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Aesthetic Values and Human Habitation: A Philosophical and Interdisciplinary Approach to Environmental Aesthetics

Curtis Carter
Marquette University, curtis.carter@marquette.edu

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AESTHETIC VALUES AND HUMAN HABITATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL AESTHETICS

Curtis L. Carter

I.

The AAAS project on American Values and Models of Habitation of which this essay is a part has been undertaken in an interdisciplinary context of the humanities and the sciences. Instead of speaking in general of how scholars working in the humanities and the sciences can cooperate to advance the understanding of American Values and their implications for habitat policies, this essay will examine in the context of environmental aesthetics, aesthetic values which are but one of several subsets of values such as economic, religious, and political subsets. We shall focus on philosophical aspects of environmental aesthetics but with the question in mind: "How can philosophy contribute to environmental aesthetics as such other disciplines as psychology, geography, sociology, landscape architecture, planning, the arts, and the physical sciences do?"

Environmental aesthetics includes theories, concepts, and practices that identify and characterize the aesthetic values and resources of the environment, define the appropriate procedures for their determination, and assess their relative place in the total scheme of aesthetic value. Traditionally, aesthetics has been concerned primarily with the visual, musical, literary, dramatic, and movement arts, but environmental aesthetics encompasses natural and built features of the physical environment itself. Current approaches to environmental aesthetics, however, look to aesthetic theory that was initially conceived to discuss the fine arts. This reference to existing aesthetic theories can be helpful as a starting point, because environmental aesthetics draws its data from the same sensibilities of perceptual awareness that has produced these theories, and because it includes the societal aspects of the fine arts. But the aesthetic concepts of the fine arts will necessarily be modified and expanded, to accommodate such new tasks as environmental impact assessment for determining land use and building policies. To this end, philosophers, geographers, psychologists, landscape architects, planners and others must search and modify their own speculative and empirical approaches in the interest of developing better theory and better practice. Better philosophical concepts are needed to interpret the values and to inform the creation of appropriate methodologies for field studies in environmental aesthetics. More suitable ways of implementing and interpreting the field studies of scientists that seek to quantify the aesthetic values of environments are needed. Planners and other policy makers must, at the same time, ponder

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Curtis L. Carter is Associate Professor of Aesthetics and Philosophy, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

the ways to give proper weight to aesthetic claims in environmental policy decisions.

The essay will set forth major philosophical concepts which are essential to developing both theoretical and applied studies in environmental aesthetics, and will propose topics for future interdisciplinary research, especially research that will advance the appropriate knowledge for environmental aesthetics policies of public and private agencies. Appendices and notes will provide bibliographic, institutional, and personnel resources representing current research.

Human beings have forever valued pleasing natural landscapes: Mountains and hills, rivers and lakes, trees and flowers. They delight in the elements that make up the natural landscape: the colors, textures, shapes, and varied patterns; they are captivated by large scale arrangements of mountain scenery, great canyons, and the intricate designs of a single flower. The sun itself is a source of endless pleasure as it warms the earth and brightens the mood of people in all cultures. All of these natural resources are valued for something more than their mineral, food, and energy contributions: they are valued for their beauty, for their design, for their sensory stimulation, for their expressiveness, and for their symbolic value.

Cities, towns, and villages have each their own aesthetic features which are expressed in their architecture, plazas, streets, parks, galleries, and concert halls. In the best of circumstances these built structures will exist in harmony with the natural setting. Indeed, some writers consider that the process of creating a human settlement is analogous to creating a work of fine art. Human settlements, like works of art, embody the fruits of human reason and feeling applied to the physical world. The creator of environment for human beings, like the artist

> "thinks, sketches, and resketches, organizes and reorganizes...wrestling with the personal and the impersonal, with desire and necessity, and with the discrepancy between the intent and the outcome."[1]

Many artists representing different specialities are required to build a human settlement such as a city, however, and its development is realized only over hundreds or thousands of years. The art of city planning moreover encompasses different functions, products, organization, materials, and processes, for example, from those of the theater. The ancient city of Pergamon, for instance, was built mainly in the second century B.C., but it was actually completed over a 500 year period, with each subsequent generation contributing an original concept.[2]

Cities of today exhibit greater or lesser degrees of planning than Pergamon, but their scale and complexity have been greatly magnified by increased density, accelerated demands for service, and by new possibilities for technological developments. Some aestheticians find today's cities dominated by huge buildings which are lacking in aesthetic values. Economic considerations and technological efficiencies dictate that such buildings be constructed with a view to inward functions, accompanied by a corresponding neglect of the external appearance. The result, according to Lienemann, is an environment of buildings that "allow no orientation and no personal relation between the experience and the environment."[3] There follows loss of the affective dimension of environment, with the consequence that the urban dweller feels a deep lack of aesthetic stimulus and is unable to develop a feeling of belonging to such an environment. The impersonal, antiseptic character of so much mid-twentieth century mass architecture has led to significant counter efforts to maintain the necessary aesthetic conditions for human welfare: planners attempt to personalize space with intimate green spaces in the midst of urban concrete; architects introduce novelty through designing "sculptured" buildings; citizen groups across the country are speaking out for the preservation of old but interesting landmarks; activist-research centers advocate improvement of the visual environment by effective aesthetic standards of zoning; and neighborhoods discover the aesthetic richness of their ethnic heritages.[4]

