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Research Article

Aisthetic/Aesthetic Experiences in School Education: Cultivating Discernment in Response to Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

The increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) as an educational and informational tool has intensified the need for learners to develop discernment in evaluating the quality, reliability, and meaning of AI-generated knowledge. This paper argues that aisthetic/aesthetic education, understood in its original sense of *aisthesis* as knowledge grounded in sensory and embodied experience, provides an important foundation for cultivating such discernment. The study develops a theoretical framework that connects aesthetic experience with the formation of judgement and practical wisdom in educational settings. The paper employs a philosophical and historical analysis of aesthetic thought, tracing the concept of *aisthesis* from Ancient Greek philosophy through German Idealism and Romanticism, particularly the work of Schiller, Goethe, and Herbart, to the educational theories of Dewey and contemporary perspectives such as Ingold's concept of attentionality. These theoretical perspectives are examined alongside the pedagogical practices of Steiner Waldorf education as an example of how aisthetic/aesthetic experiences can be systematically embedded across the curriculum. The analysis suggests that embodied engagement with materials, artistic processes, and sensory-rich learning experiences cultivates dispositions toward attentiveness, appreciation, and reflective judgement. Such capacities are essential for navigating complex contemporary environments shaped by AI and digital media. The paper concludes that aisthetic/aesthetic education offers a valuable pedagogical approach for fostering discernment, though further empirical research is needed to investigate its long-term educational effects and practical implications.

Keywords

Aisthetic/Aesthetic Education, AI, Bildung/Didactics, Discernment

1. Introduction

Most non-professional users of artificial intelligence as an online search tool experience that they need discernment to judge the usefulness and reliability of AI responses to their questions. According to the Merriam-Webster online Dictionary, discernment is the ability to judge well, to distinguish between differences based on perceptions of qualities. The theory I would like to propose is that judgement based on aisthetic/aesthetic experience in school settings can dispose

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young people to the kind of powers of judgement that underpin discernment.

The basic idea underpinning this theory is that in order to make judgements about the quality of things, be able distinguish between them, recognize patterns and connections, people need rich embodied experiences of material and value-based qualities, their connections, inter-relations and context, and they need to be habitually used to making operational decisions in complex situations. I suggest that these are not abilities that can be learned easily at a purely cognitive level but need practical experience with materials in context. In order to construct this theory of discernment, I will explore the nature of dispositions and habits, the original meaning of *aisthesis*, the Ancient Greek term for knowledge based on direct sensory experience and then build on the German psychologist and educational philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart's (1776-1841) development of aesthetic judgement. This idea links to Dewey's [1] notion of the continuity of experience, his use of the term esthetics, and the development of a pedagogy of interruption [2] that involves discontinuity with what we already know and expect.

Finally, I locate this theory within the practice of Steiner Waldorf education, which places considerable emphasis on aisthetic/aesthetic experience and then conclude by making some general, practical suggestions that are generally applicable to most school types.

I refer to disposition in the Bourdieuian sense of an embodied structure that biases or inclines us to certain ways of seeing and behaving. Bourdieu explained that dispositions are not usually learned through formal instruction but unintentionally acquired through "domestic or scholastic inculcation of legitimate culture" [3]. Lave and Wenger [4] speak of such situated learning through legitimate participation. Biesta et al, describe dispositions as follows,

> People bear their dispositions and live them through their bodies: they are emotional, practical and physical (and also cognitive, for the brain…is a body part…) dispositions are the result of both nature and nurture, but Bourdieu firmly places stress on the importance of nurture…It is clear then, that dispositions influence learning and that learning influences the nature of a person's dispositions [5].

I suggest that for a series of experiences to lead to a disposition to discernment, they must first awaken a sense of recognition of the other (person, thing or action in the world), otherwise, we would tend to recognize and categorize experiences on the basis of embodied habit ("aha, I know what that is"), which would be a pre-judgement, if not an actual prejudice.

