

Contemporary AESTHETICS

An international, interdisciplinary, peer- and blind-reviewed open-access
online journal
of contemporary theory, research, and application in aesthetics.

Home

Volume: Special Volume 11 (2024)

**The
Journal**

Donate to CA

**Call For
Papers**

The free access to this article was made possible by support from readers like you. Please consider donating any amount to help defray the cost of our operation.

**About
CA**

**Submiss
ions**

Landscape Education, Enskilment, and Aesthetics: Complex Skills for Our Time

**Ethics
Stateme
nt**

Alberto L. Siani

**Contact
CA**

Abstract

Environmental education is undoubtedly a pressing need in our time. Landscape education may be seen as something more restricted in scope and necessity, and more disengaged. However, as I will first argue, because of the intrinsically concrete, localized, aesthetic character of landscapes in their difference from environment, landscape education in fact can also be seen as a more complex and challenging concept that can be framed in terms of enskilment. Second, to better clarify this concept and highlight the theoretical and practical difficulties related to it, this paper will then turn to some Wittgensteinian ideas about learning, especially his concept of *Abrichtung*, which has been proposed to be "ecologically" translated as 'enskilment.' Third, in the last section, the paper will emphasize the centrality of aesthetics, conceived of in a pragmatic and engaged fashion, in the task of landscape education. Through a brief discussion of two main patterns of games, the paper will finally lay claim to the concrete and topical value of an adequately conceived aesthetic education to landscape.

**Editorial
Board**

**Subscrib
e**

**Browse
Archive**

**Donate
to CA**

Search
h

Search ...

Search

Key Words

aesthetics; education; enskilment; environment;

landscape; Wittgenstein

Searc

h

Archiv

e

**Search
Archive**

Search

1. Environment and landscapes: contrasting concepts and educational patterns

To address the topic of landscape education, it is essential to first qualify the concept of landscape and differentiate it from the related term 'environment,' which has a relatively firmly established and institutionalized counterpart in 'environmental education.' Let us start from the latter: 'environmental education' can be defined in terms of "organized efforts to teach how natural environments function, and particularly, how human beings can manage behavior and ecosystems to live sustainably. It is a multi-disciplinary field integrating disciplines such as biology, chemistry, physics, ecology, earth science, atmospheric science, mathematics, and geography." [1] Two interconnected aspects can be highlighted here. First, the dualistic frame: 'natural environments' and 'human beings' are treated as distinct terms, with the latter learning how to "manage" the former in a sustainable way. Secondly, however multidisciplinary it may be, environmental education is almost exclusively made up of the hard and natural sciences. These two aspects are related, since only hard sciences can neutrally and objectively study and teach an environment conceived as structurally different from human beings. Conversely, only such an environment can be exclusively addressed by the hard sciences, whereas a concept of place constituted by the interweaving of natural and human (or cultural) elements requires the intervention of humanistic forms of knowledge. The term 'environment' suggests a kind of knowledge, experience, and education that is mostly generalizable and neutral, based on the hard sciences, and also abstracted from the cultural, historical, and social aspects of a place, and more generally from the human element studied by the humanities. Indeed, the relatively recent concept of environmental humanities itself displays, from its very name, a dualism of two terms whose reconciliation is, broadly stated, the aim of the discipline. This general, dualistic stance is understandable based on the genealogy of environmental humanities, born in a context in which *both* the environment and the human *and* the environment and the humanities were thought of as dichotomies to be reconciled. Along these lines, environmental education frames from the outset the discourse in dualistic terms, resulting in an education to respect and protect nature as something external to and

distinct from humans.[2] The term 'landscape,' on the contrary, already implies at a basic level the interdependence of a certain space and a human subject, being commonly defined as "a large area of countryside, especially in relation to its appearance," or as "a view or picture of the countryside, or the art of making such pictures." [3] A certain portion of space, conceived of as landscape, is neither an object that can be considered independently of a human subject nor a mere function of the latter.

