A Poetics of Shorelines

John Stubley PhD

“The poet…apprises us not of his own wealth, but of the commonwealth”
(Ralph Waldo Emerson).

Every human being is a poet.

I’d like to thank my shoreline companions over these years, including Katie (who often walks with me by the river, and who has been almost always with me at the lake), Shenali and Zoe (who are also almost always with me at the lake on Saturday mornings), as well as those who joined less frequently at the lake such as Pete, and those who picnic and walk with us by the river. Thanks also to Jennifer for her kind reading of these words.

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Beach: Mineral

The sands of Perth beaches, in Southwest Australia, must be some of the most idyllic of any state capital on Earth. They are generally the kind of white sands that fill postcards and social media images the world over. Depending on the season of the year, these sands will more or less cover all beaches and the entire shoreline. In the hotter months, only a few places along the coast will reveal the rocks of limestone reefs on the one side, and cliff formations on the other. In the colder months, with wind and waves washing and relocating the sand, more reef (and sometimes cliffs) will be revealed, which will also gradually wear away (and perhaps be built up again later).

The sands of the beach shoreline are an ever-changing sculpture that greet one anew each visit. Of course, with all other phenomena removed (e.g. water, wind and so on), the sands would not change much, if at all. It is through the sand's relationship with water, mostly, but also with wind, with plants, even animals, and of course with human beings, that any change happens at all. The mineral kingdom on its own is a dead and lifeless thing, unless it is brought into some kind of relationship with the other kingdoms of nature.

This, in turn, can teach us something about our own approach of inquiry. In separating one aspect out from all the rest, we must also recognise its relationship to the whole. In addition, we can also say that the kind of thinking activity usually employed in the study of all the phenomena of the world – not just the mineral kingdom – is not only one that removes phenomena from the context in which it exists, but also one that attempts as much as possible to stay objective, detached and lifeless – that is, in terms of quality, 'mineralistic.' Such thinking is necessary for weighing, measuring and numbering (activities suited to the inorganic realm). To it must also be added, however, the context as a whole, but also the qualities of the other kingdoms of nature – namely, life (but also consciousness and self-consciousness). The inorganic world can be understood, in part, with inorganic thinking. Only organic thinking, however, can grasp the organic, life-filled world and, ultimately, also the *entirety* of the inorganic world.

In observing the forms of the sand of Leighton Beach, North Fremantle, each morning, therefore, I have also been forced to observe the swell and seas of the ocean, the wind direction and force, cloud activity and the relationship to barometric pressure, which is the language of high and low pressure systems and the direction of the wind. I have also been forced to observe seasonal currents, sandbar formations, the way rain affects water content close to the river mouth, and to wonder at the phenomena of melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, and the mechanics of global warming.

In addition, I have been forced to observe the movement of the moon from new to crescent to gibbous to full and back again each month, as well as its monthly course from peak north to peak south, and to try to see in what way this influences the tides. The effect of the movement and activity of the planets and constellations on the activity of water – and thereby on the forms of the oceanic shoreline – I find to be a more subtle matter, though if the monthly activity of the moon, the annual

movements of the sun, and the daily movements of the earth itself can play such a role in tidal activity, I doubt not the potential influence of the other planets (and potentially the constellations) also. (I have been observing for some time the quality of the days of the week, and have connected such experiences to the quality of the planets, for which the days of the week have obviously been named. While I find these qualities can play an active role in social phenomena, I must redouble my efforts to find connections with their influence on the natural world.)

In short, in attempting the most basic understanding of why this particular beach shoreline presents such varied formations each and every morning I have been forced into some level of observation of all of these, and other, related phenomena. And the question has thereby arisen, ‘What are the conditions for this or that phenomenon to emerge?’ In a sense, it is less a question of understanding this or that formation in the sand at the beach as it is understanding the context from out of which such a formation can emerge.

If weather forecasting requires an awareness of large context or contexts, so too does the prediction of beach sand formations, at least at the beach I visit most mornings. In asking, ‘What are the conditions by which this or that may emerge?’ one begins, to a certain extent, also down the road of prediction – not in an abstract sense, but in a living one. For to even begin to answer the above question, one must start to pull together numerous and varied observations; but more than that, one must be able to imaginatively fill in the temporal gaps between observations (which can run, imaginatively, both chronologically forward and backwards). I am far from proficient at this, nor do I attempt it regularly enough, but I recognise a path lies available in this direction. And while the end goal is not prediction of sandy shoreline formations per se, something of an unfinished, sculptural image or idea can come to meet us in our thinking if we make enough observations in a fruitful way – this image or idea does not belong to finished physical reality, but rather to something ‘not yet,’ something that does have the quality of the ‘future’ about it.

Beach: Mineral – Forms

The archetypal or primal sandy beach shoreline form is something we might call the ‘bay.’ Even when there are apparently no ‘little bays’ on a beach, the overall beach itself, if seen from far enough above, can reveal itself as something of a bay formation. The bays I have seen at the beach I visit range from as small as a few metres across to the size of the whole beach itself. Depending on the time of day or year, and the various conditions involved, the manifestation of this archetypal bay will assume an infinite number of forms.

Essentially, I would say, the archetypal bay comprises of a ‘ridge’ acting as a kind of ‘headland’ of sorts, then a curving inwards into the land away from the ocean, before a curving out again back to another ridgeline: headland, inwardly-curving bay, headland. This sandy shoreline form can, again, manifest in an infinite number of ways, depending on the relationships of the various contextual phenomena touched on above.

Beaches further south of Perth (such as Contos south of Margaret River, or in the more southern beaches near Albany) often have granite rock formations as beach headlands, with curved bays in between. There are sometimes also limestone formations such as cliff walls as part of the curve of the bay. The granite stands as a sentry, relatively unmoved against the forces of water and wind, like the prow of a ship, steadfast against what may come. The limestone is more malleable, less rounded, itself more curved centripetally (from outside in) – more open than granite (and also hollow at times), exposed to the periphery (but also sometimes with a kind of closing-off gesture), vulnerable – more con-*cave* than convex. Indeed, the cave formations that we see in this part of the world are all limestone formations where water and wind have worn away, and also played a part in the building up of, the mineral kingdom of the Earth.

In the Whadjuk area of Perth beaches, we do not have the same granite formations as elsewhere, including the more southerly beaches of the state (much of the beach sand is, however, comprised of quartz, which is also a large component of granite). We have, rather, the more limestone forms seen in places such as Cable Station beach, Cove (south of Cottesloe Beach), Grant St in Cottesloe, etc., together with sands between. The islands offshore, once part of the mainland when the sea levels were lower, exhibit the same limestone formations. In a way, we could say that limestone here takes up the headland role that granite plays elsewhere, including further south. (A note on man-made granite groynes in a moment.)

An Australian botanist and artist following a similar path of inquiry as outlined here, Nigel Hoffman, has described granite as being more youthful in quality than limestone – that its upsurging, inward-to-outward, rounded formation has more the relative quality of youthfulness about it than does the hollowed-out, washed-out, concave formations of limestone, with sands washed away from the periphery inwards, and then potentially deposited and built up again somewhere else. He illustrates this point by comparing the rounded convex faces of babies and children,

with the much more heavily-sculpted concave faces of the elderly.[1] (Indeed there is also a relatedness here to a kind of ‘time sculpture’ that lends itself more to a watery direction of observation, which we will come to later.)

