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Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature

I

We are familiar with the ways in which the aesthetic response to art is guided by features of both the work and the individual subject, but what guides our aesthetic appreciation of nature? When we interpret and evaluate a painting, the perceptual features of the work guide our visual and imaginative exploration of the canvas, and we find meaning through these features as viewed within the framework of background knowledge of the painting, feelings, and associations. My appreciation of David's *Cupid and Psyche* is guided by the perceptual features of the painting—I recognize a smiling young man with his arm draped over the female figure. If I know the myth, I know that the painting shows Cupid after he has seduced the beautiful Psyche, who lies satisfied beside him. I delight in the utter arrogance of his sensuous pose, the smirk which borders on a smirk, and I judge the painting to be the best depiction of the myth, finely executed and expressive of the myth's entire narrative in a single pictorial moment. When we turn to nature, however, aesthetic appreciation lacks the guidance of an artistic context. Various natural objects[1]—beetles, buttercups, seascapes, or landscapes—lack a human maker, an artist, and also an artistic context in respect of the type of artwork, e.g., painting or sculpture, and in respect of style, e.g., cubist or surrealist. In my enjoyment of the soft blue-green skyline of the Blue Ridge Mountains, my appreciation is guided by what I see, colors, shapes, texture, as well as folklore and other associations, but it is not directed by an artist or a body of artworks. The comparison of art and nature appreciation highlights the problem that arises when artistic context is absent from aesthetic appreciation; what replaces artistic context in the appreciation of nature? What frames

our aesthetic interpretation and evaluation of buttercups and seascapes?

Two opposing positions have been offered to solve this problem, a science-based approach[2] and a nonscience-based approach.[3] In this paper I suggest a solution to the problem by pointing to the drawbacks of the science-based approach. I argue that the foundation of the science-based model is flawed, and that scientific knowledge is too constraining as a guide for appreciation of nature *qua* aesthetic object. I offer an alternative, a nonscience-based approach, which makes perception and imagination central to guiding aesthetic appreciation.

II

The science-based approach maintains that scientific knowledge guides our aesthetic appreciation of nature. Allen Carlson's "natural environmental model" draws on Kendall Walton's "Categories of Art" to argue that knowledge of the natural sciences and their "commonsense predecessors and analogues" replaces artistic context in our appreciation of nature. Walton claims that appropriate aesthetic appreciation of art depends on having knowledge of art history and criticism which enables us to perceive it in the correct category; for example, we appreciate *Cupid and Psyche* inappropriately if we perceive it in the category of a postimpressionist work.[4] By analogy, Carlson argues that there are correct categories for the aesthetic appreciation of nature. These categories are fixed by scientific knowledge so that, for example, correct aesthetic appreciation of a whale must involve viewing it in the correct category of a mammal (rather than as a fish).[5]

If one agrees with Walton's argument, it is

convenient to appeal to *natural* history instead of art history to determine appropriate appreciative categories for nature. As artifacts, paintings can be contextualized according to their history; and for natural objects, why not turn to their history—ecology and geology. But a closer look reveals a weakness in the analogy as well as more general problems with the science-based approach. The first problem involves understanding what counts as the scientific knowledge which is supposed to guide appreciation in the natural environmental model. In a response to Noël Carroll's criticisms of the model, Carlson says:

The primary case Carroll presents of something that is not meant to be commonsense knowledge of nature in the relevant sense is, in the waterfall example, "that the stuff that is falling down is water." However, it is not completely clear why such knowledge is not commonsense knowledge in the relevant sense. Is it not the product of the commonsense predecessors and analogues of natural science?[6]

In these remarks, Carlson minimizes his knowledge requirement in such a way as to make it ineffective for determining the categories of appreciation he wants. If all that is needed to fix appropriate appreciation is having a concept of the object, then this knowledge cannot do the work that Carlson requires of it. By his own argument, it would appear that to appreciate a waterfall we need to know not just that it is water, but that it is a waterfall, i.e., it is a lot of water pouring with great force, having been channeled through a relatively narrow area. Only this depth of knowledge would equip us to appreciate the waterfall's grandeur. This point fits with the whale example above, where he claims that appropriate appreciation requires not merely that we know it is a whale, but also that we perceive it as a mammal because we would be unable to appreciate its grace if we perceive it as a fish.[7]

