

Ethan Manuszak

Portfolio

Civic Engagement Project: What Moves You?

The University of Montana, Department of Philosophy

Introduction

For my Community Engagement Project, I organized a story telling and discussion event at Free Cycles in Missoula, with special a special focus on how we move technology and how that technology changes how we perceive the world. The story telling event will double as a fundraiser for Free Cycles, an organization focused on advancing the safety of bike and pedestrian traffic in Missoula. In addition to the event there were journals placed around town that are attempting to collect more stories of technologically mediated movement, as well as a community bike ride.

When people move through their environments, their perception of the environment is in part shaped by the technology they are using to move. Many peoples' everyday movements from place to place are done in cars. Part of this is due to the design of cities and public spaces that have placed an emphasis on cars as the only means of transport. Through this project I hope to bring about greater awareness not just of the dangers of living in a car-obsessed society, but also of the benefits of other forms of travel, and the different perspectives that other forms may contribute. Different perspectives can lead to a wider range of considerations when people are moving through and interacting with their environment. Additionally, it is important that people can communicate with different perspectives to create a better base for shared understanding and community building. If more drivers, for example, are aware of the perspective of what it is like for bikers, they may be more sympathetic to changed lane configuration. And if bikers understand the perspective of drivers, they will be able to navigate their environment more safely.

This is an important project because for so long now the ease of human travel through cars has been the only perspective available. Car-centric city design, the national highway and

interstate systems, even the National parks were constructed with consideration for how to best drive a car through them. It is good to change this mentality to adopt a more inclusive value system for what matters when we are constructing our means of transportation as well as understanding that a car may serve to separate one from their environment in ways that other forms of transport may not. This expansion will involve consideration of not just human interests in pedestrians and bikers but will hopefully consider all organisms that live within that environment. Additionally, the promotion of more walk/bike-able cities and communities benefits everyone, but specifically those individuals who cannot use cars and in spaces where public transportation is not dependable would benefit greatly.

The values I aim to promote are an expansion of considerations towards the way we navigate within our society, with a focus on making moving within the environment safer for all beings within human dominated spaces. Additionally, less reliance on fossil fuels, and specifically cutting down personal use fossil fuel vehicles, is something which this project seeks to promote. This project seeks to explore what it would mean to make movement 'freer' from cars, and the possible fallout from the change in basic assumptions. What is important is that this change in thinking does not just stop at non-car human transport, and we are able to move outside of everyday transport and consider the all the ways we move through our environments. Considering the technology that moves us outside of cities, things like climbing ropes, fishing rods, hiking, and backpacking equipment, etc., is also important and can provide valuable perspectives on how our movement affects the environment.

This project seeks to contribute to the promotion of social justice through the increased navigability of cities and human dominated spaces. This increase benefits individuals who may not be able to afford a car and places where public transport may be unreliable. Additionally,

these sorts of changes benefit all individuals that move within these spaces as they become safer overall. From a sustainability perspective, decreasing our reliance on cars and fossil fuels is always a positive, and the widescale restructuring of our environments to allow for more environmentally friendly means of transport is also a positive. Additionally, roads serve as dividing lines between wildlife and ecosystems, and the more this effect can be mitigated or managed, the more connected and healthier these ecosystems can become.

Background Content

Free Cycles, and their parent non-profit organization, Missoula Institution for Sustainable Transport (MIST) is an organization that has done splendid work around Missoula in the same sort of vein that my project seeks to expand on. Freecycle offers numerous programs that are designed at getting people on bikes for little to no cost, as well as bike recycling and open repair benches (with assistance if you need it). Bikes, as opposed to cars, have lower initial cost, lower running cost, lower repair cost, and produce little emissions (mostly through production, which in turn is limited through recycling). They also offer a chance to interact with other members of the community in a way that cars do not, and not just the human community. Taking the bike path in Missoula offers ample opportunities to have interactions with wildlife that can lead to a better appreciation of those animals. Zooming over the river on Orange Street bridge does not afford the same opportunities to view the Clark Fork (and all its residents) as walking or biking over the bridge might. To emphasize and encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel also requires promotion of the rules of the road, to attempt to make drivers more aware of other forms of travel. MIST is dedicated to the promotion of the types of road constructions and designs that make them safer for everyone that may use them for transport.

Additionally, the things that make a road safer for people to cross tend to make the road safer for other animals to cross as well and seems another area that could use some promotion of rules. Emphasizing that other animals live in cities besides humans, and that drivers should be considerate of them, is not a novel idea. But it is always good to restate something that is worthwhile.

PLAN

I have identified several steps which will be necessary for me to complete both parts of my project effectively. First, I need to contact MIST and Free Cycles to coordinate space for the event, as well as identifying their needs and wants, to figure out what would be the most effective use of resources. I have a general idea of “raising money for them” but will hopefully be able to generate a much more specific idea of what can be done through this event to benefit them and their program. Secondly, I have emailed Tell Us Something, a story telling non-profit that operates in western Montana and has done many shows in Missoula. Ideally, I will be able to work together with a group that has an already established process or at least outline for how to conduct a community story telling event. In addition to this I need to come up with two specific prompts as well as parameters for what the vision for the project is. My current conception of the prompts looks something like this: on the theme of ‘traveling, technology, and community.’

The next part of the plan involves the actual logistical plans for the event, which is date and time, itinerary, will there be refreshments and what not. Currently I am still waiting for emails back, though I reckon it will depend highly on MIST and Tell Us and when/if they are free and willing to help with my event for specific date and time. Though I am hoping Free Cycles will offer a great community space and stage on which to promote the previously

discussed ideals, while also displaying the actual work being done by them to promote these ideals.

