University Sound: A Practical Aesthetics of Soundscape

By Max Barton

A Civic Engagement Project

Submitted to the University of Montana Department of Philosophy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MA in Environmental Philosophy

May, 2024

University Sound

A civic engagement project by Max Barton

INTRODUCTION

This project was conceived with the goal of examining soundscapes as aesthetic objects. During the course of the project, the remit grew to include the ethical criticism of soundscapes. As a public project, University Sound raised awareness about the University of Montana soundscape and introduced the practice of soundwalking to community members.

I had the idea for University Sound one morning as I was rushing between Eck Hall and the forestry building (a few hundred yards across the University of Montana quad). Late to a lecture on Early Modern philosophy, I was focused on everything but my surroundings. The too hot coffee sloshing in my hand, the lecture notes disorganized in my head, the time– oh the time! I half jogged the awkward way academics do– with messenger bag flapping and hands clutching coffee and loose pages– toward the forestry building only to suddenly halt before the door. A sound, almost out of earshot, familiar and strange, shook me from my self-focus. Among all the hum and commotion of the campus at ten in the morning, the busy road and whirring air conditioners and footsteps slapping concrete, there was, poised in a tree, just off the footpath, a group of black-capped chickadees, singing sweetly. Perhaps there were three or maybe four. They sang in hocket-like turns carrying one another's melody and punctuating solos with a flap or a hop between boughs. For a moment, I forgot my frenzied dash. The sun warmed my beard. The wind breathed in my ears. I turned my back to the door, and then, stepping away from the path, I walked through the grass toward their tree, laying down my things to rest in the shade of its branches. Finally disarmed, I thought to myself, *this* is how campus is supposed to sound. Such a thought was, of course, unburdened by philosophical reflection; but, there was something in this flash of emotion. "Why," I asked myself, "do we put so much time and energy into perfecting the visage of our mountain campus, the part which is put to cameras and canvases; why do we carefully craft this picture-ready identity from flowers and trees and brick and commissioned sculpture; why do we fuss about architectural style and landscaping philosophy; why do we fret over all of *this* when we so casually ignore the way our campus *sounds*?" *"Why,"* I pressed, listening to a crew of jackhammers bucking three hundred yards away,"*is it taking so long to construct the new food zoo?"*[1]

[1] The surprisingly official name for the University of Montana dining hall.

I had a lead. And a mix of hot emotions– righteous indignation, awe before the mountains and the songbirds which music them. It felt good. I knew that I was onto something. But, if I was to take this critique seriously, then I would first have to understand what it means for a place to have an auditory aspect at all. There I was, under a sun-soaked poplar dancing with happy birds, poking at the danger of novel philosophical territory. Pretty soon I was spending late nights in the library, snacking over my keyboard, pouring through literature. Pretty soon I was tearing through the pages of a book which promised a method for *tuning* the world like a violin.

By the end of the semester, I had recorded two radio shows for Missoula's high-powered community radio station, KFGM, focused on the local soundscape, and I had led my very own soundwalk across campus, all in an attempt to understand what it means to live in a world which is not merely composed in color and shadow, but in sound. In music.

University Sound (US) is first and foremost an environmental philosophy project. It is designed to bring attention to an oft-ignored issue in the literature of environmental philosophy (though much discussed in scientific literature[2]), the aesthetics and ethics of the soundscape, and to impart a practice of listening which people might use in their everyday lives.

A community engagement project is focused not only on environmental philosophy in the void, but practical contributions to sustainability and environmental justice.

People notice hills and cliffs and shining rocks and smoggy clouds and barreling storms and rotting trees, but there is much about the environment that is hidden from the eyes. There is an ecology which exists only in sound. This ecology is made up of both the *prima facie* anthropogenic aspects of the environment (the screech of steel cars, the drum of aluminum air conditioning units, the roar of rubberized soles on cement) and the *prima facie*

[2] See Pijanowski et al, 2011, for a very influential theory of *soundscape ecology*. Notably, this paper is co-authored by Bernie Krause who was the first to suggest the acoustic niche hypothesis mentioned several times in this paper.

non-anthropogenic aspects, often marked by an adaption to the anthropogenic aspects (the heightened pitch of bird song, the eerie silence of white-tailed deer standing on sod). The distinction between natural and non-natural is certainly of conceptual interest to University Sound, but there are also more empirical problems of environmental justice. For instance, how do certain sounds affect the health of both human and non-human neighbors? Who has the power to alter their sonic environment toward aesthetic and ethical ends? How do we practically craft our sonic environment?

University Sound strives to touch on all of these issues, but the scope of the project is limited by the time allotted. Regardless, I hope that it is a move in the right direction, a starting point from which I can continue to work on these issues.

BACKGROUND

A Brief History of Soundwalking and Soundscapes

Soundwalking is a practice in acoustic ecology by which humans encounter the soundscape– by noticing detail, rendering judgments, interacting with sonic neighbors, composing novel noises and anything else involving, in general, sound. We are sound-making beings. Our bodies are kept alive by rhythms: our heart, our breath, the clicks and puffs and sighs of language, even the ways we chew our food and sip our water are unavoidably sonic. Soundwalking is designed not only to help one realize the soundscape around them, but to understand their role as sound producers *in,* not apart from, the soundscape. For the purposes of

University Sound, Soundwalking was the principal way which I encountered, and invited the community to encounter, the University of Montana soundscape.

The concept of *soundscape* has gone through many permutations since R. Murray Schafer's first definition of "the quality and type of sounds and their arrangements in space and time" (Grinfeder et al. 1). Schafer's original intention behind the term soundscape and its concomitant practice *soundwalking* was to expose, using an empirical method, the emergence of "noise pollution" in urban environments as a "threat to human health," and moreover, the human relationship to nature and ecosystems (ibid). His understanding of soundscape was realist, positing it as an objective entity in the world in a manner analogous to a landscape and separable from the experiencing subject. The soundscape is revealed with the ears just as a landscape is with the eyes. Moreover, what soundwalking reveals about soundscapes is that they are in a state, just like urban landscapes, of fall. A beautiful soundscape[3] Schafer describes as a musical object, in some state of harmony. The addition of anthropogenic modern industry has compromised aurally what it had for the environmentalists of the 1970s so obviously compromised visually and culturally (Schafer 42, 185, 229). Humans, in this context, suffer the consequences in every sense, as hearers, seers, breathers, doers, etc. "It would seem," writes the colorful Schafer, "that the world soundscape has reached an apex of vulgarity in our time" (Schafer 3).

Schafer's definition of soundscape is distinctly musical. The beauty he finds to be valuable in an acoustic environment is in fact *musical* beauty. As he describes soundscapes, his metaphors are ripped from the lingo of composition, musicology, and music recording. Indeed, the frontispiece of his most influential book, *The Tuning of the World,* depicts Robert Fludd's divine monochord (*monochordum mundanum*) which connects the intervals and structures of

[3] The term Schafer uses is high-fidelity as opposed to low-fidelity. He abbreviates these as "hi-fi" and "lo-fi" (Schafer 43).

music to a universal mathematical cosmology. In the introduction, Schafer announces his intent to "treat the world as a macrocosmic musical composition" (Schafer 5). But, it is clear he does not mean this by analogy. For Schafer, all sound can be read as music. He calls the domain of music "comprehensive" and cites Thoreau's "Sounds" essay in *Walden*, John Cage's *4'33"*, and the practice of *musique concrete* as having continually destroyed conventional, circumscriptive definitions of music. "Behold the new orchestra:" he proclaims, "the sonic universe! And the musicians: anyone and anything that sounds!" (ibid).[4]

Over time, the soundscape designation was taken up by other fields, specifically in ecology, shifting the idea of listening to the world musically from a literal to an analogical perspective. If musical beauty was once the benchmark for goodness in an acoustic environment, then music in acoustic ecology is only illustrative of non-musical, and sometimes non-aural facts. For instance, Dr. Alice Eldridge's work in wildlife ecology shows that it is possible to analyze (at least partially) biodiversity using acoustic recordings (University of Sussex). This idea rests on the acoustic niche hypothesis, stating that soniferous species will usually sound at different frequencies in order to distinguish themselves from other species in the soundscape (ibid). Where I grew up, for instance, bullfrogs croak at a low frequency while cicadas occupy a more middle range. For this reason, they are distinguished with ease in the soundscape. When Eldridge demonstrates this phenomenon to lay people, like myself, she compares the acoustic niche hypothesis to a regular practice in musical composition. Some species are "like upright basses," she asserts, with a smile, while others "like piccolos," and still many others occupy the range of clarinets, oboes, violins, or trumpets (ibid). This way, just as in a symphony orchestra composed of dozens of instruments, soniferous species distinguish themselves through acoustic diversity.

[4] For how I conceive of music, see the pages 20-24 of the present essay.

Though the acoustic niche hypothesis was not developed until after Schafer had written his field-defining work, the positive values Schafer finds in the soundscape do seem to mirror these scientific findings.[5] Schafer's preferred composers are those who act as channels to nature's motifs. In *Tuning* he provides this encomium to the pre-Romantic classical composers Handel and Haydn.

"The landscapes of Handel and Haydn are as rich in detail as the paintings of Breughel and they are just as carefully structured. Michelangelo had criticized the Flemish painters for failing to exercise selection in their subject matter; instead of focusing on one thing they included everything in view. Indeed, the compositions to which I have alluded share a similar feature, for they are wide-angle tableaux; the composer observes the landscape at a distance. Nature Performs and he provides the secretarial services" (Schafer 105).

Schafer pinpoints several places where we have gone wrong in our musical traditions. One being the bombastic Romantic turn initiated by the work of Beethoven, another the ballooning of the symphony orchestra to hundreds of members, but most colorfully he derides the Futurist avant-gardism of the Italians in the early 20th century. Of Russolo's famous "Noise Orchestra" Schafer observes, "Russolo's experiments mark a flash-point in the history of aural perception, a reversal of figure and ground, a substitution of garbage for beauty" (Schafer 124). The narrative arc Schafer draws is one in which the music of man pushes further and further from its natural origin until totally divorcing music from nature, both stylistically (in detail and structure) as well as sonically (in the emblematic switch from the soft, yielding harpsichord to the discordantly loud piano, edging ever closer to the outer limits of human hearing).

Schafer obsesses over the subtleties of sound in natural environments while simultaneously denigrating the masking sounds of urban landscapes. Masking sounds are the key

[5] See Krause, 1993

ingredient in lo-fi landscapes for Schafer. A low fidelity landscape is one which is poor in detail and subtlety, and loud (Schafer 158). Masking sounds are experienced as overwhelming and harsh because they are not frequency banded– they do not mimic the distinctions of the forest and instead cover ("mask") the subtleties that a soundscape would otherwise reveal. An obvious example of this is road noise. Cars and trucks and their humming tires and revving engines do not frequency band. They take up far more breadth in the soundscape than perhaps they deserve. On the opposite end are those soundscapes he considers "hi-fi," best represented by the sounds of the country (as opposed to the city) and more specifically the unalloyed sounds of pristine nature (Schafer 43). Just as the urbanization of landscapes represented a fall to Dave Foreman and the Earth Firsters, so does the urbanization of sound represent a fall to Schafer.