From another direction, one may be tempted to say that the still, rounded and relatively finished forms of granite have a relationship to the qualities of the human head; while the hollowed-out, often-open forms of limestone, often moving and changing, have more in common with the lower physical polarity of the human being, which we could call the digestive-metabolic-limb pole.

(A note to say that seemingly contradictory images can occur when employing imaginative or other levels of perception. This is because we are approaching the same phenomenon from different directions. The latter observation above, that of the granite being more akin to the head can be said to belong to a more ‘earthly’ or mineral way of observing the phenomena; whereas the youthful qualities of granite that Hoffman mentions, and the more elderly qualities of limestone, can be seen to belong to more of a ‘watery’ or even ‘airy’ level or direction of observation. The watery and air elements also have a connection to the element of time [as touched on in Hoffman’s comparison of granite and limestone mentioned above] and, in a sense, direction. The granite forms from within outwards, in the same way in which we are active upon the world through our limbs and metabolism and digestion more broadly; the limestone builds up layers upon layers, we could say, from the periphery inwards and wears away in the same direction, in a way similar to the interactions between the world around us and our nerve-sense system. But we will come to more on this later, in a step-by-step way as our observations unfold. By keeping this in mind, however, we can move between contradiction to reconciliation of contradictions, before arriving at the next contradiction, and so on.)

In some ways, then, we could call the beaches of Perth open-aired caves. Or, to put it another way, we could say that they are caves that are lined with sand or limestone and half-filled with water, walled with dunes and cliffs, and doored and roofed with sky. They are filled with the elements of water, air, light and warmth.

As touched on above, there are also a number of man-made ‘groynes’ – piles of granite or limestone rock (with the granite rock moved from quarries most likely in the Perth hills) – along the Perth coastline. These groynes are an attempt by humans to shape the archetypal bay formation in particular ways. The movement of water and sand sediment along this stretch of coast, and the decision to build groynes, has also been influenced by the removal of the limestone sandbar at the mouth of the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River in Fremantle, and the subsequent dredging of the whole river to allow for boats.

All of this human activity on the macro level of the beach/bay influences the many varied forms we can find each morning (or other time of day) on the micro level of the shoreline.

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[1] See Nigel Hoffman, *Goethe’s Science of Living Form: the Artistic Stages*, Adonis Press, Hillsdale NY, 2007, p 124.

In addition to the sand formations visible above the water line, however, we must also add, as much as possible, observations of the sand below the water line. These are most obviously expressed in sandbars and banks, the shapes of which are hinted at on calmer days of lower tide (when we may also wonder, perhaps, what the river looked like, in places, prior to dredging, with the sandbar intact across its mouth – but more on this later), but also on winter days of reduced wind and increased swell. The clustering of surfers around wave formations reveals the location and, to a degree, the shape of underwater sand banks but, so too it seems, do the forms of the smaller bays (the bays within the larger bay of the whole beach) that reveal themselves on the waterline. There is kind of a mirroring process here brought about primarily through the lively movements of water as it shifts the lifeless mineral kingdom; more will be spoken about this in the section on the water element below.[2]

Indeed, there is a shifting, active, digestive, metabolic and limb process exhibited here in the movement of the sand along the beach that can be said to be polar to the relatively still, resolute and somewhat stoic processes of the 'headland' – be they in the form of naturally-occurring limestone or granite, or man-made groynes. In this way, we can even go so far as to see within the mineral kingdom of the beach shoreline the qualities of the head of the human being at the 'headland'/promontory (projecting part of a body), and its polar processes of digestion-metabolism and limb activity found, for instance, towards the central area of the bay. (More will be mentioned in relation to such comparisons to the human organism in the next section.) Just where the third element that lies between these two polarities can be experienced – what we, in relation to the human being, could call the rhythmic activity belonging to the activity of heart and lung – to the circulatory system more broadly – we could say lives, spatially, in some ways, between the ridge/headland point and the central point of the concave form of the bay; but we could also say it is to be found in the activity of the very waterline itself as it rhythmically dances back and forth with the movements of the sand.

So much for the form of the bay in relation to the mineral kingdom for now. There are still more manifestations of the bay archetype, however, expressed through sand formation and determined by the whole landscape context, which we will explore as we continue our journey. But let us first turn more directly, though

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[2] In relation to this, however, in the warmer months, for instance, the overall bay of Leighton Beach can turn into a bay of three, sometimes five bay sections with curves extending into sandbar formations in the water that often include a rip nearby. We can also find, especially in the warmer months, the phenomenon of what I'll call 'walls' (sometimes with small cliff formations) which act as a relatively straight line of steep-angled sand parallel to the water's edge from the Leighton cafés extending to varying lengths north of this spot, before the steepness decreases, the top of the wall becomes more rounded, and the overall form morphs, somewhere near Cable Station beach, back into the more general form of smaller bays with ridges between. On these occasions the beach is often found in the form of three 'tiers' from the dunes down to a flatter section in the middle of the beach sand, then the wall which angles down to the water, sometimes with a pooling of water on the higher sand, with cliffs perpendicular to the ocean line if the water has breached the top of the wall. Sometimes this wall becomes formed with the seaweed left by storms, with sand layering over it. At low tide on such occasions, we can also perceive the forming of troughs/divots in the sandbars under the water.

briefly, to observations of the human organism in order to support our shoreline observations.

An Interim Word: In Relation to the Human Being

In moving more fully into comparisons of the natural world to the qualities of processes within the human being, it is worth observing, for a moment, the way in which the human being is comprised of three general, overall, interdependent yet autonomous systems or processes, which contain within them other systems. Such a differentiation of qualities of systems or processes can also be arrived at in a similar way as we are currently observing the natural world in relation to shorelines. Needless to say that such an exploration of the human organism would (and has) filled whole books, so we will, by necessity, be restricted here to a few preliminary remarks only, which will hopefully unfold further throughout the rest of our exploration of the natural world and thereby become hopefully more apparent as we go along.

When we look at the human organism we can see, at one polarity, what we can call the nerve-sense system, centred in the head. Here we find a rounded, enclosed form of hard skeletal casing containing within it, in relative stillness, the processes of the brain and spinal cord, with the symmetrical sensory system receptive to the world outside. This polarity of the human being – the nerve-sense system – is centred in the head, but its activities and qualities are found throughout the organism as a whole.

At the other polarity we have the processes of digestion, of limb activity and, we could say, metabolism more broadly. Here we find, in the digestive process, largely asymmetrical activities not enclosed by bone but taking place in darkness and unconsciousness none-the-less. In the limbs we see bones supporting the structure of muscles from within; these bones are not enclosed and rounded like the head, but actively extend off towards the world outside the human being in ever-smaller sections, ending in the fingers and toes. These digestive-and-limb (and more broadly metabolic) processes and qualities are centred in the abdomen and limbs (and, we might say extend outward from there into the world through human activity), but are found also throughout the whole organism.