Furthermore, Carlson bases the depth of knowledge required by reference to Walton's categories of art, which involve knowledge of art history and criticism, yet the analogy breaks down in the waterfall example. Here Carlson is willing to weaken his requirement to identifying an object under a general category—the stuff that is falling down is water, not soil—yet this is not analogous to Walton's categories, in which

correct appreciation involves more specific knowledge than the capacity to identify a work of art as a painting as opposed to a sculpture. For example, to correctly judge Picasso's *Guernica,* we must perceive it in the more specific category of a cubist rather than an impressionist painting.

The consequence of the disanalogy is that the natural environmental model cannot provide a clear answer to the problem of what grounds aesthetic appreciation of nature. This weakness is internal to Carlson's own strategy of replacing artistic categories with scientific ones: the strength of his categories is lost when he generalizes them so much as to include everyday knowledge of objects. To avoid this, we might rely on remarks by Carlson which indicate a much stronger scientific foundation for his model, but if this path is chosen further problems emerge. I return to Carlson's response to Carroll to set out the first of these.

In his criticism of two nonscience-based models, Carlson raises an excellent question: What makes these models of nature appreciation a type of *aesthetic* appreciation?[8] But we should ask this question of Carlson's own model. It strikes me as odd to claim that scientific knowledge is essential for appreciating nature *aesthetically.* Scientific knowledge may be a good starting point for appreciation characterized by curiosity, wonder, and awe, but is it necessary for perceiving aesthetic qualities? Counterexamples are not difficult to find. I can appreciate the perfect curve of a wave combined with the rushing white foam of the wave crashing on to sand without knowing how waves are caused. My judgment of the wave as spectacular and exhilarating can be dependent solely on an appreciation of perceptual qualities and any associations or feelings which give meaning to these qualities. It might be argued that my response also involves the very basic knowledge that what I see is a wave, but this cannot count as an appreciative category for Carlson (as shown by the waterfall example above). I am not suggesting a formalist approach which makes knowledge irrelevant to aesthetic appreciation, for that would "purify away" the richness of aesthetic experience of nature.[9] All sorts of knowledge may be appropriate according to the particular object of appreciation, e.g., the cultural narratives of history, religion, and folklore.[10]

However, while such knowledge may expand appreciation as the backdrop of an aesthetic response or when more actively fed in, this knowledge is not always essential to appreciation.

Carlson's emphasis on scientific knowledge for framing appreciation also raises a practical problem for his model. His motive for fixing the appreciative context of aesthetic judgments with scientific categories is to achieve some degree of objectivity, so that conservationists and other environmental decision makers might more easily use it to determine the aesthetic value of some part of the natural environment.[11] However, alongside this possible advantage is the disadvantage that scientific and aesthetic value might become indistinguishable in the deliberative process. 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. Carlson's model meets the second criterion, but I am doubtful that it meets the first, because although it emphasizes disinterestedness, it lacks sufficient emphasis on other distinctive features of the aesthetic response, perception and imagination. We can develop a model which meets both criteria by prioritizing these aspects of the aesthetic response. (I expand on this point in the next section, where I set out my alternative to the science-based model.)

My final objection to the science-based model involves a further concern about Carlson's emphasis on science. Another distinctive aspect of aesthetic appreciation is its *free* and disinterested character; in particular we are freed up from instrumental or intellectual concerns. In this respect, contemplation of the beauty of buttercups or seascapes is directed by perceptual qualities, rather than the origins or categories of these natural objects. Scientific knowledge can impede attention to these qualities, thus diverting aesthetic attention. Again the problem stems from making scientific knowledge a condition of appropriate aesthetic

appreciation, with another undesirable implication—the necessary condition is too limiting on the aesthetic response.[12] Although Carlson provides an excellent account of the differences between artworks and natural objects and how these differences shape our aesthetic response,[13] the natural environmental model does not adequately take on board the demands of aesthetic appreciation when we move from art to nature. In this context, we need an approach that allows for the freedom, flexibility, and creativity demanded by nature *qua aesthetic* object. The complexity of nature provides the possibility of rich and rewarding aesthetic experience, but such an experience is made as much by the object as by the percipient—we must take up the challenge that natural objects offer. Ronald Hepburn expresses this well when he says that:

Aesthetic experience of nature can be meagre, repetitive and undeveloping. To deplore such a state of affairs and to seek amelioration is to accept an ideal which can be roughly formulated thus. It is the ideal of a rich and diversified experience, far from static, open to constant revision of viewpoint and of organisation of the visual field, constant increase in scope of what can be taken as an object of rewarding aesthetic contemplation, an ideal of increase in sensitivity and in mobility of mind in discerning expressive qualities in natural objects.[14]

This resounds Dewey's warning that the enemies of the aesthetic are those experiences of the world that are conventional, hackneyed, humdrum, and inchoate.[15] Both Hepburn and Dewey point to the power of *imagination* as the human capacity that enables us to create fresh perspectives on the world. Imagination, along with perception, is an important resource for taking up the aesthetic challenge offered by our natural environment.

The most desirable model of aesthetic appreciation of nature will solve the problem of how to guide appreciation in the absence of artistic context, and also meet the more practical criteria of providing a way to make aesthetic judgments which are not merely subjective and a way to distinguish aesthetic value from other values. With its emphasis on science, Carlson's model cannot meet the first and third requirements. The natural environmental model is problematic with either a weak or strong foun-

dation of science: minimizing the requirement to everyday knowledge of objects makes the foundation of the natural environmental model ineffective for directing appreciation, while strengthening the requirement makes it both difficult to distinguish aesthetic from scientific value and excessively restrictive on the aesthetic response.

How to cope with the indeterminacy of nature without the help of artistic context is the problem here, and I have shown that we cannot find a solution by replacing artistic context with the constraints of science. Nor does the solution lie in turning purely to the subject. In the next section I argue that we need an approach which draws on both subject and object, where both contribute to guiding the response, and I propose that instead of using scientific knowledge as the basis of aesthetic appreciation of nature, we turn to the aesthetic resources with which we are more familiar.

III

My nonscience-based model draws on our perceptual and imaginative capacities to provide a foundation for aesthetic appreciation of nature. The model is loosely Kantian, for it also includes disinterestedness as a guide to appropriate appreciation. How exactly can these capacities provide the basis of a desirable alternative to the science-based approach? To answer this question, I begin constructing my alternative model with a discussion of the role of perception, before turning to the role of imagination.

As with art, the aesthetic response to natural objects begins with perceptual exploration of the aesthetic object. With *Cupid and Psyche,* I explore the features in the painting, recognizing the objects depicted as well as gradually interpreting what I see. This recognition and interpretation leads to an appreciation of the artist's skill in composition and the expressiveness of the depicted figures—Cupid's arrogance beside Psyche's sensuousness. With a natural environment, such as a seascape, my perception is not directed by what an artist has depicted, but it is nonetheless directed by the recognition and enjoyment of perceptual qualities. I focus on the foreground of the seascape, the perfect curve of the wave and the white foam which coincides with the spectacular crashing sound of the

waves hitting the sand. I delight in the contrast of the still water in the horizon which presents a peaceful and dramatic backdrop to the waves. My appreciation of aesthetic qualities is directed by what I perceive, but what I pick out for appreciation depends to some extent on the effort I make with respect to engaging my perceptual capacities. With art, much depends on the ability of the artist to create an engaging and imaginative work of art. With nature, the character of the natural object to a great extent determines how much perceptual effort is required. It may take less effort to see the beauty of a particularly grand landscape than a mudflat or a wasteland. However, mudflats and wastelands may also have aesthetic value, and perceiving that is dependent upon the effort of the percipient.