2. A Short History of Aisthesis

As one can see by the entries on aesthetics in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the semantic field of aesthetics is a broad topography of multiple discourses. Aesthetics has come to be associated with reception of art, but its origins included a broader epistemology. What all discourses have in common is the embodied and sensory nature of experience. As Johnson puts it, aesthetic experience "extends broadly to encompass all the processes by which we enact meaning through perception, bodily movement, feeling, and the imagination. In other words, *all meaningful experience is aesthetic experience*" [6]. This idea takes us back the etymological origin of the term.

The Ancient Greek term αἰσθητικός (*aisthetikos)* refers to experiences through the senses, and αἰσθάνομαι (*aisthanomai*) means 'I perceive, feel or sense something'. Granta refers to the etymological root *aisth* as referring to "the sphere of feeling and psycho-physical perception controlled by the sensory network" [7]. Cazeaux points out, the aesthetics covers a wide range of only loosely connected fields and the term has three distinct sematic fields [8]. The first is the ancient Greek aisthesis, which referred to "lived, felt experience, knowledge as it is obtained through the senses in contrast to *eidos*, knowledge derived from reason and intellection" [9].

Aristotle incorporated aesthesis into a comprehensive theory of perception, by aligning disposition, activity and the production of knowledge [10]. He added the dimension of being moved by an experience, of undergoing an experience, and he linked this to catharsis in the experience of tragedy in the theatre. Aristotle also distinguished between the five primary external senses and an inner sense, a kind of central sense, that synthesized these sensations into a unified experience. For this reason, it is closely associated with phronesis or practical wisdom, which situational and necessary virtue or potentiality for making (*poesis*) useful things within a given *praxis* [11]. It stands therefore in contrast to episteme (theoretical knowledge or knowledge that is generally valid). Aisthesis, according to Aristotle provides us with a source of knowledge that is immediate and holistic and builds on prior knowledge to recognize a phenomenon and this kind of knowledge is both concrete and contingent, that is, it does not mediate us the essence of something, nor generally valid propositional knowledge. It is therefore linked to *phronesis* or situated practical wisdom.

From ancient times and through medieval and early modern times the term *aisthēsis* was part of theorizing about perception, epistemology and the reception of beauty and art. Aristotle's notion of *aisthesis* took serval routes to informing our current understandings. One of these routes was to inspire empiricism, which itself digressed into two directions, one away from the transcendental towards what we would call today positivist, materialist reductionism, the other to Romanticism and the transformative experience of encountering nature and art. Aristotle's ideas were taken up and developed in the Arab world and in India, later having a powerful influence on European medieval and early modern thinking via Islamic Spain. In particular, the ideas of empiricism were articulated by people like the Andalusian Ibn Tufayl (1105-1185) an Islamic scholar and novelist. In his philosophical novel *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan* (or *Yaqzan*), which appeared in translation in Oxford in

the 17th Century under the Latin title *Philosophus autodidacticus*, the protagonist is an autodidactic feral child who develops into a natural philosopher by applying his innate rationality to interpret his experiences (the prototype for Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe). It is known that John Locke and Baruch Spinoza were familiar with the Hayy ibn Yaqzan and were inspired by its interpretation of human nature and the role of society in shaping it. Following Attar [12], Spinoza may even have translated it or commissioned a translation from a Hebrew edition. In early modern times the Anglo/Irish/Scottish empiricists such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Locke (1632-1704), George Berkley (1685-1753) and David Hume (1711-1776) all argued that knowledge was based on the application of rationality to sensory experience.

The other direction taken by aisthesis, by now in its modern spelling *aesthetics*, was strongly influenced by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762) who first established the discipline of aesthetics referred to it as *scientia cognitionis sensitivae* (a science of sensitive knowing or sensitive cognition). Baumgarten distinguished between the mere sensory experience – the *gnoseologia inferior* and the higher faculties of rational and philosophical knowledge. The 18th Century, mainly German philosophy did not see the gap between sensory knowledge and rationality as a polarity, but rather as a continuum and thus, as Granta [7] argues, there was no inherent and fundamental conflict between senses and intellect, subjective and objective, but rather a dialogue.

