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Edited by Fabian Dorsch and Dan-Eugen Ratiu

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The European Society for Aesthetics

Department of Philosophy

University of Fribourg

Avenue de l'Europe 20

1700 Fribourg

Switzerland

Internet: <http://www.eurosa.org>

Email: [secretary@eurosa.org](mailto:secretary@eurosa.org)

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## Table of Contents

### **Paul Crowther**

*The Need for Art, and the Aesthetics of the Self: A Copernican Turn* 1-21

### **The Aesthetics Group**

*Turn, Turn, Turn: Civic Instrumentalisation and the Promotion of  
Autonomy in Contemporary Arts Funding* 22-45

### **Gemma Argüello Manresa**

*Participatory Computer-Based Art and Distributed  
Creativity: the Case of Tactical Media* 46-67

### **Zsolt Bátori**

*Photographic Deception* 68-78

### **Alessandro Bertinetto**

*Gombrich, Danto, and the Question of Artistic Progress* 79-92

### **Stefan Bird-Pollan**

*Benjamin's Artwork Essay from a Kantian Perspective* 93-103

### **The Branch Collective**

*Towards Gesture as Aesthetic Strategy* 104-114

<b>Camille Buttingsrud</b> <i>Thinking Toes...? Proposing a Reflective Order of Embodied Self-Consciousness in the Aesthetic Subject</i>	115-123
<b>Ilinca Damian</b> <i>On What Lies Beneath the Process of Creation</i>	124-136
<b>Wiebke Deimling</b> <i>Moralism about Propaganda</i>	137-147
<b>Daniel Dohrn</b> <i>According to the Fiction: A Metaexpressivist Account</i>	148-171
<b>Damla Dönmez</b> <i>Saving 'Disinterestedness' in Environmental Aesthetics: A Defense against Berleant and Saito</i>	172-187
<b>Luis Eduardo Duarte Valverde</b> <i>Net.Art as Language Games</i>	188-196
<b>Colleen Fitzpatrick</b> <i>Empathy, Anthropomorphism and Embodiment in Vischer's Contribution to Aesthetics</i>	197-209
<b>Jane Forsey</b> <i>Form and Function: The Dependent Beauty of Design</i>	210-220
<b>James Garrison</b> <i>The Aesthetic Life of Power: Recognition and the Artwork as a Novel 'Other'</i>	221-233
<b>Aviv Reiter &amp; Ido Geiger</b> <i>Kant on Form, Function and Decoration</i>	234-245
<b>Carmen González García</b> <i>Facing the Real: Timeless Art and Performative Time</i>	246-258

<b>Nathalie Heinich</b> <i>Beyond Beauty: The Values of Art — Towards an Interdisciplinary Axiology</i>	259-263
<b>Kai-Uwe Hoffmann</b> <i>Thick Aesthetic Concepts — Neue Perspektiven</i>	264-279
<b>Gioia Laura Iannilli</b> <i>The Aesthetics of Everyday Life: Suggestions for a Reconsideration of Aesthetics in the Age of Wearable Technologies</i>	280-296
<b>Jèssica Jaques Pi</b> <i>Repenser Picasso. Le Désir Attrapé par la Queue et les Iconographies Culinaires de l’Absurde et de la Stupeur</i>	297-316
<b>Mojca Küplen</b> <i>Art and Knowledge: Kant’s Perspective</i>	317-331
<b>Iris Laner</b> <i>Science, Art, and Knowing-How: Merleau-Ponty on the Epistemic Qualities of ‘Experimental Practices’</i>	332-362
<b>Regina-Nino Mion</b> <i>The Unpredictability of the Political Effect of Art</i>	363-369
<b>Vitor Moura</b> <i>Kundry Must Die — Stage Direction and Authenticity</i>	370-390
<b>Michaela Ott</b> <i>Aesthetics as Individual Affections</i>	391-405
<b>E. L. Putnam</b> <i>‘Bring a Camera with You’: The Posthumous Collaboration of Ahmed Basiomy and Shady El Noshokaty</i>	406-415
<b>James Risser</b> <i>Sensible Knowing in Kant’s Aesthetics</i>	416-427