An example from my own experience helps to illustrate this point. The local government where I live is debating how to manage a landscape that was formerly the site of an oil refinery. Besides some remnants of building foundations and an old road around the site, it has become a habitat for various plants, insects, and birds, as well as pond life in two ponds on the site. Some have argued for digging up the landscape to replace it with a neat and trim park. Others have argued that it should be left as it is, with the exception of building a boardwalk or path and a few information boards to facilitate exploration of the area for visitors. I have spent some time exploring the place, and discovered that what appeared to be an uninteresting landscape was in fact very aesthetically interesting. Through careful attention to the various aspects of the landscape, I discovered the graceful flight of numerous birds, delicate wildflowers, and an elegant pair of swans in one of the ponds. My delight in these aspects of the place may have been heightened by my background knowledge of the debate and the history of the place, but the aesthetic value I found there did not depend upon such knowledge; rather, it depended on perceptual interest and immersion in the landscape.[16]

Such perceptual attentiveness is intimately linked to imagination. Imagination encourages a variety of possible perceptual perspectives on a single natural object or a set of objects, thereby expanding and enriching appreciation. Hepburn points to imagination's power 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 of seeing.[17]

Perception also supports the activity of imagination by providing the choreography of our imaginings. In these ways, the perceptual qualities of the aesthetic object as well as the imaginative power of the percipient come together to direct aesthetic appreciation.

To illustrate the role of imagination[18] in our aesthetic appreciation of nature, I identify four specific modes of imaginative activity in relation to natural objects: *exploratory, projective, ampliative,* and *revelatory* imagination.[19] Alongside perception, these modes identify and organize many of the ways we use imagination when we appreciate natural objects. We may use none, some, or all of them, and our responses range from imaginatively thin to imaginatively thick, depending on the aesthetic object and the imagination of the percipient.

Exploratory imagination is the most closely tied to perception of the various modes we use. Here, imagination explores the forms of the object as we perceptually attend to it, and imagination's discoveries can, in turn, enrich and alter our perception of the object. Whilst perception does much of the work in simply grasping the object and cordoning it off in our perceptual field, it is imagination that reaches beyond this in a free contemplation of the object. In this way exploratory imagination helps the percipient to make an initial discovery of aesthetic qualities. For example, in contemplating the bark of a locust tree, visually, I see the deep clefts between the thick ridges of the bark. Images of mountains and valleys come to mind, and I think of the age of the tree given the thickness of the ridges and how they are spaced apart. I walk around the tree, feeling the wide circumference of the bark. The image of a seasoned old man comes to mind, with deep wrinkles from age. These imaginings lead to an aesthetic judgment of the tree as stalwart, and I respect it as I might a wise old sage. My interpretation of the locust tree is tied to its nonaesthetic qualities, such as the texture of the bark, as well as the associations spawned by perceptual qualities.

Another feature of the exploratory mode is that imagination sometimes undeliberately searches for unity in a scene where perception is unequal to the task. Imagination may struggle to bring together the various aspects of a moor which stretches beyond sight by supplying missing detail or filling in what is not seen, such as images of the landscape beyond the horizon.

Projective imagination draws on imagination's projective powers. Projection involves imagining "on to" what is perceived such that what is actually there is somehow added to, replaced with, or overlaid by a projected image. In this way projective imagination is associated with deliberate "seeing as," where we intentionally, not mistakenly, see something as another thing. We put "seeing as" to work in order to try out new perspectives on objects by projecting images onto them.

In visually exploring the stars at night, imaginative activity may overlay perception in attempting to unify the various forms traced by individual stars, perhaps by naturally projecting geometrical shapes onto them. Sometimes we take the further imaginative leap of projecting ourselves *into* natural objects. For example, to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of an alpine flower, I might somatically imagine what it is like to live and grow under harsh conditions. Without imagining such conditions I would be unable to appreciate the remarkable strength hidden so beautifully in the delicate quality of the flower. Both of these examples show how imagination provides a more intimate aesthetic experience, and thus allows us to explore aesthetic qualities more deeply than through perception alone.