Following Baumgarten, the second major field of aesthetics was the study of beauty in art and nature. This field emerged among the new bourgeoisie, for whom the value of beauty, the sublime in nature and the fine arts as possessions and a mark of distinction emerged with their sense of individuality and subjectivity. As Berger [13], drawing on Walter Benjamin's [14] aesthetic theory, pointed out, painting in the Renaissance began to reflect the idea of the viewer as a self, as an observer of the world whilst aspiring to have increasing control over it - what Berger calls the spectator-buyer. We see this particularly in the emergence of art commissioned by the wealthy bourgeoisie in the Netherlands, in the 17th Century, and in England.

Aesthetics was taken up by the Romantics in reaction to utilitarian materialism. Romanticism felt a holistic relation to nature and saw art as an ineffable and transcending category. A third field of aesthetics was derived from the philosopher Immanuel Kant, who removed it from the realm of categorization, into the realm of personal subjectivity. In his 'Critique of Pure Reason' Kant [15] objected of the use of this term from its original meaning of relating to the senses as a basis for knowledge, though he later adopted Baumgarten's use of the term aesthetics as the study of truth, goodness and beauty.

3. Idealism and Romantic Aesthetics

The German Early-Romantic movement, staring in the 1790's included the philosophers Kant, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, the poets and theorists of poetry such as Novalis, Schlegel, Hölderlin, Schiller and the biggest influence on all of them, Goethe. This was a very diverse group, who did not always agree with each other but had certain core ideas in common [16]. They did much to establish the central idea of *Bildung* and *Didaktics*, that the subject can come into being through engaging with the world. The highest task of Bildung is for the individual to connect their personal embodied self with a transcendental self which is both in the world and in humanity. Thus, *Selbstbildung* or self-formation is a pedagogy of the self. For some this meant the study of nature (Goethe), for others appreciation of high art (Schiller), for others this meant poetry (Novalis), for others this meant the hermeneutic engagement with literary texts (Schlegel). This movement also had a wider influence through translations into English (notably through Coleridge's influence on Carlyle and Emerson in America) and French through Germaine de Stael.

In Friedrich Schiller's [17] *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of the Human Being* we find the distinction between the drive to rationality (drive to form- *Formtrieb*) and the need for emotional expression in response to sensory experience (*Stofftrieb*), which can be read as a polarity of mind and body, that can only be resolved through the freedom of play, or artistic creativity. Schiller recognized the alienation people through the new emergent mechanization and industrialization of work, and the detachment of rational science and he also responded to the failure of the French Revolution, to realize liberty, fraternity and equality.

Nevertheless, Schiller saw in art the possibility of human transformation through Bildung, because active engagement with art can lead to aesthetic experience of beauty and sublimity. By learning to master the expressive possibilities of art, we can awaken from our naïve state of being embedded in nature and cultivate and edify ourselves. In self-formative creative activity, which Schiller called the drive to play (*Spieltrieb*), we have the possibility of attaining a moral relationship to the world. An aesthetic education in this sense is the basis of an education towards emancipation and freedom. The precondition for this Bildung is the cultivation of the senses and the ability to extend our sensitivity. In the 26th Letter, Schiller observes,

> What we see through the eye is different from what we perceive; for the intellect leaps out over the light to the objects. The object of touch is a force which we endure; the object of the eye and the ear is a form which we create. As long as human beings are still uneducated, they enjoy merely with the sense of feeling, to which the senses of appearance are at this stage only subservient. Either they do not rise to seeing or they are at any rate not satisfied with it. As soon as they begin to enjoy with the eye, and see acquires an absolute value for them, they are already aesthetically free also, and the play impulse has developed [18].