Another step is the promotion of the event through posters and calls for submissions and word of mouth. I think the promotional aspect may become clearer once some of the more important logistical details have been sorted out through communication with the groups I am trying to get involved and work with. Additionally, if it turns out that either one or both groups want nothing to do with me, most of the framework can remain the same, it just might become a slightly different looking event.

In addition to the event at Free Cycles I will be placing 'movement journals' around town in hopes of encouraging more sharing of stories in the same vein as the event is trying to elicit. The journals will be placed around town in several places (gear stores, climbing gym, breweries, Free Cycles) in hopes of gathering a diverse range of stories and perspectives. This part of the project will be scanned and placed online as part of my project website. Through trying to gather as many perspectives as possible I hope to open considerations for what matters and what is important when thinking about moving through one's environment. And by sharing these perspectives, hopefully create more fruitful communication between groups that may use similar environments for different activities.

Theoretical Applications 1

Issues in the Anthropocene

The Issues in the Anthropocene course is the course that I enjoyed a lot, but more importantly, challenged and pushed me to reconsider human/nature dualism, amongst other things. Deconstructing the separation of humans from their living environments has been

tremendously helpful in helping to focus my CEP and its goals. Steven Vogel's *Thinking Like a Mall* was very influential as far as helping to think about built environments as natural environments, or more accurately, that all environments are built environments. The removal of this dichotomy has allowed me to change the way I think about the construction of spaces, specifically, urban spaces.

Before this course, I thought I had a fairly good idea of human/nature dualism and what counted as natural and what did not. Being able to do away with this unnecessary and obtuse division has helped me to realign what I think should be the important goals for environmental philosophy. Coming from the city of Indianapolis, I was already semi-aware of the environmental concerns within cities, with the White River running through the middle of downtown, while being one of the most polluted rivers in the nation. Additionally, Indianapolis was a city almost entirely hostile to bikes, pedestrians, and public transport. But I never viewed these issues as environmental issues. They were public health or class issues, actively hurting the most vulnerable communities and making it harder for them to function in day-to-day life. The Issues in the Anthropocene course helped me to better make sense of the connections between the issues that reside within the construction of environments. And more so, how the 'natural world' is simply another version of a constructed environment.

The elimination of the duality has helped me to be more focused on the environments I know best, that is more urban spaces, and focusing on what can be done to change the way they are constructed for the benefit of the people who live in them. One thing that is true about most cities in the United States is that they are car centric. They have been constructed by city planners under the assumption that automobile transport was the only way people were going to

move in the future¹. As we know now, automobiles have some problems: large emission costs in both use and assembling, can only move a limited amount of people compared with other public transport, requires a large amount of infrastructure to use effectively, and they are dangerous when people are distracted driving, a phenomenon that has only become more prevalent with smart phones. Additionally, car transport hurts people's chances for active engagement with their environment in a few ways due to the construction of the environment. The constant movement of cars on streets hurts the chances of long-term engagement with environments, except at stops/traffic. This of course precludes 'natural environments' (constructed) such as National parks like Glacier and Yosemite that were designed specifically to be driven through in cars and give the visitors breath taking landscapes, from their cars.² But this is at the sacrifice of people being able to engage in these parks in diverse ways, such as bikes and walking. While these activities still happen within the parks, the promise of most of those environments is the ability to drive through and enjoy the scenery.

This sort of disconnect from nature is the exact thing that nature/human dualism propagates, which I think we need to move away from. We went over a piece by Donna Haraway in the Anthropocene course, covering the need to widen communities and 'make kin not babies'.³ Commuting on public trails, being in these spaces with the ability to stop and talk and communicate with others presents an opportunity to create new sorts of relationships with the beings around you. Additionally, it creates the opportunity for people to be more engaged with and ask more questions about the construction of their environments. If people are more aware of the way they move through the environment (due to its construction), they may be more willing

¹ Vogel 2015

² Dunaway 2000, Demo and Deluca 2000, Spence 1996

³ Haraway 2015

to ask more questions of those that do the construction. People are not necessarily guaranteed to become more critically aware of their environment because they decide to bike or walk to work instead of drive. Indeed, they may become so focused on another means of transport that they fall into a similar trap to the car-centric thinker. What is important is not necessarily that one moves around in something other than a car. What is important is that one can open themselves up to understanding the constructed environment, and how it could be constructed with more consideration towards other-than-car travel. The more varied means of transport one takes, the more opportunities they may have to understand the world in a different way. There is greater opportunity to notice how even a buffered but not protected bike line does not always feel safe, or that some cars do not pay attention to pedestrians' right-of-way in some road situations. The problems of the constructed environment become clearer as one moves through it in more ways.

But choosing a different means of moving through the environment also offers new ways to engage with it and those other beings that occupy it. One thing that specifically is interesting and important about my CEP is the community aspect, which is why I think MIST/Freecycles offers such a fantastic opportunity to work with. The community aspect of commuting by bike is embodied in the Free Cycles in the way that they offer free services and repairs to the community. They offer many gathering events and are always willing to collaborate with community members. They offer a place for communities to gather and flourish in ways that a place like an auto repair shop does not. The community that engages with the public trails and bike lanes on roads are going to have a distinct experience than those people that drive on roads or those that walk on sidewalks. All these groups have a distinct experience of Missoula, and it is important to bring all those perspectives together so we can discuss and aim to create new sorts

of relationships and communities that are dedicated towards goals that benefit all the stakeholders.