The third mode of imaginative activity, *ampliative imagination,* involves the *inventive* powers of imagination, and need not make use of images. It is marked by heightened creative powers and a special curiosity in its response to natural objects. Here imagination amplifies what is given in perception and thereby reaches beyond the mere projection of images onto objects. This activity may thus be described as more penetrative, resulting in a deeper imaginative treatment of the object. It is imagination in its most active mode in aesthetic experience.

This use of imagination involves both visualizing and the leaps of imagination that enable us to approach natural objects from entirely new standpoints. In contemplating the smoothness

of a sea pebble, I visualize the relentless surging of the ocean as it has shaped the pebble into its worn form. I might also imagine how it looked before it became so smooth, this image contributing to my wonder and delight in the object. Merely thinking about the pebble is not sufficient for appreciating the silky smoothness which is emphasized by contrasting its feel with an image of its pre-worn state. Ampliative imagination enables us to expand upon what we see by placing or contextualizing the aesthetic object with narrative images. Andrew Wyeth illustrates this with another example from the sea.

A white mussel shell on a gravel bank in Maine is thrilling to me because it's all the sea—the gull that brought it there, the rain, the sun that bleached it there by a stand of spruce woods.[20]

Ampliative imagination also accounts for a nonvisualizing activity in which we try out novel ways to aesthetically appreciate some object. Calling on imagination in this way facilitates our experience of a valley as imbued with tranquillity, or by contrast, we might imagine the cold, icy feeling of the glaciers that carved out the valley's form.

Where ampliative imagination leads to the discovery of an *aesthetic truth,* I call this imaginative activity *revelatory.* In this mode, invention stretches the power of imagination to its limits, and this often gives way to a kind of truth or knowledge about the world—a kind of revelation in the nonreligious sense. When my alternative contemplation of the valley, glaciers and all, reveals the tremendous power of the earth to me, a kind of truth has emerged through a distinctively aesthetic experience.

I want to distinguish an aesthetic truth from a nonaesthetic truth according to the manner in which it becomes known. We do not seek out aesthetic truths in the way we seek out the answers to philosophical or scientific problems. Rather, aesthetic truths are revealed through a heightened aesthetic experience, where perceptual and imaginative engagement with nature facilitate the kind of close attention that leads to revelation. A quick glance at a lamb reveals little except an acknowledgment of its sweetness. But the fuller participation of perception and imagination can lead to a truth about innocence. Contemplating the fresh whiteness of a lamb

and its small, fragile stature evokes images of purity and naiveté. It is through dwelling aesthetically and imaginatively on such natural things that we achieve new insight.

IV

The exploratory, projective, ampliative, and revelatory modes of imagination explain how imagination guides aesthetic appreciation of nature. More generally, my model provides an appreciative context by bringing together perception and imagination in place of scientific knowledge.

However, my model raises a potentially serious objection. To what extent should imagination play a role in appreciation? It might be argued that the use of imagination is likely to cause incorrect or inappropriate responses by trivializing the aesthetic object. Such trivial treatment emerges with irrelevant imaginings by the percipient, imaginings which cannot be tied to the perceptual properties of the object, or those which indulge the percipient in a personal fantasy. This line of argument might continue by claiming that imagination inevitably leads to an experience which is too unpredictable, too arbitrary and prone to fantasy to guide appropriate aesthetic appreciation of nature.

Carlson does not explicitly make this objection, but I believe that his model entails it. His account of the justification of aesthetic judgments of nature incorporates the view that there is an appropriate way to appreciate natural objects when approached from the aesthetic point of view. Correct aesthetic judgment depends on appreciation of nature informed by science, and therefore imaginative responses which diverge from experiencing natural objects through their ecological, geological, or other scientific categories would be inappropriate.

Although I have rejected Carlson's model as too constraining, I do not think that all imaginative responses are appropriate. Imagination let loose can lead to the manipulation of the aesthetic object for one's own pleasure-seeking ends. With art, the narrative of a novel or characterization determines the imaginative response to some extent. With natural objects such explicit guidance is absent, so on what grounds is it possible to distinguish imaginings tied to the object from those which are not? In some

ways this seems an impossible task; a solution to the problem is difficult to find even for art.[21] However, it is possible to specify ways in which imagination need not lead to aesthetic appreciation which trivializes and instrumentalizes nature, and thus to show that imaginative engagement can provide a valuable alternative to the scientific approach.