<b>Salvador Rubio Marco</b> <i>Philosophizing through Moving-Image Artworks: An Alternative Way Out</i>	428-438
<b>Lisa Katharin Schmalzried</b> <i>Beauty and the Sensory-Dependence-Thesis</i>	439-463
<b>Niklas Sommer</b> <i>Schiller's Interpretation of the 'Critique of the Power of Judgement' — A Proposal</i>	464-475
<b>Tak-Lap Yeung</b> <i>Hannah Arendt's Interpretation of Kant's 'Judgment' and its Difficulties</i>	476-493
<b>Elena Tavani</b> <i>Giacometti's 'Point to the Eye' and Merleau-Ponty's Painter</i>	494-511
<b>Daniel Tkatch</b> <i>Transcending Equality: Jacques Rancière and the Sublime in Politics</i>	512-528
<b>Connell Vaughan</b> <i>Authorised Defacement: Lessons from Pasquino</i>	529-551
<b>Oana Vodă</b> <i>Is Gaut's Cluster Account a Classificatory Account of Art?</i>	552-562
<b>Katarzyna Wejman</b> <i>Plot and Imagination Schemata, Metaphor and Aesthetic Idea — A Ricoeurian Interpretation of the Kantian Concept of Imagination</i>	563-578
<b>Zsófia Zvolenszky</b> <i>Artifactualism and Inadvertent Authorial Creation</i>	579-593

# ***Saving ‘Disinterestedness’ in Environmental Aesthetics: A Defense against Berleant and Saito***

Damla Dönmez\*

*Boğaziçi University*

Environmental aesthetics has been a relatively recent topic in the history of philosophy. However, the justification of aesthetic judgments in nature has created problems. The old, historical concept of “disinterestedness” dominates the tradition of aesthetics almost for two centuries. However, some modern scholars such as Berleant criticizes disinterestedness with the claim that it is not a satisfactory criterion since it regards the environment as if an artwork. On the other hand, although Saito does not present direct oppositions, she does not take disinterestedness into consideration and mention it even once in her works. As an alternative, whereas Berleant proposes a theory of “aesthetics of engagement”, Saito goes for a “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation”, both intending to adopt a holistic perspective for the human-nature relationship and overcome the created boundaries. However, I claim that although the main intention of both seems to be a comprehensive perception of nature, “appreciating nature *as nature*” (not as an artwork), they misinterpret “disinterestedness” and overlook the fact that we can still maintain it within environmental aesthetics. Disinterestedness can guide our judgments with the notions of (1) non-instrumentality, (2) transparent self and (3) impartiality. In this sense, I argue that (1) the proper antagonistic pole of engagement is not disinterestedness but a dominant theory of aesthetics left from 18<sup>th</sup> century called “picturesque”, (2) in contrast to holistic accounts of these philosophers who look for an *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, disinterestedness provides being *devoid-of-any-empirical-self* and (3) disinterestedness is not *anthropocentric*, human-centered, but *anthropogeneric*, human-generated, which accepts the “otherness” of nature and opens the way for respect and care in environmental ethics.

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\* Email: donmezdamla@yahoo.com

## 1. What is Environmental Aesthetics?

Environmental aesthetics is one of the new areas of aesthetics that emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two main questions dominate the discussions in environmental aesthetics: (1) in what ways appreciation of nature is different from appreciation of art and (2) how can we be justified in our aesthetic judgments of nature, that some appreciation is better than the other? Although environmental aesthetics does seem to develop in recent years, experience and appreciation of nature was a huge concern in the philosophers of 18<sup>th</sup> century in Anthony Ashley Cooper (Lord Shaftesbury) (1801-1885), Joseph Addison (1672-1719), Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) and Immanuel Kant. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially with Hegel, nature as an object of aesthetics lost its significance and went through a stagnation period. After Hegel, the proper object of aesthetics became only art which is the sensible expression of the absolute spirit and by the twentieth century aesthetics of nature was almost totally eclipsed by the philosophy of art. It was in 1966 that with Ronald Hepburn's seminal article *Contemporary Aesthetics and the Neglect of the Natural Beauty*, the focus of aesthetics diverted back to the environment as an object of appreciation equally as art.

