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## Temporality and intergenerational thinking in aesthetics

### Abstract

*Environmental changes on a vast scale have motivated philosophers to consider problems related to intergenerational justice and future generations of people, nonhumans, and the earth they inhabit. How should the field of aesthetics respond? The aim of this special issue of “Studi di Estetica” is to create space for scholars to bring temporality and intergenerational aesthetics more deeply into the field. The articles here are focused on temporality in art, nature, modified environments and relationships between them. In this introductory essay, I explore, first, how temporality features in the phenomena of aesthetic experience of environment, in living and nonliving things, creatures, situations, places, settings, and processes. Second, I address how the resources of the aesthetic subject (senses, imagination, emotions, and knowledge) grapple with environmental temporality and the future. To conclude the essay, I sketch out what it means to show “aesthetic concern” for future generations by drawing on ideas from environmental virtue aesthetics.*

### Keywords

*Environmental aesthetics, Temporality, Intergenerational aesthetics*

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### 1. *Introduction: bringing temporality into aesthetics*

What kinds of questions and issues arise when considering the concept of temporality in philosophical aesthetics? In what ways are *time concepts* relevant to the domain of the arts, everyday, and environmental aesthetics? The aim of this special issue of “Studi di Estetica” is to create space for scholars to bring temporality more deeply into aesthetic theory. The articles which follow my introduction are focused on temporality in art, nature, modified environments, and their interactions. Here, a special role emerges for intergenerational thinking or issues concerning future generations of people, nonhumans, and the earth they inhabit. Many academic fields have been studying the implications of environmental change by exploring topics such as the Anthropocene, time, and futures studies. Environmental changes on a vast scale have propelled moral and political philosophy to address problems related to intergenerational thinking and future generations. In response, philosophers have already been playing a role in impactful research for finding practical solutions to mitigation and adaptation in our globally warming world. What are the implications for aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, species, and ecologies affected by human-induced environmental change? What place do the arts and aesthetic experience have in enabling mitigation or adaptation to climate change? What are the implications for cultural production and artistic creation, and what do we owe future generations of aesthetic valuers? In order to establish new directions for the field, this introductory essay and the articles that follow address questions and topics such as these.

Philosophers have long considered the problem of time, and amidst these complex metaphysical discussions, one thing is clear: time is pervasive, a deep feature of the world and our experience of it. Jenann Ismael highlights the fundamental feature of time from the subject’s perspective:

We are temporal beings. We have history, we keep a running record of our histories as they unfold, and we act with an eye to the future. [...] The past seems fixed, but there is a sense of openness about the future. Change and movement are the rule rather than the exception. We are almost irresistibly inclined to describe time in dynamic terms. We say that one event gives rise to the next, that time passes or flows, that we cannot stop the fleeting moment from being incorporated irretrievably into the past. (Ismael 2011: 460)

Time is also taken as an objective or “real” feature of the world, described by physics as change and measured through intervals. But the subject cannot experience time as it is measured objectively, that is, one cannot observe time; it is not an object (Dyke 2021: 1). The subject is always experiencing the world from the present point of view or the “here-now” (Ismael 2011: 480). We can, however, experience time through changes in our environment: the clouds move across the sun, throwing different shadows onto the wall in my study through the morning hours; I am comfortable sitting at my desk and then, some time later, I feel cold and put on a cardigan. This subjective point of view on change is both a pervasive feature of experience but also one which, as we shall see, is especially relevant to environmental aesthetics.

Setting out some basic time concepts or terms will be helpful for incorporating a temporal mindset into our aesthetic lexicon and our encounters and reflections. As we would expect, a wide range of terms speak to temporal material qualities, their conditions, and our perception of them. Intervals of time are named by moment, hour, month, season, decade, all the way to the longer durations of lifetime, generation, era, age, epoch. The earth’s rotation establishes day, and night, with years and seasons related to the earth’s orbit around the sun. A variety of temporal concepts enable us to navigate our world: begin, grow, move, end, die, restore, coming, going, passing, early, late, constant, always, often, forever, never, now, present, past, future, permanent, impermanent, eternal, finite, infinite, and so on. There are also terms that suggest particular attitudes or beliefs: expectation, anticipation, outlook, prospect, possible, potential, prediction, forecast, and hope<sup>1</sup>. Below, I draw on many of these terms to articulate temporally rich aesthetic perspectives.