Before I continue, it is important to remember that Schafer is not without serious reason to think the way he does. Schafer was someone who, very early on, took the environmental justice issues of noise pollution seriously. Unlike many people who turned a blind eye to "fallen" urban environments, Schafer paid attention and sought to aid, not abandon, the denizens of the city. Only now, fifty years later, do we have empirical insight into the health problems associated with Schafer's low-fidelity environments. That being said, his critiques are not always sensitive or conceptually sophisticated. He is prone to classist flights of fancy and disregards the problem of taste (i.e. why is it that some people like *x* while others *y*). He writes, for instance, without supporting data, that, "when the rhythms of the soundscape become confused or erratic, society sinks to a slovenly and imperiled condition" (Schafer 237). He also articulates an extreme viewpoint. I call this a philosophy of absence. It is a neither-seen-nor-heard practice of cultivating a high-fidelity soundscape.

This can best be understood by one example Schafer gives about halfway through *Tuning*. The noise pollution of human beings themselves, not merely their machines, Schafer deems a "sound sewer" (Schafer 237). For a view of what an urban soundscape could be like in Schafer's ideal world, he looks to the Middle East, writing, "The bazaars and traditional towns of the Middle East will impress one by the quiet, almost furtive manner in which large numbers of people manage to go about their business without disturbing one another" (ibid). To be a responsible sonic citizen in Schafer's soundscape, is, through sheer force of will, to make yourself scarce.

In University Sound, much of what I want to interrogate are these naturalist tendencies instantiated by Schafer. Schafer is an obvious choice for a project concerning public philosophy because he stands adamantly in his own dogma. Ideas of his, the conflation between musical sound and non-musical sound, a dogged preference for "natural" sounds over "artificial" sounds, an ethics of silence, are all interesting and seductive ideas. By interrogating Schafer, I found that it was quite easy to outline what a more moderate soundscape philosophy might look like without getting into too many philosophical abstractions (realism vs. idealism, the ontology of sound, the existence of aesthetic obligations).

In both my radio shows, as well as during my soundwalk lecture, I used Schafer's philosophy as a scaffolding for my critiques. And later, I employ a revision of his music analogy for my own positive theory.

Why Care?

There are some obvious moral reasons we should care about the soundscape. First it is special because it is democratic and non-voluntary. That is, it is collectively built, but

participation in the building is not voluntary. This is the soundscape. You can't really escape it. If you can block it out, by, say, putting in your earphones, that's great, but you can't escape the fact that you are part of it, rumbling the air with your pulse, respirating into it, shuffling your feet in the dirt, swishing your pant legs, yawning, scratching, blinking.[6] And if it is the case that the soundscape affects others, then there is reason to think that you should care about your contributions.

Why is this so obviously moral? It has to do with the negative externalities of noise: the health detriments of noise pollution. Noise pollution has been linked to cardiovascular disease, hearing loss, depression, and recently there has been data showing a strong correlation between increments of noise pollution exposure and dementia risk.[7]

But we don't have to think of a soundscape ethic in wholly negative terms. A positive soundscape ethic might induce the cultivation of a *healthy* soundscape. Gardens exist toward different ends. Some exist for beautification, some for promoting community, and still others are concerned with making a place welcoming to humans and non-human animals alike. A positive ethic might focus on benevolent self-interest as in examples of virtue ethics– that living a good life in relation to the soundscape may cultivate virtuous behavior.

The ongoing construction of the food zoo, the new dining hall off the University of Montana quadrangle (aka, the oval) is one local example of noise pollution which needs ethical attention. For us humans it is a ruckus. It makes the oval a worse place to gather; it distracts from studying and relaxing; it generally worsens the aesthetic feel of campus. But, let's say construction continues for six months. That sucks, but it's not a huge deal– maybe it's even worth it in the long run to have a new dining facility? After all, six months is only 1/146th of a

[6] This would seem to apply also for those who are hard of hearing or deaf.
[7] See the meta-analysis conducted in Meng et al. 2022

normal human lifespan, so chronic noise pollution is not as much of an issue. But, think about what that means for birds. A common bird on the UM campus is the black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*). Six months is 1/6th a black-capped chickadee's lifespan.[8] That's the equivalent of twelve human years. Assuming they suffer like humans do from noise pollution, something we have pretty good evidence to believe is the case,[9] then this construction project creates a soundscape that is essentially toxic to our avian neighbors.

We also have aesthetic reasons for caring about the soundscape. Are soundscapes, after all, that different from gardens, sculptures, buildings, or other aesthetic alterations to the environment? We don't garden just because gardens attract wildlife or furnish our baskets with fruit, we do it because it promotes beauty, because it demonstrates individuality, because it cultivates an aesthetic practice of gardening about which we gather our community. The goal of a particular garden might only be to make something that is beautiful. This is a perfectly acceptable reason for gardening. Why not for designing a soundscape?

The soundscape will exist in our lives as an aesthetic object no matter what. We can, of course, choose to ignore it, but in doing so we are making an aesthetic decision just as leaving a lawn to grow back into a forest is an aesthetic decision (if not ethically obligated or otherwise compulsory). If this is our decision, then we should own the aesthetic responsibility for derelict soundscapes. There may be reasons for ignoring soundscapes that are not aesthetic (moral reasons, for instance), but these would have to be quite extraordinary. I am not arguing that we have aesthetic obligations to the soundscape.[10] I am arguing that we have good reason to regard the soundscape aesthetically. We live with it everyday; it has the ability to express the unique

[8] Average lifespan is between two and three years according to the National Wildlife Federation.
[9] See Arcangeli et al. 2022 for a systematic review
[10] Whether there are aesthetic obligations, pure or otherwise, is still a hotly debated topic in philosophy of aesthetics. For more see Robbie Kubala's survey in Philosophy Compass, 2020.

excellences of a local place and thus cultivate identity; it is something which unites communities of human and non-human animals around a common object; there is precedent for the aesthetic treatment of seemingly every other facet of public space. Especially on this last point, it is not clear why the soundscape would constitute an exception.

THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS

Environmental Aesthetics

In this essay written in lieu of a comprehensive exam, I will rehearse some of the key ideas from the seminar "Environmental Aesthetics."

I start briefly with a rehearsal of how Kantian aesthetics influenced perceptions of the environment, show how Allen Carlson's scientific cognitivism changed the way the environment is perceived aesthetically, and then outline a few critiques of Carlson's views, culminating with 21st century non-hedonic aesthetics. I end the essay with a discussion of the role of aesthetics in my CEP project, University Sound.

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* informed aesthetics most notably with his concept of *disinterestedness* or *impartiality*. The Kantian aesthetic judge views aesthetic objects from a purely rational perspective. This solves a very important problem in aesthetics known as the problem of taste (Van Der Berg 5). It is empirically the case that people like different stuff. Why is this? Kant asserts that it is because they are judging objects from a subjective, partial perspective. This is ok, but it does not render judgments in terms of universals. Universal

judgments, he asserts, are possible because all people are endowed with reason (Ginsborg §2). If it is the case that all people are endowed with reason, and if it is the case that reason derives universal principles, then it is possible for aesthetic objects to be judged rationally such that any person, using reason, would come to the same judgment (Ginsborg §2.1.2). In short, it is possible to deduce the value of aesthetic objects.

For the purposes of environmental aesthetics, this aesthetic judgment breaks further into two categories, *the beautiful* and *the sublime*. The beautiful is that which is deemed aesthetically valuable based on impartial and reasoned inspection (ibid). A broad category, this lumps paintings, sculptures, architecture, as well as landscapes and natural objects (like cut roses) together. Later, the concept of the beautiful would breed a landscape art revival which favors *picturesque* appreciation, or the appreciation of natural landscapes as natural landscape portraiture.[11] Sweeping vistas, tidy glens, and sunlit meadows would become art objects in the sense that they display the selfsame compositional properties as good paintings.

The other category is the *sublime*. Those landscapes which could not be judged in the fashion of the picturesque, were very likely instead to be sublime.

The sublime in Kantian thought is a complex idea which is still grist for much debate. I will simplify it greatly only to show how environmental aesthetics was swept up in the sublime through its acceptance of Kantian rationality. The sublime describes a phenomenological relationship between the subject (a human being endowed with reason *ex hypothesi*) and nature (most often large or intimidating landscapes). The relationship is one wherein reason is at first flummoxed by nature, and then, turning inward, vindicated as superior over nature. Reason eventually is understood to have domain over nature, to be in control of, and not controlled by, nature, and to be comprehensive of nature even where our senses fail us **(**Ginsborg §2.7). One

[11] This is notably seen in the work produced by the Hudson River School c.1850-1900. For more see Avery, 2004

example of the latter feeling (known as the mathematical sublime) is the infinite-seeming night sky. While we understand there are many more stars than we can ever hope to count and that this is an intimidating feeling, we are reassured by the fact that we can comprehend, through reason, the nature of infinity.

Both the notions of the beautiful and the sublime ramify through our environmental thinking even today. Those places prized as beautiful, like a painting, or sublime, like a cathedral, were the very first to become American National Parks. While places of great ecological intrigue like the Everglades were preserved only much later and despite much grousing.[12]

The philosopher Allen Carlson was among the most important post-Kantian thinkers in environmental aesthetics. In this next section I will show how, utilizing the work of Kendall Walton, Carlson's scientific cognitivist model of environmental aesthetics overcame the influences of the picturesque and the sublime.

In 1970, Kendall Walton published "Categories of Art." Walton argued, contra the formalists like Clive Bell, that aesthetic judgments are incompletely understood without the inclusion of non-aesthetic, external elements. These non-aesthetic elements include biographical, historical, material, psychological, sociological, and other factors which inform or comprise the product of an artist (Walton 334). For instance, one non-aesthetic fact that might inform an artwork is the intent of the artist herself (ibid). Did she intend for it to be beautiful, graceful, cacophonic? Walton argues that key aesthetic facts about an artwork (such as its coherence, grace, beauty, etc.) are actually deeply reliant upon the non-aesthetic facts which place the artwork in certain categories. Walton's most famous example utilizes the Picasso painting

[12] For more, see William Cronon's discussion of the founding of National Parks in his famous essay, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 1995,and Carlson's discussion of the "landscape model" of appreciation in "Appreciation and the Natural Environment," 1979.

Guernica. As it is, *Guernica* is dynamic and evocative for a painting. But, if we didn't think of *Guernica* as a painting, instead considering it a bas-relief (or in a different relief category Walton calls "Guernicas"), these aesthetic facts would be diminished. In fact, for a bas-relief, *Guernica* is rather controlled and flat (Walton 347-8). It has no three-dimensional elements, for instance. Clearly, non-aesthetic categorization influences profoundly the aesthetic facts we actually apprehend about a work.