My paper deals directly with the question of how aesthetic judgments in environmental appreciation can be justified. How can we ascertain that this judgment is better than the other one, or much "serious" rather than being "trivial" (Hepburn, 1993, p. 65)? In short, how can we find a normative criterion which would help to guide our actions and principles? This question is related with the first question above; in what ways appreciation of nature differ from art. I will start with answering the first and then move the latter one. In the literature of environmental aesthetics, the justification of aesthetic judgments gave way to two camps. First camp is the cognitivists who claim science or information functions as a standard. Carlson (1995) declared that the act of appreciation "has an essential cognitive component" (p. 396), Eaton (1998) asserted knowledge increases aesthetic pleasure (p. 154) and Lintott (2007) claimed that "the bias of science is a useful tool in the aesthetic appreciation of nature" (p. 392). In contrast, non-cognitivists argued against the necessity of knowledge. For instance, Brady (1998) asserted that although we can lack info about the

object, “imagination” can still encourage us to have various perceptual experiences (p. 142), Carroll (2007) claimed that we appreciate nature sometimes “less intellectually” but only by being “emotionally moved” (p. 170). However, since the second camp did not present any “objective” criterion, cognitivists accused them for having no criteria for proper appreciation. In this respect, some philosophers such as Brady (2003) referred back to the old, historical concept of “disinterestedness” (p. 10) which marks if we are “imagining well” or not with the motivation of having an impartial and unbiased approach.

However, Berleant criticized disinterestedness with the claim that it does not satisfy the criterion for aesthetic judgments of nature since it takes them as if an artwork. In this respect, he not only theorized an argument for the first question of environmental aesthetics, how appreciation of nature is different from appreciation of art, but also responded to the latter question that disinterestedness cannot function properly in justifying aesthetic judgments. His ideas can be gathered under three main problems: (1) the state of mind disinterestedness supports is pure “contemplation”, isolating the subject within his own psychological set (1994, p. 250), (2) disinterestedness “objectifies” and encloses the focus of appreciation “within borders”, frames and isolates it (1993, p. 236) and (3) it fosters a “detached” attitude by creating “distance” between the perceiver and the perceived, reducing it to the parochial dominancy of one sense, vision (1994, p. 244). In contrast to these, he argued for an aesthetic theory that (1) integrates the “perception of a conscious body and world” which is a dynamic perceptual system that “assimilates person and place” (1991, p. 102), (2) a “holistic” conception of environment which counts for a real “lived experience”, as the term itself signifies that *environs* the people (1991, p. 91) and (3) an “aesthetics” with an attitude of “engagement” where perceivers act as “participants” not “observers” (1993, p. 236) in which multi-sensuous appreciation takes place including smell, sounds, touch and taste (1993, p. 237).

Unlike Berleant, Saito did not criticize disinterestedness explicitly and did not propose a direct alternative to it. However, she dealt with the justification problem of environmental aesthetics and appreciation of nature as “nature” in her work *Appreciating Nature on its own Terms* (2007) without mentioning disinterestedness even once and utterly ignoring it. Likewise

any non-cognitivist, she rejected the role of science and information as too reductionist, as if it is the “only relationship” humans interact with nature (p. 157) and proposed an alternative model called “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation” aiming to preserve the unity and continuity between man and nature and overcome the created boundaries. In this sense, although she does not clearly depict, she criticizes imposing our own stories on nature and creating boundaries between nature and human mind. Although the “picturesque” and “associationist” appreciation of nature is her main target, the way she defends Zen Buddhism as the proper mode of appreciation, she discards disinterestedness as well. The reasons opting for a Zen Buddhist non-anthropocentric appreciation is (1) instead of attempting to understand nature exclusively through mental activities with various conceptual schemes, it suggests a possibility of knowing nature “directly and immediately with our whole body and mind” and (2) Zen Buddhism does not detach the mind from the self, but perceive its delicate life, feel its feeling. Therefore, we “enter into” or “become one with the object with our entire being” (p. 158). These points indicate that for Saito, disinterestedness is not a theory that creates a “holistic” union of object and the subject but presents a dualistic approach. Moreover, the inherent contemplative “mental activity” in disinterestedness does not enable one to “know nature” “immediately” and “directly” but rather presupposes an anthropocentric essence in which humans have a central role with a distinct position of appreciating nature from their godlike and “impersonal” position.