The field of aesthetics, more generally, has already considered some issues related to temporality and intergenerational thinking. In aesthetic evaluation, the “test of time”, examines the extent to which works of art are valued across centuries of human history. In the interpretation of art, philosophers debate whether a traditional interpretation of a work is more appropriate than a historicist one, with the former stressing authenticity and the latter, the historical contexts and narratives surrounding a work. There has been new work on the memorial arts, ruins, and

<sup>1</sup> My source for many of the terms in this paragraph is *Google dictionary*, provided by Oxford Languages (2022).

historical aesthetic values, too (Bicknell *et al.* 2019; Korsmeyer 2020). The arts, themselves, depend upon, embody, represent, or express ideas of time and temporality, especially art forms such as dance (movement, rhythm, count, dynamics, sequence, transition), music (tempo, beat, pulse, harmony, progression, crescendo), and film and video art (moving images). Individual artworks, too, address themes on the passage of time or temporality and, here, the narrative arts (beginning, middle, end) and poetry play a significant role. Beyond the arts, aesthetics abounds with examples of value terms that are linked in some way to time. In the philosophy of food and wine, temporal concepts come into play because of the ways that wine or cheese are produced. A cheese is ripe or a wine is corked. In fashion, we have styles like retro, vintage, or futuristic. Temporality is significant to understanding many ideas in global aesthetics, too. In the Japanese aesthetic tradition aesthetic qualities like ephemerality come into play, as in comparing the transience in human lives with falling cherry blossoms. Wider philosophical ideas and religious or spiritual beliefs also shape aesthetic experience, such as impermanence, a starting point of Buddhism (Saito 2007). A range of cosmologies in which time is central and conceived differently than in European traditions shape experience, such as the “Dreamtime”, a foundation of indigenous Australian culture (Jarosz forthcoming).

Temporality and intergenerational issues span a range of areas in the field including the arts, urban, everyday, and applied aesthetics (Capdevila-Werning, Lehtinen 2021). In the discussion that follows, I focus on how time and change feature in the phenomena of aesthetic experience of environment, in living and nonliving things, creatures, situations, places, settings, and processes. I then move on to explore the resources of the aesthetic subject, that is, how the senses, imagination, emotions, and knowledge grapple with environmental temporality and the future. To conclude the essay, I sketch out what it means to show *aesthetic concern for future generations*.

## 2. *Aesthetic phenomena and temporality*

How do temporal terms feature as aesthetic concepts in experiences of environment? Beginning with particular objects, for example, Yuriko Saito conveys material change:

Change or vicissitude in itself is value-neutral; it is neither for better or for worse. However, in our experience of the changes that material objects, including our bodies, go through, we often regard them evaluatively. Sometimes our attitude is positive and we welcome changes, as things “mature”, “ripen”, “develop”, “mellow”, or “season”. More often, however, we lament the change as things “age”, “decay”, “decline”, “deteriorate”, “wane”, “decompose”, or simply “get old”. (Saito 2007: 149)

Imagine a bowl of apples which are attractively colored yet unripe and too hard to eat, or a bunch of overly ripe bananas with their strong odor overpowering a kitchen. Decomposition has many stages; in the beginning there may be difficult beauty, as the lively pattern of a dead snake’s skin catches the eye before insects reduce the body to a shrunken form.