As Soetebeer [19] has shown, Schiller's programme of aesthetic education, as outlined in various texts that belong to same period as the *Aesthetic Education Letters*, centred on the

notion of self-active educational power (*selbsttätige Bildungskraft*). Schiller spoke of school knowledge as being inert, without power or energy. When we take in such knowledge it remains not only alien and 'indigestible' to the person and if retained, stays unchanged within us in a fruitless way and cannot stimulate either our feeling or our will. The term 'beauty' in Schiller's system means any form of artistic creation that has the power to elevate both the producer and recipient. Creativity is the human form of nature's creativity, but the power of imagination requires a free will, if it is to generate realities. The creative imagination complements the power of thinking. Teaching material that appeals to the feelings of the learner, to which the learner can form a personal relationship activates and motivates the will to self-activity, including the learner's own imagination, thus becoming a source of new ideas and creativity, that are not merely unconnected ideas that simply pop up, as it were, but insights and intuitions which are deeply connected to the person's previous activities and experiences combined into a new form. Thus, aesthetic experience if its allowed transform into creative activity, enables the person to emancipate herself.

Goethe's approach to *aisthesis* also went far beyond the realm of classical aesthetics and its preoccupation with the beautiful and informed his way of studying nature [19]. Goethe's method of observing natural phenomena was to start with the outer appearance but then uses the exact imagination to experience the inner processes at work within the organic phenomenon, such as the growth of a plant or the processes of formation of bones. In the physical world, for example with light and colour phenomena, Goethe sought to experience the relationships starting with exact observation, then going over into an inner reconstruction of the processes involved, leading to the creation of an imaginative model. He understood this as an active of spiritual activity of the mind. In Goethe's understanding, aisthetic/aesthetic experience directs our attention to the primary sensory qualities of colour, sound, shape, taste, and so on. Perception is accompanied by feelings (affect), which are an integral part of knowledge formation. Goethe's notion of the gestalt (a whole living entity) combines the passive sensory reception and the active cognitive-affective elements and is thus the basis for the self-active self-formation of the person. Art, understood broadly as the making of all human artefacts, is the medium through which people can develop their self-active self-formation.

4. Herbart's Aesthetic Judgement

Whereas Schiller's Letter's on Aesthetic Education were aimed at the education of the self-forming (*sich bildende*) citizen, in effect, adults, and Goethe was more concerned with establishing scientific methods that avoided what he considered the mechanistic science of his times, Herbart was specifically interested in the universal education of children. The recognition of education as a formative process of the person found its most systematic articulation), in particular in his book 'General Pedagogy' (*Allgemeine Pädagogik*, 1806). In this influential work Herbart described a systematic method of 'educative teaching', with the objective of enabling learners to develop the capacity to form their own judgements out of their own insight. At the heart of Herbart's philosophy and practice of education, however, was his notion of aesthetics. The significance of Herbart's aesthetics for education has been not widely been recognized, although Prange's [20] and English [21] work has shown how important this was.

Herbart's aesthetic theory links perception with judgement. The title of his early text *Concerning the aesthetic presentation as main business of education* from 1804 [22], makes two vital statements; educating means presenting the world, or the task of the educator being to point to direct the student's attention to what is important in the world, secondly, that the process of directing attention to the object of learning is to be aesthetic in the sense of aisthesis.