The arts themselves--sculpture, architecture, murals, music and dancing,

constitute an integral part of the aesthetic environment. This fact is affirmed by the Habitat Forum International Workshop on "The Arts and Human Settlements" held at Vancouver, Canada, in conjunction with the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements,[5] and by rapidly emerging interest in aesthetic education.[6] Concentrated forms of aesthetic stimulations that are too fragile to be displayed outside exist in the art galleries and the concert halls, and these works contribute significantly to the aesthetic experiences offerred by a human settlement. But these galleries and concert halls occupy a relatively small portion of people's time, and do not reach all people. This fact has led public and private sponsors to bring the arts into the widely traveled streets and into the spaces where people work and live. These words of developer Miller Nichols whose work shows a strong commitment to the arts as an integral part of the environment reflect the need to incorporate the arts into the parts of the community where people actually live:

> "It has always been my father's and my philosophy that people can buy paintings and sculpture and put them in a gallery, but we like putting them out where people can live with them."[7]

Monumental sculptures ranging in diversity from the carved totems of the Northwest Indians to Chicago's civic center Picasso are an obvious and persistent feature of American communities. These outside sculptures are intended to signify the sharing of common values relating to historical or mythical figures or events. But their continued presence beyond recollections of their historical ties suggests that they also contribute aesthetic enrichment by offering variety and diversion and by acting as meaningful landmarks.[8] Traditionally, these art works have been accessory to the surrounding architecture, but architect James Wines has introduced projects which show architecture as the accessory to art. In Baltimore, he designed a building for the Best Company which shows a brick wall that appears to be "peeling off" its shoe-box frame. His "Indeterminate Facade Project" in Houston extends the brick wall above the roof line for an indeterminate and irregular distance and places a loose cascade of brick over the canopy, thus providing a visual ambiguity. Wine's creations represent a philosophy that public space should be developed as a total site in which art is integrally related, instead of merely decoratively placed.

All of these contemporary insights: continuous appreciation and concern for preserving natural aesthetic environments, renewed interest in revitalizing and maintaining aesthetic aspects of the built environments, and the advancement of the arts as integral contributors to these environments, affirm the need for environmental aesthetics planning in present and future patterns of habitation, and mandate serious scholarly studies in this important field.

II.

The nature of environmental aesthetics literally impels crossing disciplinary lines, even when the research is undertaken by a scholar who approaches it from the point of view of a discipline such as philosophy. It is nonetheless important to articulate the contribution of philosophy to the interdisciplinary research. A relatively small portion of the extensive philosophical writings on aesthetics in the twentieth century are devoted specifically to environmental aesthetics. The amount of writing on the topic is increasing, however, as more philosophers publish articles and contribute to symposia on the subject. A representative list of current American-British philosophers who have contributed works on the topic would include Aschenbrenner, Beardsley, Berleant, Hein, Langer, Levi, McDermott, Passmore, Rader, Smith, Sparshott, and the present writer. Their writings include analyses of major concepts such as environment, aesthetic value, and aesthetic welfare, together with discussions of such problems as the social influence of design, paradigms for aesthetically satisfactory environments, and aesthetic environmental education.[9]

Environment

A study of environmental aesthetics calls for the clarification of the concept "environment." The environment includes aspects of the physical and psychological worlds. It includes the physical surroundings and systems that constitute man's natural ambience and the material structures and systems that he has created for himself, and also aspects of the socio-cultural institutions and activities that man has created to satisfy his needs for survival and for a diverse life of work, recreation, and creative expression. The psychological landscape includes the feelings and thoughts that are generated in response to the physical-socio-cultural environment. Physical and psychological environments thereby converge to establish the experiences and the concepts of environmental aesthetics. Not all physical or socio-cultural elements are included in environment, however; only those elements of reality to which the perceptual systems of individuals or groups are sensitive, and which are capable of being influenced by their actions are included.[10]

Of these philosophers who have attempted to clarify the concept of environment, Passmore gives especially pertinent criticisms of commonly help assumptions concerning the environmental notions of preservation, conservation and cooperation with nature.[11] Passmore's analysis serves environmental aesthetics indirectly by its clear description of these and other related concepts, and by its critique of commonly held attitudes toward aesthetic and other environmentally related values. He sets forth the facts of changes in attitudes and in meanings of the principal environmental concepts in different time periods, and shows the necessity for a thorough knowledge of the appropriate concepts for discussing environment and their implicit value assumptions which influence beliefs and policies. Today, for example, wilderness is regarded as an aesthetically favored part of environment, but for the Greco-Romans wilderness was crude and unworthy of the attention of a cultivated person.[12] Changing attitudes over time toward the concept of wilderness illustrates the need for close awareness of environmental concepts. Planners of future aesthetic environments should be mindful that the value placed on the various kinds of environment resources is subject to change. Both theoretical and applied studies must therefore indicate awareness of the changing value attached to various concepts which are used to identify aesthetic environments. Passmore provides a useful model for further philosophical analysis of the concepts of environmental aesthetics, but he himself treats aesthetics only peripherally and within the wider context of human responsibilities to nature. It remains for others to follow up his work by addressing the concepts of environmental aesthetics directly.