It is worth noting that biking may not be a safe option for all vulnerable or targeted communities, where a car can offer some privacy and protection that a bike cannot. The vulnerability of biking or walking is something that is enjoyed from a place of privileged standing. While in an ideal world these concerns would not be an issue, we live in a world where they are, and as such must make note of the ways in which activities that may seem universal, are in fact not. Part of the constructed environment is the social construction of spaces as being gendered and raced, and for long parts of American history outdoor spaces have been spaces almost exclusively for white males.⁴ This exclusion lives on today, though not as overtly violently enforced as it once was, it still permeates our society and is important to understand.

Not all stakeholders will benefit from bike use though. It is important to note that there is still currently a need for car transport for a few reasons, such as harsh winters and personal ability to name a few of the many. Cars provide a much more viable means of transport for people with disabilities and illness than bikes and walking trails in most instances. Most of our environments are constructed with only the most able-bodied among us in mind, with concerns about disability coming second. This is true for the infrastructure for transport as well, where cars provide one of the only safe means of transport of disabled individuals. The emphasis on cars as the most viable means of transport may serve to blind us from constructing environments in more unique ways; in ways that may be more acceptable to more than just able-bodied individuals. In the same ways cars can make us blind to the considerations of biking, not having

⁴ Demo and Deluca 2000, Dunaway 2000, Spence 1996

to use a wheelchair or walker can make us blind to the curbs that lack ramps for accessibility, or other ways in which our environment has been constructed without considerations for the disability community. While currently cars provide the safest means of transport for some, this does not necessarily have to continue; as we have built the environment the way it is now, we can make it differently and with more considerations. Steps forward may look like creating more disability friendly non-automotive means of transport, or public transport, to widen the safe choices of the disability community when moving through their environments.

My project is trying to draw out is that there are multiple perspectives that should be considered when constructing our environments and how we plan our movements through them. Bikes and cars are not the only two modes of transportation. Making environments more geared towards public transport like electric buses is another important perspective to consider. Additionally, in larger cities, train and rail public transport systems offer great perspectives on how we might consider environments more geared towards efficient and safe movement of people through environments. Moving away from cars as the main consideration when constructing our environments involves understanding the needs of a variety of stakeholders, which includes a plurality of perspectives who must navigate the environment.

The Issues in the Anthropocene helped me to understand that there is no human/nature dualism, and more so, the propagation of one serve to disconnect people both from each other and from the places they live. I hope my project will help to provide a way in which people can examine and think about the ways in which they live and move through their environments.

Theories II

Philosophy of Technology

The way most humans interact with the world is mediated by some form of technology or another; for most people it is corrective lenses of some variety. One must think about what form of transport they are going to use to move from one location to another, opting for one form over another. One must consider what form of technological communication is best to reach a friend or colleague, near or far. One usually must get involved with some form of technology if one wants to get into most sorts of recreational activities, some shoes, a bike, a fishing rod, a rope, etc. The philosophy of technology class has helped me to form my CEP by presenting the positive and negative effects that technology can have: its ability to form communities and its ability to destabilize people's lives, its ability to give people freedom and its ability to be used in a surveillance state. Technology covers a broad range of human creations and artifacts, but it has been an integral part of human society. Andy Clark in *Natural Born Cyborgs* argues that humans are the kinds of beings that use technology and part of what technology allows humans to do is export parts of their mind. This intertwined nature of humanity and technology creates a series of puzzling questions about the ways in which our interactions with the world are mediated. Through my CEP I hope to explore some ways in which technology mediates our experience of the world and can help build community.

In "Domestic Technology: Labour-saving or Enslaving" Judy Wajcman explores the ways in which technology in the domestic sphere shape how we see the world. Through exploring the popularization of washing machines and dish washers as pieces of in-the-home technology, Wajcman elaborates on the concept of 'marginally cleanliness.' The need to increase 'marginal cleanliness' within one's household increases with the introduction of the technology that allows for the cleaning to be done more frequently and with greater ease of access. Cleanliness standards increasing is not necessarily a negative in this context, but the problem with increasing

‘marginal cleanliness’ is just that, its marginal, and as such has diminished returns. This new perception of cleanliness then must be maintained by increased use of in-home technologies, which creates a more resource intensive, and wasteful, lifestyle. Especially considering the usage of resources, specifically water in this instance, used in the cleaning of household items generally increases with the introduction of washing machines and dishwashers in the home as opposed to handwashing dishes in a sink or going to a laundromat at a decreased frequency to in-home washing. The introduction of in-home technologies in this instance has changed not only our lifestyles but also how we perceive the world around us in a way that may be for the worse. But this is not the only way technology can change how we perceive the world, and there are more positive ways that technology can mediate our lives.

Diane Michelfelder in “Technological Ethics in a Different Voice” uses the example of telephones as a piece of technology that allows people to connect more easily and perceive the world as a smaller more connected place through the ease of a telephone call. It is much easier now than it has ever been to talk to someone across the globe and to maintain long distance relationships of all kinds. Though we understand that the telephone does not completely suffice for maintaining an actual physical presence, it seems to have created a more connected perception of the world. The introduction of all sorts of telecommunications technologies has created ways for people to maintain contact with an endless number of individuals and create all sorts of communities that would not have been possible otherwise. So, what is the difference between the domestic technology of the telephone as compared to the dishwasher? Well one gives the chance for people to connect with each other through sharing a sort of ‘space’ together (be it on a telephone line or internet forum) and the other creates cultural duties (cleanliness standards).