Herbart noted that in the act of perception we perceive the situation as a whole, rather than noting specific details. Aisthesis is not the same as observing, which has a more explicit and specific focus on selected aspects, such as gathering data. He distinguishes targeted observation from noticing. Children, he says can be trained to observe, but in natural perception we take a position in relation to what we perceive; we form judgements and evaluate what we perceive. We make judgements of taste, whether we like something or not and part of the perception includes affect as reflex. Herbart describes the initial experience of the situation as a totality, which is given as a perception, in which the *qualities* of the object (or situation) are immediately apparent- large, small, dark, light, rectangular, without boundaries etc. In this sense his account resembles the later phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty [23]. Herbart speaks of affect or being touched (*Betroffenheit*) by the experience. "It bursts forth from the depths of the heart... it is felt as a force" [22]. He calls this aesthetic necessity (*aesthetische Notwendigkeit*). It retains a double meaning of aisthetic (knowing through sensory perception) and something that has the effect of beauty, like a sunset – it has an aesthetic effect.

Herbert's interest is the educational process, which he describes as a situation in which the learner experiences something significant because it has been prepared by a teacher, who directs the student's attention to it. However, in contrast to Pestalozzi, Herbart realized that mere seeing is insufficient to make sense of the object, let alone appreciate its meaning. From a pedagogical perspective, it is not enough to simply enable the students to see the object, it requires the students to be primed to look and notice, and the presentation of the object of study requires careful selection., The function of the aesthetic pedagogical presentation is firstly enabling a perception. This is subsequently followed by revisiting the object to observe specific features in a more analytical way. The initial 'given' perception has a synthesizing function, one in which the whole rather than individual parts are experienced. In Herbart's account, aisthetic/aesthetic judgement is first an appreciative judgement (*Geschmacksurteil*) that comes

directly from perception, and is *initially* pre-linguistic, uninfluenced by external suggestion of usefulness or meaning, it is naïve and, in a sense, new. Herbart describes the given experience as 'aesthetic necessity' or 'coercion' because the image of the totality of the object and its attendant sensory qualities is 'forced' on us. The aesthetic mode of seeing (*ästhetische Anschauung*) is how we combine these synthesizing and selective/analytical elements and aesthetic judgement is the resonance of the experience that then manifests in the learner's will.

In contemporary neurological terms [24], the mind responds to the world first by sensing various sensory stimuli, then forms a mental image permeated with feeling and affect through the body's visceral response to the sensations to create a percept, which the mind then gives meaning to by calling on embodied knowledge.

In his subsequent educational works Herbart referred to the *Bildsamkeit* of the child (and human beings generally). Bildsamkeit is perhaps translatable as an inherent susceptibility to formation and transformation, or more simply *educability*, which implies that the subject, especially as a child or young person possesses the core potential for formation and transformation. The function of didactics, as the art of teaching for learning, is to draw on the child's innate educability by building on aesthetic experiences to cultivate aesthetic, and in Herbart's understanding, moral judgements. Judgements based on recognition of the qualities of phenomena are inherently moral in his terms. Today we might say they are value-based, in the holistic sense that meanings are embedded in sets of relations embedded in greater wholes.

Among others Dieter Benner [25] and Gert Biesta [26] have recognized the central importance of Herbart's aesthetic in education. As Benner writes, according to Herbart,

> Education does not work on the basis of theoretical-logical or theoretical-technical principles, nor on the basis of moral-practical principles, but rather on the basis of an "aesthetic" causality that enables a shift in perspective [or a redirection of attention- *Blickwendungen*-author] and broadens experience and perception [27].

Biesta [28] takes up another of Herbart's core ideas, the notion of the 'third thing'. The pedagogical relationship is not just one between teacher and student, in which the teacher is the active agent, but rather that both teacher and students have to develop and maintain interest in the third thing, the subject matter of the lesson. Herbart wrote,

> It is […] a familiar precept that the teacher must try to arouse the interest of his pupils in all that he teaches. However, this precept is generally meant and understood to denote the idea that learning is the end and interest the means to attain it. I wish to reverse that relationship. Learning must serve the purpose of creating interest. Learning is transient, but interest must be lifelong (cited in Hilgenheger, 2000) [29].