When reflecting on human and nonhuman relationships to environment, intervals of time are especially significant in the way that they shape our experiences. A grand, old tree graces a park, appreciated for its beauty and the long, spreading limbs which have provided shade for generations of inhabitants. The continuous experience of changing environments captures temporality in phenomena across various time frames. On a small farm, weather fronts coming and going, as well as the seasons, shape a farmer’s aesthetic experiences of her surroundings. An approaching storm brings a still landscape to life, with wind causing the hayfields to move gracefully like a sea of golden waves. When the hay is cut next month, a field of gold stubble rooted in brown soil will change the scene again. That same field will be plowed to reveal a rich earthy color before the green shoots of a new crop emerge in the spring.

Seasonal changes play a significant role in shaping aesthetic qualities of environment. Aldo Leopold’s *A Sand County Almanac* (2013) narrates ecological changes across twelve months in Sand County, Wisconsin. Leopold’s narrative integrates the aesthetic and ecological, rather than focusing merely on surface-level aesthetics or the “pretty”. He begins his account in January, observing the interactions of animals after a thaw:

A rough-legged hawk comes sailing over the meadow ahead. Now he stops, hovers like a kingfisher, and then drops like a feathered bomb into the marsh. He does not rise again, so I am sure he has caught, and is now eating, some worried mouse-engineer who could not wait until night to inspect the damage to his well-ordered world. [...] The rough-leg has no opinion why grass grows, but he is well aware that snow melts in order that hawks may again catch field mice. He came down out of the Arctic in the hope of thaws, for to him a thaw means freedom from want and fear. (Leopold 2013: 6)

Leopold captures the phenology of place, specifically, the season of winter and specific changes in the weather shaping the ecology of the place<sup>2</sup>. The mouse ventures out to explore the thaw and becomes prey for a hawk who has arrived at the site, after the hawk's fall migration. In only a brief episode of a predator-prey relationship, he compresses various intervals of time: minutes, days, seasons, year.

The seasons shape all kinds of accounts of nature, from nonfiction essays to poetry, as we find in one of the most well known poems in this respect, James Thomson's *The Seasons*, written early in the eighteenth century:

AND see where surly WINTER passes off,  
Far to the north, and calls his ruffian blasts;  
His blasts obey, and quit the howling hill,  
The shatter'd forest, and the ravag'd vale:  
While softer gales succeed, at whose kind touch,  
Dissolving snows in livid torrents lost,  
The mountains lift their green heads to the sky.

Here, Thomson's setting for *Spring* is the countryside, perhaps the Scottish Borders where he grew up, rural places which mix natural forces with human cultivation of the land. Keeping with historical sources and mixed environments, in the Picturesque style the effects of the passage of time create aesthetic qualities which are highly valued. Isis Brook presents "time" as one of the themes of the Picturesque as its designed landscapes attempt to capture nature's wildness: "Here nature as entropic of human order brings about unplanned changes that render what was once simple and smooth – the epitome of the beautiful – into the epitome of the picturesque" (Brady, Brook, Prior 2018: 25). Gnarled, stooping trees are preferred to young, upright ones, and "sham ruins" overgrown with vegetation feature as expressions of the passage of time, reflecting the architecture of ancient Greece (Herrington 2009: 76). The Picturesque and other aesthetic expressions of temporality are the subject of criticism, however, for their tendency to romanticize the

<sup>2</sup> Phenology was a regular practice of Aldo Leopold and his family. "Phenology is the study of annual events in nature that are influenced by seasonal changes such as climate and weather. [...] The data collected by the Leopold family along with other natural resource professionals around the state have allowed scientists and community members to track seasonal and climatic changes in Wisconsin for close to 90 years" (Aldo Leopold Foundation 2022).

past. Although the Picturesque offers some interesting ways to conceive of the intermingling of nature and culture, the movement was largely in the service of wealthy English landowners and their landscape designers who merrily sentimentalized the lives of rural dwellers who, in fact, were often living in poverty. In a similar vein, Saito points to how the aestheticization of transience – falling cherry blossoms – was used to champion dubious kinds of nationalistic fervor (Saito 2007: 196).