Clearly, substantially different views of environment can be put forward that are less reductive and nondualistic and in which the human factor plays a major role,[4] and landscape, on the other hand, has often been framed in a dualistic fashion.[5] Moreover, using the terms 'dualistic' and 'nondualistic' is an oversimplification, as most conceptions fall somewhere in between. It is important not to get bogged down in terminology: rather, my point is that in both research and everyday language, 'environment' semantically suggests or allows to conceive of the space and its inhabitants as mutually independent entities, while 'landscape' suggests a positioning beyond dualistic opposition. In other words, while recent literature provides valuable examples of nondualistic conceptions of the environment, the dominant view, both in scientific and ordinary discourse (including mass media popularization), tends to be dualistic, scientistic, and reductionist. Just consider how, in common usage, if I use the word 'environment' without qualification, I may or may not be including the human element, whereas if I use the word 'landscape,' the human involvement is structurally already there. This has serious and far-reaching implications, for example, in the way 'environmental education' is usually understood, as we have seen in the Wikipedia definition. Rather than reforming or integrating such a concept of environment, my effort here is to outline an alternative, landscape-centered concept. This in no way implies that I believe the mainstream concept of environment cannot or should not be reformed along more complex and nondualistic lines, but only that I am pursuing a different angle. The extent to which my proposal for landscape could contribute to a broader reformulation of the concept of environment, and more generally how the link between the two concepts should be reformulated, would be the subject of another paper. Here, I will simply suggest that the two terms, while related, serve different (and equally important) purposes and should be functionally distinguished. Moreover, it should be clear that whenever

I use the term 'environment' critically, as a negative counterpart to my own proposal, it is this mainstream, reductive view of the environment that I have in mind, not the concept as such.

However, it is also crucial to recognize that 'landscape' is a complex, "vague," and even "fuzzy"[6] term, making it impossible to propose a unified and uncontroversial concept in this discussion. I can only put forward my own understanding of the term, which is also widely present in the literature.[7] Landscape is not a "given," but an experiential process in which a certain space takes (and changes) shape.[8] The dynamic character implied in the term should point our attention to the *ontological* priority of the relational unity over the related terms. While landscape has been and should be conceived of as bridging the gap between dualisms, such as matter and form, object and subject, body and mind, nature and culture, and so on, unity comes first, and every isolation of the two terms of each dualism is an abstraction with a specific purpose and should not be essentialized. Moreover, the subjective, cultural, perceptual, experiential, evaluative, imaginative, and artistic aspects inherent in the landscape necessarily require a reference not only to the humanities in general but more specifically to an *aesthetics* adequately understood, a reference that is only incidental to the concept of environment.[9] The aesthetics thematized here is not just a special discipline focused on the study of a particular, detached part of our experience such as the beautiful, art or the arts, the sublime, taste, aesthetic pleasure or emotions, and so on. Such topics are not excluded either, but they do not constitute an essentially separated realm of our experience. The aesthetics at issue here understands the aesthetic element as spread throughout and innervating all our experience following an engaged, continuistic, holistic, anti-exceptionalist, and pragmatist blueprint.[10] Admittedly, such a view of landscape may seem *too* fuzzy to form the basis of a minimally rigorous discussion of landscape education. Here, however, I want to pursue a reverse approach: in outlining a concept of landscape education, I also want to develop the proposed view of landscape as distinct from and advantageous in relation to the mainstream view of the environment from which I have taken my cue. In fact, as I will argue, the challenges of conceptualizing education in terms of landscape rather than environment point to a level of complexity that has yet to be fully explored. This complexity may make landscape education

more relevant and appropriate to the present time than environmental education.