Finally, we have the middle realm between these two polarities which not only holds these polarities in balance, but introduces its own processes of rhythmic circulation, centred as it is in the area of heart and lung. In the activity of heart and lung we find a rhythmic breathing in and relationship to the air of the outside world through the lungs, and to the inner processes of the human being through the activity of the circulatory system and the heart. Together the activities of lung and heart relate the whole human being to the world outside in rhythmic balance. These qualities and processes are centred in the chest area, but are also found throughout the whole human organism.

Within each of these systems, we therefore find all three systems; for instance, in the head we have the more purely nerve-sense processes of the eyes, ears and so on, as well as the skull, brain and spinal cord, but we also have the moving activity of the jaw connected as it is to the digestive processes, while in between these polarities we have the nose connected as it is to processes of rhythmic circulation (in addition to nerve-sense processes of smell). Similar observations can be made also of the other two systems, and their corresponding

‘sub-systems.’ We will explore this more fully in relation to the world of nature at the shoreline as we go, but it is worth keeping this in mind as we dive further into observations below, including plant life at the beach.

Beach: Plants

The plant kingdom expresses itself in a number of ways along the oceanic shoreline. Some of the first plants observable from the waterline in our location are the dune grasses that appear along the dunes. These are often relatively simple, single-stemmed plants; monocotyledons with parallel-vein leaf structures – so called 'dune colonisers.' These include the rhizomatous spinifex, as well as couch, marram grass, sea wheatgrass and so on, generally turning from greener colours in the wetter months and spring to gold in the summer (with the seed clumps of spinifex and other dune plants occasionally seen blown towards the water's edge during/after an offshore wind).

Beyond these grasses grow more shrub-like plants with increasingly spreading and differentiated leaf formations, such as the thick-leaved fan flower, shiny fan flower, coastal daisybush, sea spinach, sea rocket, coastal pigface, rose pelargonium, saltbush and more. These are more complex plants than the simple grasses of the first wave of dunes. Occasionally, there will be a shrub-like plant that seems to have leapfrogged over the grass of the frontal dunes and landed on the beach sand itself. When we approach the more sheer limestone cliff formations, the grasses of the dunes seem to be squeezed out, and we jump straight from sand to the more shrub-like plants mentioned above.

Where they have been allowed to grow (or have been transplanted) – i.e. near the bike path, cafés, surf club, car parks, roads, apartment blocks, train line and the like – the next line of plants are even more complex than the grasses or shrubby plants, and appear as small trees such as melaleucas (tea trees), acacias (wattles, starting to flower in April, 2022) and the occasional eucalypt. Many of these have been transplanted and/or introduced but, nonetheless, the contextual conditions exist in which they can grow (and it is especially these conditions with which we are concerned here).

From these smaller trees it is not too far a distance to Norfolk pines, larger eucalypts such as tuarts and ilyarries, and other larger trees such as peppermints, bottlebrushes, other melaleucas, even hakeas and poplars. Many of the tuarts, for instance, continue in the lower areas of North Fremantle all the way to the limestone cliffs by the river, not more than a few hundred metres east from the beach.

All of these changes in plant vegetation signal not only subtle changes in soil types, but also water, wind, light and warmth activity, not to mention animal and human activity. The presence or otherwise of plants along the ocean shoreline, as elsewhere, then feeds back on the forms that the sands take. This is observable when we look at the dunes covered with grasses, larger plants, and even small trees – all of these dunes are held together by the root activity of the plants. Dunes are the houses of plant roots; plant roots become the structural pillars for the gathering of sand. Where no plants exist on a dune/between plants, the overall form is often concave like limestone itself, decaying into old age, and dispersing/moving with the wind.

In addition to plants above the water's surface, we also of course have plants below the water's surface. Without crossing the threshold into the water, we only

become aware of these plants either on calm days when we can see their darker forms in the lighter colours of the water – beyond which it is hard to discern much more – or else during or after storms when ‘seaweed’ lines the beach or fills the waves closest to shore. (I have observed on a relatively calm morning of May 6, 2022 a relatively ‘straight’ line of seaweed extending along the length of the beach, about 1-2 metres wide, about 2 metres out to sea, running parallel to the wall formation of the sand that day – mirroring it, in a way.) On looking more closely at the seaweed that expresses itself after storms, I usually find that the first ‘wave’ of seaweed to come ashore is made up of single-stemmed grass-like leaves; depending on seas and swell and wind, these can run the high-tide line higher or lower along the beach, or sometimes gather in large clumps. Then, either if the swell is large enough or if the storm (usually comprised of front with winds, seas and swell) continues for long enough, a second ‘wave’ of seaweed can appear which is more complex than the first wave of single-strand grasses; this seaweed is, rather, comprised of stems with dual leaf formations running off it, or is of the more succulent variety similar to a samphire, or has more complex shrubbing clumps of indented and differentiated leaf formation coming off multiple stems, or has thinner leaves and berry-type forms, or thicker leaves and wavy edges (such as kelp does), or has small green seed pods like compacted peas; in short, forms more similar to the second (or even third) line of dune plants than the first line of grasses.

In addition, the seaweed, if remaining on the beach for long enough – especially, it seems, the grassy variety, given these are usually more numerous – can have a clumping or stabilising effect on the beach sand (both above and below it). That is, seaweed can not only mirror the grasses of the dunes while in the water, or while washed up on top of the beach sand, but also while it lies under (or above) the beach sand not too far from the feet of the grassy-topped dunes. In what way seaweed does this is also revealed (in a micro way) after a strong wind (for example, that of a more forceful storm) when much of the surface sand has blown away; but wherever seaweed has gathered below the surface sand, the sand remains, somewhat, in tiny ‘lines’ behind the little tufts or clumps of seaweed now sticking out, like remnant weather vanes pointing the direction of the most recent strong wind. But more on this when we look at the wind itself.

From such observations the following picture can begin to emerge. When it comes to the plant kingdom at the beach, in the grasses of the under- or above-water varieties (and perhaps also in the simpler, smaller plants), we can have a picture again of the human head; we have plant formations that do not grow much, whose root formations extend and connect together below ground much like the nervous system – while above ground they are very sensitive to the movement of wind and the elements, somewhat like sensory whiskers, with very simple reproductive and metabolic processes. On the other hand, at the other periphery, we have large trees with forking trunk limbs, large numbers of leaves, and relatively elaborate reproductive organs and circulatory and metabolic processes – in short, a picture of the digestive, metabolic and limb activity of the human organism.