Aesthetic qualities which are expressive of the passage of time or impermanence need not be, also, expressive of sentimental or partial views of past relationships between people and place. The everyday context of gardens provides some evidence for my point. The category of gardens ranges from the grand gardens of palaces and stately homes to the more humble spaces of neighborhood backyards, community gardens, and allotments. The humble spaces are not viewed from a distance as a scene laid out across acres of manicured land; rather they are active and bustling, where people meet together while cultivating and caring for plants. You don't have to be an experienced gardener to witness the passage of time and delight in the changing seasons while working the soil; listening to birdsong on a late summer morning, feeling snow flurries on your face while digging out root vegetables, or reveling in the beauty of eagerly awaited flowers in early spring. David Cooper remarks on the coming, going, and passing of aesthetic qualities in gardens, and how gardens are subject to physical changes as plants grow and die or rain comes and goes, changing phenomenal conditions, as the light affects the colors and forms of plants, and design changes made by gardeners (Cooper 2006: 29). Time is intentionally designed into gardens in various ways, often to create a particular kind of experience. Japanese "stroll gardens", for example, use garden elements to focus one's attention on the present, on the "act of walking itself" or change the speed of walking by introducing different walking surfaces like stepping stones (Miller 1993: 42).

Like gardens, many kinds of ecological and land art also engage with ecological change in the context of creation and cultivation. Ecological artists often adopt remedial aims, collaborating with scientists to restore ecologies damaged by human beings, such as Mel Chin's series, "Revival Field" (1991-). Chin describes this work as sculptural, conceptual, and ecological, with the first "experiment" working in Pig's Eye Landfill, a degraded site in Minnesota, "a replicated field test using special hyperaccumulator plants to extract heavy metals from contaminated soil" (Chin 2022). On a larger scale, Patricia Johanson's art practice ima-

gines future harmonious human-nature relationships by restoring degraded places and creating mutually beneficial futures for plants, humans, and animals. “The Draw at Sugar House” (Utah, 2003) “combines engineering, sculpture, landscaping, flood control, wildlife habitat” and “allows floodwater that overtops the detention basin in Sugar House Park to flow under an eight-lane highway and drain safely into Parley’s Creek in Hidden Hollow” (Johanson 2022). This restored space includes structural features for recreation as well as flood control which, together, create a design that is intended to “evoke the historical journey of 19th century pioneers into Salt Lake Valley” (Johanson 2022).

Ecological restoration projects, as such, are not typically categorized as an art form, but aesthetic considerations become relevant depending upon the project in question. Remei Capdevila-Werning’s article in this issue of the journal, *The preservation of the Bosc de Tosca: complexities, challenges, and intergenerational aesthetics*, explores aesthetic aspects in the preservation project of the Bosc de Tosca in Spain, revealing the potential conflict between aesthetics and sustainability as the heritage of this place is preserved for current and future generations of the local community. She argues for the value of integrating “intergenerational aesthetics” into theory and practice, in so far as this approach “offers criteria to determine what aesthetic decisions should be taken now bearing in mind the potential aesthetic experience of future generations” (2022). Capdevila-Werning emphasizes the role of the local community in the restoration project and how important this becomes with regard to future generations. In this way, she integrates a *diachronic* approach to place, that is, one that recognizes the dynamic, changing character of environments, evolving ecological changes, and how nature-culture narratives unfold over time (O’Neill, Holland, Light 2008). Sensitivity to past, present, and potential future trajectories helps to capture intergenerational concerns and perhaps, even, intergenerational justice. These ideas are apparent, too, in the Parc Penallta restoration project in Wales, where a former colliery landscape was transformed into a park. The vision for the site was diachronic, attempting to include and preserve the mining heritage of the local community while also looking toward the future use of the place by the community. Parc Penallta combined the aims of landscape preservation and design with the restoration of animal habitats and heritage arts. In addition to restoring a marsh and creating places for recreation, the park included a new sculpture by Mick Petts, the large earthwork built from the old coal

shale “Sultan the Pit Pony” which represented a pony who had worked in the colliery (Brady, Brook, Prior 2018: 92ff.).