So, the questions for both Berleant and Saito are: (1) is disinterestedness indeed incompatible with “engagement” and “active participation”? In other words, does it indeed frame and isolate the object by creating distance and leaving it to the dominance of eye? (2) Is a “holistic” theory of aesthetics the most proper form of appreciation of nature distinguishing it from art? Lastly, (3) does disinterestedness indeed impose or imply any anthropocentrism since it does accept the role of human perception as a main principle of guidance? My answer is negative for all these questions. I reject both Berleant’s and Saito’s criticisms. I claim that although the main intention of both seems to be a comprehensive perception of nature, “appreciating nature *as* nature” (not as an artwork), they misinterpret “disinterestedness” and overlook the fact that it still can be

maintained within environmental aesthetics and guide our epistemological distinctions, i.e. determining if *that* judgments is better than *this* one or not. In this sense, I argue that (1) the proper antagonistic pole of engagement is not disinterestedness but a dominant theory of aesthetics left from 18<sup>th</sup> century: the picturesque, (2) in contrast to holistic account of these philosophers who look for an *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, I argue disinterestedness provides being *devoid-of-any-empirical-self* and (3) disinterestedness does not posit aesthetic judgments to be *anthropocentric*, human-centered but accept they are *anthropogenic*, human-generated. Before moving to build these arguments, investigating the origins of the concept primarily would clear away the ongoing misinterpretation. Disinterestedness does not separate the subject and object in an elitist, disengaged attitude but as its originator, Shaftesbury defines; disinterestedness means to be motivated without self-concerns.

## 2. The Origins of Disinterestedness

The origin of the concept dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to the writings of Lord Shaftesbury. He was the first one who called attention to “disinterested perception” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 132). The primary context of the concept was ethics and religion but afterwards it came to be affiliated with aesthetic judgment and attitude. “Interest” for Shaftesbury is related with the “well-being” or the “long-range good” of the individual or the society. Its main realm is ethics, related with actions and the concept of good and bad. The good actions are the ones which are concerned with the “interest” of all, not only the individual. In this sense, Shaftesbury utilizes the concept for the kinds of actions that are not motivated with “self-interest”. He associates these with the terms of “interestedness or self-love” (ibid.). Following ethics, the next subject disinterestedness shows up is religion. Shaftesbury opposes “the disinterested love of God” to “serving God...for interest merely” (quoted in Stolnitz, 1961, p. 55). The love of God shall be for its own sake alone, not for the sake of any “interest” such as fear, wishes, desires etc. In this sense, as Stolnitz (1961) puts it neatly, for Shaftesbury, the antagonism of interestedness is “egoism in ethics and instrumentalism in religion” (p. 132). Disinterestedness is only a negation of having interest or being “motivated by self-concern” (ibid.)

Around the same years<sup>1</sup>, Baumgarten introduced the term “aesthetics” in 1735 which was rooted in Greek term “aisthethike” that literally meant “sense perception” or “sensory cognition”. He used the term “*episteme aisthetike*” for the first time in his Halle master’s thesis which meant “the science of perception” or “science of sensitive knowing” (Brady, 2003, p. 8). In this respect Shaftesbury began to describe the virtuous man as the one who is devoid of being motivated by self-concerns in perceptual and sensory experiences. The term began to refer to the state of “barely seeing and admiring” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 133). His attempt was still for an ethical and practical perspective and attitude. However, following Shaftesbury, his successors such as Addison, Hutcheson, Burke and Kant caused the concept to evolve in aesthetics. I will not go into detail but touch one of the most important figures, Kant, with whose philosophy disinterestedness in aesthetics reached its climax.

Kant asserts that disinterestedness indicates impartiality, being not biased in the existence of the thing, but rather to be indifferent to its representation in relation to our personal desires, wishes or “interests”. Interest for Kant is “the satisfaction that we combine with the representation of the existence of an object” (CJ, 5:204) which by extension is a work of the faculty of desire. However, in an aesthetic judgment the pleasure does not arise due to the object’s existence but from a mere contemplation of that object. I have taste not because of the dependent relations I have with the object but because of “what I make of this representation in myself”. Disinterestedness is the quality of the beautiful which marks it different from agreeable and good. Agreeable is the state which is “merely the sensory gratification of the senses” (CJ, 5:206) and good is the one which we have a “concept of the object” (CJ, 5:208) and appreciate it with respect to the purpose or ends that it serves us. On the other hand disinterestedness indicates to an appreciation of an object not for the sake of something or for the mere sensory gratification but for the sake of that object alone. It does not refer only to not being motivated with self-concerns but also evokes the concepts of *non-instrumentality* and *impartiality*, being not biased in the existence of the thing, but rather to be entirely indif-