The close connection between perception and imagination in the aesthetic response provides some help in distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate imaginings. Wyeth's response to the seashell involves an imaginative aspect which is guided by attention to perceptual qualities and the recognition that the object comes from the sea. But problems arise if we depend solely on the connection between imagination and perception, because some imaginings can be so tentatively tied to perceptual qualities as to become inappropriate because they are irrelevant. For example, when coming upon Beachy Head, a high cliff on the south coast of England, one is awestruck by the dramatic, sheer drop to the sea, and this feeling is heightened by the knowledge that this is a favorite suicide spot. Imagining the feeling of jumping off the cliff and the fear of someone standing at the top of it accentuates the sublimity of the place. But this train of images would become irrelevant to aesthetic appreciation of the cliff if one then imagined several possibilities, such as financial difficulties, which might serve as a motive for suicide.

Also, although many images evoked by an object are obviously connected to its perceptual properties, as in the example above of the tree as an old man, there will be cases when particular imaginings are appropriate even if this is not so. Some valuable uses of imagination do not emerge through attention to perceptual properties alone. Aldo Leopold's appreciation of a mountain as wild and majestic is achieved through "thinking like a mountain," or a sort of empathetic, imaginative identification with the mountain.[22]

So despite the fact that perception helps to guide our imaginings, reliance on the link between imagination and perception alone will not serve to distinguish appropriate from inappropriate imaginings. To remedy this, I suggest two guidelines; the first is disinterestedness, while the second is characterized by comparing imagination to a virtue, so that we "imagine well" when we use imagination skillfully and appropriately according to the context of aesthetic appreciation. These guidelines are intended to be flexible, since inflexibility will conflict with the range of responses demanded by the diversity of natural objects and percipients.

The first guideline, disinterestedness, characterizes aesthetic appreciation as nonpractical and noninstrumental. Adherence to this guideline eliminates the danger of self-indulgence by the imaginative subject. It might be argued that there is a tension between the active engagement of the subject's imagination and the detachment often associated with disinterestedness. However, disinterestedness does not entail cool, distanced detachment; rather, it requires detachment from self-interested concerns, and it does not follow from this that the percipient's aesthetic response is passive.[23] Properly understood, it is the active detachment of disinterestedness that clears the ground for the free activity of imagination, but it is also what keeps it in check, thereby preventing self-indulgent imaginative responses. In freeing the mind from self-interested and instrumental concerns, imagination can underpin appropriate appreciation of the aesthetic object. Disinterestedness checks any thoughts or imaginings that stray from an aesthetic focus in my appreciation of the seascape, such as fantasizing about the abundance of shells I might collect if the waves were not so big.

The first guideline specifically addresses the concern that the use of imagination leads to self-indulgence, while the second targets irrelevant imaginings. The second guideline requires a more active role by the percipient in that she or he is expected to "imagine well." Just as keen rather than slack perception enables the discovery of aesthetic value in a wasteland, imagination can be used effectively or ineffectively in the context of aesthetic appreciation. An analogy to virtue is helpful for explaining how to "imagine well." For Aristotle, virtue is not a natural capacity, but rather it is learned and acquired through practice. We reach a comfortable point where we exercise a virtue as a matter of habit. Imagination too is developed through practice, and it gains a habitual footing just like virtue. We can begin to see how an effective use of imagination might develop, but how exactly

would such a use sort relevant from irrelevant imaginings? An important aspect of virtue provides an answer to this question. The proper assessment of the context or situation of the moral problem (using practical reason), as well as practice, provides the foundation of the appropriate virtue. In the aesthetic context, imagination is mobilized and exercised according to the demands of the aesthetic object, so that we become able to determine the irrelevance of, for example, some of the Beachy Head imaginings. "Imagining well" involves spotting aesthetic potential, having a sense of what to look for, and knowing when to clip the wings of imagination. This last skill involves preventing the irrelevance of shallow, naive, and sentimental imaginative responses which might impoverish rather than enrich appreciation.[24] Imagining a lamb dressed up in baby clothes might underline the aesthetic truth of innocence, but it is sentimental and shallow, and it fails to direct an appreciation appropriately. Such discriminations are not always easy to make nor by any means clear-cut, but through practice it is possible to develop the skill of keeping imaginings on track.