These restoration cases exist in relatively compressed time frames in terms of reference to generations of people and nature. But many scholars have been exploring the relationship between humans and nature through ideas which refer to much longer periods of time, geological time frames such as we find in deep time and the Anthropocene. How do these vast time frames become relevant to aesthetic experience, meanings, and values? Deep time is captured in aesthetic experiences of geological wonders such as the sublime expanse and colors of the Grand Canyon or the active volcano, Mount Etna, with its plumes of smoke and glowing lava flows. The new geological era of the Anthropocene, as designated by stratigraphers, identifies the pervasive ways in which human beings have altered the planet. We do not have to look across epochs to witness how humans have altered or destroyed particular places in long-lasting ways. Edward Burtynsky’s art photographs capture the vast scale of open cast mines such as those found in the West Australian gold fields. “Super Pit #4, Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, 2007” presents a pit some 3.5 kilometers across with a depth of 180 meters (Burtynsky 2022; Farrier 2020: 48). His photographs can be interpreted as expressing the tragic beauty or negative sublime of these landscapes – or simply the destruction of geological and other values. Change on such a scale affects the earth’s surface or rocks, minerals, etc., and will seem irreversible to present and near future generations of people.

Climate change is inextricably a temporal concept. All kinds of changes have been occurring across the planet and atmosphere, with both scientific and public discourse attempting to understand future trajectories as we take actions for prevention, mitigation, and adaptation (IPCC 2022). What are the implications for aesthetic appreciation of landscapes, species, and ecologies affected by human-induced global warming? Considering the cryosphere, for example, as it changes and parts disappear (glaciers, sea ice, ice caps, snow and permafrost), multi-sensory aesthetic qualities, meanings, and values will shift and evolve. Witnessing the melting of ice sheets on a micro-level is vivid but alarming, as David Farrier writes, “dull white slush, even pools of dark water gather on the surface of the ice sheet, forming deep pits. [...] Soot deposits from distant forest fires and industrial activity, even in tiny grains, create pockets of heat that allow bacteria and vegetation to colonize, further darkening the ice” (Farrier 2020: 137). As the ice melts away, in

one perceptual moment it seems that we are able to grasp an entire history.

### 3. *Intergenerationality and the aesthetic subject*

In *The inner life of time. Nature across generations* (this issue), Pier Alberto Porceddu Cilione invites the reader to rework their sense of time and develop a deep sense of the “generative rhythm of nature”. Giuseppe Penone’s large-scale sculptures from trees, wood, bronze, and stone open avenues for discovering the “hidden temporality of nature” by “digging into being, in search of the long-lasting” (2022). Such rediscovery necessarily reaches beyond objective or physical time, as Penone’s works relate rhythms of growth, aging, and future natures. Cilione’s call for a transformative reset of our temporal sense of nature and our own being emphasizes the relationality and care which feature in human-plant interactions. His essay highlights, for me, the meanings and values which emerge from exploring not only the arts and environment, but also the very experience of the aesthetic subject.

Now, then, I turn from temporality and intergenerationality with respect to aesthetic qualities and phenomena to the perspective of the aesthetic subject. I have adopted this structure in the essay for ease of analysis only, that is, it is not intended to suggest a strong separation between subject and object in my approach. I conceive of aesthetic experience as a relationship between the perceiver and what is being perceived and, as I see it, environmental aesthetics is best understood through a relational, integrated, and pluralist theory (Brady 2003; 2022). Put succinctly, the “integrated aesthetic” combines a situated and immersive environmental subject with a range of capacities drawn upon in aesthetic encounters, including the senses, thought, emotion, imagination, and knowledge. I conceive of the human subject as part of an ecological and cultural web of relationships where aesthetic meanings and values emerge from relationships between subjects and phenomena. Being open and receptive, or exercising sympathetic attention to the world, is a key feature of environmental aesthetic experience. In addition, aesthetic meanings and values are conceived, in my view, as relational and pluralistic. That is, there are a variety of aesthetic values, positive and negative, and a critically pluralist approach is prudent when assessing our aesthetic interpretations and judgments (Brady 2003; 2023).