Carlson's innovation was the incorporation of Walton's categories into environmental aesthetics. The main difference between the aesthetics of art and of the environment is the aspect of framing.[13] The categories under which we place art determine the relevance of their non-aesthetic facts; but, the environment is different. Natural objects don't necessarily have discreet origins nor paradigms for display (e.g. frames or plinths); nor do they, in most cases, have authors. So, Carlson determines that the non-aesthetic facts which are material in our aesthetic apprehension of the environment are scientific ones (Carlson 273). Scientific knowledge, Carlson declares, is necessary for the truest aesthetic appreciation of the natural world. The Everglades, instead of a swamp unfit for portraiture and evoking nothing of the mountainous sublime of Yosemite or Yellowstone, is, under the Carlsonian scientific model, a place of profound aesthetic value buttressed by the non-aesthetic facts of biodiversity, fecundity, the uniqueness of the biome, the smell of decomposition and so forth.[14]

In the 21st century, there have been quite a few compelling objections to Carlson's scientific cognitivism (SC). In this next section I review three: (1) SC does not solve the framing

[13] "The boundaries and foci of aesthetic significance of works of art are a function of the type of art in question… The natural en-vironment is not a work of art. As such it has no boundaries or foci of aesthetic significance…" (Carlson 272-3).
[14] For the application of more fine-grained ecological concepts to Carlson's scientific cognitivism, see Matthews 2002 p. 39-41.

issue, (2) one does not need scientific knowledge to appreciate the environment, and (3) there are other non-scientific things which count as aesthetically important.

1. Scientific cognitivism's framing issue: It is unclear what sort of knowledge counts as scientifically relevant. There are plenty of scientific things which might count, but is it necessary to know all in order to render an aesthetic judgment? For instance, in order to make an aesthetic judgment of *ixodes scapularis,* the black-legged tick, must one know that their numbers depend on the fulvousness of that year's acorn mast? And must one know that the acorns feed the mice from which larval ticks receive their first bloodmeal? In order to judge the aesthetics of a tree, must one know the geology of the hillside? Or the history of the watershed?
2. Scientific knowledge is not needed: This objection, notably argued by Noel Carroll, states that being "emotionally moved by nature" is possible without scientific knowledge (Matthews 38). Moreover, this state of emotional movement *is* a type of aesthetic appreciation. If this is the case, scientific knowledge is not a necessary condition for aesthetic appreciation of the environment.
3. There are plenty of non-scientific things which obviously count in our aesthetic judgments. Yuriko Saito, for one, brings up the fact that Native people have stories and rituals associated with certain plants, animals, and geographic locations (Saito 142). Moreover, the history of human habitation, conflict, art, and other such occurrences do likely influence aesthetic perceptions of a given place. Although, it is not clear how this is *scientific*.

Carlson does have answers for these objections but they aren't totally satisfying. In a few words, he addresses all three issues by showing how the barrier for scientific knowledge is incredibly low. More or less, it is the common sense understanding of water falling over rocks that makes a waterfall and woody upward growth that makes a tree.

This brings us to a more profound critique of Carlson and most every 20th century theory of aesthetics: they are hedonic. What Carlson and so many other aesthetic theorists failed to do is ground their theories in anything more than pleasure. To paraphrase Servaas Van der Berg, aesthetic hedonism is great at picking out which sorts of things seem to have value (tall trees, sunsets, ocean breezes, biodiverse regions) but weak as a theory of explanation (Van Der Berg 4-5) . The only fundamental good-making or reason-giving feature of hedonic aesthetic goods is that they are pleasurable.

The most common form of aesthetic hedonism is preference hedonism. Preference hedonism is an attitudinal account of pleasure in which "pleasures are simply experiences currently preferred, desired, liked, or valued in the right way" (Van Der Berg 3). This overcomes the main objection to more narrow aesthetic hedonism which is that all sorts of people find pleasure in different things– including what would otherwise be considered painful things (e.g. horror films, or in an environmental context, say, the scary magnitude of forest fires or the grossness of a snake devouring a still living rabbit). The problem with preference hedonism is an explanatory one. It is unclear what the normative feature is in all classes of experience considered valuable (Van Der Berg 4-5). For example, if a preference hedonist were to explain the value of a particularly tall and regal oak tree, they would need to reference some feature of that thing by virtue of which it is valuable. This hedonist only has reference to their own preferences– I like the tree because it is cool. Coolness is not the good-maker because not all

valuable things are cool or cool things valuable. And, the tree's capacity to afford the experience of coolness cannot be the good-making feature because it does not exist in all such aesthetic objects considered valuable.

In short, the most popular version of aesthetic hedonism, preference hedonism, might enumerate which aesthetic objects are valuable, but it fails to explain in a satisfying way *why* they are valuable.

Fortunately, there are many 21st century theorists developing accounts of aesthetics which avoid the pitfalls of hedonism. That being said, there has yet to be a thinker, of whom I'm aware, who applies these theories more specifically to the environment in the way Carlson applied Kendall Walton's work. In this section I will briefly review the theories of two of these thinkers, Dominic McIver Lopes and Nick Riggle.

Dominic McIver Lopes developed what he calls the "network theory" in his book *Being for Beauty*. Lopes describes aesthetic value as being embedded in social practices (e.g. photography, sprinting, husbandry). It is achievement within these practices which replaces pleasure and takes the fundamental explanatory role for instances of aesthetic value. By achieving in a variety of ways, within the proper categories of the practice, one brings about the aesthetic value.

Nick Riggle takes a similar tack, explaining aesthetic value in terms of social practices. However, for Riggle, achievement can be part of a practice but not the fundamental good-maker. For Riggle, the ability for a practice to found and sponsor what he calls an aesthetic communitarianism (which in turn reinforces a social group and supports the individuation of

group members) is the basis for aesthetic value. The fruit of aesthetic value and its proof is the aforementioned results of communitarianism.[15]

Both Lopes and Riggle have created robust systems of aesthetic value which have an explanatory advantage over preference hedonism. How this might be applied to matters of environmental concern remains to be seen.

Environmental Aesthetics and University Sound

University Sound draws on Anglo-American aesthetics in a number of ways. First, it recognizes soundwalking as an existing aesthetic practice with given norms. Second, it seeks to assist in making aesthetic judgments about soundscapes by identifying useful non-aesthetic categories. Third, its use of what I call "the music analogy" denies that music can be defined separately from external non-aesthetic facts (i.e. formally).

Soundwalking is a practice established by Murray Schafer in the 1970s and further expanded by the work of contemporary theorists like Hildegard Wanderkamp.[16] Together with soundwalking is a group of success conditions– for instance, the apprehension of novel sounds, the revelation of previously masked sounds, the recognition of one's own contribution to the soundscape.

That being said, the practice of soundwalking is not the sole aesthetic focus of University Sound. Soundwalking is, itself, a diverse, ever-evolving practice which takes place within the soundscape. Some walkers like Westerkamp focus more on aspects of play, of improvisation and novel environmental interaction[17], while others, like Schafer, focus more on inhabiting the role of listener or gathering valuable empirical data about the soundscape (Schafer 212). The goal of

[15] For more see Nick Riggle's "Aesthetic Value and the Practice of Aesthetic Valuing" forthcoming in *The Philosophical Review*
[16] Westerkamp was a student of Schafer's at Simon Fraser University.
[17] See Weserkamp's influential essay, "Soundwalking," 2001.

University Sound is not to litigate between different interpretations of the soundwalking practice. Rather, the goal is to help community members make aesthetic judgments *about* the soundscape. For these purposes, soundwalking is a useful tool. As with a stroll through the garden, the soundwalking practice assists the soundwalker in experiencing the soundscape as a sensory whole, rather than as so many fragmented pieces. At the same time, it places the listener in a direct relationship with the soundscape. No illusion of quiet can survive the soundwalk. Any existing conceptual dualism between listener and composer collapses as soon as one hears the clap of their foot on pavement.

The challenge for University Sound is to enable folks– Missoulians, students, staff, faculty– to analyze and make purposeful aesthetic judgments about the soundscape in which they live and work. For this to be effective, I had to be careful not to employ tendentious metaphysical distinctions, say between nature and culture. There are, after all, many different sounds I encounter everyday around campus that help me realize the unique excellences of this place: our clanging carillon, dry leaves scraping across concrete, intellectual chatter in the hallways, singing native birds, and so forth. The question is: how do we make judgments about the soundscape without being unfairly partial toward, say, natural sounds? And further, how do we isolate the things about the University of Montana which makes its soundscape unique? Unique to *what*?

Taking inspiration from Kendall Walton, I decided that finding a category for the University soundscape would give the necessary context from which to make judgments. In practice, this looked like sketching the features of a generic university soundscape. From here, I could analyze the features of the University of Montana soundscape which were standard, variable, and contra-standard according to the broader category (Walton 339).What I wanted

more than anything to get across to people was that there may be unique excellences of the University of Montana soundscape that we would want to endorse communally and so cultivate in our practices. Prior to the soundwalk I led across campus, I asked the group to brainstorm specific sounds they would expect to hear on most any university's campus, and then sounds they thought would be unique to the University of Montana. I wrote all of their ideas down and then, at the end of the walk, we returned to these notes and amended them.

Prioritizing an anti-formalist (Waltonian) approach to aesthetics also meant that I stressed the material, historical, and social aspects of the soundscape which are not captured by noises alone. The sounds of the world are not only aesthetic stimuli floating alone and apart from the environment but partly constitutive of the environment (e.g. birdsong both points to something in the environment which must be taken aesthetically seriously (birds) and which constitutes partly the concept *environment*). In order to hear the soundscape, we must be aware of its non-aesthetic qualities. This idea can be difficult to get across, especially to people unfamiliar with aesthetic terminology. To understand what I meant, I elaborated to them what I ended up calling *the music analogy*.

As I previewed in the background section,[18] the comparison– and in some cases non-discrimination– between the soundscape and music has a fraught history. Notably, Schafer employs music criticism to defend his viewpoints about aesthetic beauty. The most beautiful music is music which invites the formal aspects of nature. The most beautiful soundscapes do the same. Schafer repeatedly and explicitly treats the soundscape as a sort of "composition" (Schafer 5). Treating it in this way invites comparisons which can lead to misunderstandings but which can also be illuminating.

[18] P. 3-11

Music Analogy

We have certain ideas about what "music" is. Philosophers have historically called music organized sound, though other thinkers have denied that there is a single unifying definition of music (Kania §1.2). Schafer is one of those thinkers. "Today all sounds belong to a continuous field of possibilities lying within *the comprehensive dominion of music,*" he declares early on in *Tuning* (Schafer 5). Unfortunately, this non-distinction justifies his critiques of the soundscape as either harmonious or discordant according to certain musical standards – specifically the standards of pre-Romantic classical composers. Insofar as these genre norms are ill fit for making aesthetic judgments about all soundscapes, I think it is necessary to make some finer-grained distinctions between music and soundscapes.

