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“As if the earth has long stopped speaking to us”

Resonance with nature and its loss

Introduction

This paper explores the *aesthetic case* for landscape conservation. The main claim is that the experience of beautiful landscapes is an essential part of human flourishing; it is not just an enriching option for all of us and certainly not merely a subjective preference for some of us. Beautiful landscapes can make us feel at home in the world; this constitutes their great and irreplaceable value.

As a first step, I embed the aesthetic argument in the large and diverse field of major arguments for the conservation of nature. Section one thus links environmental aesthetics with *environmental ethics*.

In the second section, I clarify the *concept of landscape*, which brings me, in section three, to the *concept of “Stimmung.”* Section four shows *how “Stimmung”* (in the sense of mood) *is infused into landscape* (as atmosphere). Section five distinguishes various ways of how we experience landscape atmosphere, preparing the ground for the specifically aesthetic claim in section six: how, when we experience the atmosphere of a landscape *aesthetically*, we respond to it by resonating or feeling at home.

The paper’s title, “As if the earth has long stopped speaking to us,” is taken from a novel by the German writer Peter Kurzeck. *Literature* like his can help us to better appreciate landscape beauty. Philosophy – with its concern for clear concepts and stringent arguments – should go hand in hand with literature and employ its power to make things vivid and “present.” If the aesthetic case for landscape conservation is to

be made as strong as possible so it can gain traction in the real world, philosophy and literature must join forces.¹

So before I embark on the stony conceptual road ahead, let me get you into the right mood by presenting a passage from Peter Kurzeck's autobiographical 2003 novel *Als Gast* ("As a guest"). In the passage, the author recounts a walk he took with a friend in the city forest of Frankfurt, which – apart from the highway and its hum in the background – is as empty and quiet "as if the earth has long stopped speaking to us."²

Kurzeck's written and spoken language is like music. It is "deep-acting." It touches you immediately. This is why it can give us "knowledge by acquaintance" and make us *feel* the loss of nature. And this is why I quote it also in German. As yet, none of Kurzeck's works has been translated into English. The following translations are my own, with help from others.³

Durch das Waldstück jetzt, an seinem Rand hin. So ein schütteres kleines Waldstück – wie man auch geht, man geht immer am Rand. Und der Wald wie leergeräumt. Eher wie eben erst aufgestellt, sagst du dir. Keine Wurzeln? Ohne Wurzeln die Bäume? Von Fachleuten fachgerecht aufgestellt. Qualitätswald. Bestandsgarantie. Lebensgröße. Und mit Sorgfalt befestigt. Wie echt. Direkt beinah wie echt! Und so still, als ob die Erde, jeder Fleck Erde, die Pflanzen, die Steine und jedes Ding, als ob die Welt insgesamt längst aufgehört hätte, mit uns zu sprechen. Und wir dann auch mit uns selbst. Schon länger. Wir antworten nicht! So still, aber hinter der Stille ein Dröhnen, ein wachsendes Dröhnen. Von allen Seiten. Und kommt auf uns zu. Oder wie im eigenen Kopf drin.

¹ For more on the relationship between philosophy and literature, cf. Angelika Krebs, *Zwischen Ich und Du* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2015); as well as Martha Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); M. W. Rowe, *Philosophy and Literature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); and Gottfried Gabriel, *Erkenntnis* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

² This novel is by no means Peter Kurzeck's major work on nature, its loss and what this loss means for us. His major work in this regard is *Vorabend* ("Eve") from 2011. Across one thousand pages, this book tells the story of the second German "mobilization," which after the war managed to turn most rural German villages into places through which a car could be driven in fourth gear. Kurzeck's 2007 audio book *Ein Sommer, der bleibt* ("A summer that lasts") is highly relevant for our topic as well. In the course of this paper, I will quote a five-minute passage from this audio book.

³ My thanks go to Stephan Meyer, Anthony Mahler and Jason Morris for their help with the translations.

Through the piece of forest now, along its edge. Such a scanty little forest – however one walks, one always walks along the edge. And the forest as if emptied out. Rather as if just erected, you say to yourself. No roots? Without roots, the trees? Professionally put up by professionals. Quality forest. Guaranteed to last. Life-size. And secured with care. Like real. Directly almost like real! And so quiet, as if the earth, every spot of earth, the plants, the stones and every thing, as if all the world has long stopped speaking to us. And we then also to ourselves. Already for a long time. We do not answer! So quiet, but behind the quiet a hum, a growing hum. From all sides. And coming towards us. Or as inside one's own head.⁴

Kurzeck's walk does not lead through a forest, but only through a piece of forest. A real forest is large and deep; you can enter deep into it. Such an inside does not exist in a piece of forest. A piece of forest is not a forest anymore.

Between the trees in the piece of forest, there is nothing left, no undergrowth, no shrubs, no flowers. Even the trees do not look like real trees any more – they look more like fakes, highly praised in the excited language of advertising that culminates in the paradoxical cry: “Direkt beinah wie echt!”/“Directly almost like real!”

We are unable to resonate with such trees, with such a piece of forest, with such highly artificial nature. It seems that in a world like this, we also have stopped resonating with and between ourselves. Yet, behind this dead quiet, the cars on the motorway are roaring louder and louder. The machine world seems to be the only thing that still grows as nature used to grow. The machine world threatens us. It intoxicates us.

I. Environmental ethics and aesthetics: A map

This section sketches in the briefest manner possible an answer to the complex question of what kind of value nature has, so as to indicate where in the wider landscape of environmental ethics the aesthetic argument is located. The critical

⁴ Peter Kurzeck, *Als Gast* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2012), 191-192.

taxonomy of natural values that will be presented is a summary of my 1999 United Nations study, *Ethics of Nature*.⁵

As this taxonomy shows, there are many arguments for the conservation of nature. Thus, the aesthetic argument does not have to carry all the burden of justification. Its role is limited but important, more important than most people tend to think. This is because the argument provides a *metaphysically innocent* understanding of our feeling that we are part of nature and should try to fit in rather than stand out. It serves to underpin in a deeply humanistic fashion our horror at the ever-growing grey crust that threatens to cover all of the earth's surface.

The taxonomy lists three kinds of natural values: an instrumental, a moral intrinsic, and a "eudemonic" intrinsic value.

1. Instrumental value

The fact that nature has instrumental value in that, for example, it satisfies basic human needs today and in the future, is obvious. Nature's instrumental value is what underlies the ideal of sustainability, which is widely accepted in theory but not yet in practice.

2. Moral intrinsic value

It is, however, doubtful that nature bears any moral intrinsic value or dignity such as we accord to all human beings. To extend the moral rights of humans to plants or landscapes does not seem to be the way to go, as the reasons given for this extension are not particularly convincing.

The two main reasons given are the *teleological* argument, which stipulates that we should respect the so-called ends of nature,⁶ and the *holistic* argument, which proposes

⁵ Cf. Angelika Krebs, *Ethics of Nature: A Map* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999); a shorter, German version is: Angelika Krebs, "Naturethik im Überblick," in *Naturethik: Grundtexte der gegenwärtigen tier- und ökoethischen Diskussion*, ed. Angelika Krebs (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), 337-379.

⁶ For classical versions of this argument, cf. Hans Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), English: *The Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984); Klaus-Michael Meyer-Abich, *Wege zum Frieden mit der Natur* (München: dtv, 1984); and Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988).

that we overcome our dualistic ontology and realize that we are nothing but equal members of the natural community.⁷

The first of these – the teleological argument – fails to convince since only free agents can follow and care about ends. The ends of nature are more like the ends of machines and would be better called functions. A personal computer does not care whether or not it manages to print out a text. The AIDS virus does not care whether or not it kills a person. The merely functional ends of nature are of no direct moral relevance.

The holistic argument leads us even further into the swamp of metaphysics with potentially misanthropic or eco-fascist consequences. If mankind is nothing but an equal part of the natural system, why not get rid of it since it threatens to damage or even destroy the entire system like a cancerous tumor?

Apart from the *well-being of animals*, there seems to be nothing in nature that demands moral respect. Moral rights must be extended to sentient animals, but no further.⁸

3. Eudemonic intrinsic value

Even if non-sentient nature does not bear any moral intrinsic value, it has another important kind of intrinsic value, namely eudemonic intrinsic value: nature plays a non-instrumental role in a good human life (“eudemonic” from Greek “eudaemonia” = happiness). Another name for this type of value is “relational”; the value in question lies in a particular, non-utilitarian relation we can have with nature.⁹ Some of the best reasons and motives for the protection of nature are relational or eudemonic. It was not moral respect for trees that drove masses of people to protest against the cutting down of trees in Stuttgart (“Stuttgart 21”) or in Taksim Square in Istanbul. The

⁷ Cf. e.g. Arne Naess, *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), the deep ecology movement (which Naess founded), ecofeminism as well as posthumanism.

⁸ For a more recent statement of the pathocentric argument made popular by Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1975) and by Tom Regan, *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), see Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁹ Cf. Damian Cox, “On the value of natural relations,” *Environmental Ethics* 19, 1997, 173-183. Cox’s model of a non-utilitarian relation is friendship. Strangely enough, he classifies aesthetic value as utilitarian and not as relational.

eudemonic intrinsic value of nature is threefold: nature has beauty (1.), it gives us a sense of identity (2.) and it is sacred (3.).

3.1. Beauty

Nature – in its variability and contingency – is a particularly inviting and rewarding object of non-instrumental aesthetic attention. It has aesthetic intrinsic value; it is beautiful in the broad sense of the term. Nature does not possess this value as such; rather, it is a value for us: *We* enjoy experiencing nature for its own sake.¹⁰

3.2. Identity

The second type of eudemonic intrinsic value in nature concerns our individual and collective identity, which tends to be rooted in the places where we live. When asked who they are, many people answer by reference to where they come from or what they have adopted as their “Wahlheimat,” be it the Black Forest, the Ruhr, the Scottish Highlands, or the Midwest. Like the desire for beauty, the need to put down roots somewhere is an anthropological constant.

Great works of art, like Marcel Proust’s *Recherche du temps perdu*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Edgar Reitz’ *Heimat-Trilogie* or Peter Kurzeck’s *Vorabend* testify to this need. In particular, refugees such as the Austrian-Jewish writer Jean Améry, “qualified homeless person,” or Peter Kurzeck, who was deported from the Sudetenland to Hessia, vouch for the value of “Heimat.” Améry answers the title question of his seminal essay “How Much Home Does a Person Need?” with: “he needs much home, more at any rate than a world of people with a homeland, whose entire pride is their cosmopolitan vacation fun, can dream of.”¹¹

¹⁰ See Martin Seel, *Eine Ästhetik der Natur* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991); Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of the Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995); Raimund Rodewald, *Sehnsucht Landschaft* (Zürich: Chronos, 1999); Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2000); Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Kurt-H. Weber, *Die literarische Landschaft* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010); and Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy* (London: Atlantic, 2012). The position developed in my paper is close to those of Martin Seel and Roger Scruton.

¹¹ Cf. Jean Améry, “Wieviel Heimat braucht der Mensch?” in Jean Améry, *Werke 2* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2002), 86-117, English: “How Much Home Does a Person Need?” in Jean Améry, *At the Mind’s Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 60. See also Hermann Lübke, “Identität durch Geschichte,” in Hermann Lübke, *Geschichtsbegriff und Geschichtsinteresse* (Basel: Schwabe, 1977), 145-154; Karen Joisten, *Philosophie der Heimat – Heimat der Philosophie* (Berlin: Akademie, 2003); and, again, Roger Scruton, *Green Philosophy* (London: Atlantic, 2012).