Plant-grafting provides a fascinating example of harmonious human-plant interactions which produce craft, art, and food. In Harrison Farina's article (this issue), *Sustainable pasts, edible futures: learning to craft a livable world through plant-techne*, he brings a Greek concept for time, *kairos*, into dialogue with sustainable futures: "a successful art of plants harmonizes nature and art through a co-constituted goal" which "preserve[s] the plant's natural telos to reproduce". To produce future sustenance from plants in a caring way, grafting must be sensitive to the "when plants are softer, drier, and about to receive nutrients that can be diverted to the cuts to heal and create new growths" (Farina 2022). Farina shows how time comes into play in the subject's perspective as it is situated within an ecological relationship of past, present, and future.

This case and others discussed in the articles here serve to highlight intergenerational aesthetic meanings and values or how one generation's aesthetic experiences become meaningful for the next generation. A mother shows her daughter how to raise dahlias, and the daughter shows her daughter how to keep that same bed of dahlias in the community garden blooming into the future. This is not to say, of course, that the mother and daughter have the *same* aesthetic values, for each person can appreciate the dahlias in different ways and bring their own forms of care to cultivating the dahlias. Rather, my point is that sharing aesthetic experiences across generations can lead to the persistence of aesthetic meanings and values. A desire to conserve the particular values of a place, most notably ecological value, is an important function of environmental conservation. In the case of the dahlia garden I have applied the idea to the context of a community garden and generations of aesthetic appreciators. Passing on aesthetic values, as it were, is *not* about the museumification of a place or a preservationist attitude. As I see it, when aesthetic concerns are part of conservation aims, "aesthetic integrity", is called for (Brady 2018; O'Neill, Holland, Light 2008). This means that we should adopt a diachronic approach to understanding place, be sensitive to ecological-human narratives and stories, and consider appropriate trajectories or futures. History and memory form a large part of how we build knowledge of these narratives; when multiple histories or future narratives are under discussion, critically adjudicating between them will be required. Transferring the meanings and significance of the predominant aesthetic character of a place will be a key feature of achieving aesthetic integrity, for example, by avoiding sharp breaks that do not serve harmonious ecological-human relationships. Returning to Capdevila-Werning's ideas from

above, she explains how future aesthetic subjects can be included in exploring trajectories: “Intergenerational aesthetics aims at including the potential aesthetic experience and judgments of future generations [in] the current aesthetic reflection and practice. [...] It focuses on aesthetic values in terms of obligations towards future generations” (Capdevila-Werning 2022; see also Capdevila-Werning, Lehtinen 2021). With respect to these ideas, it’s important to keep in mind the extent to which the uncertainty and unpredictability of environmental change creates challenges to effectively taking account of future aesthetic values and valuers. In any case, the point stands that an approach inclusive of future generations is desirable.

Aesthetic tastes evolve depending upon all kinds of factors like age, peer groups, exposure to new art forms or different environmental contexts, and other cultural and social influences. Relationships between particular aesthetic subjects and the places that they cherish are reshaped interactively over time; human and other cycles of life in tandem with environmental change. A period of prolonged drought that has destroyed the viability of the family farm means that the farmer will be facing all kinds of socio-economic hardships and, alongside this, their daily aesthetic experiences may shift. Instead of joy in response to the beauty of flowing fields of wheat, negative emotions may pervade the experience – despair not only for the loss of crops, but also for what else is lost, dead trees, fewer birds and insects, and other aspects of the place that gave it beauty and ecological health before the drought set in. This case reveals the dynamic flow of emotions as they unfold – joy, despair and perhaps, later, hope as the farmer is able to adapt new methods of farming or create different economic opportunities which are less reliant on water.