The question, "what is art?" has long been the bugbear of aesthetics. The closest anyone seems to have come to a definitive answer to this question is Arthur Danto's artworld and Dickie's elaboration of the institutional theory of art, which, in a word, states that there is no singular formal property which makes both *The Fountain* and *The Birth of Venus* art (Dickie 255). Art, in fact, has no normative function whatsoever. It is simply the *imprimatur* of institutions (like galleries) complete with a history of oversight and guidance (i.e. deciding what art *is* in turn influencing which art is made). Dominic McIver Lopes argues in "Nobody Needs a Theory of Art " that Dickie and Danto are too strong in insisting that we need a theory of art at all (Lopes 117-9). Like how both art and non-art objects can be perceptually indistinct from one another, the "music" of the soundscape can be perceptually indistinct from music. And yet we do not in common parlance call something like road noise or birdsong music except when making a metaphor. There are two options here. On the one hand, allow all sounds to be music and accept

that the soundscape-music analogy is literal, or, on the other, seek a different theory which retains some distinction.

The problem is that each practice of music seems to have different criteria for what counts within its practice-specific norms and that the unification of these practices under the umbrella "music" results in much disagreement. The classical aesthete and hip-hop head may not agree on what counts as "music" at all. Lopes proposes a solution for art that also works for music: "item x is a work of [music] if and only if x is a work in activity P and P is one of the [musical arts]" (Lopes 109). This theory passes the buck to the individual practices to both decide what is included within them and to decide whether or not some item x is music.

Schafer might indeed be right that Russo's noise orchestra is "garbage" when judged in the category of pre-Romantic Classical music. Likewise, *Guernica* might be observed to be a flat and lifeless work if it is considered as a bas-relief (Walton 347-8)**.** If the soundscape is interpreted within the practice of pre-Romantic Classical music, the soundscape must be music, and it is better or worse music according to the norms of that practice. For this reason we need to be very careful. The soundscape is not music in the sense that it exists under the mantle of any of these specific historical musical practices– it is its own category. But, at the same time, the soundscape has qualities which are *like* certain musical categories. Understanding this can help us understand some difficult conceptual aspects of the soundscape without collapsing important distinctions between practices. For this reason, I don't think we need to abandon Schafer's use of the term "composition."

Conceived of as a composition, the soundscape is listened to as a single coherent object. It is easy to overlook the significance of this. Like music it is not composed of non-sequitur, unconnected sounds, but a series of sounds which, on the whole, create a coherent expression

which is typically judged as such. To think of the sounds as disconnected or arbitrary would render the word "soundscape" meaningless.

One place where it is quite tempting to think of soundscapes as different from music is in intentionality (the causal relationship between a mind state and its objective representation in the world).[19] Music, especially in the sense of the Western classical tradition, tends to be thought of as having a single intention centered on the composer. For this reason, the intent of the composer is understood as an essential non-aesthetic fact in the interpretation of classical music. This interpretation of intention, which mirrors film's obsession with the *auteur*, can also be found in traditions like calypso, big band, and hip hop. It is through an analysis of intention that the album *Standing in the Spotlight* by Dee Dee King is understood as so-bad-it's-good rather than as poor satire. If Dee Dee had been attempting to lampoon early hip-hop music, the album might be thought of in terms of whether or not the satire was successful– it wouldn't be. Instead, it is a beloved failure. It fails on every level to achieve the intention of Dee Dee King which was to make a serious hip-hop album.

In Schafer's musicology, one could conceive of the composer as nature itself, and the score-writer and performers as doing the "secretarial" work of that composer (Schafer 105). This idea is hard to understand in relation to a soundscape which is naturally democratic– constructed collectively by various unique sonic actors within a given space. The intentions of the soundscape "performers" are obviously quite different (a bird might call to communicate, a human might tap on a wooden desk to relieve nervous energy). This form resists the objectification of a *single* intention into a *single* product. And, indeed, many aspects of the

[19] I'm using a definition of intentionality which is based on common usage, assuming that intentions are real mind states and that there is a causal relationship between intention, action, and the product of that action. In conversations about an artist's intent, there is an assumption about the ability to objectify an intention. The better objectified, the more successful the artist was across this metric. I treat intention in the sense of this common usage.

soundscape are emergent. They are due to no particular discernible intention but arise as a by-product of material and ecological relationships.

I think this understanding of the lack of intention in soundscapes is possibly a holdover from the concept of the composer in Western classical music. As such, I believe it to be wrongheaded.

How do we understand the soundscape as a unity if the intentions of its constituent sound-makers seem disunified? The same question could conceivably be asked of a symphony orchestra interpreting a piece of music by, say, Beethoven. Beethoven's intentions and the intention of the interpreter need not necessarily align (certainly this is the case in many of Glenn Gould's Bach interpretations), and indeed, although the interpreter (inhabiting the role of conductor), attempts to unify the orchestra under one particular intention, their own, the mental content of the individual members of the orchestra need not be unified in totality. Some intentions may even be in discord as a matter of misunderstanding the formal language of the conductor, or as a matter of artistic difference. And yet, symphonies are considered as a unity and criticized as such. A symphony that is suffering serious crosscurrents between performers is not criticized as categorically not a symphony, but as a disunified symphony. If there is intentional discord where it is not standard for there to be, then this is a non-aesthetic fact by which we judge not the individual players apart from one another, but the symphony as a whole.

In improvisational music like free jazz, the intent of no single person is the defining intent of the composition and yet, still, there is a perceived unity. We don't listen to *Free Jazz* by Ornette Coleman as if it were a bunch of random sonic occurrences, but rather as a single unified work. The individual musicians playing in a jazz ensemble (substitute: old time, cajun, blues, grupo de son huasteco, jam band, etc.) are playing improvisatory music. They may each

individually have a good idea about what the others are playing, or a general sense of their vibe, but they won't know, until they play, what their collected intentions will yield. The aesthetic whole, the product of multiple intentions, remains elusive and mysterious.

The way a sonic product remains aloof from the intention of a musician can be seen in more subtle ways– specifically in reference to emergent factors. Think of a woman with a guitar. She can control a lot of things about the guitar– the rapidity of her strums, how loud or soft she plays, whether or not she sings– but there is also a lot she either can't control or exerts only slight control over. For instance, she has little control over the acoustics of the room, how much reverberation there is, the humidity of the air which affects the wood of her guitar, how in-tune the guitar is, ambient intrusions such as coughing, and so forth. Much of the sound she makes is actually contingent upon the interacting circumstances under which she plays. Even the sonic product of a singular intender remains in some ways mysterious.

If music is understood in this way, it makes sense of how we might conceive of the soundscape as a unity despite the disparities of intention and the fact of emergent sonic interactions. The soundscape is a composition of which we, as humans and as individuals, are a part, regardless of what our intentions might be. There is no resisting one's own aesthetic mark on the sonic environment.

In short, the analogy between soundscapes and music, especially in the sense of the term "composition" is helpful to understand why and how we listen to soundscapes as a unity. It is also helpful to understand how we, as individuals, are contributing to that unity even if our intentions are aloof.

It is also helpful in one other way: helping the soundwalker make judgments about the soundscape in terms of category. It is extremely common for people to understand music in terms

of genre norms. If the idea of Waltonian categories as applied to soundscapes is confusing or strange, it is helpful to think of those categories *like* music genres. What are the constitutive norms of the genre? (For example, university soundscapes). How are they present here? (For example, on the University of Montana campus).

Philosophy of Animals

In this essay written in lieu of a comprehensive exam, I will rehearse some of the key ideas from the seminar "Philosophy of Animals."

In this short essay I discuss some of the issues in philosophy of animals. In the first section, I review the problem of other minds, of sentience, and of establishing moral status for non-human others. In the second section I discuss how utilitarianism, deontology, virtue ethics, and care ethics have been applied in recent history, focusing on the work of Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Rosalind Hursthouse, and Lori Gruen. In the final section I explain how animal ethics is related to my CEP project, University Sound.

Foundations

The question of sentience looms large over animal ethics. We can trace its modern roots back to Descartes who believed that animals, having no thought, were mere automatons: input-output machines responding with predetermined mechanical movements. Automatons, having no consciousness, sense of self, or mind, would therefore not be sentient– they could not experience anything at all.[20] The next major development in Western animal ethics was not until Kant, who, agreeing with Descartes, thought of animals as non-sentient (unable to experience),

[20] Some dispute this fact, arguing that Descartes could actually believe that animals were not conscious, self-aware, and yet could *feel*. This is argued by Harrison, 1992.

but disagreed that this made them permissible to harm. Harming a non-human animal, for Kant, would indirectly violate one's duties to human beings insofar as the infliction of harm on one made it easier for the other (Birch 2). The contractarianism of political thinkers like Locke echoed Kant. Since non-human animals are property, their harm would violate one's contract with their human neighbors (Rowlands 1).[21] It was not until Jeremy Bentham that non-human animals received an influential and lasting defense in normative ethics. Bentham famously[22] declared that non-human animals can feel pain and suffer, and insofar as suffering is morally material, their suffering ought to matter (Bentham §17) .

It was the declaration that animals can in fact experience pain and can suffer that opened the door for other sorts of broader sentience (or "experience of") being attributed to non-human animals: the experience of joy, of depression, of hope, and so forth. However, there are still pertinent questions about what animals *do* experience beyond suffering, and about the extent of that experience.

Notably, this shows up in the problem of other minds. How do we know that animals have an experience at all? Is it enough that they *seem* to suffer (i.e. they show signs congruent with how a sufferer would act)? Philosophers like Tom Regan, Sue Donaldson, and Will Kymlicka, as well as the critic John Berger in an influential essay[23], argue that judging from the way non-human animals behave it is obvious that they have an experience of the world and their

[21] Although, in Rowlands, 1997, the author does defend a version of contractarianism which is directly rights-granting to non-human animals.

[22] "Are there any reasons why we should not be allowed to torment them? Yes, several…Perhaps it will some day be recognised that the number of legs, the hairiness of the skin, or the possession of a tail, are equally insufficient reasons for abandoning to the same fate a creature that can *feel*? What else could be used to draw the line? Is it the faculty of reason or the possession of language? But a full-grown horse or dog is incomparably more rational and conversable than an infant of a day, or a week, or even a month old. Even if that were not so, what difference would that make? The question is not *Can they reason?* or *Can they talk?* but *Can they suffer?*" (Bentham §17)

[23] Why Look at Animals, 1980

own mind.[24] One common argument for this stance makes use of Pascal's wager[25]: If it were not true that non-human animals are sentient, then we can treat them either poorly or well and in neither case would it be ethically significant. However, it is unclear whether or not they are sentient. If it is the case that non-human animals are sentient and we treat them poorly, then we would be doing massive harm. Therefore, the least risky option is to act as if non-human animals are sentient.