While I do not want to bemoan cleanliness standards, it is good to be clean and free from disease it seems, it does create a ripe area for social stratification. This stratification comes from a presence or lack of in-home appliances and the subsequent ability to meet the standards set by 'marginal cleanliness' of a mechanized home. Additionally, the fact that there is a non-trivial cost associated with purchasing, installing, and using home appliances further creates areas for social stratification in attempting to maintain certain cleanliness standards. Technological innovations that prompt new areas for stratification are often not intrinsically bad, but rather, are simply implemented in a capitalist system with all the trappings that entails, wherein technological innovation comes with a price tag. These price tags are often times the barrier to entry to participate in society in a lot of ways. But it is possible to find ways around these price tag entry points through community in a lot of ways. Second-hand markets and reselling, community shared resources and technology, sharing knowledge on how to repair items are all ways in which these price tags can be lessened as a burden.

This brings me to how all of this relates to my CEP. The communities that participate in outdoor activities usually use pieces of technology to help them in their endeavors. Climbers have shoes and ropes and harnesses to keep them safe, anglers have diverse types of rods and flies and lines to help them achieve their goals, mountain bikers have specially designed parts of all sorts of varieties within their bikes and protection gear on their body. The active engagement that is prompted by outdoor activities is mediated to some extent by the technology used to do it. But it is blocked to some extent through capitalistic development, which itself is circumnavigated through the development of recreation communities that share, resell, and gift necessary items. More so by the development of community resources, like Free Cycles here in Missoula, which seeks to recycle and provide a bank of community usable and reusable materials

for bikes and other equipment. This kind of use and reuse of technology, at least in some sense, seems related to Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" which advocates for a more bottom-up approach to technology. The kind that seeks to move away from a standardized set of tools that one must purchase to keep intact with the world, and towards one that has technology that has been adapted to fit the needs of individuals in particular instances.

The kinds of technologies that avoid standardization in favor of a more diverse and stylized development and application. This variety is heightened through continued interaction with and developments by the community. This can be seen with an example of flies in fly fishing. The technique of tying flies is something that is hard to replicate for machines, and as such is mostly done by the people who are either using or selling the flies. These processes and details are often not necessarily secret and are even shared with the community. Additionally, this leads to an open-ended development of fly technology not for the sake of monetary advantage, but instead for the enjoyment of active engagement with the world. Bicycles can be the same way with their vast variety of simple mechanical parts that can be configured to work together in endless ways for the sake of new or interesting riding experiences.

But there are technologies that separate people from their environments and resist this sort of diversification. Things like cars with software that is controlled by the company, as were seeing more and more in modern automobiles, or the software within John Deere equipment that allows the company to revoke certain features without paid subscriptions to the company (a practice that has itself created a community of farmer/hackers who have found out how to circumnavigate these features).⁵ As this practice becomes increasingly standard in the production

⁵ Mueller 2021

of modern technology, it is important to try and find ways to resist the implications of creeping technological universalism. Additional paid subscriptions after purchase, data tracking and the proliferation surveillance state⁶, and planned obsolescence are all symptoms of the technological developmental goals of companies. They seek not to increase the ability of humans to interact with the world in interesting and novel ways, but rather, seek to provide an experience that is mediated through technology at the behest of corporations that seek to profit from it. This corporate profiteering in general produces a wasteful and resource intensive lifestyle that disconnects people from their immediate environment and communities. It is important to try to mitigate the use of technologies that are inundated with these underlying ideologies of corporations.

To transition to a more positive account of what my CEP is aimed at doing regarding this is attempting to bring together communities of people who use technologies that are more likely candidates for a Haraway-ian cyborgification. This means technologies that are more likely to be able to resist this corporate creep of ideologue and uphold a community-based development of technology. Cross-pollination, as it were, of these groups with each other will hopefully open a wider understanding of how these different technologies mediate one's experience in diverse ways and allow a larger range of ideas to influence technology across fields. Or, more realistically, get people to consider more than just their own preferred recreation for the land, and the ways in which other groups use and perceive their local environment. This shift in perspective will hopefully be able to guide communities to be more considerate of other communities that participate in activities that are mediated by technology within nature. Additionally, with the application of the more engaged perspective that is brought about through

⁶ Haraway 2009

more engaged technologically mediated practices to activities that have been deprived of their engaged perspective.

An activity like driving a car, according to Douglas Browning in “Some Meanings of Automobiles,” separates one from their environment and community, in favor of a creation of personal space and expansion. This technologically mediated activity is then one which changes the perspective of the individual away from open-ended engagements with the environment in favor of a more controlled and muted perspective. Muted in this way means that one is not encouraged to engage with the outside world, but rather engages in an escape to a private and anonymous space.⁷ It is good to try and move away from this perspective of the world, as it removes people from their direct communities and surroundings. This removal is done at the expense of an active engaged perspective with one’s environment, through which the world is not seen as the other, a perspective encouraged by automobiles. Automobiles, to some extent, other the world around us insofar as there is a private inner space within the car, and a public outer space, which the car is navigating through. This separation encourages one to see the parts outside of the car, which is one’s direct environment, as being separated and removed from the space one is inhabiting inside the car. One does not feel the rain, or the wind, or the hills one is going over in the same way when they are in the car as they do when walking or biking. While this is not necessarily a negative thing, it does prompt questions about what this separation does to people’s conceptions of their movements through their environments.