3.3. Sacredness

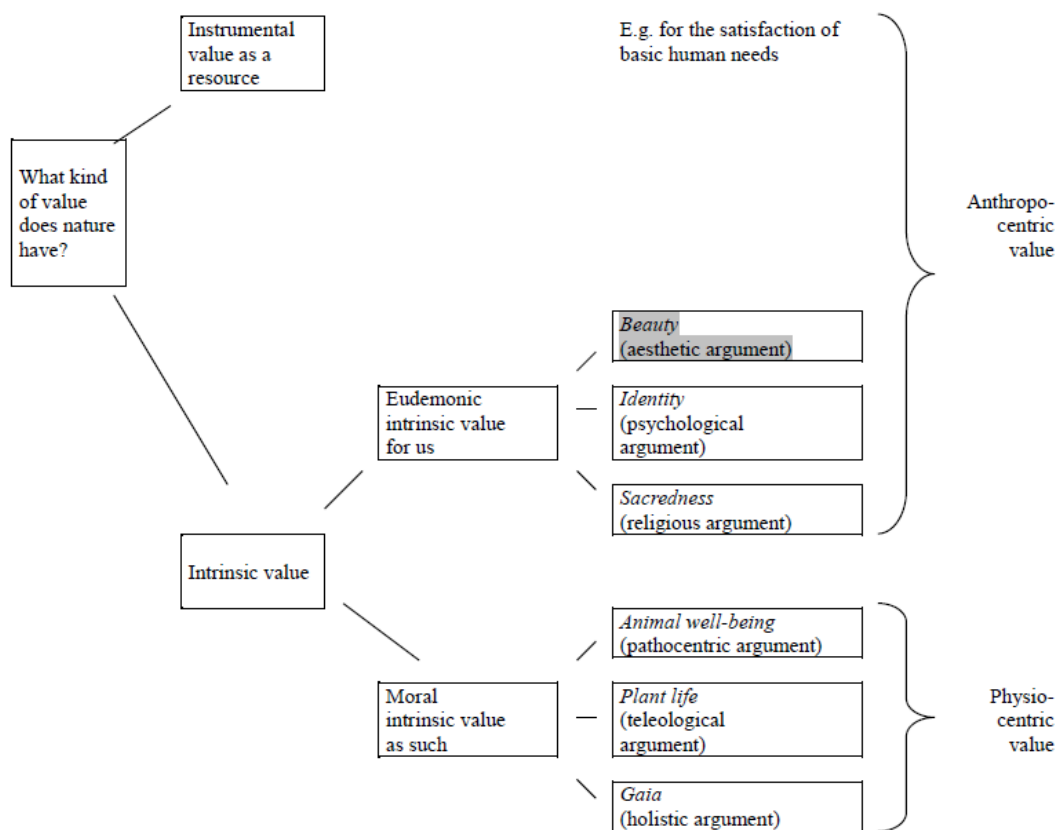
The third type of eudemonic intrinsic value in nature is a generalized version of the first one. It generalizes the aesthetic attitude towards the beautiful to an attitude towards the whole of one's life and one's world.

As the great mystics and the world's religions teach, the best attitude towards one's life takes into account the role of fate in life and does not make the meaning of life dependent on successfully achieving some fundamental ends, finding a spouse, or having a career, since one might fail to achieve these ends. In such cases, one's life would be devoid of meaning. The wise attitude towards life takes life itself as the meaning of life. The wise person reveres nature as part of life. Whoever manages to experience life as intrinsically valuable or sacred feels the true joy of living, beatitude.¹²

In table one below, you see the three classes of value in nature: first, the anthropocentric instrumental value; second, the anthropocentric eudemonic intrinsic value; and third, the physiocentric moral intrinsic value. In what follows, I will only explore what represents the center of the table: the aesthetic argument. I am not even able to address all that falls under this heading, so I will concentrate on landscapes and their beauty.

The identity argument justifies the conservation of nature where nature is in fact part of the home of people. Yet, as more and more people grow up in and live in cities and feel at home there, the identity argument becomes weaker and weaker with time. This is not the case for the aesthetic argument, which has universal power.

¹² For such a nontranscendent interpretation of the religious attitude, see Friedrich Kambartel, "Bemerkungen zu Verständnis und Wahrheit religiöser Rede und Praxis," in Friedrich Kambartel, *Philosophie der humanen Welt* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1989), 100-103; and Hans Julius Schneider, "William James and Ludwig Wittgenstein: A philosophical approach to spirituality," in *Spirituality and Counseling*, eds. Judith Moore and Campbell Purton (Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books, 2006), 50-64.



II. The concept of landscape

To clarify the concept of landscape we must first look at the concept of nature. As Aristotle already taught in his *Physics*, *nature* is that part of the world which has not been made by human beings but comes into existence and vanishes by virtue of itself. As Peter Kurzeck puts it rather pointedly: Nature is what grows by itself and what, for that very reason, is removed (“was von allein wächst, wird weggemacht”¹³). Artifacts are the opposites of nature in this sense; they are made by human beings. The distinction between nature and artifacts is polar or gradual (like the distinction between light and dark) and not binary or dichotomous (like the distinction between being pregnant and not pregnant); one cannot be a little bit pregnant but it can be more or less light or dark. There is hardly any untouched nature on earth anymore. Most of what we call nature, the conservation of which we are concerned with, lies, in fact, between the extremes of pure nature and pure artifact. It is a mix of the natural and the artificial in which the natural aspect prevails.

¹³ Peter Kurzeck, *Oktober und wer wir selbst sind* (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 2007), 41.

In nature, we can distinguish natural organisms and things (like plants and rocks) from larger natural units (like landscapes). Although most *landscapes* today are cultivated and not wild, they are not necessarily less beautiful; consider, for example, the garden-like English landscape.

There is no sharp boundary between landscapes and gardens (or parks), as again England with its landscape gardens shows. *Gardens* are, first, laid out for aesthetic enjoyment and in this respect they fall somewhere between art and nature; second, they usually surround a house and are themselves surrounded by a fence, so that they mediate between the house and the landscape.¹⁴

Landscapes are especially pertinent to the experience of natural resonance. This is because they are relatively free from human ends. Yet one can certainly also resonate

¹⁴ Cf. David Cooper, *A Philosophy of Gardens* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006). Sara Miller's *The Garden as an Art* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993) puts the emphasis on the first of the two criteria. For the history of gardens, see Marie Luise Gothein, *Geschichte der Gartenkunst* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1926); and Albert Lutz, *Gärten der Welt* (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 2016).

with nature in gardens and parks, as well as with singular organisms and natural things.¹⁵ But let us focus here on landscapes.¹⁶

To understand landscapes as larger natural units is only one of many ways of understanding them. This modest, everyday understanding (1.), which I opt for here, must be distinguished from two more demanding aesthetic ones (2. and 3.). The reason why I prefer the first understanding will emerge in the next section (III.).

1. Larger natural unit

In twelfth-century Old High German, “lantscaf” denoted a larger natural area and its population. In fifteenth-century Netherlands, the term could also refer to a painting of a larger natural unit. Art historians still talk of landscapes in these terms. Today, the boundaries of landscapes are no longer political, as they were in the beginning and as the German synonym “Gebiet” (from “gebieten” = to rule) makes explicit. As I suggest in the next section on “Stimmung,” for us it is atmosphere that constitutes the *unity* of landscapes.

¹⁵ Peter Kurzeck gives many examples of resonating with individual natural beings as well. One such example cites lime trees in summer (Peter Kurzeck, *Vorabend*, Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 2011, 867), another cites swallows in the morning: “Die Schwalben kommen nicht mehr ins Dorf. Erstens kein Platz mehr für sie. Und zwoitens – weil sie keiner mehr will. Hat niemand mehr Freude an ihnen. Sind zuletzt noch einmal gekommen und dann gleich wieder weg. Ohne Abschied weg. Und haben doch durch die Jahrhunderte mit uns gelebt. Ohne Schwalben, sagte ich, aber wer weiß das noch? Ohne Schwalben gibt es kein Glück im Haus. Überhaupt die Vögel, sagte ich. In Scharen. Bachstelzchen, Rotkehlchen, Rotschwänzchen, Meisen und Spatzen. Als Kind, sagte ich. Schon am Morgen. Was für eine Freude. Man kommt aus dem Haus und überall Leben. Alles lebendig. Alles atmet und lebt. Du bist vier oder fünf und weißt schon ganz genau, du gehörst mit zum Leben dazu. Und jetzt? Beton, Kacheln, Glastüren, Glasziegel, Preßglas, Eternit, Kunststoffe, Eisen, ein Spuk. Wie neu. Und bleibt auch wie neu. Immer frisch verputzt. Weiß, sauber, ordentlich, läßt sich gut sauber halten. Alles genormt. Grell das Lampenlicht drauf. Und die ganze Nacht ein elektrisches Surren. Die Klimaanlage. Das Licht. Die Alarmanlage. Eine Überwachungskamera. Flutlicht wie vom Mond.” (Peter Kurzeck, *Vorabend*, Frankfurt: Stroemfeld 2011, 608). In English translation: “The swallows no longer come into the village. Firstly, no longer any place for them. And secondly – because no one wants them anymore. No one takes joy in them anymore. Came once more, lately, and then immediately gone again. Without farewell gone. And still, have lived with us throughout the centuries. Without swallows, said I, but who still knows that? Without swallows there is no joy in the house. The birds, in general, said I. In flocks. White wagtails, robins, black redstarts, tits and sparrows. As a child, said I. Already in the morning. What a pleasure. One comes out of the house and everywhere life. Everything alive. Everything breathes and lives. You are four or five and already know exactly, you belong to life. And now? Concrete, tiles, glass doors, glass bricks, moulded glass, cemented asbestos, artificial materials, iron – spooky. Like new. And also stays like new. Always freshly plastered. White, clean, orderly, can easily be kept clean. Everything normed. Glaring the lamplight on it. And the whole night an electric buzz. The air conditioner. The light. The alarm system. A surveillance camera. Floodlight as if from the moon.”

¹⁶ Landscapes in the literal sense are natural landscapes. There are also landscapes in the metaphorical sense: urban landscapes, philosophical landscapes (like environmental ethics, the map of which I have drawn in the last section) and “Sofalandschaften.”

2. Larger natural unit in aesthetic contemplation

According to this aesthetic understanding, you encounter landscapes only when you attend to what is around you *for its own sake*. You do not experience landscapes when all you are looking for is recreation or research.

3. Larger natural unit in autonomous aesthetic contemplation

This even more demanding aesthetic understanding is closely associated with Joachim Ritter's well-known article on landscape aesthetics.¹⁷ For Ritter, the phenomenon of landscape begins with Petrarch's ascent of Mont Ventoux in 1336, since in this excursion and its literary reflection Petrarch attended to nature *as such* and not only to nature as the book of God. Most contemporary landscape theorists, at least in Germany, follow Ritter.¹⁸

However, it could be argued that a contemplation of landscape that has not yet emancipated itself from the religious or metaphysical worldview is also an aesthetic contemplation, albeit not a pure but a symbolic one. After all, these pre-Enlightenment people did not just see letters in the book of God but rivers, valleys and hills. Consider, for example, the locus amoenus in Plato's *Phaedrus*.¹⁹

III. The concept of "Stimmung"

This section presents "Stimmung" or atmosphere as the unifying principle of landscapes, taking up a proposal that Georg Simmel made in his classic piece on the philosophy of landscape a hundred years ago. It then documents the alarming pace of landscape destruction, for example in Germany and Switzerland after the Second World War.

¹⁷ Cf. Joachim Ritter, "Landschaft: Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft," in Joachim Ritter, *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), 141–166. See also Georg Simmel, "Philosophie der Landschaft," in Georg Simmel, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen 1909–1918* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001), 471–482, English: "The Philosophy of Landscape," *Theory, Culture and Society* 24, 2007, 20–29.

¹⁸ E.g. Martin Seel, *Eine Ästhetik der Natur* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 221; or Thomas Kirchhoff and Ludwig Trepl, *Vieldeutige Natur* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009).