Once we grant that non-human animals have *some* moral status, a further question ensues: how high is that status? Is it flat or does it differ between species? What about between individuals? Is it measured in breadth of sentience? Or depth? Or both? Or is it measured in other ways, like through intellectual capacities? As demonstrated in the following section, there are many different ways to answer these questions. One important argument for non-human animals having moral status is the argument from marginal cases (AMC). The AMC is designed to show that even in cases where non-human animals have low sentience, intellectual capabilities, etc. they might still have moral status. The argument goes like this: Some people argue on the basis of intellectual capacity that non-human animals should be excluded from moral consideration. Many humans have severe intellectual disabilities, some so severe that they do not qualify as sentient. However, almost nobody thinks that these people have no moral status. Many non-human animals have intellectual capacities that are as high or higher than disabled humans. If we accept the premise that humans have moral status regardless of intellectual capacity, then it would be inconsistent to exclude non-human animals for the same reason. Therefore, if we were to exclude animals from moral consideration it would have to be for some other reason than intellectual capacity.

[24] Famously Barbara Smuts articulated the "someone's home" theory which is influential for Donaldson and Kymlicka (Donaldson 25).
[25] See Lockwood 2020 for an application of the wager in regard to the treatment of invertebrates.

Normative Ethical Theories

Peter Singer is likely the most influential utilitarian focusing on animal ethics. His philosophy bases moral status not on intellectual capacity, but on interests. Every living, sentient thing, has interests, the completion of which causes positive feelings and the thwarting of which suffering (Singer 56). Singer cites the AMC as a reason why interests via a utilitarian calculus are more important for grounding moral status than intellectual capacity or depth of sentience (75-6). However, these other factors do play a role. Singer's main contribution to animal ethics is the equal consideration of interests. The name of this principle is a bit ambiguous. It does not mean that all interests are considered equal regardless of circumstances (e.g. your interest in eating cornbread and another's in not being put to death are not equal) but are circumstance dependent. That is, interests are equally considered. No one's interests are disregarded, and indeed interests are congruent insofar as they might be compared. But, they are not flat. So, in a moral calculus, a mouse's interest in not being tortured and a human's interest in not being tortured are both worthy of consideration and comparable with one another.

To show what I mean by *not flat*, let's continue with a thought experiment.[26] Imagine that we have come to a terrible moral fork in the road: either a mouse gets brutally tortured for thirty minutes or a human does. Both of them have an interest in avoiding pain and therefore in avoiding the torture. How do we decide which one suffers? This may break down to the ability to feel depth of suffering and breadth of suffering. For instance, let's say that the mouse will be traumatized for two weeks, but the human for the rest of their life (which would be, say, 30 years). The human therefore has the capacity for a greater breadth of suffering than the mouse. Likewise, perhaps the human feels greater pain because, as they are suffering the torture, they are

[26] I derive this thought experiment from several of a similar kind in Kagan, 2019

reminded of a traumatic instance from their childhood. This indicates a greater depth of suffering. In each of these instances it would seem that the human would suffer *more*. And so, on a utilitarian calculus, the best choice is the mouse.

Tom Regan on the other hand is likely the most influential deontologist. Where Singer weighs moral problems in terms of utiles, Regan focuses on animal rights. The original or "basic" wrong for Regan is the view that animals are resources to be used or consumed (Regan 180). Contra Singer, Regan writes, "What is wrong isn't the pain, isn't the suffering, isn't the deprivation. These compound what's wrong. Sometimes - often - they make it much, much worse. But they are not the fundamental wrong" (179). Regan rejects the utilitarian ethic of Singer due to its aggregative nature. Because all interests count toward a calculation, some heinous acts could be justified as, in the end, promoting more happiness than suffering. For instance, animal testing, the use of animals in sports, and so forth. In other words utilitarianism leaves open the possibility for using non-human animals as means merely.

Like Kant, Regan reasons from a fundamental moral premise: all experiencing subjects of a life have equal inherent value. Insofar as some lifeform can be shown to be an experiencing subject, it has this right against molestation and instrumentalization (meaning that plants, microbes, etc. don't have these insofar as there is insufficient proof that they are experiencing subjects) (186). Like Singer, Regan appeals to the AMC for validation that value is not only intrinsic but equal. For, if it were not equal, and if it were based on something other than being an experiencing subject, that thing would need to be stated and shown to be worth valuing specially. Most folks seem to think that it is based on intellectual capacity. AMC shows that this is not the case.

Rosalin Hursthouse rejects both Singer and Regan's view in her essays, "Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals" and "Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of the Other Animals." Firstly, Hursthouse rejects the debates over moral status entirely (Hursthouse 2-3). She writes that debates over moral status create classes which are far too heterogeneous (e.g. including the equal consideration altogether of people and fish and lions and deer) (ibid). Moreover, within these heterogeneous classes, there is arbitrary "animal elitism" It is only by what she calls "a few psychological capacities selected ad hoc," that we decide which animal wins in conflicts of interest (Hursthouse 138-9). Worst of all, these rankings severely de-contextualize moral choices. I reiterate one of her many effective examples[27]: say a house is burning down. A person and a cat are inside. The calculus is obvious. If you can only save one, it would be the person. But, say the person escapes by themselves. They now have a decision to make: go back in to rescue the cat or do not. Once again, the calculus for the Singerian or Reganite is clear: only save the cat if it is not risky to do so, because the saver, being a person, has a higher moral status. But, this is *not* the same calculus a virtue ethicist would make. De-contextualized as it is, this situation does not have an obvious moral answer at all. For this reason, virtue ethics should not use the model of moral status created by consequentialist and deontological philosophers like Singer and Regan.

Lori Gruen, a care ethicist, goes even further than Hursthouse in her book, *Entangled Empathy*. Like Hursthouse, Gruen begins her book attacking what she calls "arguments based on abstract, universal principles" (Gruen 20). These are the sorts of syllogistic arguments employed by Singer and Regan in moral calculations (e.g. we should try to alleviate suffering (universal), this man is suffering (particular), therefore we should do what we can to alleviate his suffering). As in other care ethics, Gruen is focused not on moments of dramatic decision which she calls

[27] See Hursthouse p. 140.

"alienating" and in which such a calculus would be used, but in the interstices– of developing the ability to apprehend problems properly, considering and gathering contextual information, and only thereafter acting (Gruen 13, 24). Moreover, conceiving of ethics in terms of dramatic decisions obscures that the reasoning hero might be a part of the problem (Gruen 23). Instead of a broad virtue ethic as employed by Hursthouse, Gruen focuses on an ethics of care which centers interpersonal relationships and benevolence as the highest virtue – the virtue which all ethical actors should develop. Gruen's main point is that empathy can extend to far more than just interpersonal human relationships and ought to be extended to the recognition of non-human others.

Philosophy of Animals and University Sound

Animal ethics influences University Sound in two main ways. Firstly, it broadens the ethical component of soundscape philosophy. Secondly, it stresses the virtue of humility by reminding the soundwalker that they may never achieve a perfect recognition of the soundscape, for there are many sounds they are unable to hear and moreover many perspectives they cannot inhabit.

Soundscapes have both aesthetic and moral content. On the one hand a practice like soundwalking (an organized reconnaissance of the soundscape) is concerned internally with achievement parameters within a set of norms (development of sonic consciousness, sonic play, recognition and description of sonic phenomena). On the other hand, the practice has empirical goals which are outcomes based: the evaluation of the soundscape with an eye to moral or aesthetic improvement. For instance, it might take a thorough evaluation of the soundscape to notice masking sounds, such as highway noise, which are bothering nearby human neighbors or interfering with their behavior. Or, one might find that the sound of a band in a practice room is

drowning out the bird song in a local garden and take steps to remedy this by helping to soundproof the room. Or, one might realize, through soundwalking, that they have been a poor sonic citizen in the past: perhaps they talk with speakerphone enabled in public, or sing along to music playing only in their headphones.

The recognition that the experience and design of soundscape has not only an aesthetic, but an ethical character, means that the soundwalker makes decisions about whose interests count in the soundscape. Does it matter that songbirds must compete with band noise? Or that squirrels must bear the incessant barking of dogs in a local park? Ought certain animals to be able to express themselves in the soundscape? Think of people who put electric bark collars on their dogs, or those who kill cicadas out of frustration over their incessant murmur. What impacts do I have on the soundscape? Are there ecological ramifications when I, alone in the woods, blast music from my speaker?

Realizing that a soundscape is not only an important phenomenon for humans, but also for non-human animals is a natural extension of philosophy of animals. Further, recognizing that non-human animals are part *of* and participants *in* the soundscape reveals another fact about soundwalking: as hard as we try to make it otherwise, the practice of soundwalking is anthropocentric. This is so for two reasons, the first empirical and the second conceptual.

First, human ears are only capable of registering certain frequencies (between 20hz and 15-20khz).[28] Non-human animals are variably able to recognize higher or lower frequencies. For this reason, it is hard to account for all the sounds that we, as sonic citizens, are producing. Moreover, it is hard to know about all the sounds which non-human animals are producing. Bats emit sounds in echolocation in a register we can either hardly hear (children can sometimes hear the low-end of their calls at 20khz) or cannot hear at all (some bats, for instance, can hear in the

[28] Purves et al. glossary entry for "The Audible Spectrum"

range of 200khz). On the other side of the spectrum, elephants stomping their feet create bass tones so low we cannot hear them and so subtle we cannot feel them.[29] This is a humbling realization. Even if we had perfect access to the world through our senses, unclouded by partiality or social influence, even then would we be missing significant portions of the soundscape. For this reason, one should never fool themselves into thinking that a soundwalk alone can give them access to the full spectrum of the soundscape.

Moreover, noise pollution in chronic doses is universally recognized as a serious risk to human health. And, we have data to indicate that noise pollution inhibits ordinary non-human animal behavior in a number of ways.[30] It is still speculative, but scientists believe that the health of non-human animals might also be affected adversely by noise pollution (Clark).

Second, the soundscape, realized through the human sense of hearing, is subject also to human perspectives. Even if we could hear frequencies like a bat, it is likely not possible to hear *like* a bat.[31] So long as we give up on the impartial perspective from nowhere (or God's eye view), hearing in a way that is not influenced by the human perspective might be very difficult if not impossible.

Soundscapes are democratic (collectively built); for humans, soundscapes are non-voluntary in the sense that we cannot avoid our role in them. For non-human animals, soundscapes are non-voluntary in an additional sense. While humans may have the option to wear headphones or utilize hearing protection, non-human animals do not have this luxury. Moreover, while humans can often ignore their sonic environment, many non-human animals

[29] Ranges for non-human animals found in "Frequency Hearing Ranges in Dogs and Other Species" published by Louisiana State University
[30] See Arcangeli et al. 2022 for a systematic review.
[31] See the influential essay by Thomas Nagel, "What is it Like to be a Bat?"

common to urban areas like bats, owls, deer, and songbirds, rely heavily on the sonic environment to find food, avoid predators, and communicate with kin.

Whether judging the soundscape from an aesthetic or moral perspective, the interests of non-human animals cannot be ignored.[32] Like us they live within soundscapes and have a role in their construction. It is abundantly clear that we need more data and more studies on the health risks of noise pollution for non-human animals as well as for humans. It is through an abundance of data that we engage in more specific, fine-grained calculations *a la* Singerian utilitarianism.