The questions concerning technology and movement are many and they prompt questions about what it means to be a human being in a world so dominated by technology. The ability of

⁷ Browning 2009

people to use technology for ends that enable more members of our communities to engage in activities and community building are endless. Translators that allow people to speak to each other with not cross-lingual knowledge required, ever improving prosthetic equipment and medical advances that help individuals with disabilities to better participate in a society that was not built with them in mind. There are many technologies that exist that help to connect and integrate communities to make them more widely accessible to all, and attempt to build even stronger and larger communities. But there are also many technologies that actively contribute to ills in this world. Whether they be technologies of war, or technologies of corporations, or technologies surveillance, many technologies serve not to build community. What is important is trying to parse out where positive technological perspectives, which are those perspectives that build community and engagement with one's environment, can come from and how we can aim towards them. While also avoiding the sorts of technology that creates the type of perspective wherein the world becomes a resource for our exploitation, and there is no connection to the world around us, besides as a source of more technological power.

Theories III

Environmental Aesthetics

The environmental aesthetics course was helpful for me in formulating the basis for my CEP for a number of reasons. The main takeaway from this course was within Tom Greaves and his aesthetic theory of movement. His theory provided an entirely different aesthetic theory that informs the ideas behind my project. Additionally, exploring the conceptual history of American landscape aesthetics and their ties to a 'wilderness' ideal helped push me towards a new way to conceive of our aesthetic (and all experiences) of the world. The draw towards this differing aesthetic is in part because the traditional conception of animals within aesthetics seems to be

lacking to some extent and fails to recognize what is aesthetically appreciable about animals in the world. This want to create a wider aesthetic understanding of the world is in part the motivation for my CEP because I believe all experiences of the world are to some extent aesthetic, and if we can change how we conceive of the aesthetic conception of the world, we are able to open ourselves to more considerations in other areas.

The original conception of the aesthetic value of its place was as a landscape, which is a vast sweeping and picturesque area, taken as a whole.⁸ The rolling hills as seen from atop the highest one, or best spot from which to view an alpine lake. The idea was to find a place that had a sublime view of the area. One that, for early American environmentalists, often elicited thoughts of the divine or of great European cathedrals and monuments. Places like Zion National Park in Utah, named after the Christian holy land, or Cathedral Rock in Yosemite Valley in California. The construction of the first of the national parks was done with the thought of people being able to drive to and park at some of the most scenic locations that offered the best views of the ‘sublimity’ the park had to offer. This emphasis on singular views, and the promotion of a landscape aesthetic arises hand in hand with the invention of the photograph and camera, although the preference for a landscape aesthetic can be seen in a long history of western European art. Pastoral villages and fields or large mountain ranges and sweeping forests, all have been the subject of paintings and can be seen as evidence for a preference for the unmoving landscape aesthetic.

There are many critiques of this aesthetic, but for my CEP the alternative system that I found better encapsulated our experience of the world, and what is aesthetically appreciable, is

⁸ Demo and Deluca 2000

Tom Greaves phenomenological aesthetic of wild movement. In brief, the theory works something like this: all of one's experiences of the world are aesthetic experiences, by nature of aesthetic experience being part of all sensory perceptions of the world, one is always aesthetically engaging with the world. And what we appreciate in the world, at least with animals for Greaves, is their 'open-ended wild movement within a lived environment.' This wild movement is movement that is shaped and shapes the world around it. This shaping is done in an open-ended way, meaning that both the animal movement influences the landscape, and the landscape influences the animal's movement, but it is never determinate what those effects will be. The lived environment is an acknowledgment that the animal has been and remains within their space in a way that cannot be replicated in, for example a zoo, but may be possible in a nature preserve, but is best encapsulated in the areas wherein there are no limitations on where and how the animal may move. These are the basic parts of the aesthetics of movement that are put forward by Greaves, and now it seems like it is possible to explain how this connects to my CEP.

This change in aesthetic paradigm is helpful as far as it opens oneself up to a more open experience of the world. Instead of thinking that aesthetic experiences must be had in some transcendental location of some great majestic space, one is able to adopt a more open aesthetic attitude that allows for more ways of seeing and understanding the world. This more open attitude can also be tailored based on the way one is thinking about one's own movement through the world. The walker on the paved trail moves and perceives differently than the backpacker in the backcountry, or the climber on a cliff face, or an angler approaching a river. They are all looking at and for different movement cues and are always in an open-ended relationship with the world around them, acting and reacting in accordance with the changing conditions of the

world. Different goals will lead to different aesthetic experiences of the world, and the different aesthetic experiences of the world open us up to more full considerations of how the world is, and our place in it. One can more fully integrate and understand the environments that one is in if one can understand and read aesthetic cues from a variety of perspectives. And more so, a larger perceptual toolbox allows for people to consider the environment more fully, as they can pull from a larger well of information in terms of important considerations for their environment. A hiker with an eye towards angling may have more considerations towards water, an angler with an eye towards birding may have more considerations towards the area around the water, the possibilities open as more considerations and combinations are put together.

The aesthetic experience of the biker in Missoula varies from that of the car in some important ways, though it also mirrors it in some ways. One of the ways in which to apply the movement aesthetics to transportation is to think of how ‘open and wild’ our movements within transportation can be. This looks like examining the ways in which different means of moving through one’s environment allow them to experience the world around them in an open-ended sort of way. Some modes of transport may allow for more opportunities for open engagement, though that is given the appropriate conditions for such engagement. There are a number of factors in play that contribute to the ability of a mode of transport to prompt open engagement, including the openness of the individual using the vehicle. This includes the space in which one is moving, the individual’s purpose in their movement, and the mode of transportation itself. While these are not the only considerations, they are some of the most prominent and the focus of this section.