Within the broad framework provided by the concept of environment, philosophers distinguish among the various ways that people relate to their environments. Sparshott has attempted to identify the relations that are of special interest for aesthetic perception.[13] From an aesthetic point of view a traveler on his journey sees his surroundings in terms of their formal elements or explores the details of what is being seen, but a resident reacts to the same surroundings according to patterns already formed in his mind. "He sees more because he has seen more; he sees less because he no longer looks."[14] Again the transient associates what he sees either with something generic, the types to which he assigns what he sees as specimens, or extraneous, the experiences he brings with him from elsewhere. "But the resident in a place associates with it what he knows has happened or still goes on there."[15] Both of these "points of view" bear on the development of the concept of aesthetic environments, each one capable of producing a different set of aesthetic values, each providing a different basis from which to establish the aesthetic worth of a particular environment.

The physical environment includes various subdivisions with differing characteristics which need to be specified for purposes of developing appropriate environmental aesthetic policies. Philosophers such as McDermott have begun to develop concepts for analyzing the characteristics of urban environments, as distinct from nature environments.[16] McDermott's comparative analysis of the

state of nature and city images in the American consciousness points to a gap in present environmental aesthetics studies. Following the Whites, he contends that nature is seen as a regenerative force for building a personal aesthetic environment, whereas the city assumes an essentially negative image.[17] Whatever deficiencies modern cities may have, it would be incorrect to say or believe that cities are without aesthetic values. On the contrary their visual and multi-sensory elements offer an intense concentration of aesthetic resources. The density of the fine arts in city environments is unrivaled, and the variety of architecture, together with the accents of ethnic cultures, combine to offer an exceedingly rich aesthetic field.[18] The failure to develop a positive image for urban environments is due in part to the failure of philosophers, artists, and others to articulate the attractive aesthetic features of urban environments. These features must be expressed in order to do justice to the aesthetic characteristics of the city: fine arts treasures, marvels of light and sound, delights of smell and texture, architecturally rich streets and squares, ethnic diversity, and idiosyncrasies of life style--all of these provide the materials of a distinctive set of images for articulating the aesthetic values of the urban environment.

There is need to emphasize the positive aesthetic values of all the distinctive physical environments, of which cities and nature are but two. These two categories are in need of further breakdowns, because the two categories of "nature" and "city" at present include only the extremes, and are too imprecise. Concepts which designate the in-between would be very useful. Wilderness is a recognized sub-category, but there are other regions which are in need of further specification: the regions of sparsely settled farm lands, rural towns, suburbs, coastal and mountain zones, each have distinct aesthetic characteristics that warrant special analysis from an aesthetic point of view.[19] But before such analysis is possible, specific and appropriate concepts for these areas must be created. For this purpose, philosophers can justifiably turn to literary and descriptive studies of gifted landscape observers to augment their conceptual studies.[20]

The aesthetic terms that are to describe these various physical environments should express the interests and values of their populations. The terms for describing a city, for example, should express the concerns of ethnic groups, the poor, and students, as well as the interests of the more affluent middle and upper classes. Descriptions of rural landscapes should display the positive aesthetic values of rural experiences. Aesthetic descriptions of coastal and mountain regions should reflect the interests in and values of these areas as national resources which must serve many populations, including residents and travelers. Like the arts treasures of the urban environments, these natural resources require special policies that can only be developed with the aid of carefully delineated concepts incorporating the important characteristics of the different physical environments.

Such distinctions as these illustrate the important fact that philosophers do have something to contribute to the concept of environment and to its appropriate differentiations. A detailed philosophical study of this concept with specific reference to aesthetics, and in conjunction with other disciplines, would be extremely useful at this point as a guide to future theoretical and applied studies in environmental aesthetics. The study might begin, for example, with a conceptual analysis of the concept of environment that is implied in the ekistic studies of Doxiadis, but with a special view to aesthetics.[21]

Aesthetic Value

Emerging consciousness that the decisions about physical habitat are inseparable from values leads naturally to a consideration of aesthetic value: destroying a scenic mountain view in order to dig for coal; deciding whether to restore or replace an older city landmark; and the placing of a sculptural work in a public square, all of these situations are instances where aesthetic value is at stake.

Like environment, aesthetic value is one of the major concepts of environmental aesthetics which is in need of clarification. Traditional Western aesthetics has held the view that aesthetic value is generated in the aesthetic pleasure that things arouse in the one who perceives them. But as Sparshott has noted, the traditional view must be clarified and perhaps modified before it can be useful for developing environmental aesthetics policies.[22] It implies, for example, a division of the aesthetic and the practical, which is inconsistent with the fact that some of the objects, or situations being looked at for aesthetic appraisal will have both practical or functional as well as aesthetic interest.

Aesthetic value has been explained in various ways in recent literature; these words of Rader encompass an important aspect of what we mean by aesthetic value today:

> "Aesthetic value attaches, for example, to what men immediately or directly enjoy in simply looking at things in nature or at made objects; in listening to bird songs, or soughing trees, or to music; in feeling a piece of woolen or a smooth pebble; or in arranging an attractive table or a bed of flowers."[23]

Rader's statement contains, however, only a partial view of aesthetic value; he is concerned with what has been called the "thin" or sensory surface value.[24] But there is an equally significant "thick" sense of aesthetic value in which the notion is extended to include the associative life values that are evoked in the experience of an environment. When a resident views a familiar landscape across from his house, for example, the aesthetic response includes more than a set of colors, shapes, and textures; it includes the person's felt experiences which are connected with the setting. Analogously a building located in a city is more than a sculptured mass of surface and design; the aesthetic value of the building includes a set of life values which are connected to its function as a museum, a bank, or a factory, and the impact of these structures on the quality of life. It will be useful therefore for philosophers to develop in greater detail the implications of these two senses, thin and thick, of aesthetic value for environmental aesthetics.