¹⁹ On the appreciation of landscape in antiquity, see Winfried Elliger, *Die Darstellung der Landschaft in der griechischen Dichtung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975).

The German word “Stimmung” (from Old High German “stimma” = voice) is untranslatable (arguably more untranslatable than “Heimat” where being at home at least comes close). “Stimmung” embraces three phenomena while its English and French counterparts (“mood,” “attunement,” “ambiance,” “atmosphere,” “humeur,” “état d’âme,” “accord,” etc.) usually embrace only one or two. The three phenomena are harmony, mood, and atmosphere.²⁰

1. Harmony

Being in tune or in harmony is the original sixteenth century meaning of “Stimmung.” Musical instruments were said to be in tune or integrated and ready to be played, and later, in the eighteenth century, the same was said about the faculties of the human soul. Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* famously talks about the harmony (“proportionierte Stimmung”) of the faculties of imagination and understanding (“Einbildungskraft und Verstand”) in aesthetic contemplation.

2. Mood

Moods belong to the sphere of mental human feeling; they are not just *bodily* feelings such as toothache, nausea or fatigue, although they are sometimes regarded as that. In contrast to standard mental feelings or *emotions* (rage, sorrow or joy), which are directed at something or other in particular, moods (sadness or cheerfulness) have no specific objects, but are rather about life and the world at large. Moods integrate us. The musical metaphor of “Stimmung” as introduced in the last paragraph highlights the holistic character of moods. Moods synthesize what we feel into a more or less harmonious whole. They ensure that we hang together affectively and don’t fall to pieces. Nevertheless, there are times when we do fall to pieces, and in this sense, we are not always in a mood. Given their integrating function, moods can be regarded as the affective counterparts to reason. Just as reason overcomes the one-sidedness and often tyranny of particular standards of rationality (e.g. instrumental or moral rationality) and goes for an “all things considered” holistic judgement, moods may

²⁰ Cf. Leo Spitzer, *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony: Prolegomena to an Interpretation of the Word “Stimmung”* (Baltimore: John Hopkins, 1963); David Wellbery, “Stimmung,” in *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe 5*, ed. Karlheinz Buck et al. (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 703-733; Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, *Stimmungen lesen* (München: Hanser, 2011), English: *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), chapter one; and Friederike Reents, *Stimmungsethik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015), especially 13-16.

overcome the restricted agenda and often dominance of particular emotions and establish a balanced affective synthesis.

As with emotions, there are two major kinds of moods: transitory (as in “moody”) and enduring. Unlike the connotation of “mood” in English, which privileges the first kind, “Stimmung” is wider and refers equally to the second kind. The so-called “Grundstimmungen” are longer lasting and more reliable or world-disclosing than the short-term and capricious “Launen.”

Apart from their integrating function, which is central to our topic, moods also differ from emotions in many other ways. Table two below contrasts moods with typical acute emotions. The table employs eight characteristics; besides intentionality and cause, these are duration, intensity, dynamics, mode of awareness, influence on cognition and link to behavior. It is intended as a fairly uncontroversial survey of how the philosophical and psychological mainstream as well as ordinary language generally perceive the contrasts.²¹

With regard to their *duration*, both transitory and enduring moods tend to last longer than acute emotions; with regard to their *intensity*, all moods tend to be milder; with regard to their *dynamics*, they tend to be more stationary; with regard to the *mode of awareness*, they tend to linger in the background; with regard to their *influence on cognition*, they tend to color all we perceive and think; and with regard to their *link to behavior*, they tend to be only indirectly motivating.

²¹ For philosophical treatises, see Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995); Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chapter seven; Matthew Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); as well as the special issue of *Philosophia: The Meaning of Moods*, 2017, eds. Angelika Krebs and Aaron Ben-Ze'ev. For a psychological survey, see Christopher Breddie, Peter Terry and Andrew Lane, “Distinctions between mood and emotion,” *Cognition and Consciousness* 19, 2005, 847-874. Affective disorders orders such as clinical depression, paranoia and schizophrenia seem to stand between emotions and moods in many respects.

Typical characteristics	Emotions <i>(anger, sexual desire etc.)</i>	Moods <i>(happiness, sadness etc.)</i>
1. Intentionality: <i>What are they about?</i>	<i>Something specific</i>	<i>Life and the world at large</i>
2. Cause: <i>What induces them?</i>	<i>Specific events</i>	<i>Cause is less well defined</i>
3. Duration: <i>How long do they last?</i>	<i>Seconds, minutes, hours or days (for acute emotions) – weeks, months or years (for enduring emotions)</i>	<i>Hours or days (for transitory moods) – weeks, months or years (for enduring moods)</i>
4. Intensity: <i>How strong is the feeling?</i>	<i>Intense (at least for acute emotions)</i>	<i>Milder, more moderate than in emotions</i>
5. Dynamics: <i>What motion do they have?</i>	<i>Dynamic (at least for acute emotions)</i>	<i>Stationary, a kind of equilibrium</i>
6. Mode of awareness: <i>Are they felt in the foreground or in the background?</i>	<i>In the foreground (at least for acute emotions)</i>	<i>In the background</i>
7. Influence on cognition: <i>How much do they color what we see and think?</i>	<i>Limited effect</i>	<i>Pervasive effect (“mood congruence”)</i>
8. Link to behavior: <i>How motivating are they?</i>	<i>Directly motivating</i>	<i>Indirect, loose link to behavior</i>

In light of the eight characteristics noted here, we can regard acute emotions as eruptive peaks on a continuum of moods. Both emotions and moods can be classified as positive/pleasant or negative/unpleasant. Moods in particular are often described as

high or low, full or empty, deep or shallow, centrifugal or centripetal, calm or tense, energetic or tired. Needless to say, there are many transitions between moods and emotions. A general irritation, for example, can turn into a specific anger and vice versa.

Moods and emotions are directed towards the world. When they are inverted – that is, sought for and enjoyed for their own sake – they can degenerate into states such as *kitsch* and *sentimentality* in which an element of dishonesty or even deceit facilitates easy gratification.²²

Moods and emotions can be *shared* among human beings. Such inter-human or collective affects, be they the result of infection as in mass panic, or of true – that is, sympathetic or dialogical – sharing, are also called collective “atmospheres.”²³ In addition to such inter-human atmospheres, there are also nonhuman atmospheres (which in turn can be shared by us via infection or sympathy, as will be explored later in section V.).

3. Atmosphere

When nonhuman entities such as landscapes, cities, buildings or rooms are said to have aura or atmosphere, they are regarded not only as integrated wholes (as in 1.) but also as full of feeling, e.g. as full of peace or melancholy (as in 2.). The atmospheres of landscapes change with the weather, the time of day and the season. These transitory atmospheres can be distinguished from the more enduring atmosphere, *gestalt* or *character* of landscapes. The character of landscapes depends on their physiognomy, climate and history. Both the enduring and the transitory atmospheres of landscapes are not merely subjective phenomena, even if subjective factors like personal memories and personal moods also play a role in actual landscape experience.²⁴

²² See, besides Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), 49-54: Michael Tanner, “Sentimentality,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 77, 1976/77, 127-147; and Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 485-488, as well as “A Point of View: The Strangely Enduring Power of Kitsch,” *BBC News*, 2014 (online).

²³ Cf. Angelika Krebs, *Zwischen Ich und Du* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2015), which uses insights from the debate on joint action (the main protagonists of which are Margaret Gilbert, John Searle and Michael Bratman) in order to further the understanding affective sharing.

²⁴ See Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Mensch und Raum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), English: *Human Space* (London: Hyphen Press, 2011); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980); Marc Augé, *Non-Lieux* (Le Seuil: Librairie du XXe siècle, 1992), English: *Non-Places* (London:

Landscape character is the *principle of unity* behind the first, modest concept of landscape in section II. As not all experiences of atmospheric larger natural units are aesthetic rather than hedonistic or scientific, the two more demanding, aesthetic concepts of landscape in section II. do indeed seem too narrow.

Where a large natural area loses its character through a natural catastrophe or human destruction, it lacks the unity necessary for being a landscape. It turns into an expressionless *heterogeneity*, into a non-place or landscape garbage. It does not turn into an ugly “landscape.” Ugly landscapes are the opposites of aesthetically attractive and, in this broad sense, beautiful landscapes.

Not every landscape change amounts to landscape destruction. The change can also be for the good. The Golden Gate Bridge, which spans the Golden Gate Strait between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean, might be an example of the latter. Still, much of what goes on around us does amount to landscape destruction.

A scientific study that documents this is Klaus Ewald’s and Gregor Klaus’s 2009 monumental geographical work on the changing Swiss countryside, *Die ausgewechselte Landschaft*. The photographs on the back cover of this book indicate what Switzerland, which once was so beautiful, looks like in many places today: leveled, plot aligned, drained, regulated, hypertrophied, devoid of species diversity, obstructed, destroyed by urban sprawl, illuminated, cut open, channeled, covered in artificial snow, over-travelled, and wired.²⁵

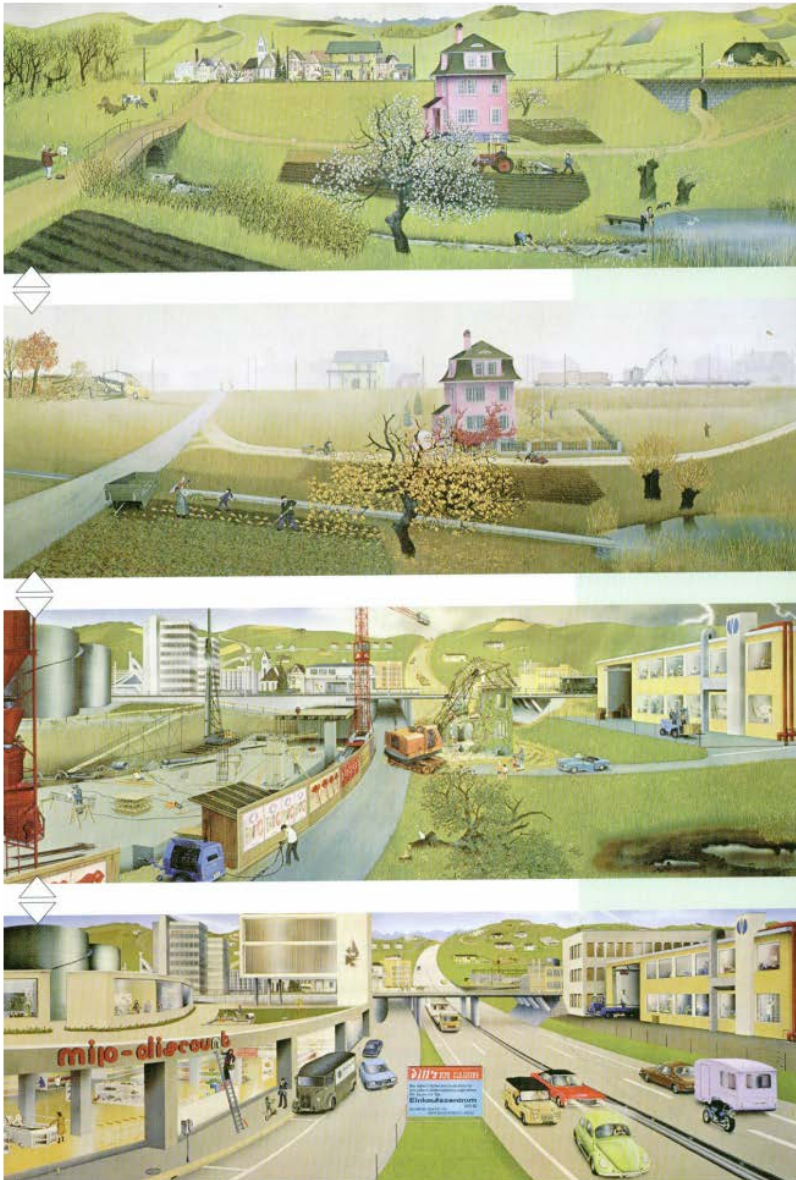
An artistic exemplification of landscape destruction is Jörg Müller’s set of pictures, *Alle Jahre wieder saust der Presslufthammer nieder* (“Every year the jackhammer’s pounding returns”).²⁶ Below are four of the seven pictures in this series.