As mentioned in the previous section on constructed environments, the way in which a place is built, and who is considered in this construction, has a massive impact on people’s

experience of the environment. Cities that are built with only cars in mind tend to have poor non-motorized options for transportation, and as such, encourage the use of cars. This ends up making it more dangerous for non-motorized transport within the same spaces, as the space has not been built with them in mind. Making it so that there is a singular, or almost singular, mode of preferred transport can limit the ability of anyone to be able to engage in a truly open aesthetics within a space. In this way, spaces wherein walking or biking or any other form of transport is unsafe as a matter of design can be seen as having been constructed in a more closed way. Inversely, spaces that are constructed to allow multiple forms of safe movement through them seem to be at least partially more open, because there are inherently more ways in which to experience the space safely. In this way, city streets that lack sidewalk fail to allow for open engagement from multiple perspectives, whereas a country road with wide shoulders may offer a more apt location for multiple perspectives. The extent to which the environment is conducive to fostering multiple modes of transport at the same time is in direct correlation with that environment's ability to allow open engagement. Spaces that fail to allow for a more movement types are therefore less open to engagement than spaces that facilitate multiple modes of transport. However, the space through which one is moving is not the only contributing factor to open engagement, part of the openness relies on the individual that is moving through the environment.

An individual's mood plays a significant role in determining how open they will be to engaging in the world around them when moving through it. One may be closed to aesthetic engagement when moving through their environment, regardless of mode of transport. If an individual is only concerned about arriving at their destination and has no concern for the space they are moving through, then they will always fail to openly engage with their environment,

regardless of whether they are on a bike or in a car. This attitudinal disposition aspect relies on a number of personal factors and will vary depending on the individual. For example, an individual enjoying an aimless drive along country roads in a truck or car has created a space wherein they can openly engage with their environment. Conversely, a person on a bicycle trail on a bicycle, but who is only focused on getting from point A to point B will most likely fail to engage openly with their environment. There are also degrees to which one can allow themselves to be open, depending on mood. One may wish to openly engage with their environment but may fail through attitudinal dispositions that do not allow open engagement. The factors that determine one's disposition when moving through one's environment vary greatly and depend heavily on factors such as one's job or one's social life. These factors change day to day attitudes and inhibit or enhance and individual's openness to their environment when they are moving through it. Cultivating attitudinal openness is a practice that requires an openness when moving that is not necessarily entirely accessible or possible within the United States. Part of the issue lies within construction of not only environments, but within cultural associations with movement through certain spaces. Cities have tended to become spaces where it seems like there is a fast paced and destination-oriented movement attitude, which permeates the movement culture in the United States. This culture makes a more open engagement attitude harder to cultivate on a larger scale but is not entirely impossible. Allowing for and creating space that fosters more open forms of engagement can hopefully help to advance a more open sort of aesthetic attitude, regardless of form transport.

The mode of transport that one chooses to take, to some extent, factors into creating opportunities for open engagement. But only as far as the other two factors also influence these opportunities. There are some features of different forms of transport that contribute to the ability

to have open experiences. For example, walking around lackadaisically on a trail, without any sort of determined end point, probably prompts more active engagement than driving in a car on one's way to a destination. In the same vein, if one is taking a drive with the intent to open themselves up to aesthetic engagement, then they will probably generate more opportunities for this sort of engagement. But there are limitations imposed to some extent by the mode of transport; while a scenic drive may be relaxing in a less populated area, it would be harder to do in an active city center where one must focus on driving and other drivers. This applies to busy bike paths and lanes as well as crowded sidewalks to some extent, though to a lesser degree it seems, as the sidewalk would not be obstructed in the same way a bike or car lane would by a stopped individual. However, the walker or biker has a much easier time, generally, than the car does in making quick stops at various places along the route they are on. It is easier for a pedestrian to notice something in a shop window and interact with it than it is for a car driving past, generally, given the other variables mentioned. Additionally, utilizing a number of different modes can help to open to people up to a myriad of experiences, which help to inform one's movement through the environment, regardless of the specific form in use. If one bikes and walks and drives along the same area, they will most likely have different experiences of that space, and those differing experiences will inform each other with both new and old information about the space. If one walks past a bakery and notices the smells, which they enjoy, this may prompt them to bike through it a little slower or roll the windows down of the car to smell the fresh baked goods. Moving through the environment differently prompts differing aesthetic experiences, and these experiences help to inform our continuing experiences of space. Different modes of transportation do offer different perspectives, though using a specific method does not necessarily entail that one will be able to engage with their environment fully and openly. The

opportunities created through choosing a different mode of transport do tend to open us up to more chances for engagement, though not necessarily so. The opportunities that one has for active engagement with their environment when moving through it depend on a variety of factors, some are environmental construction, and some are more personal. All these factors come together to help determine how able one is to open themselves up for opportunities of active engagement with the world around them.