Aesthetic value as we have been speaking of it here occurs in the relations of persons who experience values of objects or environments with qualities that already are worthy of being valued.[25] It encompasses both subjective interests of perceptions, etc., and objective sensory and design values of the physical landscapes, etc. Aesthetic value resides therefore neither entirely in the subjective consciousness nor in the objective world. This theoretical point has the practical implication that the measurement of aesthetic value of the environment is immensely complicated by the fact that it must take account of both factors. It will not do merely to catalog the features of physical aesthetic resources, as many approaches to aesthetic measurement of the environment presently undertake, nor merely to measure the responses of subjects to the environment as psychological research on environmental aesthetics does at the present time.

The central importance of aesthetic value for environmental aesthetics derives from the fact that aesthetic value provides the primary rationale for preservation of natural environments and for creative and humane development of built environments. Aesthetic value is able to provide this rationale because it satisfies basic human needs for sensory stimulation, for perceptual order, for affective expression, and for symbolic communication. Utilitarian, recreational, and ecological support for environmental aesthetics policies which express value in terms of cost benefit, health, play, and the balance of nature provide complementary support for the rationale of aesthetic value, a basis for supporting environmental aesthetics policies. But utility, ecology, and recreation support aesthetic interests only as a secondary concern, whereas aesthetic value provides direct and undiverted support for environmental aesthetics policies. It is perhaps easier to gain public and institutional support for the auxiliary reasons, and their importance in winning support for aesthetic concerns is not to be overlooked. But the fundamental rationale for environmental

aesthetics must be located in the primary aesthetic value where it is less subject to the dominant concerns of these auxiliary interests.

Aesthetic Welfare

The concept of aesthetic welfare, like that of aesthetic value, is of primary importance for environmental aesthetics. Aesthetic welfare supports the notion that aesthetic experiences are essential to an acceptable quality of life, which people require as part of their general welfare. This relatively new concept of aesthetic welfare has been explored in a preliminary manner by Beardsley and by Levi. Beardsley defines aesthetic welfare as a segment of general welfare, together with such other ingredients of the good life as physical comfort, freedom of inquiry and belief, and personal privacy.[26] It consists of the totality of the aesthetic worths of all the objects experienced by members of a society in a given period of time, including the aesthetic experiences of the natural and built environments. As distinct from aesthetic wealth, or the physical resources themselves--art works, natural landscapes, streets and squares--aesthetic welfare consists of "all acts of private enjoyment, appreciation, and enlightenment," according to Levi.[27] The contributions of Beardsley and Levi represent a good beginning toward explaining aesthetic welfare, but the understanding of this concept should be expanded to include public aesthetic value as well as its private distributions. Public involvement in aesthetic welfare includes experiencing the intangible benefits that accrue from the presence of beautiful architecture, mountains, waterways, and the other characteristics which make a place attractive to both residents and visitors. Public aesthetic welfare includes the shared images of a place that is enjoyable to live in or to visit. It refers to the collective aesthetic welfare, as when, for example, the design of a city expresses the values of the people who live there.

Since aesthetic welfare is an essential part of general welfare, it should play a major role in social policy decisions that affect the quality of life. At the present time, the concept of aesthetic welfare is still too inadequately developed to be a highly useful tool for the development of environmental aesthetics policies. But its obvious potential effectiveness for such purposes should provide an incentive for philosophers to work out, in concern with other scholars, the necessary details to improve its usefulness. Beardsley has begun a useful delineation of the kinds of problems that must be examined.[28] And the scope of problems, especially those dealing with questions of distribution of aesthetic benefits and regulation of land use is in need of expansion. In order to deal with questions of distribution of aesthetic benefits, for example, it is necessary to take into account both aesthetic and ethical considerations. We may not, for example, be able to argue for an equal distribution of aesthetic experiences (benefits), in virtue of the principle of distributive justice, because the capacity for aesthetic experiences, and the motivation to pursue them, are not evenly distributed.[29] We might nevertheless use the principle of aesthetic welfare as the basis for a policy to provide equal opportunity for access to environments conducive to the having of aesthetic experience, or to support artistic and environmental institutions and practices which assure such opportunities.

There are other problems that arise in connection with any attempts to integrate the concept of aesthetic welfare in environmental policy. As Beardsley has noted it can be difficult and seemingly counterproductive to submit aesthetic welfare to social regulation.[30] Aesthetic values are both subtle and fragile, and they are easily lost in the attempt to manipulate or artificially mandate their occurrence. Taste, or the capacity to derive aesthetic experiences from certain kinds of objects change, and a socially regulated standard of aesthetic welfare would be unable to accommodate the range of changing tastes. There are, moreover, circumstances wherein aesthetic values conflict with other values, because aesthetic welfare is but one aspect of the general welfare. But all of these "difficulties" are simply problems to be reckoned with in the pro-

cess of developing a socially useful concept of aesthetic welfare, and they should be resolved with the same creative skills of invention that we apply to satisfy other important human needs. It will be necessary for governmental, educational, and corporate institutions to consider the promotion and realization of aesthetic opportunities, creative and appreciative, in the various environments of human habitation.