Until then, it is best to walk with humility. For the purposes of public philosophy, I recommended to those who participated in the soundwalk a virtue ethics approach. Those key virtues I highlight in the next section of my report (p. 45-47). They are catchy and memorable. But, in matters of the soundscape, I've been tempted personally to lean toward an ethic of care which stresses attention to non-human animals. Understanding ecological principles as well as acquainting yourself with the ordinary behaviors of native species will go a long way toward understanding whether or not the sonic environment is a welcoming one. For this reason, as well as others, soundwalks ought not to stress merely the sonic aspects of the soundscape, but their material and ecological situation. In the early stages of my project, I considered leading a group on a blind-folded soundwalk. However, I reconsidered this idea after realizing how useful the eyes, and the hands, and the nose might be to the soundwalker, providing much needed non-aesthetic, external data about the soundscape. Your ears alone might not be good enough to tell *why* the chickadees have stopped singing. But they are certainly necessary for noticing their absence.

[32] For aesthetic preference in non-human animals see Watanabe, 2013 (comparative cognition), Welsch, 2004 (evolutionary aesthetics), French, 2022 (multidisciplinary).

Environmental Ethics

In this essay written in lieu of a comprehensive exam, I rehearse some of the key ideas from the seminar "Environmental Ethics."

In this short paper, I survey some of the important developments in the field of environmental ethics. In the first part, beginning with Richard Sylvan and the last man problem, I review early literature on intrinsic value theory and responses from the environmental pragmatists. In the second part, I cover, very briefly, the ongoing debates over the concept of wilderness, touching on William Cronon's landmark essay, "The Trouble with Wilderness." In the third part, I look at indigenous perspectives on environmental ethics. Finally, I touch on environmental virtue ethics. At the end of the essay, I discuss the relationship between environmental ethics and my project, University Sound.

The beginning of environmental ethics as its own discipline in Anglo-American analytic philosophy can be traced back to thinkers like Richard Sylvan writing in the 1970s. His paper "Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?" touches on earlier Western thinkers, most notably Aldo Leopold, but where Leopold calls for an extension of traditional ethics into environmental ethics, Sylvan calls for a new discipline entirely (Sylvan 17-8). Sylvan argues that western ethics has not historically been monolithic, but rather occupies many different views. All of these views, however, connected in a "Western Super Ethic" "[are] simply inconsistent with an environmental ethic," which would include (1) "[the preservation of] some worthwhile parts of the earth's surface from substantial human interference" and (2) the complete rejection of "a principle of total use" (Sylvan 19-20). In short, the dominating idea which permeates Western ethics is one in which the instrumental use of nature is permissible to the extent that it does not

harm fellow humans or oneself. The idea that the only moral harm possible is harm to humans and human ends Sylvan calls "human chauvinism" (Sylvan 23).

Sylvan demonstrates the difference between a human chauvinistic ethic and an environmental ethic in several thought experiments but most famously in "the last man example" (Sylvan 21). Under human chauvinism, the last person on Earth could permissibly destroy every natural object and animal (short, I imagine, of hurting herself) since it would be impossible for the last person to harm another person. However, this act would be obviously forbidden under an environmental ethic as commonly conceived. This example can be extended to what Sylvan calls the "last people example," in which a group of people are still seemingly forbidden from destroying all "natural resources" even for "the best of reasons" (ibid). These examples show that "the class of permissible actions that rebound on the environment is more narrowly circumscribed on an environmental ethic than it is in the Western super ethic," since the Western ethic permits any action so long as it is not directly or indirectly harmful to humans (Sylvan 22).

While Sylvan articulated what might be needed for an environmental ethic as commonly conceived, it remained to be seen what actually grounded that ethic in the first place. While the field of animal ethics grounded itself mostly by analogy to human ethics (suffering in Singer's utilitarianism; the basis for moral status in Regan's deontology), an environmental ethic had a steeper burden of proof. From where do we derive moral status for the things that comprise the environment like natural objects?

Enter: intrinsic value.

The most famous proponent for the intrinsic value of natural things is probably Holmes Rolston III. His view of the intrinsic value of non-human nature grounds value as an objective, natural property of the world discovered in the "genetic set" (Rolston III 133). Other thinkers,

like J. Baird Callicott, view the intrinsic value of non-human nature as being conferred by human beings who value nature for itself. Jim Cheney wrote in 1992, in the thick of these debates, "It is widely held that all hope for a satisfactory environmental ethic rests on the question of whether intrinsic value can be discovered in non-human nature" (Cheney 227). The environmental pragmatists thought otherwise.

Critiques of the intrinsic value debates from environmental pragmatists focus on the superfluity of intrinsic value claims. Katie McShane describes the positions of environmental pragmatists like this, "We do not need to work up a theory of intrinsic value…to articulate the importance of the things we hold most dear. Every environmental policy or practical ethical recommendation we would want to defend using intrinsic value claims can be defended equally well using extrinsic value claims" (McShane 46). In a famous paper, "The Urban Blindspot in Environmental Ethics," Andrew Light mounted the critique that the furious non-anthropocentrism of the intrinsic value debaters justified, if obliquely, the insensitivity shown to "fallen" natural areas like cities where the intermixing of human and nature is a constitutive element (Light 11).

Critiques like Light's also came from outside the trenches of the intrinsic value debates. William Cronon's "The Trouble with Wilderness," addresses the idea of wilderness in American society. Therein, the concept has been given an undeserved ontological status. Cronon addresses this issue by providing a socio-historical analysis of the term which dispels its mythic character. It is possible to understand wilderness as a human creation only when one tracks the origin of wilderness. Common wisdom would have one forget that areas of "wilderness" were not just found as "pristine sanctuar[ies]" apart from human life, but instead were historically peopled environments deeply altered by organized management (Cronon 8). Keeping this in mind,

Cronon later asserts, the idea that wilderness is apart from civilization is not only a historical fabrication, but an insalubrious story based on the frontier myth (Cronon 13). For, to consider wilderness as outside of civilized spaces and to moreover hold that nature in this particular form is worth preserving or has some sort of special value, leads one to neglect the places where they do live, treating urban fall as a *fait accompli*, about which they can do nothing (Cronon 17). If people were to see instead of wilderness and civilization, *wildness*, in everything and existing everywhere, they might be able to develop an ethic which covers not just instances of no-use, but also instances of appropriate use– to develop "an ethic that will tell us as much about *using* nature as about *not* using it" (Cronon 21).

The wilderness/civilization dualism is what is known as a hierarchical dualism. A hierarchical dualism is a binary which is not merely a descriptive expression of disjunction, but hides a major evaluative premise: that the one is superior to the other. Often, hierarchical dualisms are used as "natural" justifications for the subjugation of the perceived inferior. The mind is higher than the body, culture than nature, reason than emotions. In Ecofeminist Karren Warren's "The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism," Warren explains how the subjugation of nature, justified by hierarchical dualism, is deeply connected to the subjugation of women in Western society.

For Warren, there isn't anything "*inherently* problematic" about value hierarchies unless they exist to reinforce "contexts of oppression" (Warren 126). The problem is that value-hierarchical thinking is used to justify what Warren calls "oppressive conceptual frameworks" which "establish inferiority and justify subordination (ibid). It is this "logic of domination" (e.g. men over women, culture over nature) making use of value-hierarchical thinking that impeaches culturally instantiated dualisms. The logic of domination makes use of

two major evaluative premises. (1) Of two descriptively different things one is superior morally for whatever reason, and (2) this very moral superiority justifies the subordination of the one to the other (126-8). This framework has been used to justify the subordination of both women and nature under the same logic. So, Warren concludes, the fight to end sexism, seeing that it is a fight against a logic of domination, is *also* the fight to end naturism. Conversely, she writes, "a responsible environmental ethic *must* also embrace feminism" (146). This logic of domination also upholds racism and justifies the continued subordination of indigenous peoples in the United States and elsewhere around the world.

Another issue facing indigenous people is the devaluing of indigenous knowledge by settler societies. Many indigenous worldviews have their own epistemologies and metaphysics which have been treated historically as incompatible with a Western worldview and thus rejected by settler governments and academies. McGregor et al. write, "In contrast to dominant Western society's tendency to view the natural world as a commodity, property or a 'resource', Indigenous understandings are based on regarding the Earth as alive and imbued with spirit" (McGregor 35). This more animistic outlook means that where Western concepts of justice often exclude the non-human, indigenous ontologies are more inclusive of entities like rivers, forests, and the earth itself. These indigenous outlooks, comprising distinct "legal orders, governance, and conceptions of justice," McGregor et al. call "Indigenous knowledge systems" (McGregor 36).

There is good reason to think that discrimination against indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) is not founded in reason, but prejudice. For instance, the more inclusive indigenous knowledge systems seem better poised to understand relational problems of climate change about which Western knowledge systems struggle**.** This can specifically be seen in the pan-indigenous

concept of *Buen Vivir* which recognizes "the relational worldviews and the intrinsic value and agency of the non-human" without needing to prove these views philosophically (McGregor 37). Moreover, some IKS might better handle conceptually difficult legal ideas like the "legal personhood" or "rights" of nature (ibid).

Another means by which we can cultivate an environmental ethic without resorting to the intrinsic value debates, is by articulating an ethic which obviates the need to establish moral status. Philip Cafaro and others have done this by sketching an environmental *virtue* ethic. Instead of focusing on external (or internal) justifications for the status of natural environments, an environmental virtue ethic, in Cafaro's words, "incorporates a respect for nature, conceives 'human interests' broadly, and presents environmental protection as being in our enlightened self-interest" (Cafaro 4). An environmental virtue ethic would seem to embrace a benign anthropocentrism focused on what a good life *for a human* looks like, how the society in which they live reflects this, and on what relationships are relevant to human flourishing. Cafaro references three nature writers in his essay "Toward an Environmental Virtue Ethics," namely Rachel Carson, Aldo Leopold, and Henry David Thoreau. Each of these writers, in their writing lives and personal lives, exemplify a virtuous relationship to the environment through which they sketch what a "decent" human life might look like. And, in examining each of these writers, Cafaro explains, we find that they exemplify certain common virtues (simplicity, for example). It is these common virtues, exemplified by all three models, that intrigues Cafaro.

Notably, Cafaro uses the lives of Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson to show how a "resolutely nonanthropocentric" relationship to the nonhuman world can function as both "an ethical position and an intellectual task" (Cafaro 14-5). In the case of virtue ethics, the former seems to fall out of the latter as the intellectual task "demands repeated attention to the

nonhuman world" wherein we "discover intrinsically valuable nonhuman beings" (ibid). Cafaro articulates a way of avoiding the pitfalls of anthropocentrism (e.g. speciesism, hubris) without resorting to self-denial.

Environmental Ethics and University Sound

Although University Sound is a project dealing predominantly with aesthetics, one cannot talk about soundscapes without referring, in some way, to ethics. It seems to be the case that all aesthetic objects can submit to an ethical reading in one way or another.[33] Moreover, of aesthetic objects, the soundscape is particularly prevalent in our lives as an entity which is democratic (collectively constructed), but non-voluntary (one can not opt-out of the soundscape entirely). Like the aesthetics of urban environments, or of architecture, soundscape aesthetics overlaps with inevitable questions about justice.