My starting point is a chapter by Brian Wattchow and Alex Prins, entitled "Learning a landscape. Enskilment, pedagogy and a sense of place." [11] The authors are outdoor educators in Australia, mostly dealing with bushwalking, surfing, sea-kayaking, and the like. According to them,

it is all too easy to treat the landscapes within which these activities occur as value-neutral venues, as simply a means to achieve personal, social, and environmental educational outcomes [...]. These activities and the landscapes in which they are practised become ahistorical, rather than activities and locations with long and fascinating cultural histories. [...] While this may be done with good intentions, like teaching for generalisable knowledge that can be applied anywhere, [...] the essence of doing, knowing, and learning gets lost when it becomes disconnected from the land upon which it occurs. [12]

In a rather explicit way, such an "all too easy" blueprint follows the environmental education pattern, to which they contrast landscape education as always local, historical, and concrete, leading to necessarily plural, fragmented understandings and strategies. According to Wattchow and Prins, and drawing on Deweyan pedagogy, [13] landscape education focuses on experiential and temporal continuity, emphasizing interaction and immersion rather than theoretical distance. It goes beyond objective knowledge and subjective impressions and finds a place beyond this and associate dualisms, requiring participatory engagement and leading not to neutral skills or competences to be equally applied to any context but to enskilment [14]—a way of learning (through) practice in place. Landscape education should be thought of as training individuals and groups to orient themselves, interpret, establish, and communicate (in) human habitats, and is both hyperlocal and all-pervasive. Since it teaches "a way of being in a landscape [we] call home," [15] it is an education that builds continuity, while also changing us by fostering attentiveness to the space we inhabit and its changes, and developing embodied sensitivity to the opportunities, risks, and limits of human-induced changes. Ultimately, landscape education is a training to become attentive to the way of being (in) a landscape that we call home.

Such intention is reflected in the literature in uncountable exhortations "to transform mindsets [and] to move from humanist to post-humanist worldviews: adopting non-anthropocentric perspectives on human interactions with

nature, or dissolving this boundary entirely and letting go of the 'human as steward' image that has enthralled us for two millennia." [16] This exhortation inherently entails a substantial aesthetic dimension, which takes several forms and draws on several sources that have found their way into scholarship. These range from the more traditional and mainstream to the most extravagant, from geo-autobiography to learning how to see, from imagination to projection/correspondence, from Indigenous culture to sport, from everyday objects to storytelling, and from artistic engagement to even neopagan shapeshifting. [17] While I cannot delve into the specifics of each form, it is important to note that they all indicate, in their own unique ways, the importance of teaching us to be more attuned to the spaces we inhabit and to learn how to embody them, even if only partially and provisionally. [18] I will return to the centrality of aesthetics for this topic in the last section.

Now, based on the examples of mindset-transforming forms just seen, it may look like learning about/with/in landscape is an easy and enjoyable hobby or pastime. I contend, however, that taking it seriously as an education is an incredibly demanding and challenging task. This is because, according to the antidualistic concept of landscape advanced here, being *in* a landscape means being *a* landscape. But how do we learn and teach this? I cannot hope to exhaust such issue in a single paper. For now, by choosing to use the term 'landscape' instead of 'environment' in relation to education, I suggest we acknowledge that we are not learning (to be like) something else in order to safeguard it, but we are rather developing, extending, and strengthening an existing relationship of interaction and continuity. [19] Even so, the task at hand and its requirements are all but clarified. To move forward, I propose we briefly turn to Wittgenstein.

2. "Life would run on differently": Wittgenstein on enskilment

Although as a topic education is not directly at the core of Wittgenstein's philosophy (though it is worth noting that he was a schoolteacher for six years from 1920 to 1926), in his philosophy he provides an outline within the framework of his broader interest in meaning and explanation. The basic idea is that "the teaching of language is not explaining, but training" [20] and, as Glock puts it, "training does not presuppose understanding, but only patterns of reaction on the part

of the trainee.”[21] ‘Training’ here translates the German words ‘*abrichten*’ and ‘*Abrichtung*,’ which are not commonly employed with regard to children’s education, but rather for the training/drilling of animals for specific abilities or actions. The rather controversial and old-fashioned tone given to Wittgenstein’s conception of education by this terminological choice has been diversely interpreted and criticized.[22] As my engagement with Wittgenstein’s late philosophy is limited to a “utilitarian” angle in this context, I will not delve into the debate.[23] Instead, I will focus on exploring the ecological approach to Wittgenstein’s philosophy of education, as illustrated, among others, in a short article by Biancini, for whom “the concept of learning plays an enormous significance in the philosophy of the later Wittgenstein.” The key notion in this ecological approach is exactly that of ‘*Abrichtung*,’ translated however not as ‘training’ but as ‘enskilment,’ in the footsteps of Ingold:

We could consider the process of learning as an enskilment in which the practitioners learn not definitions, as supposed by the Russellian theory, but also are directly engaged in an interaction with the environment [...]. Environment that is the range of possible situations in which they *live* – the term *Leben* in Wittgenstein is used as a synonym of activity to which we could give a meaning [...]. Choosing to translate the German *Abrichtung* with Enskilment we arrive to see two dimensions of learning as strictly interwoven: an ontogenetic dimension of the growing of an organism in an environment, and the ontological commitment of the linguistic practices in building the world. To learn a language means to grow as person and to dwell an environment.[24]

This approach can be called ‘ecological’ mainly because learning does not occur through the explanation of definitions of objective (or objectified) external facts, but through direct and active engagement. This further implies that meanings are not associated with neutrally and independently given, objective essences, but are constructed and instituted in and through interaction with the world, which is therefore at the same time natural and cultural, linguistic and nonlinguistic.

Since meanings cannot be simply pointed at via definitions but need to be learned in practice, the groundwork for education is *Abrichtung*. The meaning of words is not typically learned through other words, but rather through the dynamics of various and more or less complex situations where the word itself is an unremarkable placeholder and could be replaced by gestures, interjections, facial expressions, and the like.

Consequently, we learn a language (and other practices) by being trained/drilled in its usage, with an initial focus on establishing certain patterns of behavior rather than on understanding.[25] Understanding emerges from within the practice itself, by following its rules and examples, such as when we learn a game by starting to play it, rather than by collecting definitions of all objects involved in it. Enskilment can then function as a more up-to-date and charitable rendition of *Abrichtung*, at the same time preserving Wittgenstein's antidualistic and pragmatic intention. Conversely, seen from a Wittgensteinian angle, the concept of enskilment gains radicalness and complexity, which are often absent from tendentially optimistic and sometimes extravagant formulations of landscape education. Finally, Wittgenstein's apparently outlandish views on education allow us to sharpen the distinction proposed in the first paragraph between environmental and landscape education.[26]

In short, I conceive of environmental and related education as something that can be framed in terms of objectivity/objectification, definitions, and understanding, whereas landscape and related education require framing in terms of interaction or relation, enskilment, and practice. Whereas environment and environmental education are commonly framed by (or at least semantically allow or tend towards) dualistic juxtapositions, objectivist explanations, and a hard/scientific background, landscape and landscape education allow for the abandonment of hard dualisms and the essential inclusion of subjective viewpoints and different disciplinary perspectives. Moreover, recourse to Wittgenstein's views on education makes it possible to emphasize the practical dimension of landscape education as enskilment, as opposed to the more theoretical-objective character of environmental education, where scientific knowledge and precise definitions play a leading role. This also means that landscape education entails a radically transformative dimension and a practical commitment that, unlike environmental education, cannot be pursued only through explanations. In the words of Stickney's comments on Wittgenstein, "trying on worldviews is unlike putting on new glasses or playing dress-up. If the teacher commands, 'Now see the tree like *this*,' there is no guarantee that pupils see the alternate aspect to which the teacher points [...]. It is not simply a matter of attaching new pictures to the corresponding thing, but of

gradually coming through training and enculturation to react differently while seeing.”[27]

Briefly, reacting in a new way to our habitat requires *being* in a new way, which emphasizes my previous point about the significant difference between the ease and frivolity of occasional pastimes and poses and the upsetting difficulty of training/learning to perceive and behave in different ways. To quote Wittgenstein again: “An education quite different from ours might also be the foundation of quite different concepts. For here life would run on differently. —What interests us would no longer interest them (i.e., the other people involved). Here different concepts would no longer be unimaginable. In fact, this is the only way in which *essentially* different concepts are imaginable.”[28] A different education results in different concepts and different ways of living. Establishing communication and common interests across resulting groups of people is challenging. Therefore, there is no room for easy optimism about the possibility of establishing a different and “better” way of being (in) our landscapes through transformative teaching without resorting to unrealistic nostalgias and ineffective poses and projections.[29] While no simple solution can be offered in the remaining space of this paper, in the next and final step of my argument I will take up the aesthetic thread again to better characterize the complexity, but also the attractiveness, of this idea of landscape education.