World View

Rader, in his recent essay on environmental aesthetics, suggests there is a need to address the questions of environmental aesthetics in a wider philosophical context than is afforded by the concepts of environment, aesthetic value, and aesthetic welfare that we have been considering here.[31] Perhaps a world view which includes a body of principles that convey a consistent set of beliefs, propositions, and attitudes would satisfy this need for a wider philosophical perspective. From the point of view of environmental aesthetics, it would be desireable to distinguish between world views which show a greater or lesser compatibility with aesthetic values and welfare, and this can be accomplished by looking at the principles. Rader considers two representative sets of principles and finds that one of these offers much greater support for aesthetic interests than does the other. The set that he finds in greater harmony with aesthetic concerns includes the following principles: 1) composition or synthesis, 2) harmony with nature and 3) qualitative stabilization.[32] Composition or synthesis is holistic and community oriented, as opposed to being atomistic and individualistic in its orientation to the world. The principle of harmony with nature augments the holistic orientation of the first principle and relates aesthetic values to life forces in nature. The principle of qualitative stabilization of population and material progress accents the importance of qualitative experience, which is the realm of aesthetic value, and reinforces the value of life enhancement to which aesthetics is a contributing factor.

The alternative set of principles which Rader examines: atomism or configuration, dominion and conquest of nature, and quantitative expansion of population and material progress, represents the world view which has dominated recent approaches to both aesthetic and general welfare, particularly in America. This second world view has to a large extent demonstrated considerable indifference and neglect of aesthetics by its tacit assignment of a low priority to all aesthetic concerns. The environmental policies that have emerged from the application of this world view are actively or inadvertently detrimental to aesthetic welfare. Given a choice of these two world views, those who care about aesthetic welfare have little choice but to work from the position of the first set of principles. On the other hand, the benefits for aesthetics of acting on the principles of composition, harmony with nature, and qualitative stabilization of population and material growth could result in substantial advancement of aesthetic welfare. Rader's own words spell out the possible consequences for environmental aesthetics in an appealing manner:

> "Life enhancement will be preferred to life multiplication. There will be more in the way of personal services and less in the way of gadgets and commercial junk that no one needs. The public will be encouraged to buy products that involve the minimum environmental disruption. Waste will be largely replaced by conservation and recycling. The cherishing of nature's assets will be accounted morally good and their wanton destruction evil; but there will be no objection to the transformation of nature as long as it makes the world more fruitful, more beautiful, and more habitable. Human beings will be regarded as integral members of the ecosystem, not as outsiders or villainous intruders. They will delight in the sensuous qualities of the natural environment, in sights and sounds and odors, in tastes and touches. With

> the greater emphasis on the aesthetic side of life, the arts will flourish: sculpture and painting, dance, music, literature, architecture and civic design will play a greater role in human affairs. Skill and fine craftsmanship, which have been sc long sacrificed to the mass production of consumer goods, will revive and again flourish. Diversity will tend to replace uniformity, decentralization to replace overcrowding. Poverty will be extirpated where ever possible: wealth will be equitably distributed, and luxury confined to sensible limits. Science and technology will be prized as much as ever, but they will be given new directions."[33]

III.

The applied aspect of environmental aesthetics is a matter of genuine concern for every citizen who cares about the quality of the environment, and is especially to those persons responsible for public policies governing land use and physical environmental planning: governmental agency representatives, urban and regional planners, and corporate officials. Regulatory guidelines for publicly funded projects such as the guidelines of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, together with state and local legislation, create additional sets of special practical concerns for planners and developers.[34] These regulations, together with the planner's desire to win acceptance for his project by the surrounding community, are factors strongly motivating environmental aesthetics.

These practical concerns and the increasing necessity for environmental impact analysis, including assessment of the aesthetic impact of land use projects and building projects, have led to the creation of applied methods for measuring aesthetic environment and of technical theory for evaluating such methods. The results of these efforts are documented in the following publications: Aesthetics in Environmental Planning,[35] Landscape Assessment: Values, Perceptions, and Resources,[36] and Aesthetic Resources of the Coastal Zone.[37] Each of these contains an overview of present methods for assessing aesthetic values, and substantial bibliographies. These publications are oriented toward the use of aesthetic information in planning. They offer an excellent guide to the present "state of the art," and indicate some awareness of the inadequacies of current aesthetic assessment practices.

Applied environmental aesthetics deals with such problems as identifying and measuring aesthetic resources of the environment. Numerical systems that are intended to quantify aesthetic attributes by assigning numerical values to them are used for visual analysis.[38] Methods of environmental analysis developed by Zube and Mann broaden the scope of analysis to include a greater use of verbal descriptions, maps, and aerial photographs.[39] but they do remain within the limits of quantitative analysis.[40]

A close and critical analysis of the variety of methods presently available for environmental aesthetics analysis is too substantial a task for the present essay, but a cursory survey of them suggests that such an in-depth analysis from a philosophical perspective is needed. Here are some of the problems that require investigation. Applied environmental aesthetics suffers generally from the absence of theoretical and philosophical guidance. The existing references to general philosophical aesthetics in the literature of applied aesthetics appear as a general background, but there exists near total asymmetry between this literature and applied aesthetics.[41] Practically no evidence of the understanding gained from such literature appears in the discussion of applied environmental analysis. There is, moreover, seeming total unawareness of a body of philosophical writing directly concerned with the problems of environmental aesthetics.[42] The current "state of the art" suffers, therefore, from the absence of any respectably developed philosophical and theoretical grounding. The absence

of an adequate theory of aesthetic value, together with other circumstances attending the status of qualitative "knowledge" in the policy decision process, has resulted in a proliferation of methods inadequate and possibly inappropriate to the very nature of aesthetic value.