Thus, we see an explicit link between aisthetics/aesthetics and the German tradition of didactics or Bildung. The 'third thing', the subject matter that unites the experiences of teachers and students, is not only literally the object of study but the meaning and context of that object, the transactional relationships that arise through engagement with the text, image, idea, or natural phenomenon – the *inter-esse* (between beings) cannot be reduced to a prescribed outcome but remains open to interpretation. In Gadamer's [30] sense of a fusion of horizons, the process of hermeneutic engagement with the text (or any object of study), the coming together of the different horizons, the teacher's, the students' and that of the phenomenon, can be more than the prescribed content. It is this 'more' that is 'bildend' or formative of the person.

As Christoph Wolf, writing in the contemporary German phenomenological educational discourse, points out, in the Didaktik/Bildung tradition, education is understood as a bodily-sensual process. It has a physicality and aesthetic character and thus the sensual sensitivity and emotionality associated with [these conditions] are also important perquisites for relationships with other people, the world, and with oneself. Education is thus both aisthetic and aesthetic, that is, it concerns human perception and theories of perception and sensual understanding, and it involves the formation of the senses, the imagination, and the body" [31].

5. Herbart, Dewey and a Pedagogy of Interruption

As English [21] has elucidated, Herbart and Dewey are linked by their recognition of the function of discontinuity, disruptions, and interruptions in the learning process. Discontinuity of experience, or an experience of something unexpected that comes towards the learner and cannot easily be evaded, awakens them to what is non-self, to the other. This in-between space of *inter-esse* is what makes the learner recognize that they are, in Herbart's terms, *bildsam*, capable of iterative self-formation. English expresses this as follows,

> By reading Herbart and Dewey, as well as contemporary theorists' thoughts on the educative meaning of experiences such as inner struggle, felt difficulty, resistance, doubt, disillusionment, and fear, I have sought to demonstrate why we *should* preserve the in-between of experience for education…In teacher-learner interaction, preserving the in-between means learners are given a sense of how to find the in-between for themselves, how to create encounters with the new and unfamiliar that lead them to self-critical thought. The significance of the in-between of learning is grasped when we begin to understand that, in learning processes, the space that open up when one is interrupted- confronted by something new and unfamiliar- is an experiential space for one to learn about oneself (one's limits and capabilities) and about the world [21].

Herbart is seen today as foregrounding, "situational judgment and experiential understanding of schooling. [Herbart] affirms that the world that we experience is the real world" [32].

As scholars such as Johnson [6] and Shusterman [33] have argued, Dewey's theory of aesthetics offers not only a perspective on art but on knowledge and knowing, because Dewey believed that knowing should start with experience in its fullest sense and therefore experience is aesthetic and, that "pervasive qualities were the ground of all experience and thought" [36]. Experience for Dewey is a polysemic term including ongoing process (continuity), immediate event and outcome, and being embodied, it involves the whole human being, both doing and undergoing, active and receptive and always situated in a context has a pervasive unifying quality. Shusterman summarizes the 'work' that Dewey's notion of aesthetic experience does for our mental life, "structuring our experience into a coherent whole, organizing its terms and limits, determining the sense of what is adequate in judgement, giving our thought direction, and determining relevance and appropriateness of association" [33]. But he adds that two other aspects that Dewey emphasizing, can also fulfil these functions, namely habit and purpose. Habit disposes us to certain kinds of aesthetic experience and purpose directs our attention to what is salient for us in the situation.

Dewey described experience as a learning process as a kind of breathing, "a rhythm of intakings and outgoings" [34]. Experiencing is not merely receptive but is rather an interactive exchange involving the learner's volition and agency, through which the learner forms intentional relationships to the world, responding through what Ingold calls attentionality. What he [35] means by attentionality is awareness, not merely *of* the world, but *with* the world we are already embedded in. As Ingold explains, we attend to the world in several senses; by directing attention our to what is salient (ad = towards, tendere =stretch), apprehending its qualities (attend in the sense of listening intently), reading its affordances and responding in fluid and meaningful ways (his example is walking in nature, but he has frequently used crafting and skilled artistry as examples), and to attend also means caring for, waiting on someone (out of duty or awaiting a summons). Ingold adds the further meaning of longing for, that is, extending a lone of relationships into the future. He says, "the operations of the attentional mind…are not cognitive but ecological" [35]. What Ingold brings to this understanding of learning through experience is the notion of dwelling as, a task we are bound to take on as responsive and responsible beings, as part of the life we undergo. Put in the most general terms, life itself is a task, and to lead it, …is the task of education.