In between these two polarities we have smaller trees and larger shrubs rhythmically positioned between the grass forms of the dunes, and the larger tree forms further inland. At the beach shoreline, in relation to plant life, the human being lays his/her head down closer to the water with feet extending inland. (When it comes to sea plants, we may be tempted to hypothesise a mirroring phenomena with the simpler grasses closer to shore, extending to more complex plants further into the ocean – that is, a mirroring image of another human being with head closest to shore and limbs stretching out to sea [with a kind of space-filled or ‘dead’ zone between the touching of heads where no plants grow, and only washed-up sea plants or blown dune-plant seeds eventually die]. But such a mirrored image in the water would have to remain only hypothetical for now because it is as yet unobserved, and therefore an 'image in outline' only – a ‘faint reflection’ in water.) This image is, again, from the plant-in-the-landscape perspective. (Other relationships exist between the human being and the individual plant per se, but these relationships have been explored elsewhere.) To this picture we can add and/or compare our earlier picture of the activity of the beach sand in relation to the human being. How such a shoreline relates to animal life we will touch on next.

Beach: Animals – Birds

The animal kingdom reveals itself in many ways on the beach shoreline. At this particular beach, as at many others, the most obvious animals to perceive are the birds. While the birds do, of course, interact with the mineral kingdom and the plant kingdoms touched on above, as well as the earth and water elements, they are primarily animals of the air.

The birds often seen while walking from the dune formations to the waterline itself, at least in summer time, are welcome swallows, as if somehow living up to their common, English name. Often, whole lines of them will sit on fences protecting areas of dunes – on the threshold of the dunes themselves (or the pathways through the dunes), as if finding a 'branch' thin enough for their small feet/claws. They dart and shoot about over the beach sand from this base in large numbers, eating sandflies that swell in volume in the warmer months. Sometimes the swallow will even follow people as they walk – as they kick up more sandflies with each step – making for an easy meal.

The willy wagtail will also often flit around on the beach sand, though in more solitary numbers, also feeding on flies and other insects. The wagtail too may follow people as they walk, and as they kick up insects. He will often also be seen in the dunes and further back, away from the beach itself. Like the swallow, rarely will the wagtail fly too close to the water.

On the shoreline itself there is really only one bird that seems to belong to all areas of it – that seems to really be at home – be it on the sand, in the air above, standing in the waves as they lap ashore, in piles of seaweed that build up, or even sometimes in the water itself: and that is the seagull. He is really the bird of the oceanic threshold, a kind of keeper of all sides, no matter what the season. He is the bird one finds early morning on calm summer days, huddling in large bunches pointed to the easterly wind with beaks tucked back into the folds of feathers above the wings, perhaps standing on one leg (one gull in particular with a broken wing is often there). The seagull is the bird that one sees in the storms of winter months, gliding fast with a south-west wind along the waves, before shooting up, then somewhere further along turning around and flying low along the shoreline flapping hard into the wind. He flies out over the waves, and also inland beyond the dunes (where the food is sometimes easier at the closest café). There is a wisdom, it would seem, in the imagination of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* being a bird of a particular crossing of worlds.[3]

The bird that often fills the space above and on the ocean side of the seagull is the crested tern (and sometimes also the bright-orange-beaked Caspian tern). His form is less rounded than the gull, more arrow-like, so that, when he sees a fish below, he can tuck in his wings and dive like a spear, head first, straight down and through the water's surface. The seagull will not usually cross that threshold to below the water's surface, or will do so only barely. The tern, on the other hand, seeks to penetrate the water as much as possible, though not through any swimming ability,

[3] Richard Bach, J*onathan Livingston Seagull*, Pan Books, London, 1975.

but through his aerodynamics. The tern's stay in the water, however, is short lived – he does not dawdle and float on the surface but is soon in the air again. Likewise, he is not often seen standing (I have seen the slightly larger Caspian standing on one or two occasions more than the crested tern), and even less walking, on the sand itself. He seems to only ever be flying and searching for food, diving down for it, or flying upwards again, with or without a meal.

Beyond the tern, the most commonly spied bird is the little pied cormorant (or sometimes large). He is a bird of air but, more often than not, also the water. Even when he flies it is usually close to the surface of the waves, sometimes curving up and over a surfer, before heading back down again. In the water he seems busy, diving down and often popping up many metres away. On diving under, his tail flicks down last, and gives the impression of a kind of a flipper or fin propelling him quickly through the water. He is sleek and seems built for fast travel through the water in the same way the tern is built for/by the air.

Sometimes I have seen larger birds like the osprey or even the sea eagle further out, but rarely, and only somewhat faintly. Sometimes the swan will fly up or down the coast. I have seen the pelican gliding and circling from time to time not far from the river mouth at the beach. On one warm day in December I saw three birds flying on the wind from the north towards the river mouth – birds that, in their flying pattern, would most likely have been herons, but not white-faced, reef or rufous (they were possibly white necked); on April 5, 2022 I saw two white-faced heron flying from south to north, and slightly inland. On occasion, the pied oystercatcher will walk the shore here or closer to Port Beach, or fly in from over the ocean in the direction of the river. I have also seen the smaller plovers on the beach sand itself, often at the water's edge, but only half a dozen or so times (usually one or two birds only).

In the dunes and in the line of trees behind them seem to be the places of the singing honeyeater and the New Holland honeyeater, singing their songs and darting amongst the shrubs and leaves. Beyond that, often further back amongst the larger trees, come the magpie, the crow, the white cockatoo, the pink and grey galah. The white cockatoo will come, from time to time, down to the dunes and eat the grasses – but only rarely will he step foot onto the open beach sand itself, and only if there is a plant there that has leapfrogged the grasses at the sand-dune threshold. The pink and grey galah might fly over from time to time but, again, only as far as the dunes (if the galah does walk on the sand itself, it is only to access the dune plants) – the same with the crow (which I have only seen walking on the beach once). (I have also seen, on one occasion – May 6, 2022 – a single straw necked ibis circle over the beach sand before landing in the dunes out of sight.) The magpie is rarely seen on the dunes themselves – I have seen him there only once, and it seemed to occasion a confrontation with a seagull. Sometimes the larger red-tailed black cockatoo or white-tailed black cockatoo will fly over or take up in a larger tree for a while. (Sometimes the red-tailed cockatoo will go as far as the larger trees of the dunes, but not as far as the shrubs and bushes of the dunes; black cockatoos tend to remain in larger trees further inland; on April 25, 2022 I counted around 100 white-tailed black cockatoos near Stirling Highway and John Street landing in pines

and she-oaks and other trees.) One can imagine a time when the emu also walked these hills and dunes.

Other birds of prey sometimes inhabit the dunes themselves, possibly looking for the mice that live there. Small brown-winged raptors can sometimes be seen on light posts while I drive home. At night, I have spotted an owl or some other night raptor diving into the dune shrubs just south of the surf club. (A boobook owl has been heard in 2021 and 2022 on a street about a kilometre back from the beach in the evening [Pearse St, as well as John St]); and I have seen a family of owls living in a tree near the social farm on Thompson Rd, further inland.

When we look at birds, in some ways we can say that they all, or most of them, appear as related not to the kind of large, long and slow metabolic digestive activities we might see in, say, a cow. Nor are they the kind of balanced and rhythmic animals that exist between slow metabolic digestive activities and the activities of the head such as we can feel or experience in, say, a lion or tiger, cat or dog. They are, in a certain sense, related to the rapidity, awakeness, alertness and sharp precision of the nerve-sense system centred in the head. We can say, on the whole, they all tend, and this also relates them to the human being, towards animals of the head – head animals. Within this, however, as touched on above, we can find a whole range of expression.