3. Aesthetic education to landscape: skills for our time

The practical dimension inherent in enskilment, as opposed to learning through explanations and definitions, cannot be reduced to learning new rules or patterns of action. Indeed, the latter can only take place based on developing new ways of perceiving (not just seeing), feeling, imagining, reacting, and, ultimately, being. The capacity for such development is essentially aesthetic in nature; landscape education should be seen as an instance of a broader aesthetic education framework.[30] However, this is not a traditional aesthetic education focused on the beautiful, artistic, and tasteful. Rather, it involves a comprehensive, flexible, complex knowing-how to map and interpret the spaces we inhabit and to institute and communicate a variety of symbols and meanings within it, developing new patterns of relation and co-belonging. Essentially, it should be conceived as a pragmatic education that imparts a dynamic set of competences conducive to building an “aesthetically”

successful habitat without relying on essentialistic or dualistic forms and structures often associated with environmental education. Aesthetic education should not be viewed as a legacy of an old-fashioned humanistic curriculum, but rather as an increasingly relevant umbrella-term for a diverse range of locally based practices of enskilment, reflecting the growing complexity of the reality to which the authors apply. This is true not only in light of epochal critical changes such as the ecological ones, but also in terms of more daily yet equally important challenges.

Giovanni Matteucci provides an outline for such skills:

Knowing how to manage the complex system of appearance even in the absence of references to deep structures of existence [...] is the skill increasingly required of the contemporary human being, and perhaps decisive in general for human beings from the beginning insofar as they are prompted by their own nature to extend their mind, to live in dialogue with something that cannot remain merely 'outside'. An aesthetic knowledge that, in order to be expressed effectively, must remain operative and thus be entrenched in a field of experience that involves dynamic categories, ready to change on impact with circumstances without stiffening into structures that are too elementary because abstractly atomic.[31]

Even though Matteucci's discourse is not about landscape per se, I believe landscape could very well be a destination of the mind's "extension" and the "experience with" he pleads for. Arnold Berleant also proposes a similar idea, although again not specifically related to landscapes, with his "Education as Aesthetic." [32] This concept highlights the correspondence between the "aesthetic field" and the educational situation, concerning the four main terms respectively involved (art object-educational subject matter or project, artist-scholar or scientist, appreciator-student, performer-teacher). More precisely, the terms involved are "not independent elements cast in various combinations. They are facets of a single total activity" [33] endowed with self-sufficiency and internal criteria of success, conceived, once again, in a Deweyan way in terms of resolution, fulfillment, vitality, creativity, and so on. While critically underscoring, as I did, the difficulty and "rarity" [34] of the occurrences of such successfully accomplished educational situation in today's contest, Berleant concludingly asks whether such "aesthetic integration" may "stand as an exemplar of the larger social order," [35] thus connecting education and broad social issues, in addition to everyday life, under the mark of the pervasiveness of a so-conceived aesthetics.