Verso, 1995); Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995); Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Hermann Schmitz, *Der Leib, der Raum und die Gefühle* (Ostfeldern: arcaden, 1998); and Thomas Fuchs, *Leib, Raum, Person* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2000).

²⁵ Cf. Klaus Ewald and Gregor Klaus, *Die ausgewechselte Landschaft: Vom Umgang der Schweiz mit ihrer wichtigsten natürlichen Ressource* (Bern: Haupt, 2009).

²⁶ Cf. Jörg Müller, *Alle Jahre wieder saust der Presslufthammer nieder* (Aarau: Sauerländer, 1973).

The changing countryside



These pictures show a typical Swiss countryside and how it changed between the years 1953 and 1972. Can you guess what season it is in the various pictures?

In the first picture it is obviously springtime, the fruit tree in the middle of the picture is in full bloom; in the second picture it is autumn, the tree's leaves are yellow. But what about the season in the last picture? It is difficult to tell, isn't it? For nothing much remains of nature. The trees, meadows and fields are gone, the cows are gone, as are the brook and the pond. All that remains is the grass. And grass is green all year

round. As it happens, it is autumn, the mini-tree planted on the roof of the discount store has yellow leaves.

To complement the education of the eyes with some education of the ears, I would have liked to play to you now, if only I could, two passages from Peter Kurzeck's audio book *Ein Sommer, der bleibt* ("A summer that lasts"). In these passages Kurzeck talks freely, not reading from a manuscript, and describes how the valley of his youth, near the Hessian village Staufenberg, was destroyed by the construction of a motorway.

The first passage, "The valley that disappeared," gives a picture of the valley. It is beautiful, you feel at home in it. You can walk around, look around and just be there for its own sake. The second passage, "The motorway," shows the loss. There is nothing to see in the valley anymore. You can no longer walk there. You can only drive. You can't stay there because of the all-embracing noise; there is a permanent roaring. This is no longer a world for people. It is a world for cars. Here are the two passages, first in a German transcript and then in English translation:

Das verschwundene Tal

Der Weg zur Lahn ging durch ein sehr schönes Tal. Er war am, am Westabhang des Berges, da standen schon keine Häuser mehr. Also das Dorf eigentlich erstreckte sich nach Süden hin – nach Süden und Südosten. Und an diesem West- oder Nordwestabhang waren eigentlich nur noch – erst noch Gärten – und dann war eine Wildnis und dazwischen gingen ein paar Treppengässchen den Berg herunter. Und, äh, das Land war mit / also die Erde war mit, mit Mauern eigentlich wurde die gehalten, also terrassenförmig angelegt. Mit alten Feldsteinmauern, die zum Teil lose aufgeschichtet waren und zum Teil eben grob gemauert. Da gingen ein paar Treppengässchen runter, dann konnte man auf die Straße nach Odenhausen kommen, und es gab sehr, sehr schöne Wegraine eigentlich und große Hecken und Erlengehölze und, und überall floss dann im Frühling noch Wasser – also kleine Bächlein, die im Lauf des Sommers versiegten.

Das ganze Tal, das nach Westen ging, das war wie, wie ein altes Bild eigentlich, wie, wie der Hintergrund eines Heiligenbildes oder so. Es war voller Gärten und Wassergräben und Fischteichen vom Dorf bis an die Chaussee. Und jenseits der Chaussee waren dann Wiesen und Felder bis zu den, bis zum Bahndamm, der, äh, zugleich eine Art Deich war, gegen / aber weiter kam das Hochwasser dann eben nicht. Und dieses ganze Tal ist jetzt mittlerweile zugebaut. Es ist eigentlich total eingenommen von einer Autobahn und einer Autobahnabfahrt. Man merkt dann erst wie riesig, also wie viel Platz so eine Autobahn braucht. Und vor allem auch eine Abfahrt oder eine Autobahnkreuzung geht weit ins Land rein eigentlich – es ist überhaupt nichts mehr übrig. So lang, so lang es das Tal gab und so lang ich in Staufenberg wohnte, bin ich jeden Tag wenigstens einmal dort gegangen, weil da am Nachmittag und am Abend auch das Licht am schönsten ist. Man sieht dann die Berge und Wälder im Westen, hinter denen die Sonne untergeht. Und im Frühsommer geht sie weit im Norden unter und bei einer bestimmten Lichtkonstellation kann man das Rothaargebirge sehen, das man eigentlich nicht sieht von Staufenberg aus.

Die Autobahn

Und als ich dort weg bin, das heißt 1977, da war es so, dass man / dass ein großer Teil der Stadtautobahn des Gießener Rings schon fertig war. Und der sollte ja neue Anschlüsse zu neuen Autobahnen auch gleichzeitig bieten. Das heißt, man hat überall Schnellstraßen und Autobahnen und Autobahnstücke schon gebaut und das Tal, das zur Lahn hin ging, von dem ich sprach, dieses Tal war noch da, aber man wusste, es sind seine letzten Tage, man muss jeden Abend da gehen um es, um es nochmal zu sehen. Um zu sehen, wie die Wassergräben zwischen den Flüchtlingsgärten leuchten, Wassergräben zur Bewässerung, die voller Blutegel waren, und die Fischteiche und die Brunnen, die es da alle gab. Brunnen mit schönen Dächern, zum Teil sogar mit gewölbten Steindächern.

Und als wir wegzogen, da war es so, dass die Autobahn gebaut wurde, also dieses Teilstück der Autobahn direkt unterhalb von Staufenberg, das das ganze Tal ausfüllt und seither hört man unentwegt Tag und Nacht im Dorf die (...) / den Lärm von der Autobahn. Also ein ständiges Rauschen, das man im ganzen Dorf hört. Stille gibt es eigentlich nicht mehr. Man kann mittlerweile das Dorf nicht mehr / also man, man kann nicht mehr nach Westen aus dem Dorf gehen, ohne dass man, dass man dazu verurteilt ist unter der Autobahn irgendwie durchzukriechen eigentlich. Wenn man nach Lollar geht, dann überquert man die Autobahn. Da ist ein Stück Horizont abgegraben. Das heißt, wenn man ein Gedächtnis hat – was einem ja abgewöhnt werden soll – wenn man ein Gedächtnis hat, dann hat man den Eindruck, da fehlt ein Stück, ein Stück von der Erde. Und man muss diese Autobahn überqueren, es gibt auch nichts mehr zu sehen eigentlich. Wege (...), die zu meinen Kindheitswegen gehörten wie der zum Daublinger Bahnhof, wo man wusste, man geht jetzt durch Kornfelder, sieht kleine Wäldchen. Und wenn man morgens geht, weil man ja in die Schule fahren muss mit dem Zug, dann sieht man überall Rehe. Und jetzt ist da ja überhaupt nichts mehr – da ist zwischen den Dörfern kein Land übrig geblieben. Und eigentlich wirklich gut und in Ruhe kann man aus dem Dorf raus nur noch nach Nordosten gehen. Das ist der Weg zum Friedhof und zugleich der Weg, der zu dem entfernteren Wald führt. Zu dem großen Wald, von dem wir in den ersten Jahren nach dem Krieg gelebt haben, alle Flüchtlinge eigentlich. Und mittlerweile fahren die Leute mit Autos an diesen Waldrand, zum Joggen. Das heißt, sie gehen nicht dahin oder so, sondern sie fahren mit dem Auto an den Waldrand, joggen und fahren dann mit dem Auto zurück und gucken, ob sie's noch zum Fernsehen für die Vorabendkrimiserien schaffen. Und der ganze Gießener Ring, diese Stadtautobahn geht eigentlich auf die Vorabendkrimiserien zurück, weil die Leute die ganzen Fünfziger- und Sechzigerjahre hindurch im Fernsehen diese Serien gesehen haben, in denen es Stadtautobahnen gibt – also amerikanische Serien – und dann haben sie diese Stadtautobahnen gebaut. Und ich glaube in, in den Köpfen, in ihren eigenen Köpfen spielen die Leute jetzt diese Vorabendserien nach. Man weiß nur nie, welche Rolle einer hat, entweder ist er auf der Flucht – jahrelang schon auf der Flucht – oder er nimmt jedes Mal, wenn er ins Auto steigt, wieder die Verfolgung auf oder plant umsichtig, äh, einen Amoklauf.

The valley that disappeared

The path towards the Lahn went through a beautiful valley. It led along... along the western slope of the mountain; there were already no houses anymore. Well the village, actually, extended to the south – to south and southeast. And along this western or northwestern slope there were really only – at first only gardens – and then there was a wilderness, and in between a few narrow stairways leading down the mountain. And, er, the land was... well, the earth was held... was held in place with walls, laid out terraced. With old stone walls that were sometimes held together by crude masonry and other times loosely stacked. There, a few stairways lead downwards, from which one could reach the road to Odenhausen, and there were very, very beautiful waysides, really, and large shrubs and alder groves and... and, in spring, water would flow everywhere – small streams that would dry up during the course of summer.

The entire valley with its westward leaning, it was like... like an old painting, really, like... like the background for a picture of a saint or something like that. It was full of gardens and moats and fish ponds, reaching from the village all the way to the chaussee. And then, beyond the chaussee, there were fields and meadows up to the... to the embankment that, er, was also a sort of dike against... / ... but stopped the high water from getting any further. And meanwhile, this entire valley is spoilt by development. It is, in fact, completely dominated by a motorway and its exit. Only then does one begin to realize how huge... that is, how much space such a motorway requires. And especially exits or highway crossings, they reach so far into the countryside, really – there is absolutely nothing left. As long... as long as there was still a valley, and as long as I have lived in Staufenberg, I went there at least once every day, because, during the afternoon and also the evening, the light is at its most beautiful there. One can then see the mountains and forests towards the west, behind which the sun sets. And, in early summer, the sun sets so far in the

north and, during a particular constellation of light, one can see the Rothaar Mountains, which normally can't be seen from Staufenberg.

The motorway

And when I left, that is 1977, it was... one had... / a substantial part of the motorway of the Gießener ring road had already been completed. And it was also meant to allow new connections to new motorways. This means that they had already built express roads, and highways, and highway segments everywhere, and the valley that lead towards the Lahn, of which I have spoken, that valley was still there, but one knew that it was in its last remaining days, one has to go there every evening in order... in order to see it one more time. In order to see how the ditches shine between the gardens of the refugees, ditches for watering that were full of leeches, and the fish ponds and the wells that were all there. Wells with nice roofs, sometimes even with arched stone roofs.

