the end of this thesis, they will recognise that I have been ambitious in my intentions for its contributions. To that end, I suggest that I have left the reader with a great deal to think about and to take into their own personal and professional lives. That said, I am also aware of areas of much needed future research. While I have analysed existing nature aesthetic curricula, and created new curricula, and worked to place them in the context of aesthetic journeying (see C2Ks under *Criticism of Environment* in plumbing Plate 14), as everything can be aesthetically appraised I think it is important to see how these conceptual resources can help articulate issues and solutions to current environmental educational issues. For example, I have not attended deeply to how these curricula could be aligned with current policy-based curricula. In addition, there are opportunities to reflect on aspects of these models with practitioners in outdoor education and traditional education. The present intention would be to raise consciousness of the aesthetic features that influence them in their daily lives – the notion of the journey as a special experience could be an important place to start as outdoor learning and nature-based learning often utilise this feature in their pedagogies. It is important to recognise that the journey is often seen as a metaphor, or when enacted it is positioned as 'other' and outside of the everyday life of learners.

Outside of schooling or formalised education, finding ways of exploring and disseminating aesthetics through the various media (narrative, image, lived and literary journeys, etc.) will be important in the realisation of journeys as a means for better world-making. Furthermore delving deeper in the philosophical connections between Hepburn and Midgley, with my other canoeing companions, could provide new knowledge and practical resources to aid educators, coaches, guides and journeyers to attend to the aesthetic richness in environment.

A 'conclusion' is finite. I've entitled this chapter with the word 'revisiting'. I've done this not just as a reminder of how a conclusion typically functions – to revisit the arguments, implications and claims in the pages above. A 'revisitation' implies recognition. I hope that the knowledge explored and created in this thesis will resonate with the reader (and

author) long after it is placed in a research repository. What I mean by this is that the reader will, of course, come to their own interpretations, make their own connections, and develop new ideas based on a small phrase, a part of a plumbing image or something else that I'm unable to recognise at the time of writing. This realisation has been my most profound aspect of learning in and through this process.

I may finish this (thesis) journey now, but its potential for lasting disturbance may come around again and again. This is dependent on how one acts and is acted upon by environmental affordances. The lived and narrative journey may contribute to my life as an educator, which is unified with, but markedly different from, my personal life. I cannot know what the contributions might look like until these moments happen. Yet it is through the nurturing of caring and attentive aesthetic sensibilities and developing sensible sounding language that leads to a revived aesthetic core of the journey. This realisation can lead to varying forms of lasting disturbance. In the frame of aesthetics of nature, everyday and environment, canoe journeys enable one to better to attend to all living entities and the social, cultural, political, environmental, ecological and educational conditions that directly impact the quality of existence. The final stroke of this thesis is that undertaking an educational journey should now be characterised by the development of aesthetic sensitivities and the paddler's striving to put aesthetic rewards to serious work in the task of better world-making within the journey and beyond.

Figure 3 Reviving the Aesthetic Core of Canoe Journeying in Nature and Outdoor Education (Watercolour, Gouache and Pigment Ink by Lewis Stockwell)



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