Such a vision of aesthetic education may seem ambitious and warrants a broader discussion that addresses the demands for empirical application that no framework of landscape education can disregard.[36] Although this is not the place to do so, in conclusion I would at least like to offer a pattern for such an application by elaborating on games, a term that has already appeared in the previous discussion and is inextricably linked with both aesthetics and education.[37] There are, of course, countless types of games, and an infinite number of purposes or needs that they are intended to satisfy. First of all, here I am talking about games in which we can be seriously absorbed and involved, and not just occasional, detached pastimes. Secondly, I am talking about games that are essential to our learning, not just instrumental. To clarify, one can design and play games that convey a desired piece of information, knowledge, or skill in an easy or enjoyable way, but where the goal is the information itself and the game is purely instrumental. In this case, if we could devise even more effective ways of conveying such information, or, once the information is conveyed, we could dispense with the game altogether. Here, there is a predetermined result we want to achieve, and the game, and more generally the aesthetic dimension, is a means to that end. Such a pattern works well with education that focuses on the knowledge and understanding of definitions and theories and the teaching of related behaviors: for example, a game that teaches what are the optimal conditions for the nest of an endangered turtle species and how to recreate and protect them. In short, these are games that play a very important role in the context of environmental education as presented in the first paragraph. Games used in landscape education as described here are very different. Here, the goal is not predetermined and external to the game, but is the game itself, in that it is a transformative experience and cannot be replaced by other means of acquiring predetermined knowledge or skills. Through the game, new ways of perceiving, feeling, imagining, and reacting are developed that could not be developed otherwise: what a player learns cannot be separated from what they do, and vice versa. This also means that no two games are the same: time, place, contextual conditions, personal background, current state, and so on are all part of the game, which is therefore a form of enskilment, that is, of understanding in practice, "in which learning is inseparable from doing, and in which both are embedded in the context of a practical engagement in the world – that is, in dwelling." [38]

In sum, instead of the detachment, objectivity, and universality of knowledge that environmental education aims for, landscape education seeks to increase and improve participation and involvement with the place, the subjective and collective capacity to adapt and respond to what it offers,[39] and to focus on the particular circumstances and goals.[40] Like environmental education, landscape education contains crucial moral and political motives, in addition to more specifically pedagogical, cognitive, cultural, and social ones—all of which are outside the scope of this article. However, unlike environmental education, landscape education is inherently characterized by its aesthetic dimension, not in the sense of a contemplative taste or ability to appreciate beauty but in that of an engaged, operational set of skills that orient our perception of, response to, and presence in, the spaces we inhabit.

Alberto L. Siani

alberto.siani@unipi.it

Alberto L. Siani is an Associate Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Pisa. His research focuses on German Idealism, pragmatism, and the philosophy of landscape.

Published on July 13, 2024.

Cite this article: Alberto L. Siani, "Landscape Education, Enskilment, and Aesthetics: Complex Skills for Our Time," *Contemporary Aesthetics*, Special Volume 11 (2024), accessed date.

Endnotes

[1] From Wikipedia, "Environmental Education," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_education. Other common uses of the term do not diverge significantly.

[2] Indeed, a significant segment of environmentalism, both in theory and practice, views human agency dualistically, as inherently external and potentially harmful to the "natural" and healthy functioning of nonhuman nature. On this see, among others, Nina-Marie Lister, "Is landscape ecology?," in *Is Landscape...?*, ed. G. Doherty and C. Waldheim (London-New York: Routledge, 2016), 115-137; Werner Krauss, "Postenvironmental landscapes in the Anthropocene," in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. P. Howard, I. Thompson, E. Waterton and M. Atha (London-New York:

Routledge, 2019), 62-73; Heesoon Bai, "A Critical Reflection on Environmental Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 4 (2020): 919-920: "The habit of mind that sees the environment as 'out there', that our work as environmental educators or activists is to do something *about, to or for* the environment, and that other beings have no consciousness, value and agency of their own, is one-piece with the [modern Western] epistemology of dualism. The latter separates mind from matter, inner life from outer environment, what is animate from what is inanimate and so on."

[3] Definition from the Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/landscape>.

[4] I have in mind, more specifically, some notions of environment developed in the phenomenological and pragmatist tradition, but also in eco-philosophy. See, among others, Allen Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 3 (1979): 267-75; Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment. Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London-New York: Routledge, 2000), on which I will return later; Roberta Dreon, *Human Landscapes. Contributions to a Pragmatist Anthropology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2022).

[5] See, most notably, the criticism of the "landscape model" in Carlson, "Appreciation and the Natural Environment."

[6] See Isis Brook, "Aesthetic appreciation of landscape," in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. P. Howard, I. Thompson, E. Waterton and M. Atha (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), 40.