The understanding of the aesthetic theory I have laid out is built around a space's ability to facilitate open and active engagement, as well as personal attitudes and choices that one makes to initiate or sustain this engagement. It is important to note that there are multiple factors that contribute to one's ability to engage openly and aesthetically with the space they are in, some of which are in one's control, and some of which are not. Being able to distinguish between the two helps us to figure out what the appropriate solution to a problem is. If the problem is that everyone in a place is constantly busy and must rush everywhere, and they just happen to do so on bikes and not cars, then it seems like conversations and attitudinal adjustments would be the most helpful. In cases where there are no bike lanes or non-car-infrastructure, but people are able to engage with their environment from their car, it seems like some sort of structural shift may be to help facilitate more perspectives. The open and active engagement that one can have with their environment depends on a number of factors, and identifying these factors is helpful in opening oneself up to more active engagement.

Actions Taken

In attempting to organize a public facing event there has been a large amount of logistical communication necessary for me to set up my event and project. Locating speakers, finding a venue, figuring out the format of the event, and coordinating the non-public presentation parts of

my project have all offered their own unique challenges. While some steps entailed a singular email met with a positive response, I was met with a fair share of dead ends and unresponsiveness. This created a need for reformatting and a shift in aim of the event in some regards, but not away from my goals, rather, achieving them through different means. Being able to slightly shift the format of my event has created space for what I think may be a better way in which to articulate the concepts for which I am aiming. Additionally, it has opened space for more community communication on the topic of the event.

In addition to the public aspects of my event there has been a large amount of communication not only with my advisors, but also my peers which has helped to guide me and to help focus the aim of my project. Additionally, it cannot be understated how much my in-class readings for the program courses have shaped my thoughts on this project, in addition to a healthy amount of reading outside of the curriculum. The theoretical underpinnings of my project are derived from small parts of all our classes, though with the more explicit connections to specific classes made earlier.

Regarding actual steps taken in order to organize the event, there were easier steps and there were harder steps, both for logistical and personal reasons. Contacting a venue which would host my event was a relatively easy step given the prevalence of community accessible space in Missoula. Having used Free Cycles services, as well as attending events there, and knowing a few of the employees, it was an easy enough task to coordinate with Bob Giordano about reserving space. Additionally, because Bob has been an invested member of the community for so long, he was able to offer lots of resources and advice in terms of hosting and putting on a public facing event. Additionally, Free Cycles is a perfect backdrop in which to discuss movement perceptions mediated through technology, as they are an organization that is

built upon providing a non-car centric approach to transportation and commuting. And Free Cycles is also dedicated to building local communities through direct involvement with a number of different organizations designed around getting more people involved with not only bikes, but the idea of sustainable transportation and recycling effectively.

In terms of locating speakers for this event I struggled a bit. Reaching out to a number of organizations through their information pages was hit and miss effective. Going into physical locations to talk to people was mildly more effective but did not yield the results for which I was hoping. In total I contacted about fifteen different organizations in a variety of fields and heard back from about five, and of those, only got three volunteers for speaking committed as of writing this section. This has prompted issues and anxiety in my project, but it has not sunk it. It has prompted me to reconsider the way I want this event to function and made me consider alternative formats through which to get my message across. This has led to a change in event type from a strictly story telling event to a more hybrid speaker/group discussion format that will hopefully allow for a wider consideration of perspectives. But this has also created the need for more involvement on my part, as now it will be necessary to create discussion questions that will hopefully prompt the small group talks that will provide new movement perspectives.

Another aspect of my project has been the creation and distribution of ‘movement journals’ to attempt to capture more stories and perspectives around Missoula. These journals are simple notebooks with directions taped to the inside and a pen attached to record stories. They have been placed in various locations around Missoula, with the hope that people will engage with them and record their own stories to be shared. If people decide to use them is yet to be determined, but I am hopeful that people will find the idea intriguing and worth contributing to.

The coordination of the multitude of parts of this project, and the evolving nature of the event in general, has required me to take lots of interpersonal actions, often reaching out and interacting with people I have never met, even though we share the same spaces. This sort of interconnection is already exactly the kind of thing that my event is trying to encourage, more openness in community building through broad coalitions. These coalitions need some common ground on which to make connections, and why not start by talking about the different perceptions that we all bring to the same physical space?

Accomplishments

Overall, I think that my event was a success, and I feel I was at least able to accomplish some of my goals for this project: getting people together in the same area to discuss their experiences and perceptions of the world due to their movement through their local environments. These sorts of discussions are important, I believe, as they serve to do several things. Firstly, it is always good to build community through active engagement with other people who live in the same community. Secondly, having the time and space to engage with other members of the community in a productive way is not always possible, so providing that space and time is a positive thing. Third, and finally, being able to have non-philosophers interact with philosophers in public settings to have open conversations about the world and local environments is a good thing. These conversations not only share philosophy with non-philosophers but allow the philosophers to move away from an 'ivory tower' stereotype, and towards a more community friendly approach.

Building community through active engagement with other people in that community can be done in numerous ways. For this event it was bringing people together to discuss and share stories, which I thought was the most effective means to share perspectives. While giving people

a platform to speak, it also allows for communication between those speaking and the rest of the group, which allows for more perspective sharing and building. Group discussions are also generally less formal than a more speaker-oriented event and may allow people to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences. Overall, the group discussions seemed to be a highly effective, and well received, method through which to conduct this event.

Creating more space within one's local community for meaningful community-oriented discussions about issues, philosophical or otherwise, is a really challenging thing to do. People are busy with their lives in numerous ways, and having to create the space in one's own schedule for something like a community discussion can be difficult. The turnout for my event (~25 people) was honestly better than I was hoping for, and I was extremely happy that many people were able to and willing to attend an event on one of the first nice and sunny days of the year. People were very willing to engage with the ideas and share their perspectives, but one of the fundamental issues was simply giving people the opportunity to interact in this way, as well as them being able to attend given time and lifestyle constraints.