Why should this be the case? Perhaps contemporary philosophers are too content with contemplation and too little geared for participation in policy formulation affecting environment. This posture can be justified to a degree, philosophical work requiring research and contemplation. But is it desireable for philosophers to resign critical decision-making entirely to others? On the other hand, philosophers qualified and willing to participate have not often been consulted.[43] Perhaps another reason for the absence of philosophical contribution is that persons involved with applied environmental aesthetics just happen to emerge from scientific or management backgrounds and are unaware or unsympathetic to the multi-dimensional contributions of philosophers. There is a tendency among such persons to assume that all information that is useful for policy decision can be expressed in quantified terms. Yet our experience with aesthetic aspects of environment show that they consist of such attributes as affect, design quality, tone, distinctiveness, uniqueness, fineness, excellence, all of which are difficult to quantify in standard fashion as units of magnitude, amount, size, volume, or area. Methods dealing only or primarily with quantitative aspects of environment do not properly characterize it. Aesthetic interests are always disadvantaged in the policy process when compared with economic considerations which show to their best advantage in quantitative models. Even well-intentioned policy persons eager to advance aesthetic interests assume that the best thing that could happen would be to find a way to quantify aesthetic values, the assumption being that once quantified these values would stand a better competitive chance with economic and other interests more easily reducible to "data."

As an alternative to this approach, I propose a move in the direction of methodologies which will express convincingly qualitative aesthetic values. Artistic media--literary, visual, and auditory--would appear to have a better chance for success in such expression than statistical charts.[44] At very least, artistic expression could be used to augment the descriptions and measurements of the qualitative approaches. This is not merely a question of utilizing media, but of artists creating new dimensions in qualitative communications.[45]

There is need for an operational concept of "aesthetic resource" that tells us what is to be included and excluded and on what grounds. At the present time there is no agreement on criteria for deciding what constitutes aesthetic resources. Researchers in applied environmental aesthetics have attempted to deal with this problem in the context of land use or recreational studies, stressing such factors as scenic value, appearance and design; more advanced approaches broaden to include both natural and built aspects with some attention to cultural and historic features, and also take into account the inter-relation of the resource and the landscape.[46] This work provides elementary materials from which to develop a philosophical ground for the concept, but at present no such development is in evidence. Neither do the existing statements provide a definition adequately encompassing the aesthetic resources addressed in this essay--the arts as well as natural and built environments. The definition should be open rather than closed, because of the broad range of things that it must cover; it should be one with an incomplete set of properties whose subsets may vary, depending on which aspect of the concept is being applied.[47]

Deficiencies in other areas of environmental aesthetics can also be related to the lack of philosophical and theoretical grounding. The legitimacy and effectiveness of legal arguments in support of environmental aesthetics claims (e.g., claims intended to preserve landmarks or to restrict commercial uses of attractive waterfront land) would be greatly clarified and strengthened by a concept of aesthetic welfare and a notion of aesthetic rights developed and recognized by the philosophical community.[48]

IV.

The interdisciplinary character of environmental aesthetics which has been referred to throughout mandates the cooperation of philosophers with scholars in other disciplines. It is not possible here to refer in detail to the probable contributions of all other disciplines, but certain ones stand out. Kepes writing from the point of view of the visual arts advances considerably the relationship of the arts and environment.[49] Wohlwill's forthcoming essay on psychological research in environmental aesthetics reviews the empirical literature and discusses problems of methodology in such studies.[50] Geographers Lowenthal[51] and Tuan[52] writing on the perception of environments contribute another important perspective. Tuan's study of environmental perception in relation to culture and values, and Lowenthal's research on perception and environmental image formation are complementary to philosophical studies. Lynch's book The Image of the City remains a pivotal source which shows an environmental planner's attempt to map urban spaces according to aesthetic components of nodes, paths, and landmarks.[53] These examples are but a small sample of scholarly resources for interdisciplinary approaches to environmental aesthetics. Literature and the interest of scholars from many disciplines show that environmental aesthetics has already become a common focus of inquiry and make it an especially appropriate topic of interdisciplinary research. Yet a major problem remains: to establish cooperation among the philosophers, scientists, artists, other humanists, environmental planners, and policy administrators, each with a particular contribution, and to elicit the necessary public and political support for rational and humane policy and actions.

In broad terms these cooperative efforts might proceed along the following lines:

1. Conduct an extensive critical review of existing applied aesthetic methodologies, from an interdisciplinary base, including philosophical critique of the concepts and value implications to determine the kinds and scope of successes and deficiencies. This undertaking could build upon the previous work of Bagley, Mann and others. The present writer is engaged in undertaking to develop a philosophical critique of these methods.

2. Identify needs for basic and applied research, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, following upon the critical review above.