[7] See among others Arnold Berleant, *Living in the Landscape. Towards an Aesthetics of Environment* (Lawrence: Kansas University Press, 1997); Rosario Assunto, "Paesaggio, ambiente, territorio: un tentativo di precisazione concettuale," *Rassegna di Architettura e Urbanistica* (1980): 49-51; Alberto L. Siani, *Landscape Aesthetics: Toward an Engaged Ecology* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

[8] See Atha et al., "Introduction," in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. P. Howard, I. Thompson, E. Waterton and M. Atha (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), xxvi.

[9] See Paolo D'Angelo, *Filosofia del paesaggio*, Macerata: Quodlibet, 2014, 13-14.

[10] For a broader presentation of such background, here strongly reduced, see Siani, *Landscape Aesthetics*. Aesthetics as conceived here also has many points of contact with the "everyday aesthetics" thematized, most notably, by Yuriko Saito, *Everyday Aesthetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), but a discussion of them would take us too far. See also Berleant, *Living in the Landscape*.

[11] Brian Wattchow and Alex Prins, "Learning a landscape. Enskilment, pedagogy and a sense of place," in *The Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, ed. P. Howard, I. Thompson, E. Waterton and M. Atha (London-New York: Routledge, 2019), 105.

[12] *Ibid.*, 102.

[13] *Ibid.*, 103.

[14] *Ibid.*, 108-109. See the original formulation of 'enskilment' by Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 416: "'Understanding in practice' [...] is a process of *enskilment*, in which learning is inseparable from doing, and in which both are embedded in the context of a practical engagement in the world – that is, in dwelling." I will return to this later.

[15] *Ibid.*, 106.

[16] Jeffrey A. Stickney, "Seeing Trees: Investigating Poetics of Place-Based, Aesthetic Environmental Education with Heidegger and Wittgenstein," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 4 (2020): 1279.

[17] See Emily Brady, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 216-217 and Stickney, "Seeing Trees," 1281-1290. On the plural character of the appreciation of nature, see also Yuriko Saito, "Is There a Correct Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature?," *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 18, no. 4 (1984): 35-46 and Berleant, *Living in the Landscape*.

[18] It is important to clarify that while this should not be taken in the mere sense of a humanizing of nature, it should not exclude it either, but rather combine it with its counterpart, the naturizing of the human being: "To be 'one' with nature [is] to realize vividly one's place in the landscape, as a form among its forms. And this is not to have nature's 'foreignness' or otherness overcome, but in contrast, to allow that otherness free play in the modifying of one's everyday sense of one's own being" [Ronald W. Hepburn, "Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of Natural Beauty," in *British Analytical*

Philosophy, ed. B. Williams and A. Montefiore (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 297].

[19] In this sense, and paraphrasing Matteucci's talk of "experience with" rather than "experience of" (see Giovanni Matteucci, "The (Aesthetic) Extended Mind: Aesthetics from Experience-of to Experience-with," *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics* 10 (2018): 400-429, on which I will return in the conclusion), it may also be convenient to speak of "learning through (or with) landscapes," rather than "learning landscapes."

[20] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte, rev. P.M.S. Hacker and J. Schulte (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 7.

[21] Hans-Johann Glock, *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 112 (entry on *Explanation*).

[22] Wittgenstein's own methods as a schoolteacher in rural Austria were, to say the least, rough even for the standards of the time.

[23] In general, this paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of Wittgenstein's views on education, and I only refer to him as a means to better understand the topic at hand, which is landscape education.

[24] Pierluigi Biancini, "Language as Environment: An Ecological Approach to Wittgenstein's Form of Life," in *Papers of the 32nd International Wittgenstein Symposium*, ed. V.A. Munz, K. Puhl and J. Wang (Kirchberg am Wechsel: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society), 57.

[25] The process seems alarmingly similar to a conception of education as behavioristic conditioning, or even animal taming, and certain Wittgensteinian expressions do not contribute to dispel this impression. Once again, the point here is not to evaluate Wittgenstein's theory of education.