On the beach sands we can find the small, fast-flitting activities of the welcome swallow, which is so nerve-sensory in its activity it hardly stops moving – barely, if ever, touching the ground. We have the willy wagtail, still very nerve-sense but slightly more metabolic and willful (within the nerve-sese processes) than the swallow, jumping from place to place, and a lot more feisty. Here we also find the nervous plovers flitting then stopping, then flitting forward again, like wound-up clocks. Moving further inland we find the nerve-sensory and small singing honeyeater and the New Holland honeyeater, followed by the larger and more rhythmical crow, magpie and Western long- or short-billed corella (known locally as white cockatoos) which all express (within the more rhythmic space of the overall nerve-sensory bird life) rhythmic processes (with the crow tending slightly towards the nerve-sense realm, and the white cockatoo slightly towards the metabolic realm, with the magpie more purely rhythmic), while the larger red-tailed and white-tailed black cockatoos are like metabolic expressions within the more rhythmic processes (within, again, overall nerve-sensory bird life). The smaller raptor birds of the dunes are smaller than the cockatoos, and could be seen to express a kind of nerve-sense aspect of more rhythmic processes. (More on these distinctions later when we come to the lake shoreline.)

Heading out to sea, the tern is similar to the raptors of the dunes, and perhaps more nerve-sensory (within the rhythmic element), as is the pied cormorant, though they are shaped by and largely inhabit different elements (air and water respectively). The ospreys and sea-eagles further out can be seen as expressing a more metabolic polarity (though they are also nerve-sensory within this polarity), as can the pelican (more fully metabolic) and swan (more rhythmic within this metabolic realm), in their own ways (though we will also look more closely at these birds when

we look at the river and the lake). Then, of course, we have the seagull which, as mentioned above, seems to move effortlessly between areas as a kind of balance – rhythmic within rhythm – as its form also expresses, between the polarity of the welcome swallow and, say, a pelican. (We could perhaps say similar things of the brief interludes of the pied oystercatcher, which is perhaps slightly more nerve-sensory than the seagull.)

From these reflections, a further image may arise of the shoreline area of the beach, in this case relating to the birds of the animal kingdom. We can say that, in an imaginative way, we find the human being lying down again, with the head on the beach sand (as expressed in the plovers, wagtails, welcome swallows then honeyeaters and so on), rhythmic area further back beyond the dunes (the crows, magpies, galahs and so on, and more metabolic area and limbs extending further inland (going as far as the malleefowl or the emu further inland if we wished). (We may again be tempted to hypothetically, or at least tentatively, say [based on observations of the plovers scurrying the shoreline, the seagull and the terns flying or touching down on the water slightly further out, around the same area as the pied cormorant; then slightly further out the occasional circling of the osprey above, the passings of the swan, and even the movements of the occasional pelican] that an image of the human being is also reflected, in the bird life of the water area of the beach, laying down with the head towards the shoreline, the more rhythmic and balanced area leading out to sea, and the more metabolic-digestive-limb area further out [or even higher up, pointing also to the possibility of a human being, in relation to bird life, who stands on its head at the beach shoreline, with limbs pointing skyward with the larger birds] – but, in a similar way to the plant life in the water, this image would remain tentative at best, with limited observations of birds above the ocean; it would remain also an image in outline, a faint watery reflection. And if we were to admit such an image in outline, then we would be forced to say that a rhythmic space, however, would still appear to exist between the touching of the two imaginative human heads, inhabited or expressed by the activity of the seagull.) Again, all of this relates to the bird life of the oceanic shoreline, but points to similarities with some of the imaginations we have already touched on above in relation to the mineral and plant kingdoms.

Before moving on to human beings, we would perhaps be wise to consider some of the other animals of the beach shoreline next.

Beach: Other Animals

As should be clear by now, we are resting mostly upon our own powers of observation when it comes to the phenomena of these natural landscapes (which, again, can also serve as seed activity for observing social landscapes). So when we talk about birds, and especially now about other animals, we should keep in mind that there is a great variety of other animal life that may well go unseen, either because of time of day or season, because they are underwater, because they are so small, or generally because they are so difficult to observe with the naked eye (and other senses).

Having said this, in all the living systems (ecosystems; both natural and social) which I have observed, there is a tendency for the 'whole phenomenon' to manifest in all of its parts, no matter how small. So even the animals that we do see tell us something about the patterns, lawfulness, and objective imaginations of the landscape as a whole. And this landscape can tell us something about the whole of nature, as well as ourselves as human beings.

Some of the first animals that we can become aware of at the beach, especially during the summer months, and especially after periods of rain and then heat, are the fly and the sandfly. While flies can seemingly greet us anywhere in the Australian landscape, sandflies are generally restricted to beach sands. And what is the primary difference between flies and sandflies that immediately strikes us on encountering the latter? It is that they generally don't want to fly. They seem earthbound, hopping and jumping more than flying. Sandflies tend to stick to the sand as much as they stick to the skin. Their will to movement seems much less than their airborne relatives.

We may also, on walking through the paths of the dune sands, especially in the summer months, find a trail (or actual presence) of a lizard, goanna or even a snake. These reptiles seem restricted to the dunes, however, and it is relatively rare that they or their trails will be found openly exposed too far out on the beach sand proper.

Likewise, towards evening, we may also spy mice or rats at the edge of the dunes, not on the beach side so much as where the dunes blend into the larger plants and smaller trees such as the acacias. This is also, as we have mentioned, where we tend to find the raptor birds – the birds of prey.

On the sand itself, closer to the rise and fall of the tide, we might also see the activities of small crabs rolling round balls around their homes, or else see them scurrying sideways along. (In mid December I have seen large [~7cm diameter], round, deep holes at low tide just within the high tide line with no balls rolled on the outside; a couple of days later I saw a couple of dismembered crabs in an area of sand at low tide where many seagulls prints were left, and where one or two seagulls still picked at the remains of a mid-sized crab.) Smaller shells that wash up on the beach can also reveal various animal life inside – the builders or inheritors of these shell 'houses.'

We may also see, especially as the warmer months begin, small, long, thin, black millipede-like creatures (presumably Portuguese millipedes) crawling along the

sand, including towards the water where they will, if submerged, roll up into a spiral (before, sometimes, continuing on towards the water where they may be washed away). Solitary European honey bees can sometimes also be seen near the water, alive and also dead. Crickets can also be heard at the beginning of the warmer months, especially around November, in the growing-dryer dune grasses.

As we have already seen with the plant kingdom, the oceanic shoreline reveals to us, albeit in lifeless form, what is taking place mostly unseen within the ocean. This is also the case with the animal kingdom. Depending on the weather and season, we may find the remains of different animals washed up on the shore. Jellyfish of one form or another are not uncommon, including after storms, especially ones with more rounded forms (jellyfish are also seen, of course, alive in the water, especially smaller ones near the water's surface in the summer months, close to shore). Blowfish might appear after storms but also at other times. Larger fish are more rare, though they are seen, including after storms. In the big winter storms (with cold fronts), some of the first remains to appear are those of the cuttlefish. In 2021, following a number of successive cold fronts, and after the first wave of cuttlefish of all sizes, there followed a mass of bluebottle or Portuguese man o' war stingers, with inflated blue capsules and purple ridge lines, and blue tentacles running out from the capsule. It is hard to find an animal more expressive of the nervous system of the human being than this bluebottle. In the colder months, there will occasionally be star fish that also wash ashore in winter storms.