How can we capture longer time scales of aesthetic valuing? That is, how can we explore aesthetic futures in the present day? One resource comes readily to mind: imagination. Imagination has been philosophized as having various functions or capacities but most relevant for my purposes here are: thinking of something not present to the senses; entertaining mental images; envisaging alternative ways in which the world might appear; thinking of future possibilities; the power behind creativity and invention; and the power which drives the creation of works of art (Stevenson 2003). Imagination positions perception, thought, and understanding beyond the here and now and enables us to envisage all kinds of not-present things, including future scenarios and unfolding narratives. Imagination is in great demand due to the special features of

climate change: its temporal scale; extraordinary effects on the earth and atmosphere; and the need for predictions and climate models. Scientists can help us to understand current and future risks but with much of our knowledge of climate change being iterative rather than definitive, imagination is required to try to grasp just what we can expect. Envisaging possible worlds and alternative technologies are important avenues for creating new forms of adaptation (Richardson 2019; Fudge 2021). Imagination has always been at the heart of innovation and cutting-edge design; brought into the fields of planning and architecture, it can assist in designing climate-resilient buildings and other structures to mitigate the effects of more frequent severe weather events like hurricanes and flooding. New technologies, including forms of renewable energy, also rely on inventive ways of thinking and envisaging the needs of future generations of people and nature.

In her article (this issue), *The principle of mutuality: an art-based approach to environmental aesthetics and ecological thinking*, Ermelinda Rodilosso (2022) argues that the narrative arts, especially fiction, can play a powerful role in environmental aesthetics. She observes the mutuality of the immersive, dynamic, and temporal features of both fiction and experience of environment, pointing to how the temporal in fiction is especially useful with respect to grasping intergenerational aesthetics. Rodilosso argues that “a form of art that can adequately expose the manifestations of change – even climate change – can provide us with cognitive resources regarding the extent and the consequences of the Anthropocene”. By projecting ourselves *into* narratives, for example, we can “imagine different aesthetic and ethical values concerning the environment and future generations”. In addition, I would point to indigenous and local ecological knowledge, and how the diversity of perspectives, stories, folklore, myths and cosmologies, can assist in aesthetically characterizing environmental change (Kimmerer 2013; Jarosz forthcoming).

When it comes to envisaging environments of the future, I agree that there are various ways in which imagination can engage intergenerational concerns and support transformative visions of the future. “Ampliative imagination”, for example, enables a temporal expansion of what is perceived by overlaying the landscape with an unfolding narrative of future scenarios (Brady 2003: 156-7; Mikkonen 2018; 2022). Consider the farm that has been suffering from drought. The farmer draws upon multisensory resources to perceive the qualities of the landscape as it transforms from rich fields of green and plentiful water in the

creeks and ponds to a brown landscape with dried up, rocky creek beds and the soil around the ponds revealed by lower water depth. In essence, through imagined future states of the place, the various perceptual qualities of the farm are amplified to configure worse states of drought. The crops have completely failed, the earth is dry and cracked, and all of the ponds have dried up. Whether through its projective or ampliative powers, imagination can bring home probable scenarios and thus provide a better understanding of what is needed to mitigate and adapt. Imagination can fail us, though. Sometimes the attempt to grasp what may lie in the future is too far beyond our ken, bearing no resemblance to our present understanding of ourselves and our planet. Or, the possibilities and future scenarios are just too innumerable and speculative to take hold of, even by the most inventive power of the mind (Mikkonen 2022).