And when we moved away, the motorway was being built... well, this fragment of the motorway directly below Staufenberg that fills the entire valley, and ever since, in the village, one constantly hears, day and night, the (...) / the noise from the motorway. That is to say a perpetual buzz that can be heard across the village. There isn't really any silence anymore. Meanwhile, one can no longer / well, one... one can't leave the village to the west anymore without one... one being condemned, really, to somehow crawl under the motorway. If one goes to Lollar, then one crosses the motorway. A piece of horizon has been dug away there. That is to say that, if one has a memory – though they would have us unlearn it – if one has a memory, then one gets the impression that there's a piece missing there, a piece of earth. And one has to cross this motorway, there is also nothing, really, to be seen. Paths (...) that belonged to the routes of my childhood, like the one to the Daublinger train station, where one knew one will now walk through the corn fields, see small woods. And when one leaves in the mornings because, after all, one has to take the train to school, then one sees deer everywhere. And now, there is

absolutely nothing there anymore – there is no land left between the villages. And, in fact, the only way to leave the village nicely and peacefully is to the northeast. That is the path to the graveyard and also the path that leads to the more distant forest. To the big forest, off which we lived during the first years after the war, all refugees, really. And nowadays, people drive to this forest with cars to go jogging. That is to say, they don't go there or anything like that, but they drive to the edge of the woods by car, jog, and then drive back by car while thinking about whether they can make it to the television in time for the early evening crime series. And the entire Gießener ring road, this motorway, really boils down to the early evening crime series, because, throughout the fifties and sixties, the people were watching these series, in which there are motorways – that is to say, American series – and later they built these motorways. And I think that in... in the heads... in their own heads these people are now imitating these early evening series. Only one never knows which role someone has; maybe he is on the run – for years already on the run – or he takes up the chase again every time he steps into the car, or he carefully makes plans for, er, running amok.²⁷

The first passage begins like a fairy tale that you would tell a child: “The path towards the Lahn went through a beautiful valley.” The language is as simple as can be: “path,” “beautiful,” “valley”, “village,” “mountain,” “forest.” Nevertheless, the valley unfolds in great detail before our eyes, with its little terraces in the evening light, with its creeks and ditches.

But when the motorway comes and occupies the valley like a foreign army, there is no walking anymore; it is only to the graveyard that you can still walk like a human being. In the other directions, you have to crawl like a beast. The space taken by the motorway in the valley is reflected in the space it occupies in the language, spreading like a disease in terms such as “express roads,” “highway sections,” “motorway junctions,” “exits,” “Gießener ring road.” The noise produced by the motorway is also echoed in the language: “a permanent buzz that can be heard across the village. There isn't really any silence anymore.” This external and internal conquest is not merely reported by Kurzeck, it is rather that we can feel it directly as we listen to his voice.

²⁷ Peter Kurzeck, *Ein Sommer, der bleibt* (Berlin: supposé, 2007), CD 2, passages 5 and 8.

How and why a world for people, however impoverished, was transformed into a world for cars is hinted at, in ironical exaggeration, towards the end of the second passage, where Kurzeck indicates how the early evening crime series brought the American way of life into the back rooms of even the remotest postwar German villages.²⁸

IV. How is “Stimmung” infused into landscape?

Unlike human beings and many (other) animals, landscapes cannot feel anything in the literal sense. They do not have nervous systems. Nevertheless, we attribute moods such as peacefulness and melancholy to landscapes. (To a lesser degree, we also attribute bodily feelings, emotions, thoughts, and actions to landscapes.) The same holds for architectural units, for rooms, buildings, streets, neighborhoods and cities. It seems to hold also for artworks. Paintings, symphonies, poems and theatre plays all have their moods. They *express* them and do not merely, if they are both representational and expressive, *represent* them. Artworks and buildings – like landscapes – cannot feel anything in the literal sense. Why then do we attribute moods to them? On what basis? With what right? To repeat the question in Georg Simmel’s terms: “to what extent can the mood of a landscape be located within it, objectively, given that it is a mental state, and can thus reside alone in the emotional reflexes of the beholder and not in the unconscious external objects?”²⁹

²⁸ Kurzeck’s early novel *Kein Frühling* (“No Spring”) (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 1987) paints a realistic picture of the impoverished world for people in the German countryside before modernisation. As Kurzeck explains in the first chapter, he wanted neither romanticism nor mere stocktaking: “Daß uns die verlorene Zeit nur nicht nachträglich noch zur Idylle mißbrät und die Gegenwart, das Leben in der Mehrzahl bliebe eine Angelegenheit für Statistiker.” In English: “The lost time must not take on a nostalgic air in retrospect, and the present time, pluralistic as it is, must not degenerate into a merely statistical affair.” (10)

No other work by Kurzeck brings out landscape destruction as well as *Vorabend* (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 2011). In chapter 42 (703-717), there is a particularly rich passage in which Kurzeck claims that we should not have given up the earth (“Wir hätten die Erde nicht aufgeben sollen,” 712) and asks how we can ever come to terms with the fact that something was good and then is not good anymore, that something was right before and then is made wrong. Also his posthumously published novel fragment *Bis er kommt* (“Until he comes”) (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 2015) leaves us in no doubt about Kurzeck’s environmentalist position. If we are lucky, he writes on page 256, there will soon be no cars anymore and the highways will grow over in front of our eyes. For literary studies on Kurzeck’s oeuvre, see *Text und Kritik* 199, 2013: Peter Kurzeck; and Christoph Riedel, *Peter Kurzecks Erzählkosmos: Idylle – Romantik – Blues* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2017).

²⁹ Georg Simmel, “The Philosophy of Landscape,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 24, 2007, 26-27.

There are many philosophical responses to this question, including that the question is misconceived. It is advisable to start with this last response before looking at four major explanations of how landscapes “acquire” moods: the projective, the causal, the associative, and the metaphorical models.

Phenomenologists such as Martin Heidegger, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Hermann Schmitz, and Gernot Böhme maintain that asking how “Stimmung” is infused into landscape is the wrong question to ask. “Stimmung” is already out there. When we move in landscapes we enter their “Stimmungen”; the phenomenon of “Stimmung” lies before the divide between subject and world. Here is a quote from Otto Friedrich Bollnow’s classic *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* from 1941:

In “Stimmung,” the world has not yet become an object, as it does afterwards in the later forms of consciousness, especially in knowing; rather, “Stimmungen” still live entirely in the unseparated unity of self and world, with a shared colouring of “Stimmung” pervading both. That is why it is also wrong to assign “Stimmung” solely to the subjective side and to assume that it then, in a sense, rubs off on the world.

Likewise, it is also not a belated, merely simile-like transfer, but a direct and originally apt characterization when one also ascribes a specific “Stimmung” to a landscape (particularly under certain atmospheric conditions) or a living space, or when one describes, in an emphatic manner, a visual representation of a landscape as an evening or moonlight “Stimmung.” One does not then, in a manner of speaking, ascribe a soul to the landscape; one is thinking, rather, of their shared permeation by the specific content of a “Stimmung,” which encompasses the human and the world together. “Stimmung” therefore does not belong to the isolated “inner life” of human beings; instead, human beings are included into the whole of the landscape, which in turn is not something that exists separately, but is rather related back to human beings in a particular way.³⁰

³⁰ Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Das Wesen der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1995), 39–40. It is strange that Bollnow’s classic has not been translated into English yet. For a translation of two

This might seem a tempting explanation, but can it really apply to *adult* human beings who experience “Stimmungen”? Can adults not, do they not, *differentiate* between themselves and the world when they feel, for example, sad in a cheerful crowd, an amusing theatre play, a homely street, or a bright landscape? It seems they can and do. To be sure, when sad they might find it difficult to be open to the incongruous positive atmosphere around them. As with strong emotions, moods also have this tendency to spill over, to rub off on their surroundings. Their lack of exact fit is a price we have to pay for their immediacy. Throughout our lives, we work on improving this fit through “sentimental education.” Despite this somewhat irrational tendency in our moods and emotions, we can and do distinguish between them and the state of our surroundings.

It therefore seems that Otto Friedrich Bollnow has too primitive an idea of “Stimmungen.” What he says about the undivided unity between self and world may hold for babies and for some animals, but it does not seem apposite for adults.³¹ Human beings may indeed begin their lives with what Sigmund Freud called the “oceanic feeling of being one with the universe” and what Max Scheler and Maurice Merleau-Ponty referred to as “identification” or “pre-communication.”³² However, this primary unity must be distinguished from the differentiated unity that later develops upon its basis and that characterizes adult moods. While babies might just *find* themselves at home in or at one with the world, adults must open up to the atmosphere around them and *make* themselves at home. For adults, the issue of how moods permeate landscapes, buildings or artworks and how we respond to them remains a question.

central chapters of his book, see *Philosophy of Emotions*, eds. Aaron Ben-Ze'ev and Angelika Krebs (London: Routledge, 2017).

³¹ It does not seem to hold for some animals either. As Robert C. Roberts warns in “The Sophistication of Non-Human Emotion,” in *The Philosophy of Animal Minds*, ed. Robert W. Lurz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 218-236, we should not underestimate the complexity of animal emotion. Many animals are capable of other-regarding emotions like compassion, which presuppose the distinction between self and other. – To be fair to Bollnow, it must be noted that in later chapters of his book he tries to bring together the moods we undergo passively with the more refined attitudes (“Haltungen”) that we actively adopt. Still, he does not confront what this means for the initially postulated undivided unity between self and world in “Stimmung.”

³² Cf. Peter Goldie, “Freud and the Oceanic Feeling,” in: *Religious Emotions*, eds. Willem Lemmens and Walter Van Herck (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 219-229; Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1999), English: *The Nature of Sympathy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Child’s Relations with Others,” in: *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, eds. Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007), 143-183.

The transition from primary unity to adult self-world differentiation is gradual. As the psychiatrist Ulrich Gebhard reports in his 1994 study *Kind und Natur*,³³ small children perceive both the natural and the artificial world around them according to themselves and their current states. At ages 6 to 7, a child still believes everything to have consciousness. At around the age of 8, this is limited to moving things; at around 11 it applies only to moving things; and finally at age 12 only to animals. Gebhard quotes children's phrases like "The sun shines because she is kind," "The table is bad because he pushed me," "The clouds want to make it rain," "The rubber ball bounces off the wall and wants to be caught, while the wooden ball is too stupid for that."

Gebhard, in fact, believes that such *child-like animism* never fully leaves us. According to him, adults still "feed off" of these past experiences of unity; borders that are too rigid are damaging; when we reach old age, we often become like children again. As he sees it, our enlightened scientific worldview manages to conceal the magical with only a flimsy layer.

As against Gebhard, I fear that we cannot have it both ways. We cannot both be scientifically literate and realize that landscapes are nonsentient and yet believe that they are somehow sentient nevertheless. I thus conclude that we have to confront the question of how "Stimmung" is infused into landscape. Let us now turn to four major answers to this question.

1. Projective model

This model harks back to our childhood, too. It differs from the preceding one in that first, it fully acknowledges the legitimacy of the question and, second, employs another psychological mechanism to account for moods in landscapes: projection instead of complete or partial unity.

Peter Kurzeck gives a nice example of projection. When his little daughter Carina did not want to go to sleep although her parents had asked her to, she used to tell them that she herself would be happy to go to bed, but her teddy bear was not because it still

³³ Cf. Ulrich Gebhard, *Kind und Natur* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994).

needed to hear all about their day. Carina projected her own eagerness to stay up onto the teddy bear, so that she would not have to be responsible for it.

Richard Wollheim has worked out the projective model in some detail.³⁴ For him, the mechanism of projection lies at the heart of the phenomenon of expression both in art and landscape. While we find expression in landscapes, in art it is created by the artists.

As Wollheim explains, projection is an internal act that we carry out under instinctual guidance, when we are either in a mental state that we value (like love or curiosity) and that we see as under threat, or in a state that we dread (like cruelty or melancholy) and by which we find ourselves threatened. Anxiety alerts us to this situation and projection alters it, bringing us some relief from this anxiety. At the beginning of life, projection occurs in a totally haphazard fashion. Only later does it become more orderly and the parts of the environment upon which features are projected are selected because of their affinity to these feelings. In consequence, these parts of the environment are experienced as of a piece with these feelings.

Wollheim understands landscape atmospheres as *complex projective properties*. We identify them through experiences that we have; in this regard they are like secondary properties, such as colors, which would not exist if no one was there to see them. But projective properties differ from such secondary properties in being not only perceptual but also *affective*, with the affection directed not merely towards what is in front of one but also towards some older and more dominant object. The experience intimates or reveals a *history*, sometimes its own, usually only the kind of projective history of how it might have arisen.