Needless to say, any marine animal has the potential to wash up at one point or another, but it tells us something that these jellyfish and cuttlefish remains appear in their thousands on this one small stretch of coastline, that the larger fish are more rare, and that cetaceans (including whales, dolphins, propoises etc.) are even rarer. (When dolphins and whales, for example, do beach themselves, humans often, often in great numbers, usually feel called to willful action – to *do* something; I have only rarely seen people throwing back jellyfish or bluebottles, even when they may still be alive.)

From the sand it is also possible to see animals that are still alive and at home in the water. Closer to shore we might find smaller fish, such as whitebait, especially during the warmer months, which can even approach us should we go into the water. These smaller fish tend to stick closer to the surface, moving fast, and are triggered to quick movement, sometimes jumping out of the water. (In early February I saw a school of whitebait jumping ashore from out of the sandy shorebreak in order to escape larger fish.) Whiting tend to blend into the white sand further below (even King George Whiting may be found in slightly deeper water; I have seen them among the limestone reefs of North Cottesloe), with mid-sized whiting often swimming between the surface layers and the deeper layers. Closer to the surface, and relatively close to the shore, we might also see some herring (although they tend to prefer areas of reef or weeds, and this stretch of beach is mostly sand; a small school was seen, however, on the morning of April 15, 2022, swimming near the shore in about three to four feet of water chasing whitebait that were swimming close to the surface and occasionally jumping), the slightly larger mullet, or even larger

tailor. Usually around Easter time we might see a school of salmon, though they are starting to appear at other times as well – I have found myself snorkelling inside a ring of salmon at Cable Station beach just north of Leighton in October, 2020. (I also believe I saw a school near Leighton Beach in early December, 2021 relatively close to the beach, swimming in an anti-clockwise direction, but the next day they were further out; as well as another school in early November with an oily slick running off them that snaked out to sea [and another in mid December with an oil slick running towards shore and out to sea], though I cannot confirm that these were salmon.) Salmon usually appear further out than the smaller fish mentioned above.

Blowfish may appear anywhere at any time, it would seem. Being devoid of reef, this particular beach also does not have any reef fish.

I have not seen rays on this particular stretch of shoreline, only slightly north of here between Cottesloe and North Cottesloe, and some years ago now.

From time to time I have seen what I suppose to be a sea lion, closer to shore, sleek and moving quickly, its movements not totally dissimilar to a cormorant. I have also seen dolphins, usually a little further out than the area the sea lion might inhabit. And, from time to time, also whales, even further out than the dolphins. (A humpback with a calf was seen on October 28, 2021 off Cable Station beach unusually close to the shore, before a couple of hours later moving out to deeper water past the artificial reef). These are some of the largest animals on earth. Needless to say, sharks are also present in these waters, though they are hardly ever seen, and when they are it is usually because of what we call a ‘shark attack’ (for instance that of November 6, 2021 at Port Beach).

So from the stingers and jellyfish, so clearly an expression of the nerve-sense system, to fish and cetaceans that increase in size from the nervous whitebait of the shoreline to the slow moving whales of the depths, we find that an image can emerge for us, in relation to the water animals at the beach shoreline, of the human being lying in the water, its head at the shoreline, its digestive-metabolic-limb system spreading out into the depths. We might also, preliminarily, feel that the smaller jellyfish, fish and cetaceans inhabit more the surface layers of the ocean, while the larger of these inhabit more the deeper waters, and again an image might arise of the human being standing (at least from the perspective of animal life within the water), head touching the water’s surface, feet extending down into the deepest ocean. In this case, the dolphin, while being a digestive-metabolic animal overall, does playfully travel from the depths to the surface and beyond in a very rhythmic fashion. The whale on the other hand is much slower, more ponderous, digestive, cow-like (the young are called calves) in movements, including rising to the surface. A seal, and especially a sea lion, is also generally more of a metabolic creature, but can dart quickly across the water’s surface – indeed it also spends large amounts of time out of the water, has ears, and whiskers, all pointing to its tendency to be much more nerve-sense oriented within the metabolic realm (such as our nervous system is within our digestion; while the dolphin can be seen as more rhythmic within the metabolic realm, and the whale more purely metabolic within the metabolic realm, though this can also vary depending on the species of seal, dolphin and whale we

are observing, especially in relation to other seals, dolphins and whales. In this context, however, the above delineation would appear to be accurate in terms of the general qualities of the seal, the dolphin and the whale when compared to one another).

Similar distinctions could no doubt be made with the fish, but we have limited viewing access to the larger fish, though the quick and jittery activity of whitebait as opposed the slow, spiralling motion of the salmon tells us something already, with herring or mullet occupying something of a middle space, often jumping from the water, being also more balanced, compact and rhythmical in size and movement. Similar patterns could probably also be found with jellyfish, if we were better able to view them with the naked eye from the shoreline. (Again, the summer months do often reveal many very small stingers in the water closer to the shore, for instance, usually on the water's surface.)

And from the shoreline looking inland we also find ourselves moving from more nerve-sense realms of the sandfly, flies, millipedes, bees and small crabs to areas of slightly larger animals in the crickets and reptiles, though they also remain fairly small, then to small rodents. (Although rodents may be introduced, this is, again, still the area where ecosystem *conditions* are such that they can dwell here; rabbits may also be found in this location.) All of these animals express more nerve-sense activities, though they do become more rhythmic as we move inland (see, for example, the shift from small lizards to the bobtail goanna). Indeed, if we were to continue further inland we would find much larger snakes and skinks, as well as, if we were to continue even further inland, increasingly larger metabolic animals such as goannas, echidnas, wallabies, kangaroos and so on, not to mention the emu, as touched on above. Again, a picture can emerge for us here, in relation to animal life above the water at the beach shoreline, of the human being lying down, head near the water's edge, body stretching out into the metabolism and digestive organs and limbs further inland, with a rhythmic system as a third realm between these two polarities.