3. Identify and establish working communications among scholars, artists, and administrators who are qualified and interested in environmental aesthetics research at the basic or applied levels, for purposes of developing teams to conduct the research, and for establishing a check list of qualified consultants in the humanities, arts, and sciences for future projects. The references contained in this paper are part of an in process collection of such information.

4. Establish model experiments of interdisciplinary teams for basic and applied research, and for reporting and interpreting this research to policy makers and the public. These experiments would test out the feasibility of such cooperative research efforts and provide the basis for practical application of the notion of interdisciplinary environmental assessment teams, that include artists and philosophers.

5. Conduct philosophical and empirical inquiry on the question of the relative place of aesthetic value in an overall scheme of complementary competing values. Presently it is difficult for policy makers to come up with a program that justifies, for example, preserving an area for aesthetic reasons when property

values and developers' interests are affected. The research should provide philosophical discussion of the problem and should include empirical studies of what people are actually thinking on the question.[54]

6. Conduct research to establish sound philosophical and operational bases for educating the environmental aesthetics scholars, field workers, and writers. There is a need to investigate and develop models of environmental aesthetics education for the different tasks of basic and applied research; for field work in landscape assessment and planning; and for writing commentary and criticism on aesthetic aspects of the environment. At present no adequate guidance is available for establishing education programs in environmental aesthetics.

7. Conduct research on the public awareness aspects of environmental aesthetics projects and policies: collection of information; generation of supporting rationale; preparation of operational guidelines for specific projects; dissemination of all these to citizens groups and public officials. The Center for the Visual Environment located in Washington, D.C. represents a beginning of such research efforts, which could serve either as both an object of study or as part of a team for conducting such research.[55]

Footnotes

1. Seymour Sarason, The Creation of Settings (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972), p. 283.
2. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, Matrix of Man (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 110.
3. Fritz Lienemann, "Cities for the Citizen," Art and Environment (Berlin: Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art, 1976), p. 66.
4. Small green parks or gardens such as the one next to the Museum of Modern Art in New York provide aesthetic relief from the concrete urban environment in many places across the country. James Wines and the architects of S.I.T.E., Inc. who are developing brick and concrete buildings that are in fact sculptures and are also functional buildings have demonstrated new ways of enriching the sterile mortar and brick that dominates the urban environment. See Janet Bloom, "New Concepts for Public Space Combine Art and Architecture," Architectural Record (February, 1972), pp. 101-140. The center for the Visual Environment, located in Washington, D.C., Elizabeth Reid, Director, acts as a national resource center and clearing house for information on environmental aesthetics community projects. The center provides printed resources on such topics as the following: zoning ordinances, historic preservation, signs and bill boards, pedestrian environments, and renewal.
5. Statement of Habitat Forum Workshops on "The Arts and Human Settlements," Vancouver, Canada, June 4, 1976, submitted on behalf of the Forum Workshops by Elizabeth Lane, President, Canadian Conference of the Arts, 4438 Marguerite Street, Vancouver, B. C.
6. See, for example, Curtis L. Carter et. al, Aesthetics and Environmental Education: A Multi-disciplinary Resource for Curriculum Development (Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1976).
7. New York Times, August 15, 1976. Developer Miller Nichols whose company built Kansas City's Pioneering Shopping Center, Country Club Plaza, in 1922 has been a major advocate of bringing the arts into the streets.
8. Sven Sandstrom, "The Hierarchy of Exigencies and the Role of Art in Urban

Environment," Art and Environment, p. 98.

9. See the attached bibliography for notation of these contributions.
10. See Zdzislaw Cakowski, "Philosophical and General Methodological Problems of the Investigation of the Human Environment," Dialectics and Humanism, II (Spring, 1975), pp. 55-66, for a fuller analysis of environment.
11. John Passmore, Man's Responsibility for Nature (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1974).
12. Passmore, pp. 107-111.
13. Francis Sparshott, "Figuring the Ground," Journal of Aesthetics and Environmental Education, Vol. 6 (July, 1972), pp. 11-23.
14. Francis Sparshott, p. 15.
15. Francis Sparshott, p. 15.
16. John J. McDermott, "Nature Nostalgia and the City," in The Family, Communes, and Utopian Societies, S. Teselle, ed., (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1973), pp. 1-20.
17. Morton and Lucia White, The Intellectual Versus the City (New York, 1962).
18. See Barclay Jones, "Prolegommena to a Study of the Aesthetic Effects of Cities," Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism LVIII (June, 1960), pp. 419-429.
19. This need was called to my attention in a conversation with Charles Little, senior research consultant in land use policy, Library of Congress Environmental Policy Division.
20. See for example, William Wordsworth, Guide to the Lakes (1835) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970); J. B. Jackson, "Several American Landscapes," in E. H. Zube, ed., Selected Writings of J. B. Jackson (Amherst, Mass.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970); and Phillip Lewis, Upper Mississippi Comprehensive Basin Study, Appendix B; Aesthetic and Cultural Values (Madison, Wisconsin: 1969).
21. Constantine A. Doxiadis, Ekistics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
22. Sparshott, Francis, p. 19.
23. Melvin Rader and Bertram Jessup, Art and Human Values (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1976), p. 7.
24. See D. W. Prall, Esthetic Judgment (New York, New York: Apollo Editions, 1967), pp. 180-184; and John Hospers, Meaning and Truth in the Arts (Chapel Hill, N. C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1946), pp. 11-16.
25. See also Charles E. Little, "Preservation Policy and Personal Perception; A 200 Million Acre Misunderstanding," in Ervin H. Zube, Robert O. Brush, Julius Gy. Fabos, eds., Landscape Assessment: Values, Perceptions, and Resources (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania: Dowden, Hutchinson and Ross), pp. 46-57.
26. Monroe Beardsley, "Aesthetic Welfare," Journal of Aesthetic Education, IV (October 1970), pp. 9-20, and "Aesthetic Welfare, Aesthetic Justice, and Educational Policy," VIII (October 1973), pp. 49-62.
27. Albert W. Levi, "Art and the General Welfare," Journal of Aesthetic Education, VII (October 1973), pp. 39-48.
28. Monroe Beardsley, 1973, pp. 51-54.
29. Monroe Beardsley, 1973, p. 53.
30. Monroe Beardsley, 1973, p. 54.
31. Rader and Jessup, pp. 352-385.
32. Rader and Jessup, pp. 365-379.
33. Rader and Jessup, pp. 377-378.
34. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 emphasizes aesthetics in its guidelines for environmental impact statements stating that: "The Federal government use all practicable means...to...assure for all Americans... aesthetically and culturally pleasant surroundings...and to preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage ...." NEPA, Sec. 101 (b) (2, 4). The Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 stresses the importance of aesthetic resources to the future well-being of the nation. See Roy Mann Associates, Aesthetic Resources of the Coastal Zone, prepared for the U. S. Office of Coastal Zone Management, National