In January, 2024, the groups Center for Progressive Reform and Governing for Impact released a report aimed at addressing noise pollution at the policy level. The authors write, "A growing body of research… shows that low-wealth communities and communities of color across the United States are more likely to be exposed to sources of noise pollution" (Dobbs-Allsopp 7).

The authors go on to cite various studies about disparities in noise pollution exposure among racial and socioeconomic groups in the United States. Black American neighborhoods (>¾ Black) suffer, on average, from an additional four decibels of noise pollution. Students in the schools most exposed to road and aviation noise pollution are more likely than in other schools to be both people of color and eligible for free meals. Noise pollution also has

[33] It should be noted that some thinkers do not distinguish the aesthetic and ethical, but rather think of them as one. Plato is noted for this view as are more contemporary philosophers influenced by Plato like Iris Murdoch.

particularly adverse effects on children. The authors write, "A major decade-long study of 6,000 American schools found that those located near major airports reported lower standardized test scores, which were subsequently improved upon the installation of sound insulation" (Dobbs-Allsopp 11).

It is clear that *noise pollution* constitutes an obvious and pervasive health risk on any normative analysis

But, soundscape ethics doesn't just concern noise pollution.

According to the Clean Air Act, "The traditional definition of noise is 'unwanted or disturbing sound.' Sound becomes unwanted when it either interferes with normal activities such as sleeping, conversation, or disrupts or diminishes one's quality of life."[34] [35] This definition of noise pollution is vague. On the one hand, there are certain noises which obviously constitute pollution for everyone– a highway for instance, or anything generating more noise consistently than 90 decibels (the sound of a motorcycle). On the other hand, there is no clear procedure for determining that a noise is "unwanted." Is the sound of wind chimes noise pollution just because someone finds them obnoxious? The line is blurry between what is genuinely noise pollution and what is merely annoying. However, because the soundscape affects all community members, the fact that a sound is annoying to some should be something we take seriously.

Being democratic, a soundscape is the creation of its constituent community. As such, the aesthetic analysis and design of a soundscape also gives extraordinary reasons for active, communal participation. That being said, not every noise-producing action can be democratically coordinated. We need an ethic that covers not just the obvious, noise pollution and very annoying noises, but something which also covers the mundane. Moreover, ethics that focus on noise

[34] Clean Air Act Title IV, section 201

[35] For the anthropocentrism of this definition– i.e. *for whom* is it disturbing? – see my section on philosophy of animals p. 32-35

pollution are negative ethics; they focus on absenting sound, on learning to shut up. For that reason, policy intervention is especially good at mitigating these harms. An ethic for sound should, in my opinion, also be action guiding in a positive way: it should guide us in our everyday sound production toward excellence, not just forbid us our loudness. Just as Cronon warns, we need to be suspicious of any ethic that casts "any use as abuse" (Cronon 21). We are unalterably a part of the soundscape. And, the sounds with which we fill it constitute, in large part, the identities of our homes.

Cafaro echoes this argument in his writings on environmental virtue ethics. He writes, "Often, the general public views environmentalists as killjoys, willing to countenance any trade-offs of human freedom or happiness in pursuit of their aims…In defending wild nature and asserting its intrinsic value, environmentalists are necessarily proscriptive. Yet the writings of the great naturalists, and our own experiences, tell a story of joyful interrelation with nature" (Cafaro 4-5). An ethic covering soundscapes needs to understand our roles as creators and composers. It must understand joy and play. The analogy to music can be extended here to impress upon us the sacred role of sound: it is the realm of dance, passion, and romance. Just as music can alter our mood, what we hear in the soundscape has the ability to change the ways we experience the world.

Acoustic Consciousness and collective action problems

Soundscape ecologist Hildegard Westerkamp employs the idea of an acoustic consciousness in her writing. The acoustically conscious person cultivates their consciousness through a practice of soundwalking. She writes:

"When attentive listening becomes a daily practice, requesting sound quality becomes a natural activity. This may be reflected in simple actions like not playing the radio all day long,

using a hand lawnmower instead of a power mower, buying quiet machinery, requesting to turn off disturbing sounds wherever possible, helping to preserve quiet areas in our cities, and staying aware of our own acoustic actions and of our collective responsibility for the sonic environment" (Westerkamp).

This consciousness which begins with attentive, perhaps strenuous, attention eventually becomes a "natural activity." In short, one picks up on what they do and do not like in the acoustic environment. But more significantly, one begins to understand their own responsibility as being part of the "collective responsibility." As sonic beings, we are obliged not to forget that we are active constructors as much as we are passive listeners. The shape of the soundscape is ultimately one we must take our responsibility for.

One might liken this responsibility to the collective action problem of climate change. As with climate change, larger soundscapes, like those of cities and forests, are the product of many contributions that, when taken alone, seem almost insignificant. Cary Coglianese, a professor of law at the University of Pennsylvania writes, "Even if the contribution of any one person is *de minimus* in its own right, each individual's impact adds up" (Coglianese). However, soundscapes are more meaningfully local. While it might be the case that sound and carbon emission dispersal are relatively similar, both disperse and attenuate as they distance from the source, sound, unlike carbon emissions, reaches complete dispersal. The fact that this is not true of carbon emissions exacerbates the collective action problem. "Even if all new emissions of greenhouse gasses could somehow be halted tomorrow," writes Coglianese," the gasses already in the atmosphere will not dissipate for some time to come" (ibid).

That being said, while noise pollution differs in important ways from carbon emissions, it still might instigate smaller-scale collective action problems. Imagine that you decided, for

instance, to use a push mower while your neighbor opted for gas-powered. Any ethic of soundscapes must deal head-on with this hazard. A sense of individual responsibility as a "composer" of the soundscape is a good start.

Being a Sonic Citizen

In the public-facing portion of University Sound, I settled on a virtue ethics approach to what I call being a "sonic citizen." During my radio program I outlined four virtues that could be associated with good sonic citizenship. This is by no means an exhaustive or profound list. It is, like many other programs in University Sound, a start. There may be new virtues that arise, and certainly the classic virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice will all be needed to some degree to be a good sonic citizen.

Humility – Firstly, it is impossible for us to understand the scope of the soundscape or the gross product of the sounds we as humans create– or our machines create for us. This is down to pure physical fact: we cannot hear below 20 hz, and we generally do not hear much at all above 17,000 khz. Bats and elephants live in these lacunas. There are colors of the soundscapes we will never see and which may make a world of difference to those who can. We must be humble, though not meek or self-effacing in our sonic production. Moreover, there are community members with misophonia triggers. We should always be aware of these possibilities. Our sounds may not be as beautiful to others as they are to us.

Neighborliness – We must understand that a soundscape is by nature democratic. And that it leaks into the lives of everyone no matter whether they want it to or not. We must also understand that we are not alone in the soundscape. We have neighbors, friends, and

collaborators. They play a part in the composition just as much as we do.We should honor that and honor their needs. This goes, too, for social justice. The WHO calls noise pollution an "environmental nuisance," but I don't think they go nearly far enough. Exposure to noise pollution has been linked to all sorts of nasty ailments, from hearing loss to heart disease. Because those who most often live near roads are marginalized economically and socially, soundscape issues are social justice issues, and the sonic citizen recognizes that.

Open-mindedness – I'm very open to the importance of reflecting historical continuity and tradition in our soundscapes, preserving this based on aesthetic or moral obligation (it isn't quite clear whether or not there are pure aesthetic obligations), but, there may be competing ideas of what a soundscape ought to be like. Take for example debates in landscaping over the use of native vs. exotic species– these debates can be very tricky to mediate. It makes sense that, being as a soundscape is democratic and non-voluntary, there will be disputes over values and goals which are incommensurate with each other. Being so, a sonic citizen understands that there is not one answer to any problem. Imagine a scenario where a band wants to play on the oval[36]– this will cause distress to some, certainly, especially the birds and deer who make their home here and thrive in the off-hours, and perhaps to those who are not fond of the music. But imagine that the band is native, and imagine that the event is communal and celebratory, and imagine that it honors the history of the land. The sonic citizen must be open-minded. They must see the good in an out-of-tune carillon or a rock concert.

Attentiveness – We must pay attention to not just ourselves but everything around us. Being a sonic citizen means recognizing that you are part of the soundscape: every breath you take, every

[36] The University of Montana quadrangle

clapping step, every word uttered, or bag rustled joins the composition in its totality. It is as if we were living on a canvas, carrying wet paint brushes strapped to our clothes. We cannot avoid or pretend to be apart from the soundscape. And so the sonic citizen uses not just their ears alone, but their eyes, their noses, their scientific and aesthetic and historical and social knowledge, and anything else when making judgments about the soundscape.

ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Met with relevant professionals

Originally, my project looked quite different. I had planned on hosting musical outsiders on my radio show in order to discuss their unique relationships with the natural environment. Once I began chatting with ethnomusicologists about the idea, I quickly changed tack. They pointed out some serious problems with my approach. First, my lack of training in ethnography and especially ethnographic interviewing; second, my lack of expertise in the musical traditions of my potential interviewees. For this reason, I decided to abandon the original project. Getting expertise from outside the philosophy department was an important factor in my project turning out how it has.

2. Sought out radio show guests

Before turning my project into University Sound, I was in the process of seeking out guests for my show. I knew a few people in town and had heard tell of some others– a native piperer, an old-time banjo player. I had some interest, but nothing committal.

3. Surveyed literature

I read a lot of literature on soundscapes before beginning my project. In University Sound, I mainly reference R. Murray Shafer and Hildegard Westerkamp. However, my initial survey was much wider than this. At first, I was focused on studying the many different applications of the soundscape concept in scientific fields, but as the literature got increasingly technical, I found that I had already isolated the philosophical problems that most interested me– and might interest the public. Shafer, the ur soundscape philosopher, has had such a lasting influence on soundscape philosophy that responding more directly to his work ended up making the most sense for the public focus of University Sound.

4. Practiced soundwalking

As part of my research and in preparation for my guided soundwalk event, I had to learn to soundwalk. This involved a lot of walking and a lot of listening around campus. I made numerous field recordings, some of which ended up in my radio programs.

5. Recorded radio shows

I recorded two two-hour long radio shows for KFGM, a high-powered community radio station in Missoula, Montana. The shows were fully scripted and involved musical and non-musical examples throughout. The second show was recorded around the UM campus and featured live examples of road noise, bird calls, footsteps, etc. This second show ended up low-fidelity and clipped in various places because my inexpensive recorder was incapable of handling wind (even when muffed). If I could go back and do it again, I might opt to intersperse more field recordings during the show rather than record a whole episode in the field.

6. Advertised event

I created a poster to advertise my soundwalking event. I hung that poster all around campus and at several off-campus locations. The event was sparsely attended. In hindsight, I should have spent more energy on advertising the event. One thing I could have done was make the show less university-centric. Not many of my listeners on KFGM are students or live in close proximity to the University of Montana.