Simple projection projects an unwelcome psychological property onto another figure with psychology, thereby changing primarily the beliefs about this figure, whereas *complex* projection projects an unwelcome psychological property onto an environment without psychology, thereby changing primarily our attitude and not our beliefs. Furthermore, the property itself is changed; the peaceful character of the

³⁴ Cf. Richard Wollheim, "Correspondence, Projective Properties, and Expression in the Arts," in Richard Wollheim, *The Mind and its Depths* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 144-158.

landscape is experienced not as a state of mind that inheres in the landscape irrespective of ourselves, but as continuous with our own peacefulness, *as of a piece with it*.

This is an ingenious proposal. Yet again it seems to be too much driven by childhood needs, and negative ones for that matter, being too concerned with child-like anxiety and its relief, to do justice to the more rational and differentiated quality of adult moods and their experience of landscape atmospheres.

2. Causal Model

According to this much more straightforward model, a peaceful landscape only makes *us* feel peaceful. The landscape is not really peaceful itself. To call it peaceful is a loose manner of speaking, attributing back to it the feeling it has triggered in us.

That landscapes have causal effects on us is beyond doubt. Johann Wolfgang Goethe, in his theory of colors for example, explored the psychological effects of colors, such as the soothing impact of the color green. Today, such causal effects are systematically used in light therapy against winter depression.

3. Associative Model

This is another uncomplicated and popular model. It explains the peacefulness of a landscape by its power to make us think of something peaceful, for example because it resembles something (like the face of a Saint Bernhard dog resembles a sad human face). But, again, the landscape is not really peaceful itself.³⁵

The problem with both models, the causal as well as the associative, is that they fail to capture that the peaceful feeling is intimately related to the landscape. How the landscape looks, sounds or smells is integral to a full description of the feeling. Contrast this with a bottle of wine that makes you cheerful and reminds you of the good old days. To describe your cheerfulness you do not need to talk about how the wine tastes. The peacefulness is *in* the landscape, whereas the cheerfulness is not in

³⁵ On resemblance, see Peter Kivy's contour theory in Peter Kivy, *The Corded Shell* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), chapter eight.

the wine. Causal effects and associations are too external to account for the “within-ness” or integrality of moods in landscapes.

4. Metaphorical Model

According to this last model, landscapes can indeed be peaceful in themselves, but not in the literal sense. In recent aesthetics, Nelson Goodman, Jerrold Levinson and Roger Scruton explicated this model for the arts.³⁶ In music, for example, Roger Scruton distinguishes three levels: the primary and physical level of *vibrations in the air*; the secondary and phenomenal level of heard *sounds*, “audibilia” that the deaf person cannot hear; and the tertiary and musical level of *tones* heard in the sounds. To hear tones in music moving up and down, attracting and repelling each other, striving forward and lingering, crying out and comforting is to hear sounds through the metaphor of human life, of human movement in space, of human action and feeling. A metaphor is the deliberative application of a term or phrase to something that is known *not* to exemplify it, e.g. when Monday is called a blue day. By fusing dissimilar things, the thing’s aspect is changed, so that one responds to it in a different way. Hearing music, experiencing its moods, is metaphorical hearing. It is hearing with *double intentionality*, hearing *both* sounds and tones by hearing tones *in* sounds.

Following on from this understanding, landscape atmospheres can be understood as *tertiary aspects* like moods in music. Landscape atmospheres are as real as their colors and sounds on the secondary level, which in turn are as real as the light waves and the air vibrations on the primary level. As Roger Scruton puts it:

Because we are subjects the world looks back at us with a questioning regard, and we respond by organizing and conceptualizing it in other ways than those endorsed by science. The world as we live it is not the world as science

³⁶ Cf. Nelson Goodman, “How Buildings Mean,” in *Reconceptions in Philosophy and Other Arts and Sciences*, eds. Nelson Goodman and Catherine Elgin (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), 31-48; Jerrold Levinson, *Music, Art, and Metaphysics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); and Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). – For a good survey of the large variety of affective responses to music, see Jenefer Robinson, “Emotional Responses to Music: What Are They? How Do They Work? And Are They Relevant to Aesthetic Appreciation?” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 651-680. Robinson regards moods as non-intentional. Therefore she believes that music arouses moods primarily via contagion (“Jazzercise effect”), which corresponds to our causal model.

explains it, any more than the smile of the Mona Lisa is a smear of pigments on a canvas. But this lived world is as real as the Mona Lisa's smile.³⁷

This lived world and our gazing devotion to its affective richness is to be defended against imperialist tendencies in the natural sciences and their mathematically calculating dominion over nature – “die rechnende Weltbemeisterung,” as Theodor Litt calls it.³⁸

Babies and some animals neither experience atmospheres in this sense nor do they see landscapes. They can only be said to feel atmospheres in the much simpler sense of primary (more or less porous) unity. Metaphorical experience, seeing x in terms of y, which it is not literally but which fits and reveals something about it, is a high achievement; it requires close attention and imagination. Poets are particularly skilled at this. They find “the magic word” and make “the world sing” – as Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff famously puts it. Peter Kurzeck's work abounds with such striking metaphors, personifying not only nature as that which no longer “speaks” to us but also mundane artifacts like his washing machine, which he hears as engrossed in a satisfied monologue (“die Waschmaschine in einem zufriedenen langen Selbstgespräch”).³⁹

The metaphorical model bears some similarity to the projective model. Metaphors are also “projective,” but in a much more general sense than the anxiety-driven psychoanalytic one employed in the projective model.

V. Some basic types of experience

In order to prepare the ground for the specifically *aesthetic* type of landscape experience, four more basic types should be distinguished: perception (or

³⁷ Roger Scruton, *The Face of God* (London: Continuum, 2012), 128-129.

³⁸ Theodor Litt, *Naturwissenschaft und Menschenbildung* (Heidelberg: Quellen und Meyer, 1959), 166.

³⁹ Peter Kurzeck, *Bis er kommt* (Frankfurt: Stroemfeld, 2015), 323. On personification in Kurzeck, see Johannes Ullmaier, “Die Ewigkeiten macht man sich selbst: Zu Verlebendigung und Überzeitlichkeit bei Peter Kurzeck,” *Text und Kritik* 199, 2013: *Peter Kurzeck*, 58-70.

For the larger picture, see Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper, 1995). This book explores the “myths” that “made landscape out of mere geography and vegetation” (12), including political myths such as the Nazi myth of Germania.

understanding), empathy (or vicarious/reproduced feeling), sympathy (or fellow feeling) and infection (or contagion). The contemporary debate on empathy, in which “empathy” can mean any of these different phenomena, still needs to regain the conceptual standard that phenomenology reached at the beginning of the last century, most notably in the writings of Max Scheler and Edith Stein.⁴⁰

1. Perception

When we perceive that a landscape is peaceful, we remain affectively more or less neutral. We simply realize that it is peaceful (in the metaphorical sense). It does not require much attention or imagination to recognize the atmospheres of landscapes, as poetry and other creative arts have paved the way for us. We do not need to be aesthetically active ourselves to respond to landscapes, as Joachim Ritter and before him Georg Simmel seem to have thought (cf. III.3.).

2. Empathy

When we empathize with a peaceful landscape, we move with its atmosphere, enacting it but not sharing it. As the example of cruelty makes it clear, empathy occupies an intermediate position between perception and sympathy. Cruel people are not sympathetic to the suffering of their victims, but they still need empathy in order to fully enjoy their victims’ pain.

3. Sympathy

When we sympathize with a peaceful landscape, we move with its atmosphere and share it. We resonate emotionally, as we do when we listen to a favorite piece of

⁴⁰ See Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1999), English: *The Nature of Sympathy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); and Edith Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2012), English: *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington: ICS Publications, 1989). For an English summary and elaboration of Scheler’s position, cf. Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), chapter seven; and Angelika Krebs, “The Phenomenology of Shared Feeling,” *Appraisal* 8, 2011, 35-50.

In his 1934 treatise *Art as Experience* (London: Perigree, 2005), 54-55, John Dewey draws a similar distinction between recognition (identification, stereotyping, labeling, which corresponds to 1. perception), perception in the true, full sense (which for him is emotional and thus comes close to 3. sympathy), and being overwhelmed by something (which is passive and corresponds to 4. infection). In fact Scheler proposes two other categories of how we experience the emotions or moods of others: identification (or unification) and shared feeling (feeling-in-common/community of feeling). Both categories seem irrelevant for landscape experience. Scheler introduces *identification* as an extreme form of infection. An I sucks another in in all its vital attitudes or is sucked in by that other. Some of Scheler’s examples for this are child’s play (“I am mommy”), hypnosis or obsession. In *shared feeling*, two personal Is cooperate so as to feel one and the same emotion or mood. His example is two parents standing beside the dead body of a beloved child.

music. Sympathy is an emotion in the full sense, including bodily feeling, cognitive evaluation and behavior, while empathy is “only” a vivid mode of cognitive understanding; although in certain cases empathy can lead to actual emotions, it does not necessarily do so.⁴¹ Sympathy comes in two variants: participatory sympathy and meta-sympathy. Only the first is relevant for landscapes. In the second, we are sad *about* the sadness or bad situation of another, but we do not accompany her through her sadness as in the first variant.⁴²

4. Infection

When we are infected by a peaceful landscape, we are swayed by its atmosphere. Infection is causal while perception, empathy and sympathy are intentional; they are directed towards the expressive quality of the landscape. In being directed towards an “other,” they presuppose some distance between self and other. Infection is not alert to this distance. Infection is relevant for mental health and wellness, but in itself it is not an aesthetic phenomenon.⁴³

VI. Aesthetic resonance

This final section spells out how resonating aesthetically with landscape atmospheres can make us feel at home in the world. It distinguishes between stronger and weaker understandings. While beauty, especially functional beauty, allows for feeling perfectly at home, sublimity affords only a partial or ambivalent version.

Aesthetic landscape experience involves not only attending to landscapes closely, perceiving their atmosphere (V.1.) and empathizing with it (V.2.), but also entering it

⁴¹ Cf. Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 197; and Kendall Walton, “Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime,” in *Emotions and the Arts*, eds. Mette Hjort and Sue Laver (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 37-49.

⁴² For this distinction between two different kinds of sympathy cf. the first chapter of Edith Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2012), English: *On the Problem of Empathy* (Washington: ICS Publications, 1989); and Gerda Walther, “Zur Ontologie der sozialen Gemeinschaften,” *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 6, 1923, 66-90.

⁴³ Many nature activities combine health and wellness with aesthetics. Think of hiking in the mountains or swimming in the sea. In such combined nature activities, nature is not replaceable by a gym. This irreplaceability adds force to the aesthetic argument for nature conservation. Still, the (replaceable) health and wellness effects of nature are of immense importance too. “Feeling at home” in nature is often due to these effects. Nevertheless, it is not this kind of feeling at home in nature that is explored here.

and sharing it (V.3.) for its own sake. In stressing the “intrinsic-ness” of aesthetic experience, as well as the distance that is constituent of perception, empathy and sympathy (as they are directed towards an “other”), this understanding is reminiscent of Kant’s aesthetics, even if his aesthetics is much colder than that. As John Dewey, among many others, observes, sympathetic emotions play no role in it: “To define the emotional element of esthetic perception merely as the pleasure taken in the act of contemplation, independent of what is excited by the matter contemplated, results, however, in a thoroughly anemic conception of art.”⁴⁴ Instead of aesthetic contemplation, I therefore prefer to speak of aesthetic “resonance” (I will elaborate on the physical metaphor of resonance below).