Oceanic and Atmosphere Administration, July 1975, Washington, D.C.

35. Marilyn D. Bagley, Cynthia A. Kroll, Clark Kristin, Aesthetics in Environmental Planning, prepared for U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D. C., 1973.
36. Ervin H. Zube, Robert O. Brush, Julius Gy. Fabos, eds., Landscape Assessment: Values, Perceptions, and Resources (Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania: Halsted Press, 1975).
37. Mann, Aesthetic Resources of the Coastal Zone.
38. Bagley, p. 43.
39. Bagley, pp. 81-85; Mann, pp. 139-156.
40. "Quantitative" refers to characteristics of a thing that can be expressed as measured units: magnitude, amount, size, volume, area, length; "qualitative" refers to the less tangible aspects of a thing: affect, design, tone, distinctiveness, uniqueness, fineness, excellence, which elude any quantitative scale.
41. See for example Bagley, pp. 14-104.
42. See the previous section of the essay.
43. Some philosophers would reject the suggestion that they should be participating in the affairs of the world, and would insist that their sole task is to deal with philosophical issues in epistemology, logic, ethics, or metaphysics. I do not share this view.
44. The kind of creative approach of young writers such as William Carney represents a promising direction. See his Trees for Cincinnati prepared for the Cincinnati Institute and A Berkshire Sourcebook prepared for the Junior League of Berkshire County.
45. A considerable advancement in the recognition of the qualitative aspect of environmental aesthetics appears in Mann's study, Aesthetic Resources of the Coastal Zone, p. 29. He attempts to take account of qualitative attributes of aesthetic resources and provides data which can be developed. But he appears to return to quantitative methods when it comes to inventory and evaluation of these resources.
46. Mann reviews the current methods of identifying aesthetic resources in Aesthetic Resources of the Coastal Zone, pp. 10-20, and develops his own approach for application to Coastal Zone resources, pp. 20-60.
47. There is precedent for this approach to definition in aesthetics; see Morris Weitz, "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," in Problems in Aesthetics, (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 169-180.
48. See Robert E. Manley and Timothy A. Fischer, "The Effect of Aesthetic Considerations on the Validity of Zoning Ordinances; the Status of Aesthetic Land Use Controls in Ohio," The Cincinnati Institute, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1974; and Bagley, Aesthetics in Environmental Planning, pp. 31-38.
49. See Gyorgy Kepes, ed., The New Landscape in Art and Science (Chicago: Paul Theobard, 1956); and Arts of the Environment (New York: George Braziller, 1972).
50. Joachim F. Wohlwill, "Environmental Aesthetics: The Environment as a Source of Affect," to appear in I. Altman and J. F. Wohlwill, eds., Human Behavior and Environment. I (New York: Plenum Press, 1976).
51. David Lowenthal, "Images of Nature in America," Columbia University Forum, VII, (1966), pp. 34-40; and "Environmental Perception and Behavior," Research Paper No. 109, University of Chicago Department of Geography (1967).
52. Yi-Fu Tuan, Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1974).
53. Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1960).
54. Charles E. Little, Specialist, Environment and Natural Resources, at the Environmental Policy Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, has proposed a series of American Land Forums to determine such information, in an unpublished paper, "The American Land Forums."
55. Charles E. Little, specialist at the Library of Congress, has been especially helpful in providing information on applied environmental aesthetics.

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Conferences on Environmental Aesthetics

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November 13, 14, 1970

"Aesthetics of the City," Chairman, Curtis L. Carter
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April 19-21, 1972

American Society for Aesthetics
Annual Meetings: Workshops, Symposia, Papers
1971, Los Angeles; 1974, Fairfield, Connecticut; 1976, Toronto

"Art, Science and Technology in Shaping the Environment of the Future"
Chairman Arnold Berleant
Sponsored by The American Association for the Advancement of Science
Boston, February 22, 1976