[26] It might be objected that both Ingold and Biancini use the term 'environment' in a nondualistic way, and that it is therefore problematic to reinforce a critique of the term as dualistic by recourse to their views. Once again, however, the notion of environment that I am criticizing here is the mainstream, dualistic, reductive one exposed at the outset, which is the one that commonly informs the idea and practice of environmental education

(and, one might add, of environmentalism as a whole). In a sense, it could be said that while Ingold and Biancini's aim is to reframe the notion of the environment in an alternative (and, for the moment, marginal) way, I draw on their views to develop an altogether different notion, that of landscape education. As already mentioned, I am not concerned here with whether and to what extent my own proposal might contribute to reframing the notion of environment in a nondualistic direction.

[27] Stickney, "Seeing Trees," 1293. It should be noted that Stickney focuses on Wittgenstein's notion of *seeing* things in a certain way ("see the tree like *this*") based on his thematization of "environmental education," which, from the point of view of my own focus on landscape, appears somewhat limiting. However, I believe that what Stickney claims unproblematically applies to nonvisual actions and reactions, which covers the more concrete notion of learning landscapes, including hearing, smelling, touching, feeling, and learning about the history, folklore, and culture of the place.

[28] Quoted in Stickney, "Seeing Trees," 1297.

[29] On this difficulty, see also Claudia Ruitenberg, "The Cruel Optimism of Transformative Environmental Education," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54, no. 4 (2020): 832-837.

[30] On the related topic of the public and performative dimension of aesthetic appreciation, Brady, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment*, 218, provides valuable insights.

[31] Matteucci, "The (Aesthetic) Extended Mind," 427.

[32] Berleant, *Living in the Landscape*, Chapter 8.

[33] *Ibid.*, 131.

[34] *Ibid.*, 132.

[35] *Ibid.*, 134.

[36] A central issue here is that of the institutionalization of such a "curriculum," only part of which can be entrusted, in my opinion, to schools, with the proviso that this should not lead to a "bookish," compartmentalized reduction of it.

[37] Paradigmatically, think of the notion of "free play" in Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and in Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, but also of Dewey's insistence on the seriousness of games in the context of his theory of education, of Wittgenstein's "language games," and of Matteucci's notion of "collusion," from the

Latin *cum* (with) + *ludere* (to play): "The aesthetic designates a form of an organism-environment interaction so integrated that it generates a sort of full 'collusion'. In other words, it is a kind of practices in which the organism and the environment are coupled and mutually supportive in a holistic experiential configuration" (Matteucci, "The (Aesthetic) Extended Mind," 406).

[38] Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment*, 416. As possible examples of such games, just consider the way Wattchow and Prins, "Learning a landscape," teach surfing, sea-kayaking, and so on.

[39] There is, of course, an important social aspect to this, as aptly underlined by Wattchow and Prins, "Learning a landscape," 108-110, through their insistence on the centrality of storytelling and "storygathering." Again, such activities should not be conceived in a purely representational sense, as the neutral transmission of predetermined beliefs and knowledge, but rather as participative performances of the involvement in/with the landscape.

[40] There is no permanent, unchanging way of instituting, experiencing, and living landscapes, and the latter rather should be taught and learned from the specific perspective of each one of the experiences— incommensurable with each other—that we make every time. In this sense, I believe my framework can successfully incorporate and develop Ingold's famous explanation (or integration) of landscape through "taskscape": "*The landscape as a whole must likewise be understood as the taskscape in its embodied form: a pattern of activities 'collapsed' into an array of features*" [Tim Ingold, "The Temporality of the Landscape," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (1993), 162].

Volume: Special Volume 11 (2024) | Author: Alberto L. Siani

[Publisher](#) | [Permission to Reprint](#) | [Links](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Donate](#)

The author retains copyright for the article.

Downloading, copying in whole or in part, and distribution for scholarly or educational purposes are encouraged,

provided full acknowledgement is made to *Contemporary Aesthetics* and to the authors of articles.

© 2024 *Contemporary Aesthetics*

ISSN 1932-8478