One of my main goals for this project was to bring philosophy into a public setting. I wanted to do this because community engagement is important for philosophy. An opportunity like my event, hopefully, brings people into contact with some of the real things we discuss in environmental philosophy and opens the discussion past an academic setting. It is one thing to hear what academics think about their environments, but it is also particularly important that other perspectives and values get represented. Generally, people who write and publish environmental philosophy, or philosophy in general, are going to be in a different social stratum than a non-profit worker, or a service industry worker, though not always. But these differences contribute to experiencing the world in diverse ways, and if philosophers can more readily

interact with people who experience the world differently it will help expand both parties' considerations of the world, hopefully. I think my event was successful in merging academic philosophical concepts along with everyday experiences of the world and how people experience it.

Challenges

I experienced several challenges related to this project, mostly around organization of my event, though also with the purpose of my event, as well as figuring out what the focus on my project was, and what I wanted to accomplish with it. I think one of the most challenging aspects was narrowing down my project. I had a lot of ideas and not a lot of direction with what I wanted to accomplish through combining them. I knew that I wanted to talk about the way we experience our environments and others within those environments, but originally my project was focused on non-human animals. I eventually figured out what I wanted to do and was able to focus my project, due in large part to interactions with not only the other people within the program, but through talking with people about the project in general. These conversations helped guide me to what I thought would be the most productive areas of focus, and what may be a little too farfetched.

My largest hurdle though was organizing speakers. Getting the space was easy enough, Bob Giordano of Free Cycles was super kind and helpful in getting space, as well as giving me suggestions and resources. But organizing speakers, as the original plan was to have it be a storytelling event, proved to be difficult. I reached out to around twenty-five different groups, organizations, and businesses to try and secure speakers, and was only able to get about three to agree to speaker, all of whom subsequently backed out. This was a major hurdle, having a

storytelling event without story tellers. But, in the end, the hybrid between group discussion and storytelling seemed to provide a wonderful way to engage with different perspectives.

A more personal hurdle for me was getting over some anxiety when talking with strangers, as was necessary when I was putting out the movement journals and posters around town. Interacting with strangers is not necessarily hard for me, but having to explain my project and goals to strangers was a source of some anxiety. That is until I went out and started talking to people about the event and received great support from the community, or at least those individuals I interacted with. Additionally, the movement journals themselves have not garnered as many stories as I had hoped they might. This part of the project would have best been conceived of and enacted earlier on in the timeline to be more effective, though I do think any interaction with the journals can be thought of as a massive positive in terms of perspective sharing.

Overall, the challenges for this project were able to be navigated effectively and in a way that still allowed me to achieve the goals I had set out to achieve with this project. The accomplishments for this project make the challenges more than worth the difficulty they put me through. I was able to accomplish my goals in a way that I was happy with and feel proud of, and importantly, was possible due to the environmental master's program, and all the wonderful professors that helped me throughout my two years. This project feels like it pulled a little bit from everything I have learned here, and I was happy to be able to bring all my knowledge together to do this project.

Works Cited

Borgmann, Albert. "Focal things and practices." *Technology and values: essential readings* (2009): 123-133.

Browning, Douglas. "Some Meanings of Automobiles." *Technology and values: essential readings* (2009): 290-293.

Clark, Andy. *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence*. Oxford University Press. (2003).

DeLuca, Kevin Michael, and Anne Teresa Demo. "Imaging nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the birth of environmentalism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17.3 (2000): 241-260.

Dunaway, Finis. "Hunting with the Camera: Nature Photography, Manliness, and Modern Memory, 1890–1930". *Journal of American Studies*, 34(2) (2000), 207-230.

Duncan, P. D. "Old West, New Audiences: Wildlife Documentaries, Non-Theatrical Exhibition, and the Us Wilderness Culture Industry, 1928–1930". *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*, (2023): 43(1), 20-41.

Greaves, Tom. "Movement, wildness and animal aesthetics." *Environmental Values* 28.4 (2019): 449-470.

Haraway, Donna. "Anthropocene, capitalocene, plantationocene, chthulucene: Making kin." *Environmental humanities* 6.1 (2015): 159-165.

Haraway, Donna J. "A cyborg manifesto: Science, technology, and socialist-feminism in the late twentieth century." *Technology and values: essential readings* (2009): 225-241.

Heidegger, Martin. "The question concerning technology." *Technology and values: essential readings* (2009): 100-113.

Michelfelder, Diane P. "Technological ethics in a different voice." *Technology and values: essential readings* (2009): 247-257.

Mueller, Gavin. *Breaking Things at Work: The Luddites Are Right About Why You Hate Your Job*. United Kingdom, Verso, (2021).

Spence, M. D. "Crown of the continent, backbone of the world: The American wilderness ideal and Blackfeet exclusion from Glacier National Park." *Environmental History*, (1996). 1(3), 29-49.

Snyder, Emily. "The Ugly Animal: Aesthetics, Power, and Animal-Human Relationality." *Humanimalia* 5.1 (2013): 136-168.

Vogel, Steven. *Thinking Like a Mall: Environmental Philosophy After the End of Nature*. Cambridge, MA, USA: MIT Press. (2015).

Wajcman, Judy. "Domestic technology: labour-saving or enslaving?" *Technology and Values: Essential Readings*. Wiley-Blackwell. (2010)