Recognizing a plurality of aesthetic experiences and values, I believe, becomes even more important as we adapt aesthetic preferences to a climate-changed world. Auer (2019: 9) argues that people's lives will be so negatively impacted that positive appreciation will be limited and tainted with regret: "Pervasive ugliness will limit opportunities for pleasurable experiences, but so may the constant stress of having to satisfy physiological needs – a reality that may affect tens of or even hundreds of millions of people as early as 2050". Perhaps this is overly pessimistic, but he's right to point out that we should be prepared for decreased aesthetic value in the world. In *Radioactive futures of environmental aesthetics* (this issue), Mario Verdicchio presents a case which perhaps illustrates Auer's concerns. Nuclear waste extends over a "time scale that transcends generations and is rather comparable to geological era". In the face of such deep intergenerational environmental change, Verdicchio argues that environmental aesthetics needs be flexible in the face of the "blandsapes" that are the likely future of managing nuclear waste as safely as possible. Abandoning a fixation on beauty or scenic landscapes is required to accommodate the vast waste repositories which have to be placed at a great distance from human habitation to protect people from long-lasting radioactivity and other dangers. The waste is stored underground and inaccessible, invisible from a landscape perspective though very real from a geological one. Furthermore, radiation itself is not something which anyone ought to appreciate through direct perception! Verdicchio brings to light the need for actually creating *repulsive* landscapes which will deter future generations from getting anywhere close to the repositories. More generally, we need a plu-

rality of intergenerational aesthetic values inclusive enough to encompass a range of landscape tastes, natural, modified, scenic, bland or ugly.

If we are sensitive aesthetic subjects, then we are bound to adjust our sensitivity in light of future scenarios which demand an evolution of our values, however, this evolution is likely to be demanding and require relevant guidance.

#### *4. Conclusion: aesthetic concern for future generations*

How might we evolve our aesthetic perspectives to include what I call *aesthetic concern for future generations*, and why does such concern matter at all? My view is this: if we accept that future generations of the earth and its inhabitants ought to be provided with similar or better protection from, for example, the effects of global warming, and that intergenerational justice is a worthy pursuit, then aesthetics should inform our efforts. An important assumption underlying my claim is that aesthetics contributes to meaningful and flourishing human lives, and our aesthetic-ethical relationships with nature contribute to ecological flourishing (Brady, Brook, Prior 2018). Based on this assumption, the development of appreciative virtues provides a promising foundation for exercising aesthetic concern for future generations.

In the case of intergenerational aesthetics we are, necessarily, working with the contingencies of future scenarios. Given the flexibility inherent in virtue-based ethical theories, they can provide a relevant direction for bringing intergenerational concerns into the environmental context. For example, Marcello Di Paola (2017) bridges the ethical and aesthetic when he argues that we may find courage to face the Anthropocene through the cultivation of virtues in the context of gardening practice, where we learn and exercise virtues such as wonder, ingenuity, humility, perseverance, mindfulness, and cheerfulness. Environmental virtue aesthetics or EVA (Hall, Brady 2023) develops a revised notion of respect and prescribes the development of aesthetic sensibilities, care, sympathetic attention, imagination, and other kinds of appreciative virtues. EVA has the potential to support forms of human-nature co-flourishing, as well as constituting an aesthetic grounding for ecological citizenship.

Capdevila-Werning and Lehtinen take a further step by explicitly connecting intergenerational aesthetics to normative concerns through the following principles:

Aesthetic decisions made in the present should not foreclose future aesthetic judgment, experience, and attribution of values, nor limit the possibilities of interpretation and meaning. Aesthetic decisions should maintain access to existing aesthetic values and taste, but not impose one's aesthetic worldview on future generations. Aesthetic decisions should also aim at non-deception and at seeking truthfulness whenever possible. (Capdevila-Werning, Lehtinen 2021: 47-8)

These principles are clearly useful when it comes to planning and decision-making for modified and built environments and their future trajectories, including the kinds of restoration projects mentioned above. I would add that in cases of rewilding, where the aim is to enable nature's autonomy rather than continuous management of a place, there will be considerable unpredictability as to just what aesthetic values may unfold (Prior, Brady 2017). In this respect, and in other cases where such autonomy is more pervasive, flexibility will certainly be called for. Environmental virtue aesthetics comes into its own here, as we develop our aesthetic characters to respond accordingly and in line with appreciative virtues which ultimately benefit present and future generations of people and nature.

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