V

Supported by these guidelines, imagination, together with perception, can provide the framework for an alternative model which has several advantages over the science-based model. First, it provides a framework for aesthetic appreciation of nature which is based in familiar aesthetic sources, perception, imagination, and disinterestedness. In contrast to scientific knowledge, perception and imagination provide a framework that is clearly aesthetic and which, in the practical context, makes aesthetic value distinguishable from other environmental values, e.g., ecological, historical, and cultural. Another advantage lies in the alternative model's freedom from the constraints of scientific knowledge, because imagination and perception facilitate aesthetic rather than intellective attention, and also because this approach does not require specific knowledge of the percipient. This is especially important in the practical context where environmental decision making involves a wide variety of individuals who enter into the deliberative process with more or less expertise. The alternative model is more inclusive, more open

to the aesthetic experiences of inhabitants, visitors, developers, local government, etc., in working out the best solution. My guidelines show how inappropriate imaginings are avoided, and in the practical context, they point to possible agreement in aesthetic judgments within the framework of perception and imagination. Arbitrary and self-interested imaginings are precluded by the guidelines, which makes it easier to settle disputes in the deliberative process.[25]

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1. By "natural object" I do not assume objects which have never been touched by human beings, as is sometimes argued when "natural" is equated with "wilderness." When using the term "natural" here I recognize the inevitability of some human role in the genesis of much of what we call "nature," from the significant role played by humans in the creation of an artificial lake or an English hedgerow, to the (arguably) negligible role in the appearance of Greenland's icescapes. Acknowledgment of the human role is likely to be a component of the background knowledge we bring to any particular aesthetic encounter with nature.

2. In this paper I shall focus on Allen Carlson's science-based model since it is the most developed of them. See various papers by Carlson, including: "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 37 (1979): 267–275; "Nature, Aesthetic Judgment, and Objectivity," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 40 (1981): 15–27; "Nature and Positive Aesthetics," Environmental Ethics 6 (1984): 5–34; "Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 53 (1995): 393–400. Other versions of the model can be found in Marcia Muelder Eaton, "The Role of Aesthetics in Designing Sustainable Landscapes" (forthcoming), and "Fact and Fiction in the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature" (in this issue); and Holmes Rolston III, "Does Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature Need to be Science-Based?" The British Journal of Aesthetics 35 (1995): 374–386.

3. Examples of nonscience-based approaches include Ronald Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty," in Wonder and other Essays (Edinburgh University Press, 1984); Arnold Berleant, Aesthetics of the Environment (Temple University Press, 1992); "The Aesthetics of Art and Nature," in Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts, eds. Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); and Living in the Landscape: Towards an Aesthetics of Environment

(University Press of Kansas, 1997); Stan Godlovitch's mystery model: see Godlovitch, "Icebreakers: Environmentalism and Natural Aesthetics," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 11 (1994): 15–30; and Noël Carroll's arousal model in "On Being Moved By Nature: Between Religion and Natural History," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, eds. Kemal and Gaskell.

4. Kendall Walton, "Categories of Art," *The Philosophical Review* 79 (1970): 334–367.

5. Carlson, "Nature and Positive Aesthetics," p. 26.

6. Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge," p. 399. For Carroll's quote, see Carroll, "On Being Moved by Nature," p. 253.

7. Carlson, "Nature and Positive Aesthetics," p. 26.

8. See Carlson, "Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge," pp. 394–395. The two models he criticizes are Godlovitch's mystery model and Carroll's arousal model (see note 3 above).

9. For some excellent remarks on the drawbacks of a formalist approach to aesthetic appreciation of nature, see Ronald Hepburn, "Trivial and Serious in Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, eds. Kemal and Gaskell, pp. 72–73.