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<sup>1</sup> Shaftesbury wrote his work *Sensus Communis: An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor* in 1709.

ferent to its representation in relation to our personal desires, wishes or interests. In this sense, unlike Berleant criticizes, disinterestedness has never been defined or explained in history as an attitude that is “distanced”, “detached” or “isolating and framing” the “object”. Berleant’s criticism might be due to the results of the *art for art’s sake* trend that gained eminence in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century but I argue that this was a phenomenon highly influenced and affected by the political agenda of those periods. In contrast, disinterestedness in its original version never had such intentions or implications. Hence, we can summarize the main intention of the concept with the following three key terms: 1) non-instrumentality, (2) selflessness and (3) impartiality.

In the modern literature, Brady defends “interest” as a helpful concept for designating the features of aesthetic attitude. As Shaftesbury primarily proposed, non-instrumentalism is one of her motivations to save the concept in the contemporary debates. Aesthetic responses differ from intellectual ones in the way they are not mediated but rather perceived immediately without factual consideration or with utilitarian concerns (Brady, 2003, p. 9). The main importance of the concept for Brady (2003) is that it invites us to an attitude that is devoid of purpose where no object is used as a means to an end, nor searched for its “function or use”. In this sense, it should be marked that disinterestedness does not mean “indifference”, but rather just being free from concerns” (p. 10) resembling Shaftesbury’s definition of “not being motivated with self-concerns”. Indifference connotes negative attitudes, such as not caring or disregarding. However, disinterestedness indicates to a purely neutral state, neither to be touched with an “interest” nor “lack of interest” (p. 34) that is being devoid of any enthusiasm or spirit.

The second affiliated concept is “selflessness”. Egoism, selfishness and selflessness are closely connected terms but are highly different in their content. In this respect, it is easy to confuse disinterestedness with any one of them and misinterpret the meaning and purpose it suggests in aesthetic judgments. Although Shaftesbury’s usage of disinterestedness in 1700s had been contrasted with egoism in ethics, such as being “unselfish”, with Addison it changed meaning to “impersonality” or “selflessness” (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 138). Selflessness or impersonality is also a proper term to describe what Kant means with the concept. In this sense, whereas

selfishness and unselfishness would mean “being other-directed” that is “Willing to put the needs or wishes of others before one’s own” as the Oxford Dictionary states (Url); “selflessness” denotes a transparency in the identity, “making oneself a pure, unflawed mirror” that can reflect “all the impressions, which the objects that are before us can produce” with no “distortion” (Brady, 2003, p. 138).

Lastly, “impartiality” is a potent term to delineate the attitude which disinterestedness advocates in aesthetic judgments. Disinterestedness functions in aesthetic judgments’ justifications to differentiate what is “arbitrary” and “subjective or personal desire” and what is an irrelevant “practical aim” (Brady, 2003, p. 34). Especially in aesthetic appreciation of nature there are less strong boundaries than the works of art. For example, there are no nature (natural sound) critics of cicadas that instructs us what we should listen, judge if the notes are appropriately designed, how long we shall pay attention and in what way we should interact as is the case in listening a Beethoven or Bach. “Consider the self-indulgent response that appreciates a rainbow as “placed here just for me!” (Hettinger, 2007, p. 418). Against such consequences, disinterestedness proposes a “standard” with respect to the last criteria, if the response is “unbiased or biased”. It guarantees a degree of impartiality so that I can assume everyone has a same similar appreciation with respect to that particular experience. This was one of Kant’s concerns as well; he prioritized disinterestedness as the first moment of aesthetic judgments in the sense that it grounded the “universality” of them. Only with a normative criterion as such we can demand from others a similar response for a rainbow or a sunset.