A note here must also be added about dogs. At the northern part of Leighton Beach, around the edge of the area I've been regularly observing, there is a dog beach. (More about dogs will also be mentioned when we explore the river.) Some days it almost looks impossible to walk the shoreline for there are so many dogs walking, running and even swimming, being either on the sand, on the shoreline itself, or in the water, going in and out of the water, or moving parallel to the shoreline. Big and small, they all seem very happy, and very much at home. And they seem to play here not far from the sign of the Dingo on the Dingo Flour Mill, slightly south of the designated dog beach. These dogs are, of course, an introduced species. Needless to say, there is information about the connection of dingos to this area but, again, this is not my information to share. Even without this information, however, it is clear to see that dogs do find a home in this particular area – that is, along the shoreline at this particular beach. Rarely do dogs move too far away from the shoreline, even more rarely into the dunes (unless they go to or from the car with their 'master'). Likewise, a relatively small number tend to swim (unless it is to fetch

a stick or ball), and rarely do they swim too far out (unless it is to their master, or unless their master has thrown a stick or ball a long way from shore; I have only even seen a very small number of dogs that swim *alongside* their masters). We can say that the dog is to the shoreline in the same way that the seagull is, and often we see them chase one another in this shared space (although the seagull tends to inhabit more the area south of the designated dog beach). The seagull is an expression of the rhythmic system within bird life. Canines are an expression of the rhythmic system within mammals (and we could perhaps also say within animal life as a whole). Even to look at the teeth of canines is to observe their heavily-accentuated namesake between the incisors (which are more pronounced in nerve-sense mammals such as rodents) and the molars (which are more pronounced in metabolic mammals such as the ungulates [hoofed animals]). The canines are mammals balanced between the nerve-sense polarity and the metabolic polarity (with all the gradations and holistic expressions of the same within each part/realm). Upon the rhythmic wave movements of the actual shoreline itself we find the rhythmic bird the seagull and the rhythmic mammal the dog. We can, of course, from this direction, also wonder where the dingo would have felt most at home here. If we look to dingo activity elsewhere, such as Fraser Island, we can imagine that dingos would once have also found a home on this shoreline, being the rhythmic mammals that they are. We can also ponder the consequences of removing an animal from its ecosystem (as well as an ecosystem from its animals).

A final note must be flagged at this point about the inner activity of animals – what we might call their ‘psyche’ (or, literally, soul) life. Unlike lifeless minerals, and unlike plants (which are expressions of processes of life), animals add to these lifeless and life-filled processes, processes of consciousness and soul. They do not as yet attain to self-consciousness – that is, they are not conscious of their own consciousness as human beings are. At this point, we are obliged to also add to our considerations of the polarity between nerve-sese processes and metabolic-digestive-limb processes, with the rhythmic processes in between, the human soul processes of thinking and willing, with the processes of feeling in between. One does not usually feel too much sympathy or antipathy towards the plight of a fly, a bluebottle, a whitebait fish, a small lizard, or even, perhaps, a small bird. It is much easier to feel something in relation to a dog. Likewise, a dog itself can change from sympathetic to antipathetic behaviour very quickly, as any observation of dogs interacting with other dogs will demonstrate (as will observing the larger predatory canines). When it comes to the plight of more metabolic animals such as whales, even dolphins, seals, (or perhaps slightly less so when it comes to kangaroos and emus), but especially whales, we feel we are much more dealing with something mighty, something that we don’t quite grasp, something related to the depths of who we are; and we can be, on such occasions as the ‘beaching’ of whales, more called to willful action. Dolphins can fill us with joy because they are also an expression of feeling-imbued willpower that carries the willful realm up into feeling and thinking. Birds, generally, can flit about our heads, especially the welcome swallow or similar, like so many thoughts. (Indeed, this is perhaps the real

fear that lies behind something like Hitchcock's *The Birds*, which is, in a way, a picture of our times.)

But let us only introduce this aspect of the human soul qualities of thinking, feeling and willing in this sketch-like and incomplete way for now, and expand more upon it later. Let us consider further, first, the human being on the shoreline.

Beach: Human Beings

Human beings are an obvious and regular feature on this particular stretch of beach. They have, of course, been here for millennia. But I am not in a position to speak of the activity of human beings on this shoreline other than what I have myself observed.

The presence and activity of human beings on the beach, from what I have observed, seems to follow particular patterns in space but also time. In the course of a year, or the course of a week, or the course of a day, different human presence and activity can be observed on the shoreline, and this takes place within certain spatial patterns.

Generally speaking there is a spatial area including a train station, roads, car park, apartments, bicycle racks, apartment building cafés and other businesses, and so on. This then gives way to a manufactured grassy park area with barbecues, another café, a bathroom block, a surf club and a restaurant above the surf club. Near here there is a walk and cycle path that runs parallel to the shoreline next to the dunes with trees, followed by the shrubs, through which run a half dozen fenced pathways down to the beach sand, passing by some recently installed wind breaks on the beach and now in the dunes near the cafés, then on to the shoreline itself and the water beyond. From the shoreline we can look south and observe the large granite rocks (groyne) and built environment of the port (some very small limestone groynes/dune reinforcements also lie to the south on Port Beach); west to the international cargo ships, as well as the ferries moving between Fremantle and Rottnest Island; north to the groynes, buildings and Norfolk pines of Cottesloe; east to the roads, cars, trainline, industry, apartments and houses of North Fremantle, and up to the helicopters and planes occasionally flying overhead. Human beings themselves can, of course, be found at any point within this area; and at different places within this area (or along this spectrum) certain general activities seem to predominate.

The train station, road and carpark area is a place of arrival (then eventual departure) following movement from all corners of the greater metropolitan area/landscape periphery that can stretch off into the vast inland distance. The grassy park area, surf club, bike and walk path, and so on, is also often an area of movement, exercise, activity and play. (The cafés positioned here do offer more of a space of stillness between movement, though people are perhaps move active at this café than similar cafés elsewhere – one does also get the feeling that if the cafés could be positioned on the shoreline itself, people would be even happier, as the extensive views of the restaurant also attempt to achieve.) People are then funnelled along specific pathways (now regularly ‘flattened’ by bobcat machinery, at least during the summer months) through the dunes to arrive at the beach per se – the dunes themselves are fenced-off designated ‘no-go zones’ otherwise. On the beach proper, different activities take place depending on the time of day, week or year (as we’ll discuss more in a moment) but, generally speaking, people on the sand are often sitting or lying down while reading, sunbathing, stretching, writing, building sand castles, eating or talking. There is, of course, more movement in this area in

the form of running or walking or other sport, especially in the morning hours, but this seems to generally be more an area of sitting or lying down. However, these are rarely the only activities people engage in, purely because they have usually come (especially in the warmer months) from somewhere else (the arrival space) with a view to go to the water itself.

As people approach the water they reach the shoreline, and there is a tendency either to move along it in the form of walking (and usually walking more slowly than elsewhere) or, less often, running in a northerly or southerly direction, or to cross it into the water itself, or to pause on the threshold for some time, either in relative stillness or in play. For those who cross the threshold, then the water itself awaits. Here, the options seem to be either to move across and slightly below the surface in the form of swimming, to move on and above the surface in the form of surfing (or kitesurfing, foiling, etc.), to move below it in the form of snorkelling, or to again pause in relative stillness. Generally speaking, the pausing will happen much closer to the shoreline than say swimming, then comes surfing, then kite surfing even further out. The boats and ships even further out belong to the shoreline as much as the cars and houses and other human activities further inland.