Still, in tandem with Kant, it is important to distinguish between aesthetic experience on the one hand and physiological and psychological (for example, hedonistic) impact or effect, on the other. This fundamental point is also stressed by Ludwig Wittgenstein in his 1938 *Lectures on Aesthetics*. Wittgenstein argues that aesthetic reactions – like the discomfort one might feel when a door is too low or a musical passage is incoherent, and the appreciation one might feel when a suit is the right length or a poetic image is precise – are “directed”; there is a “why” to aesthetic reactions, not a “cause” to them. Aesthetics is not “a branch of psychology.”⁴⁵

The main thesis of my paper about how aesthetically attractive landscapes can make us feel at home in the world does not concern *causal impact* or *effect*. Rather, it concerns the quality of the aesthetic experience itself, which can include, as a by-product, the mood of feeling at home.

Like most or all intrinsic activities, aesthetic sympathetic attention or resonance is accompanied by pleasure. Georg Henrik von Wright calls this kind of pleasure “*active pleasure*” and contrasts it with, first, “passive pleasure” such as the good taste of an apple, and, second, the “pleasure of satisfaction,” that is, the feeling we have when we

⁴⁴ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: Perigree, 2005), 264. On Dewey’s affective approach, see Christiane Voss, “Der affektive Motor des Ästhetischen,” in *Kunst und Erfahrung*, eds. Stefan Deines, Jaspas Liptow and Martin Seel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2013), 195-217.

⁴⁵ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell 1966), 14 and 17. See also Roger Scruton, “A Bit of Help from Wittgenstein,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 51, 2011, 309-319.

get what we want.⁴⁶ It is an intricate philosophical problem as to whether active pleasure (as an overall feeling, which might also involve some struggle and suffering, such as in the process of artistic creation), is a conceptually necessary and defining element of all that is done for its own sake or whether it is only typical of it. What is clear, however, is that we cannot intentionally induce active pleasure. It arises only when we are absorbed in the activity and forget about our daily worries. It is a *by-product* of the activity. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has popularized the notion of the self-forgetful drive, which characterizes active pleasure as *flow*, a term that Dewey also employs when he writes about the organic, rounded character of what he calls “*an experience*,” which roughly corresponds to what I call intrinsic experience: “every part flows freely, without seam and without unfilled blanks, into what ensues.”⁴⁷

Csikszentmihalyi presents empirical findings to show how, in some particularly successful cases of actively pleasant intrinsic activities, the subjects become aware of themselves as part of a larger whole. As he sees it, there is nothing esoteric or metaphysical in this: “When a person invests all her psychic energy into an interaction – whether it is with another person, a boat, a mountain, or a piece of music – she in effect becomes part of a system of action greater than what the individual self had been before.”⁴⁸ Martin Buber in *I and Thou* describes the same phenomenon in different terms, when he writes about the mystic:

What the ecstatic man calls union is the enrapturing dynamic of relation, not a unity arisen in this moment of the world’s time that dissolves the *I* and *Thou*, but the dynamic of relation itself, which can put itself before its bearers as they steadily confront one another, and cover each from the feeling of the other enraptured one. Here, then, on the brink, the relational act goes beyond itself; the relation itself in its vital unity is felt so forcibly that its parts seem to fade before it, and in the force of its life, the *I* and the *Thou*, between which it is established, are forgotten.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cf. Georg Henrik von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1993), 63-65.

⁴⁷ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: Perigree, 2005), 37-38.

⁴⁸ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), 65.

⁴⁹ Martin Buber, *Ich und Du* (Darmstadt: Lambert Schneider, 1997), English: *I and Thou*, (London: Continuum, 2004), 69.

Another example of this phenomenon familiar to musicians is the feeling you can get when, after rehearsing a symphony with the orchestra, it suddenly seems as if the music or the orchestra *plays you*. Before, it was you who played your instrument together with all the others who played theirs. Now, you feel a part of the whole. And this is a new experience over and above the active pleasure you have felt all along in rehearsing the symphony with the other musicians.

Because of its holistic direction, this feeling of differentiated unity or being at home can be regarded as a *mood*. In contrast, mere active pleasure or flow seems to be “only” a non-intentional bodily feeling.

To sum up, the affective quality of aesthetic experience highlighted so far lies in sympathy and in flow on the one hand plus, in some cases, the feeling of being at home on the other. The *physical metaphor of resonance* underlines this affective quality.

However, the metaphor of resonance might be misleading in at least three ways. First, physical resonance occurs when one object vibrates with another at the same or a similar natural frequency, e.g. when the G- and D-strings of a violin vibrate with a G-major chord on a piano. This is a *causal* phenomenon, whereas aesthetic resonance is first and foremost intentional sympathy.⁵⁰

Second, physical resonance is not only causal but also *instantaneous*; aesthetic resonance, in contrast, requires a “gymnastics of attention” (to borrow a phrase from Roger Scruton). It takes time and effort; only sometimes, in learnt spontaneity, does it occur instantaneously. We can distinguish the immediate seizure by an aesthetic atmosphere from the discrimination that sets in afterwards, which may or may not validate the first immediate impression. This first impression is directed and is not to be confused with infection.

⁵⁰ The metaphor of resonance therefore also fits non-aesthetic human phenomena such as being infected by laughter or crying, which could be called “*causal resonances*.” Other non-causal types of resonance are “*biographical resonance*” (when you feel at home in your neighborhood, cf. I.3.3.) and “*social resonance*” (when you are in harmony with certain people, sharing activities, emotions and moods with them). In his book *Resonanz* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2016) Hartmut Rosa investigates all these types. See also his earlier book *Beschleunigung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2005), English: *Social Acceleration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), which views social acceleration as a “resonance killer.”

Third, physical resonance tends to be *bilateral* (and even amplifying: think of the famous example of marching soldiers collapsing a bridge). Not only does the violin resonate with the piano, the piano resonates back with the violin. This has led Hartmut Rosa to conceptualize resonance in general, including aesthetic resonance, as a mutual phenomenon. For him, resonance is not an echo relation, but a response relation; it requires that both parties speak with their own voices.⁵¹ In aesthetic resonance, as he has it, not only do we respond to the world, the world also responds to us. Rosa criticizes bourgeois one-sided understandings of aesthetic resonance with nature, but praises children and indigenous people for their more immediate and mutual aesthetic dialogue with nature; he also talks of nature taking revenge on us for what we have done to her. This mutual concept of aesthetic resonance, however, slips into metaphysics, as nature does not respond to us in any literal sense. To distinguish Rosa's concept from mine, his would better be called "*rosanence*." What Rosa might have in mind is the Eichendorffian phenomenon of the magic word, which sounds the song that sleeps in all things. Soberly understood, this phenomenon is nothing but our feeling that our metaphors *fit* the world. We create our metaphors but we cannot create the fit. The fit must happen by itself. If it does, it feels as if the world responds to us and begins to sing.⁵²

1. Beauty

Landscapes are *beautiful* in the broad sense when they invite and reward intrinsic sympathetic attention or resonance. Their appeal, similar to the appeal of everything that is beautiful, is not limited to some of us, but open to all. Aesthetic landscape resonance is not just a subjective preference, as travel guides and art criticism prove. It is a universally accessible form that the desire for beauty can take. The desire for beauty is an anthropological constant. Fulfilling this desire in one way or another is an important part of the good human life. As morality requires respect for the essentials of the good life of all human beings, conserving beauty is a moral obligation.

⁵¹ Hartmut Rosa, *Resonanz* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2016), 298.

⁵² This is also how the phenomenon is accounted for by Theodor Litt, *Naturwissenschaft und Menschenbildung* (Heidelberg: Quellen und Meyer, 1959); Josef König, "Die Natur der ästhetischen Wirkung," in Josef König, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, Freiburg: Alber 1978, 256-337; and Georg Misch, *Der Aufbau der Logik* (Freiburg: Alber, 1994).

How beautiful landscapes and other beautiful objects or ensembles manage to lure and satisfy us is, of course, the central question of aesthetics. Classical answers stress symmetry, harmony or unity in diversity. Modern answers focus on the experiencing subject. According to the Kantian answer, beautiful objects or ensembles bring our faculties of understanding and imagination into free play. This intellectual Kantian model should at least be complemented by the idea of a “free play of sympathy.”⁵³ It is not only our cognitive faculties that are attracted and challenged by beauty but also our affective powers. Beauty does not only make us think about many things, it also makes us feel many things. It makes us open up and grow both rationally and emotionally.

Do the *atmospheric* and the beautiful then amount to the same thing (at least for beautiful landscapes and expressive art)? Not necessarily. Something might have a strong positive or negative atmosphere in the sense of an overwhelming impact, infecting us but not inviting us to attend to and sympathize with it for its own sake. Kitsch could be an example of this. We might formulate this point differently: what is merely atmospheric *has* an atmosphere, while what is beautiful *expresses* an atmosphere. If we put the point like this we would, however, be employing a weak notion of expression that would allow us to say that beautiful landscapes express atmospheres. We could not limit the notion of expression to artworks that admittedly are expressive in a different and deeper sense than landscapes. Expressive art is a kind of communication. It has a message. It pursues meaning. It articulates, explores and meditates on human concepts in a structure all of its own. Expressiveness in art is an achievement. This does not hold for landscapes. Compared with art, the expressiveness of landscapes is a superficial phenomenon.⁵⁴

Can landscapes be *kitsch*? Representations of landscapes can evidently be kitsch. Think of postcards with orange sunsets over the Adriatic Sea or oil paintings of bellowing stags. But what about landscapes themselves? We sometimes call them kitsch. Yet what we might mean by this is that they are almost too beautiful, too easy to enjoy (exactly appropriate for “Kitsch-Menschen” who are out for easy

⁵³ Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 355.

⁵⁴ John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: Perigee, 2005), 67, compares artistic expression with the extraction of juice from grapes in a winepress. Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 158, and *The Face of God* (London: Continuum, 2012), chapter five, denies that landscapes can express anything.

gratification) or that they have been overused and spoilt for us by commercials and Hollywood movies. Nevertheless, we must admit that if we try hard enough and break through the clichés, we can always find something in the landscapes themselves. Nature is so varied and rich. Therefore, natural landscapes cannot be kitsch. Highly cultivated landscapes, in contrast, can be. Take landscape parks with little bridges, fake temples and castles, garden gnomes and too many overly rosy blossoming flowers. For such kitsch, however, human beings are to blame and not nature.

Landscape beauty is special and *cannot be replaced* by other kinds of beauty. If it were replaceable, nothing much would follow from the aesthetic argument in terms of landscape conservation. One reason why landscape beauty is special is that we experience landscapes synaesthetically and feel them with *all our senses*, not only with our eyes and ears, which are more capable of aesthetic distance than our noses, tongues and fingers are. We even move around in landscapes. Sensual feeling and, yes, infection is part and parcel of aesthetic landscape experience.⁵⁵ We can thus add infection to the affective aspects of aesthetic landscape experience outlined so far, which include sympathy, flow and feeling at home. Infection serves to increase the immersive effect of beautiful landscapes, so that we may feel at home *in* them, both sensually and aesthetically.

Architecture comes close to landscapes in this respect without sharing all its attributes (no wind, no rain, no sunshine etc.).⁵⁶ Nevertheless, architecture and landscapes do share many other specific features. Let me mention eight more. First, both *contain us*; they are not positioned opposite us and framed like pictures on a wall (which, again, increases the immersive effect). Second, the beauty of both is of the *expressive* rather than the representational kind. Third, the *sublime* is more common in our natural and architectural environment than it is in art. Fourth, architecture and landscapes are more *easily accessible* than most art; you do not have to know that much in order to enjoy

⁵⁵ See Hans Jonas, "Der Adel des Sehens," in Hans Jonas, *Organismus und Freiheit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1973), 198-225, English: "The Nobility of Sight," in Hans Jonas, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14, 1954, 507-519. See also Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); and Gernot Böhme, *Atmosphäre* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1995).