Following Dewey [1], the continuity of experience is always both doing (engaging with the world) and undergoing (experiencing), and that each significant cycle of experience changes our potential for engaging with the world anew.

6. Education Practice

My professional context for developing this theory is Steiner Waldorf (the terms being synonymous) education. Space does not permit an account of the theory underpinning this practice [36]. According to Rawson [37] learning in a Waldorf school involves the construction of learning opportunities, by teachers who have themselves formed strong relationship to the subject matter, in which the students encounter the world through aisthetic/aesthetic experience enriched by feeling and effect. Through a structured and rhythmical process of recalling, reconstructing sharing, dialogue and meaning-making, students generate their own knowledge of the world and then subsequently learn to contextualize in cultural knowledge and historical context. Thus, the aisthetic/aesthetic process is central to the students' experience and is embedded methodologically and didactically into the curriculum in age-related ways.

Through encountering a wide range of sense-perceptible qualities from early years settings onwards, the students embody different qualities, and this becomes the basis for dispositions to appreciation and to making discerning judgements. Appreciation means the recognition and valuing of the qualities of someone or something, which usually implies a degree of comparison and understanding of the situation and context. Once we can appreciate something can we discern its qualities in ways that form a basis for judgements, be they aesthetic, artistic, practical, scientific, moral or personal. In elementary education up to the age of puberty, students learn through direct experience to appreciate qualities- for example, of colour, tone, shape, gesture, movement, weight, texture, resistance, hardness and later learn to identify the distinguishing characteristics of materials (used in handicrafts, crafts and practical work such as gardening), qualities in the use of language, musical distinctions, visual images, whether in nature or in cultural artefacts. After puberty students learn to transform appreciation into the ability to form judgements [38].

7. Conclusions

On the basis of my extensive practical experience in Waldorf education, I suggest that what Ingold describes as attentionality in his discussion of 'anthropology and/as education' has been practiced for over 100 years in Waldorf education. Ingold takes the view that the pursuit of truth should not be confused with objective facts that are detached from the world. Real knowledge and truth can be generated through participating in life in the world. As Ingold explains, imagination, which has its origins in the living world, is an active part in the generation of knowledge. The process of science involves participation in the world process; "The…point is that imagining is the activity of a being who nevertheless dwells in an actual world…we do not have to think the world in order to live in it, but we do have to live in the world in order to think it." [39]. In his recent book Ingold writes, "Truth, then, lies in this relationship of mutual indebtedness: *it is the unison of experience and imagination in a world to which we are alive and that is alive to us*" [35]. Dwelling in the world, in Ingold's sense, provides the learner with rich aisthetic/aesthetic experience and this experience can is transformative.

The thesis that an aisthetic/aesthetic approach can dispose

students over the course of their schooling and beyond to being able to discern what to do in complex situations would obviously need to be the subject of empirical study. The purpose of this paper has been to outline a theory that can be used heuristically in the field as a lens to explore learning processes. I suggest that it would be relatively easy to document the aisthetic/aesthetic process across the different subjects and then evaluate the students' short term learning experiences, but it would be significantly harder to assess the long-term effects, since we are not talking about measurable knowledge or even skills. Ultimately, I suggest, only subjects can determine the extent to which they are disposed to making judgements of discernment.

Author Contributions

Martyn Rawson: Writing – original draft

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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