10. I should point out that scientific knowledge can expand appreciation as well. If my companion tells me that the wave is an aspect of a great lake, I might appreciate the wave as more spectacular due to my surprise that a lake could create such big waves. These additional beliefs expand my perception and add to appreciation. But this is only a minor concession to the science-based approach because I maintain that scientific knowledge is not a necessary condition of appropriate aesthetic appreciation of nature.

11. For Carlson's defense of his model in this context, see Carlson, "Nature and Positive Aesthetics."

12. I should note that Carlson does not support a dry scientific approach as the model of aesthetic experience. He has argued for the active, engaged, and disinterested approach of the aesthetic standpoint. Nonetheless, his condition of the correct scientific category stands, and he is critical of a strongly subjective stance. See Carlson: "Appreciating Art and Appreciating Nature," in *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, eds. Kemal and Gaskell, pp. 203–205; and "Aesthetics and Engagement," *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 33 (1993): 222–227.

13. See Allen Carlson, "Environmental Aesthetics," in *A Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. D. Cooper (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992), pp. 142–143.

14. Ronald Hepburn, "Nature in the Light of Art," in *Wonder and Other Essays* (Edinburgh University Press, 1984), p. 51.

15. See John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1934), p. 40.

16. Sometimes finding aesthetic value in a wasteland is impossible without the help of someone who has had more experience of the landscape. As is often the case with art, sometimes we fail to find aesthetic value for ourselves and rely on others to direct us to aesthetic qualities we have not discovered. Here I have in mind something like Sibley's seven critical activities (See Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," *The Philosophical Review* 67 [1959]: 421–450), although I do not think that appropriate appreciation of art or nature requires the expertise of an art critic or naturalist, respectively. The guidance of a companion who has viewed the artwork before or is familiar with the landscape may be sufficient for the discovery of aesthetic qualities.

17. Hepburn, "Nature in the Light of Art," p. 47.

18. My use of the term imagination is intended to include a range of imagination's capacities, from visualizing powers to imagination's more inventive capacities such as make-believe and imagining possibilities. I include here those powers which do not depend on visualizing and having mental images.

19. The *exploratory, projective,* and *ampliative* modes of imagination are loosely borrowed from Anthony Savile, who discusses them in relation to narrative paintings. The fourth, *revelatory* imagination, is my own. See Anthony Savile, *Aesthetic Reconstructions* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

20. These remarks are from an interview with Andrew Wyeth in Wanda Corn, *The Art of Andrew Wyeth* (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1973), p. 55. I am grateful to Fran Speed for this quotation.

21. Some useful ways to sort relevant from irrelevant imaginings are suggested by Ronald Hepburn in "Trivial and Serious in Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature" and in "Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination," *Environmental Values* 5 (1996): 191–204. In the context of fiction, cf. Peter Lamarque, "In and Out of Imaginary Worlds," in *Virtue and Taste: Essays on Politics, Ethics, and Aesthetics In Memory of Flint Schier*, eds. Dudley Knowles and John Skorupski, Philosophical Quarterly Supplementary Series, vol. 2 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

22. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 129.

23. My view of disinterestedness is based (loosely) in Kant's discussion of the concept, in which disinterestedness is opposed to particular kinds of interest, namely, self-interest and practical interest, where in both cases we wish to use the object as a means to some end (whether that end is pleasure or utility). Understood in these terms, the logic of disinterestedness does not entail abstraction or passive contemplation, but only that we value the object for its aesthetic qualities rather than how it might serve our ends. I have argued elsewhere that as a condition of aesthetic appreciation, disinterestedness requires that we set aside what we *want*, but not who we are. (See "Don't Eat the Daisies: Disinterestedness and the Situated Aesthetic," forthcoming in *Environmental Values* 7 [1998].) In this respect disinterestedness guides imagination by precluding self-indulgence without excluding "embedded" or "situated" aspects of the percipient.

24. See also Hepburn, "Trivial and Serious in Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature," for issues related to this point.

25. I am grateful to Jane Howarth, anonymous referees, and Arnold Berleant and Allen Carlson for their comments on drafts of this paper.