Therefore, I claim first, disinterestedness does not claim any disengagement and passivity or framing and isolation of the object in an elitist way which is dominated with just a subjective contemplative state of mind but rather the picturesque tradition does it. Second, although it doesn’t call for a holistic integration of person and environment as Berleant and Saito looks for, it suggests a transparency of the self that is non-instrumental and unbiased and finally, it does not defend anthropocentrism but accepts the fact that aesthetic judgments are *anthropogeneric*, they are human-generated. We have to accept the duality of nature and humanity, i.e. nature is an “other” to us. This will create a space for “respect” in environmental ethics.

### 3. Objections and Counter-arguments

#### 3.1. *The proper antagonistic pole of engagement: picturesque*

First, I claim that “disinterestedness” and “engagement” are pseudo-juxtapositions in Berleant, and the proper antagonistic pole is “picturesque”. Since Berleant is more severe in this criticism, this counterargument would be mainly against his thesis. Although, Saito (2007) criticizes the domination of aesthetic appreciation *only* by the sense of sight, she explicitly admits that the proper target of this criticism is picturesque, an aesthetic tradition left from the 18<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 152-4). Picturesque is ruled with a distant and detached relation from the subject and the object of aesthetic appreciation is framed in a bordered, two-dimensional picture. *Picturesque* literally means “like a painting”, coined after the term *pittoresco*, “the painter’s view”. Nature is viewed as a landscape painting where the visual qualities are emphasized. In picturesque, nature is experienced as if an ‘ideal landscape painting’. Therefore, the approach to it is necessarily dominated by the sense of sight. Vision, colors and the play of light are the main parameters for determining aesthetic response (Callicott, 2007, p. 108).

Berleant wants to object this claim and integrate an approach of experiencing nature that is three-dimensional and multi-sensuous, not reduced to sight alone but includes hearing, smelling, and the sense of touch. However, unlike Berleant proposes, disinterestedness does not reject this attitude. What it means is to be devoid of personal, self-interested concern in its original version; to be unbiased and impartial as seen above. Carlson (1993) also attacks Berleant with the argument that “active participation and disinterestedness are not necessarily incompatible” (p. 222). The latter asks for a “special unique way or a special attitude” in approaching aesthetic phenomena and the former demands taking part lively in the appreciation process. However, assertion of a special attitude in aesthetic judgments does not exclude the process of taking part logically. Analytically, they are not antagonisms to each other. Similarly, Brady (2003) argues that his juxtaposition of disinterestedness and engagement “rests on a mistaken assumption” (p. 133).

On the other hand, Berleant can assume a hidden premise that disinterestedness *deliberately* and directly overlooks and rejects engagement. How-

ever, that is another issue which is tied up with the history of what kind of aesthetic genre dominates. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century picturesque commenced to guide all aesthetic phenomena as if it is the only one and Berleant seems to confuse this historical, dominant type of art as if it *is* the whole artistic tradition and reduced the rich context of aesthetics to picturesque alone. Moreover, Berleant (1991) accuses Stolnitz to be the pioneer figure who isolated aesthetics “from the rest of life” (p. 13). However, Stolnitz does not argue for passivity and distance but as can be seen in his idea of “sympathetic attention”, he claims that we need to open ourselves to the object and let that perceptual experience to carry us to its own nature. This is the state of mind that we should have, not a purely subjective contemplative mental process but a direct openness to the aesthetic features of the object or phenomena. In this way, we can be “thoroughly engaged by it” (Brady, 2003, p. 9).

Not only this but also, many scholars who defend disinterestedness such as Brady and Carlson also accept the fact that environment shall be appreciated multi-sensuously. This shows that disinterestedness and the peculiar dominancy of one sense, vision, are not necessarily dependent on each other and parasitic. Brady (2003) emphasizes the need to acknowledge the “particularity of natural environments as environments rather than merely as scenes or objects” (p. 3). Similarly, Carlson (2007) advocates a “natural environmental model” in nature appreciation which differentiates from “object” and “landscape model” (p. 125). The natural environmental model accepts the fact that we are surrounded by nature in a multi-sensuous way such as the sounds of rain, humidity of mud, smell of a rose or an odor of decay. But, they both accept that disinterestedness is a crucial aesthetic attitude that discriminates what kind of aesthetic judgments are appropriate or not, rich or shallow. Therefore, we can be in nature, acknowledge its sounds, smells and touch in a multi-sensuous and three-dimensional way but be devoid of self-interested expectations. For instance, we can acknowledge all the perceptive qualities of a chamomile but not have an appetitive desire. On the other hand, we can approach a flower *singularly* but can acknowledge its continuity with the rest of the atmosphere disinterestedly. For example, we can appreciate a snowdrop in its particularity on the top of a high mountain. This appreciation itself is already bounded by the context that the appreciation demands: the aware-

ness of snow, mountain, height, less oxygen, etc. It does not mean that we have separated and isolated the object from its environment. Therefore, disinterestedness does not discard the features of continuity and engagement with the environment.