7. Led soundwalk

I led a guided soundwalk around campus. Prior to the event I gave a short introductory lecture on soundscapes. I also polled the group about sounds they generally associate with universities (including chatty hallways, the sounds of sneakers on cement, intramural sports, and so on), and on what they expected to hear around UM. At the end of the walk we had a discussion about what we heard, what surprised us, about what, if anything, was unique to the UM soundscape and, most importantly, about our sonic preferences.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

1) Accomplishments

The principal accomplishment of University Sound is an exploratory one. Over the course of three months, I was able to explore a topic which is underrepresented in the environmental philosophy literature. I plan on continuing to do research into this topic.

Moreover, I was afforded the opportunity to use academic time to focus on public philosophy. University Sound forced me to slow down and try to present complicated ideas to a lay crowd. I was alternately successful and unsuccessful in this endeavor. I discuss this more in "challenges."

2) Challenges

I faced many unique challenges while working on University Sound. I outline three here.

1. Public philosophy

   Because my project was so focused on introducing philosophical ideas to the public, I had to be careful with the way I presented myself. It was important that I made the ideas relatable, that I made efforts to reduce academic jargon, and that I made a concerted effort to focus on style and entertainment value. I was especially sensitive to this last point because I was generously permitted by the folks at KFGM to use my regular spot (6-8pm on Saturdays) not to play music or chat with guests, but to gab about my philosophy work. KFGM is a radio station with a loyal following, but even the most open-minded radio listener has her limit. What I didn't want to do was drive listeners away from KFGM by blabbering about intrinsic value, the definition of an aesthetic object, idealism and realism, or other abstract philosophical topics.

2. Advertising

   My advertising was clearly insufficient. If I could go back and do it over I would work with groups on campus to make the event UM-sanctioned. If I had done this, I would have had much greater reach. As it is, because my event was so sparsely attended, I don't think University Sound had nearly the impact on the community it could have.

3. Endurance

The sheer public-ness of this project meant that failing had pretty great stakes. I was representing both myself and the UM philosophy department to the world as well as acting out a potential future career (as a teacher). My first show had some promise but contained quite a few errors of elocution as well as misstatements. For the second show I decided to get out of the studio and record it using a portable microphone while perambulating the campus. I found this method to be an improvement; although, the field recording had quite a few technical problems due to the wind– clipping, mostly. All in all, it was a great learning experience.

Works Cited

Arcangeli, Giulio, et al. "Neurobehavioral Alterations from Noise Exposure in Animals: A Systematic Review." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 20, no. 1, 29 Dec. 2022, p. 591, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9819367/, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010591. Accessed 1 Sept. 2023.

Avery, Kevin J. "The Hudson River School." *Metmuseum.org*, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History, 2004, www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/hurs/hd_hurs.htm. Accessed 2024.

Bentham, Jeremy. *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. Westport, Conn., Greenwood Press, 1789.

Berger, John. *Why Look at Animals?* 1980. London, Penguin Books, 2009.

Birch, Jonathan. "The Place of Animals in Kantian Ethics." *Biology & Philosophy*, vol. 35, no. 1, 24 Dec. 2019, link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10539-019-9712-0, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10539-019-9712-0.

Cafaro, Philip. "Thoreau, Leopold, and Carson." *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2001, pp. 3–17, https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics200123135. Accessed 7 May 2020.

Carlson, Allen. "Appreciation and the Natural Environment." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 37, no. 3, 1979, p. 267, https://doi.org/10.2307/430781.

Cheney, Jim. "INTRINSIC VALUE in ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: BEYOND SUBJECTIVISM and OBJECTIVISM." *The Monist*, vol. 75, no. 2, Apr. 1992, pp. 227–235.

Clark, Fay, and Jacob Dunn. "Noise Pollution Is Hurting Animals – and We Don't Even Know How Much." *The Conversation*, 22 Aug. 2022,

theconversation.com/noise-pollution-is-hurting-animals-and-we-dont-even-know-how-much-186408.

Clean Air Act. 1963.

Coglianese, Cary. "Solving Climate Risk Requires Normative Change." *Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Initiative*, The Wharton School, the University of Pennsylvania, 26 July 2019, esg.wharton.upenn.edu/climate-center/solving-climate-risk-requires-normative-change/.

Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History*, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1995, pp. 7–28.

Dickie, George. "Defining Art." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3, July 1969, pp. 253–266.

Dobbs-Allsopp, Will, et al. *Safe and Sound: How the Environmental Protection Agency Can Protect Us from Dangerous Noise*. Governing for Impact & The Center for Progressive Reform, Jan. 2024.

Donaldson, Sue, and Will Kymlicka. *Zoopolis : A Political Theory of Animal Rights*. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press, 2014.

French, Fiona. "Expanding Aesthetics." *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, vol. 9, 4 May 2022, https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2022.855087.

"Frequency Hearing Ranges in Dogs and Other Species." *Lsu.edu*, Louisiana State University, 2017, www.lsu.edu/deafness/HearingRange.html.

Ginsborg, Hannah. "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2022, plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/kant-aesthetics/. Accessed 2024.

Grinfeder, Elie, et al. “What Do We Mean by “Soundscape”? A Functional Description.” *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, vol. 10, 15 June 2022, https://doi.org/10.3389/fevo.2022.894232.

Gruen, Lori. *Entangled Empathy : An Alternative Ethic for Our Relationships with Animals*. New York, Lantern Books, A Division Of Booklight Inc, 2015.

Harrison, Peter. “Descartes on Animals.” *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 167, Apr. 1992, p. 219, https://doi.org/10.2307/2220217.

Hursthouse, Rosalind. “Applying Virtue Ethics to Our Treatment of the Other Animals.” *The Practice of Virtue : Classic and Contemporary Readings in Virtue Ethics*, edited by Rachel Welchman, Indianapolis, In, Hackett Publishing Company, 2006, pp. 136–155.

---. “Virtue Ethics and the Treatment of Animals.” *The Oxford Handbook of Animal Ethics*, edited by Tom L. Beauchamp and R.G. Frey, Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press, 2013.

Kagan, Shelly. *How to Count Animals, More or Less*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019.

Kania, Andrew. “The Philosophy of Music.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2024, plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/music/. Accessed 2024.

Krause, Bernie L. “The Niche Hypothesis: A Virtual Symphony of Animal Sounds, the Origins of Musical Expression and the Health of Habitats.” *The Soundscape Newsletter*, vol. 6, June 1993.

Kubala, Robbie. “Aesthetic Obligations.” *Philosophy Compass*, 31 Oct. 2020, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12712. Accessed 25 Nov. 2020.

Light, Andrew. “The Urban Blind Spot in Environmental Ethics.” *Environmental Politics*, vol. 10, no. 1, Mar. 2001, pp. 7–35, https://doi.org/10.1080/714000511.

Lopes, Dominic McIver. “Nobody Needs a Theory of Art.” *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 105, no. 3, 2008, pp. 109–127, https://doi.org/10.5840/jphil200810531.

Lopes, Dominic Mciver. *BEING for BEAUTY : Aesthetic Agency and Value.* S.L., Oxford Univ Press, 2021.

Matthews, Patricia. “Scientific Knowledge and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature.” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 60, no. 1, Feb. 2002, pp. 37–48, https://doi.org/10.1111/1540-6245.00050.

McGregor, Deborah, et al. “Indigenous Environmental Justice and Sustainability.” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, vol. 43, no. 1, Apr. 2020, pp. 35–40, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877343520300075, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2020.01.007.

McShane, Katie. “Why Environmental Ethics Shouldn’t Give up on Intrinsic Value.” *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2007, pp. 43–61, https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics200729128.

Meng, Linghao, et al. “Chronic Noise Exposure and Risk of Dementia: A Systematic Review and Dose-Response Meta-Analysis.” *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 10, 20 June 2022, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2022.832881. Accessed 18 July 2022.

National Wildlife Federation. “Black-Capped Chickadee.” *National Wildlife Federation*, www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Birds/Black-Capped-Chickadee#:~:text=The%20average%20lifespan%20for%20black.

Pijanowski, Bryan C, et al. “Soundscape Ecology: The Science of Sound in the Landscape.” *Source: BioScience BioScience*, vol. 61, no. 203, 2011, pp. 203–216, www.edc.uri.edu/nrs/classes/nrs534/NRS_534_readings/Sound2.pdf, https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2011.61.3.6.

Purves, Dale, et al. *Neuroscience*. 2nd ed., New York Oxford University Press, 2001.

Regan, Tom. “The Case for Animal Rights.” *Noûs*, vol. 20, no. 3, Sept. 1986, p. 425, https://doi.org/10.2307/2215309.

Rolston III, Holmes. “CHALLENGES in ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS .” *ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* , edited by Michael E. Zimmerman and J. Baird Callicott, Prentice Hall, 2001, pp. 127–146.

Rowlands, Mark. “Contractarianism and Animal Rights.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, vol. 14, no. 3, Nov. 1997, pp. 235–247, https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5930.00060.

Saito, Yuriko. “Appreciating Nature on Its Own Terms.” *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1998, pp. 135–149, www.pdcnet.org/enviroethics/content/enviroethics_1998_0020_0002_0135_0149, https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics199820228.

Schafer, R. Murray . *The Soundscape : The Tuning of the World*. Rochester, Vt., Destiny Books ; [United States, 1994.

Singer, Peter. *Practical Ethics*. 1979. 3rd ed., New York, Cambridge University Press, 21 Feb. 2011.

Sylvan, Richard. “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental, Ethic?” *ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY from Animal Rights to Radical Ecology* , edited by Michael E. Zimmerman and J. Baird Callicott, Prentice Hall, 2001, pp. 17–25.

University of Sussex. “Dr Alice Eldridge - Learning to Listen.” *Youtube*, 31 July 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3KxzxIKsXI.

Van der Berg, Servaas. “Aesthetic Hedonism and Its Critics.” *Philosophy Compass*, vol. 15, no. 1, 18 Dec. 2019, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12645.

Walton, Kendall L. “Categories of Art.” *The Philosophical Review*, vol. 79, no. 3, July 1970, pp. 334–367, https://doi.org/10.2307/2183933.

Warren, Karen J. “The Power and the Promise of Ecological Feminism.” *Environmental Ethics*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1990, pp. 125–146, https://doi.org/10.5840/enviroethics199012221.

Watanabe, Shigeru. “Animal Aesthetics from the Perspective of Comparative Cognition.” *Emotions of Animals and Humans*, edited by Stan Kuczaj and Shigeru Watanabe, Tokyo, Springer Japan, 2013, pp. 129–162.

Welsch, Wolfgang. “Animal Aesthetics.” *Contemporary Aesthetics*, vol. 2, 2004, : digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_contempaesthetics/vol2/iss1/15 . Accessed 2024.

Westerkamp, Hildegard. “Soundwalking.” *Hildegard Westerkamp*, 1 Jan. 2001, hildegardwesterkamp.ca/writings/writings-by/?post_id=13&title=soundwalking. Accessed 2024.

World Health Organization. “Noise.” *Www.who.int*, 27 Apr. 2010, www.who.int/europe/news-room/fact-sheets/item/noise.