⁵⁶ But could not all that is special about nature be faked or imitated in architecture (or even in cyberspace)? The answer is no. As imitations go, if people know they are only imitations, they want the original, the authentic and real thing. And how could they not know if nature was faked (given transparent political systems and public knowledge of human and natural history)?

them aesthetically. Fifth, both are *public*, or at least not hidden away in the private sphere; you often cannot avoid them. Sixth, both are *localized*; they cannot be moved around like pictures or books, and this makes them especially vulnerable to what is around them. Seventh, the beauty of both is largely *functional*; it presupposes that they fulfill their function but it does not reside in this; rather it resides in the way the residue, which is not determined by function, is formed (this is more true of architecture than of landscapes: while buildings are defined by their functions, landscapes are individuated by their atmospheres). And eighth, both can make us *feel at home in the world*.⁵⁷

Yet, in architecture, it is the human world, the history of human ends and ideals, not the natural world, in which we might feel at home. And this makes all the difference. Beautiful landscapes are irreplaceable first and foremost because they fulfill our conscious or unconscious longing to be part of and not alienated from the natural world, the world that is just there, that comes into being and vanishes by virtue of itself. Beautiful landscapes heal the rift between subject and nature, both the nature out there and the nature in us. Living in harmony with nature in this sense is more than an enriching option for a good life; it is an essential part of human flourishing. Here is Otto Friedrich Bollnow once more:

It is disastrous when humans live in the stony deserts of cities, in rooms that more often than not are fully air-conditioned, and are scarcely affected anymore by the changing seasons. For this reason, it is extremely important that humans experience the rhythms of nature as well as the rhythms that order their own lives, that they feel the pauses and slow down for them, and then respond to the reawakening of life in the spring with all their energy, experiencing it as a radical renewal. But this can only occur in the intense

⁵⁷ On how architecture makes us feel at home, see Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1959); Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Mensch und Raum* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963), English: *Human Space* (London: Hyphen Press, 2011); Alexander Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit der Städte* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1965); Roger Scruton, *The Classical Vernacular* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994); Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997); Juhani Pallasma, *The Eyes of the Skin* (New York: John Wiley, 2005); and Peter Zumthor, *Atmosphären* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006).

experience of the sprouting green of nature. As Hölderlin writes in his lovely verses, the “holy green” “refreshes” us and transforms us into youths again.⁵⁸

Beautiful landscapes teach us how to “*dwell on earth*,” Bollnow continues, following Martin Heidegger.⁵⁹ They give us a sense of place and make us honor it. They invite us to put down roots somewhere and identify and care for it as our special “Heimat,” and this links the aesthetic argument with the identity argument (in I.3.2.). We need neither a dubious teleological metaphysics nor a dubious holistic ontology, neither deep ecology nor posthumanism to understand that we are part of the natural world and should act accordingly. Deep humanism and the experience of natural beauty suffice.

2. Sublimity

There are stronger and weaker forms of feeling at home in nature. So far I have mainly talked about the strongest one, *perfect sympathetic coordination*, which feels like unity.

Often, however, we succeed only *partially* in our attempt at sympathetically moving with something. Our failure need not be due to ourselves; it could also be due to the landscape. The classical distinction between the beautiful and the sublime is relevant here. For our purposes, it can be reconstructed as follows. Only the beautiful (now in a more limited sense than before and no longer synonymous with “aesthetically attractive”) allows us to be fully taken up in it. The sublime, in its infinite extent and power, entices us to sympathetically move with it, too. The subject enjoys participating in its magnitude and strength. However, the subject also feels painfully reminded of her own insignificance and vulnerability. The sublime confronts us with a tension between a celebration of the landscape and self-negation. Still, insofar as the sublime appeals to us and invites us to partially move with it, neither leaving us cold

⁵⁸ Otto Friedrich Bollnow, “Die Stadt, das Grün und der Mensch,” in Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Zwischen Philosophie und Pädagogik* (Aachen: O.F. Weitz, 1988), 44-62, 55.

⁵⁹ Cf. Martin Heidegger, “Bauen, Wohnen, Denken,” in Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1951), 145-164, English: “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper, 2013), 141-160.

nor threatening us existentially, it is possible to talk about feeling at home, in a weaker sense, in sublime nature too.⁶⁰

3. Functional beauty

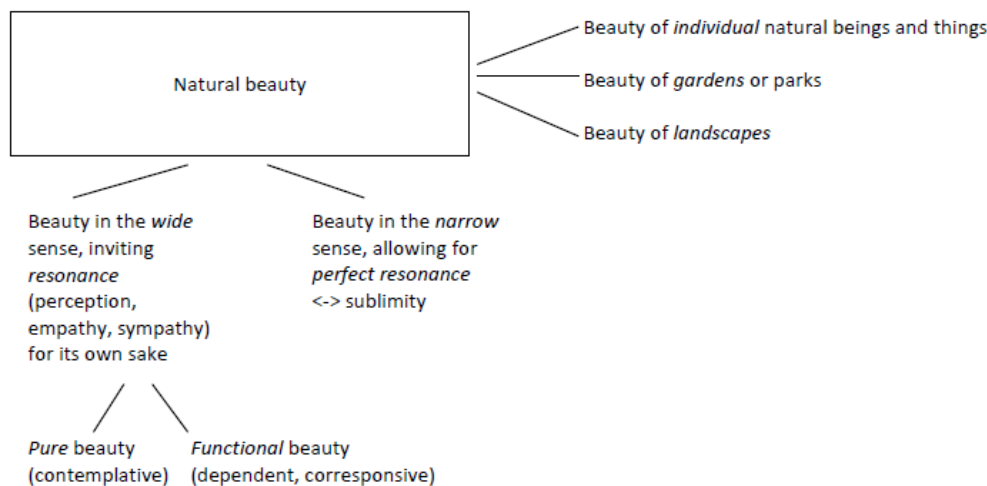
A third understanding of feeling at home in nature opens up when we attend to the landscape that surrounds us not as such, but in relation to ourselves, that is, in its functionality for our own good. In Kantian terminology, the latter kind of experience is directed at the “dependent” beauty of the landscape and not at its “pure” beauty. A landscape that looks as if it affords a good human life is beautiful in the functional sense. It is ugly if it doesn’t. Thus, contrary to “positive aesthetics,” there is a sense in which nature can be *ugly*.⁶¹

The distinction between functional and pure beauty must not be confused with the point made right at the beginning of section II., namely, that most landscapes today are marked by human labor. Even pristine nature can be functionally beautiful. Admittedly, it will be less frequently so than cultivated nature. It is no accident that we speak about the “Garden” of Eden. In functionally beautiful landscapes we feel at home, not only because they have a good physiological and psychological impact on us, but also because they indicate, by the way they look, sound and smell, that they can support human life and provide for its needs. *Evolutionary aesthetics*, which traces our sense for beauty back to our sense for landscapes with a high survival value for our species, like the savannah, finds a limited justification here.⁶²

⁶⁰ Cf. Tom Cochrane, “The Emotional Experience of the Sublime,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 42, 2012, 125-148; and Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Otto Friedrich Bollnow makes a similar point in “Mensch und Natur,” http://www.otto-friedrich-bollnow.de/schriften/detail/mensch_und_natur-215.html, 25. He stresses that we should not confuse our being at home in nature (“Geborgenheit”) with absolute security (“Sicherheit”), as nature always has aspects of the uncanny and the threatening, too. As the example of the Alps famously shows, only *existential* threat and sublimity exclude each other; see for example Denis Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 223; and Werner Bätzing, *Die Alpen* (München: Beck, 1991).

⁶¹ For positive aesthetics see Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment* (London: Routledge, 2000); and Malcolm Budd, *The Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁶² See Denis Dutton, *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).



In his *Ästhetik der Natur* (“Aesthetics of Nature”), Martin Seel calls this functional aesthetic dimension “corresponsive” and contrasts it with two other aesthetic dimensions, the “contemplative” and the “imaginative.”⁶³ His contemplative dimension concerns the pure beauty of nature, whereas his imaginative dimension looks at nature through the prism of art, especially landscape painting. As Seel’s neo-Kantian aesthetics is perhaps the most refined and thorough contemporary work on environmental aesthetics, I will, by way of ending, explore how my approach relates to his.

Seel explains his three dimensions by referring to the view across Lake Constance from his former office at the University of Constance. The first, *contemplative* experience of nature sees nature “as a cheering space of detachment from active life.” It perceives nature by abstracting it from the significance and value of things for social recognition and action. The I dissolves and disappears in the space of nature. This view of Lake Constance is free of meaning; it responds to a constantly changing sensual play of appearances – the dancing of light reflexes, the corrugation of the waves, the fanning of the colors – but it does not endow them with any particular significance other than what they are.

⁶³ Martin Seel, *Eine Ästhetik der Natur* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991). For an English translation of some core ideas, see Martin Seel, “Aesthetic Arguments in the Ethics of Nature,” *Thesis Eleven* 32, 1992, 76-89, esp. 77-80; for a critical review see Catherine Rigby, “Beyond the Frame: Art, Ecology and the Aesthetics of Nature,” *Thesis Eleven* 32, 1992, 114-128.

The second, *corresponsive* perception of nature experiences nature “as a place that illustrates a successful human life.” It opens up an articulated space that is no longer meaning-free, but rather highly meaningful, in which the synaesthetic I is enclosed. This existentially interested gaze at Lake Constance sees the refreshing coolness of the lake’s surface in summer and the warming vapor of the mist in winter. It remains attached to certain places in memory or in anticipating feelings of joy.

Third, the *imaginative* experience of nature renders nature “as a mirror of the human world full of images.” Nature is seen as if it were an artwork freely improvising on other works and styles of art. The I finds that her horizon is widened as a result of this double reflection of her being-in-the-world. That kind of gaze at Lake Constance perceives the way in which the lake communicates with Claude Lorrain and Antoine Watteau, and later with William Turner and Ferdinand Hodler.⁶⁴

The experience of landscape that I have dealt with here is not tantamount to Seel’s “corresponsive” mode, as one might assume at first sight. Rather it is meant to cover all three modes, including the contemplative one. In contrast to Seel, I believe that all three kinds of nature experience can make us feel at home or “enclosed” in the world. Seel tends to exaggerate the differences between them anyway. Seel goes too far when he denies that a landscape, which we experience contemplatively, can have any expressive articulateness, any anthropomorphic expression. Seel’s formalism or autonomism of contemplation is reminiscent of similar movements in the aesthetics of music and architecture that claim to be exclusively concerned with a meaning-free play of appearances while the language they employ to render this disinterestedness is permeated with expressiveness. Are the “dancing” of light reflexes or the corrugation of waves on Lake Constance not anthropomorphic and expressive, after all?

Yet what is particularly convincing is Seel’s *anti-metaphysical stance*. He sternly resists every temptation to read the beauty of nature as a “wink” (in Kant’s words) given to us by the world or by God, signaling that we are welcome in the world. Roger Scruton seems less transparent and steadfast regarding this point. Who is reassuring us, we want to ask, when Scruton writes about the experience of natural beauty: “It contains a reassurance that this world is a right and fitting place to be – a home in

⁶⁴ All the quoted phrases are translations from page 18 in Seel’s book.

which our human powers and prospects find confirmation”?⁶⁵ The main objective of my paper has been to develop the aesthetic case for nature conservation as an *alternative* to metaphysical or theological approaches. An aesthetics of nature that does not steer clear of metaphysics itself cannot fit this bill.

⁶⁵ Roger Scruton, *Beauty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 65; cf. also “I have come to see more clearly that the positions that naturally appeal to me in aesthetics also suggest a theological elaboration,” in Roger Scruton, *The Soul of the World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), vii. For a general discussion, see Ronald Hepburn, “Landscape and the Metaphysical Imagination,” *Environmental Values*, 5, 1996, 191-204.