3.2. *The discussion of selflessness: immersion-in-a-bigger-Self vs. devoid-of-any-empirical-self*

Second, although it might be much limited than they seek; their call for a holistic account of appreciative attitude is still embraced in disinterestedness. The self does not vanish and dissolve in a bigger Self as both Saito and Berleant assume but, disinterestedness, although different in dimension, still implies an account of selflessness. Whereas their theories can be interpreted as implication of *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self*, disinterestedness defends *being-devoid-of-any-empirical-self*. Disinterestedness is more than being “unselfish” but it is to be “impersonal” or “selfless” where one becomes “a pure, unflawed mirror, prepared to receive without distortion all the impressions” (Stolnitz 1961, p. 138). Disinterestedness implies selflessness where the self does not dissolve in the whole as they prefer, but becomes *transparent*. Disinterestedness is at a parallel line in their purpose, but differs to the extent and degree being ambitious in this.

In disinterestedness, the self does not dissolve in nature, rather keeps his/her identity separate but becomes much neutral and transparent. In this sense, the self becomes devoid of any empirical dependencies and determinations, it does not set aside who s/he is but “what s/he wants” (Brady, 2003, p. 132). Therefore, it is not a passive or detached relationship but a sort of relationship that demands from the one to stand at a concrete standpoint and relate to the phenomena without “wants or desires” (ibid.). The dichotomy of subject and object is maintained in disinterestedness with the assumption that natural environment is distinct from us (Brady, 2003, p. 70). The holistic arguments of Saito and Berleant do not consist of such a premise. However, I do not mean to claim that the holistic ideas shall be abandoned and instead the idea of nature’s otherness hand in hand with disinterestedness shall only be embraced. Rather, I argue that the idea of accepting nature’s otherness and distinctness to generate an elitist and detached appreciation of environment is misleading. Disinter-

estedness accepts this otherness and still has a lot to say about the relation of humans and nature. This is not a trivial argument that shall be ruled out easily.

Culture is the reason for the difference between nature and humans. As the term itself means, nature, in the “most commonest and fundamental sense”, refers to all the existent things which are not human and “distinguished from the work of humanity”. It is in contrast to culture, history and everything that is “artificially” produced (Soper, 1995, p. 15). In short, as Soper (1995) puts it neatly, it is the “idea through which we conceptualize what is *other* to ourselves” (p. 16). This acceptance of nature’s otherness for Brady is a realistic attitude. We affect nature with our deeds and it affects us, but it is true that there is a gap in between. However, this fact does not lead us to “objectify” or “detach” from nature. In contrast, accepting nature’s otherness with disinterested attitude can engender a respectful relation with it that is devoid of utilitarian purposes and biased, self-motivated concerns. The aesthetic disinterested attitude helps one “to love something (e.g. beautiful crystal formations the indescribable beauty of plants) even apart from any intention to use it” (Kant, CJ, 5:267). Disinterestedness calls for a transparent self that is devoid of any empirical needs so that in the end, it “habituates us to selfless reflection and conduct” (Lucht, 2007, p. 138). It enables us to value nature in a way that “backgrounds personal preferences and utilitarian concerns” and “foreground an appreciation of its qualities” (Brady, 2003, p. 129). In short, although holistic accounts that advocate the *immersion-of-self-in-a-bigger-Self* might aim to erase the boundaries between humans and nature and create a unified relation, their ideas are not realistic and well-grounded to abandon the theory of disinterestedness.

### 3.3. *Anthropogeneric vs. anthropocentric*

Third, against Saito’s “Zen-Buddhist type of non-anthropocentric appreciation” theory, I argue that aesthetic judgments are response-dependent which means that they are *anthropogeneric*, human-generated, and shall not be confused with *anthropocentric*, human-centered. I argue that Saito misinterprets the term “*anthropocentric*” with worries of domination of nature. However, disinterestedness does not lead to *anthropocentrism*. It is true

that aesthetic appreciation by definition demands a creative dialectic between humans and nature that is dependent on the above-mentioned argument of “otherness” of nature but this shall not lead us to discard altogether the existence of a human appreciator. This is like throwing the baby with the bath water. The claim that aesthetic judgments are *anthropogeneric* underlines the fact that it occurs within a human perspective. In that case, disinterestedness involves *anthropogenericism* as a necessary feature of aesthetic judgment which necessitates the human-valuer.

*Anthropogeneric* indicates the necessity of “subject generator” in an aesthetic appreciation. Aesthetic appreciation in nature is always relational; there is a creative dialectic between humans and nature. Since any philosophical view or ethics without humans does not make sense, it is the same case in aesthetics. Humans *ignite* aesthetic appreciation. Appreciation itself even assumes it by definition, in order for that act to take place, an appreciator has to exist. This is the same case for ethics, we try to find a proper ethical theory or an answer to the question “how *we* shall live” or “how *I* shall act”. These questions are directed to particular *subjects*.

To say of any natural thing *n* that *n* is valuable means that *n* is able to be valued, if and when human valuers, *Hs* come along. There is no actual beauty autonomous to the valued and valuable forests cirque lakes, mountains, sequoia tress, sand hill cranes there is aesthetic ignition when humans arrive, the aesthetics emerges relationally with the appearance of the subject generator. (Rolston, 2007, p. 328)

Reminiscent of Thomas Nagel's book (1986), there is not a “view from nowhere”, the view is always from somewhere (p. 2). Therefore, we can adopt a kind of aesthetics that can help us appreciate nature without imposing our practical needs, desires and wishes. In other words, I suggest that with disinterestedness, we can both accept the *anthropogeneric* nature of each proposition and appreciate nature's beauty without falling into a relativist discourse. Then, our aesthetic judgments would include a standard for a “universal voice” (Kant, CJ, 5:216) without assimilating or imposing our self-concerned interests. Moreover, even the call for “impartiality” and being devoid of self-motivated concerns indicate that disinterestedness is not *anthropocentric*. In contrast, it urges us to detain from imposing our own practical desires and needs. In other words, the otherness of nature and *anthropogenericism* are not one and same even though they might

look like. The latter is the ontology of how we *make* judgments. Adopting nature's otherness does not necessarily lead us to have a hierarchical, *anthropocentric* relation with nature.

#### **4. Why a Defense of Disinterestedness?**

All in all, saving disinterestedness in aesthetics as a criterion of justification brings forth crucial consequences in environmental ethics. Although the judgments of aesthetics and ethics are separate realms of values, they can help us to constitute a comprehensive attitude towards our environment. The disinterested attitude, by means of accepting nature's otherness and appreciating it with a non-utilitarian, transparent self and impartiality leads us to respect and care for nature for its own sake.

Disinterestedness encourages us to pay "attention" to the aesthetic object or phenomena (Brady, 2003, p. 136). It demands us to recognize and be aware of it. Every awareness or consciousness of an object with no dependent relation consequently leads one to value it for its own sake. The "open receptivity" to the aesthetic qualities of that natural surrounding "frees up the mind from personal preoccupations" (Brady, 2003, p. 140) and a mind that is concerned with the qualities of the "other" acknowledges the independent existence of that being. It exists there as it *is* and that is the way it has been so far and will be in the future. This kind of attitude is nothing but respect which involves "allowing the other to be who they are" or what it is "without using them as a means to one's ends" (Brady, 2003, p. 142). Successively, care is the effort to sustain "other" beings existence. It is parasitic on respect, because trying to nurture and look for the continuance of any existent being cannot take place without acknowledging its otherness and value.

In short, nature is distinct from us. However, we shall not misunderstand this distinction as a detachment or an isolation. Accepting "a degree of distance" does not necessarily lead to an elitist, alien relationship. As Brady puts it, via adopting a disinterested attitude in environmental appreciation, humans could set a "close relationship" with nature but at the same time enable others to be themselves. This is the way how "enough distance" is preserved in any friendship (Brady, 2003, p. 142). Friends have

to let the other to be who they are without assimilating them, otherwise that would not be a friendship but slavery.

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