Needless to say, sometimes people are on their own, and sometimes they are with others. When they are with others, there is an increased tendency to conversation. When they are on their own they may be on their phone, listening to music through headphones, reading a book, stretching, writing or so on. People, together or on their own, seem to give different levels of attention and observation to the world around them or, it would seem, to the world within them. I have noticed that some people will observe an animal such as a dolphin, or another natural phenomenon like a water spout or rainbow, while there are others who do not seem to. This is not intended as a judgement, merely an observation, and I count myself also amongst those not attending to phenomena because sometimes I have only seen things once they have been pointed out by others.

As opposed to the activities of further inland or further out to sea (especially container ships), for the majority of human beings that I have observed (except for, say, café staff or shire maintenance) the shoreline is not a place of work. Nor is it generally (or perhaps *currently* is a better word) a place of food gathering except for the fishermen who occasionally dot the shoreline; it is (again, currently) a place of play, rest, relaxation, reflection and so on.

This is perhaps a place to say something slightly more specific about the human organism, given that we have already begun tracing, and will continue to trace the phenomena of the natural world in relation to the qualities present within the human being. As already touched on, we can see within the human organism three fundamental gestures. At one polarity, in relation to form, we see a round and still head element with hard, fixed bones encasing a space filled with the brain. This is where, in terms of function, our symmetrically positioned senses consciously receive the impressions of/from the vast world periphery (particularly through sight and hearing) in connection with the nervous system of the human organism more broadly, though centred as it is here in the head, with the brain encased within the

skull, and the spinal cord extending from it, encased as it is within the bones of the spine. In the head there are very few muscles except in that part of it which is more active – the jaw and surrounds (also functioning, again, as the start of the digestive processes, which are much more conscious in the mouth than later in the abdomen). Between the jaw and the eyes and the still, rounded dome of the head, we have, again, the entry to the rhythmic system of the lungs through the nose. So in this way, we can see already the other fundamental gestures of the human being already contained in the one polarity of the nerve-sense system centred as it is in the human head. In the other polarity of the human organism we find the limbs and digestive – or what we might call, generally speaking, the more metabolic – processes. Here we find, in terms of form, very mobile bones 'encased' within muscles. In the abdomen, there is no real space enclosed by bone in the same way as we find in the head, other than the spinal column, (though, in terms of function or process, digestion and metabolism more generally take place in an enclosed, unconscious darkness). Generally, in relation to the form and position of bones and muscles, we have in this polarity a tendency to increasing open-ness pointing off to the periphery, as opposed to the enclosed space (enclosed by bone) of the human head. In the metabolic system we have activity, movement (from within outwards), and open-ness – an acting outwards onto the world – and closed off unconscious darkness when it comes to metabolic-digestive-reproductive processes or functions. (Within this, we also find nerve-sense processes, of course, as well as circulatory functions of blood carrying various airy elements.) And in between these two polarities of nerve-sense and metabolic, we find the more rhythmic, regulatory functions of heart and lung and circulation more broadly. Here the form of the rib cage starts off in more of an enclosed manner at the top, closer to the head, before becoming much more open, especially towards the floating ribs closest to the legs. The rhythmic system is a third gesture or quality within the human organism which includes also nerve-sense and metabolic qualities (the breath, for instance, is much more under our conscious control [nerve-sense related], whereas the beat of heart and flow of blood is much more unconscious [more, we could say, metabolic related]). This third, rhythmic gesture is not a half-way point between the two polarities but, rather, is an expression of another quality altogether, which, as we have observed very briefly here, also occurs within the two polarities.

From here it is but a relatively small step to also observe the way in which the soul or psychological qualities of the human being also find a seat within each of these parts of the human organism, with thinking seated in the human head, feeling in the area of heart and lungs, and willing in the area of metabolism, digestion and limbs. (If we are to go back to the first to observe the connection between these soul activities and the way they find their respective 'seats' in the different physiological processes of the human being, then we would arrive at the, amongst other things, Goethean scholar Rudolf Steiner.[4] Such descriptions as these are also, in part, an invitation to test such observations for ourselves, which is also, again in part, what I

[4] See Rudolf Steiner, *Riddles of the Soul*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1970.

am attempting in this account.) In what way the human being remains ‘unspecialised’ whereas animals do specialise, in one direction or another, will hopefully become clearer in our observations, as will, hopefully, the connection of the human organism, with its three gestures or qualities, to the whole of the natural world around us.

With this in mind, from the perspective of the whole beach shoreline in relation to human beings at least, we can perhaps experience an imagination in which the area of arrival beyond the dunes can be seen as related to the somewhat chaotic movement of limbs and digestion and metabolism found within the human organism. The area of the dune itself and the beach can be seen as an area of rhythm and regulation – human beings move rhythmically in and out of this space between the water and the arrival area of vehicles, trains and bikes. The shoreline area itself, closer to the water, is often a place of sitting, of pausing before swimming, pausing before surveying the surf, pausing while touching the water and looking out, pausing while deciding which way to walk, pausing while turning, pausing while playing as children or as parents. (Even while walking there appears to be much more of a ‘stillness’ amongst shoreline walkers than amongst the walkers of an inner-city street.) Is not this pausing an expression of the stillness of the human head, which does also contain movement in the activities of the jaw (those talking) or even in the psychological activity of thinking that is seated there, but where an overall physical and formal stillness is the foundational signature? Is this not somewhat reflected by those who merely go a short distance into the water, not really swimming but more ‘taking a dip’? And in the more serious swimmers, and especially the surfers of different kinds, further out into the water, do we not have also a mirror of the activity of back-and-forward rhythm and regulation of those on the beach sands and those moving through the dunes. Those on boats and ships and planes and helicopters seem to mirror more the metabolic, limb-like, digestive activities of the arrival space of vehicles and beyond of the area further inland. (While human beings within these mechanisms are seated, the mechanism can act like an extension of their own limb movement and activity.) This is an overall general imagination of the activity of human beings at the beach landscape, including their technology.

From a more localised and slightly more technology-free direction, we could also imagine walking the shoreline more as rhythmical activity, with the quality of nerve-sense activity found in sitting on the beach, as well as sitting waiting for waves, or standing in water. Gentle swimming we could also see as being a more rhythmic activity, as is walking through the dunes. Surfing and swimming can be experienced as more metabolic, as is exercise, including exercise in the grassy area near the cafés or the running or riding along the beach path.

Some days the above processes can also take place in an even more condensed way: Runners run along the dune edge on the sand, people walk towards the water, others lie down on the sand closer to the water, people pause or walk slowly along the shoreline, people dip briefly and others surf while swimmers swim beyond the break further out. In all of these cases, we can picture, throughout the landscape as a whole, two archetypal human beings lying down, one with limbs stretching off inland the other with limbs floating off out to sea; the top of their heads

come close together at the shoreline itself, with a kind of rhythmic gap between the heads provided by the rhythmic walking of people along this shoreline [or crossing it] – there is not complete stillness here, but a kind of rhythmic or breathing space between the heads; and there is also two rhythmic, regulating spaces of heart and lungs in the images of both human beings between limbs and head as they lie down on the land and upon the ocean respectively. (These pictures are, again, in relation to human activity at the beach shoreline – we can compare them to previous pictures above in relation to other kingdoms of nature at the beach.)

In the course of the year, there will generally be an increase of people at the beach in the warmer months. Generally there will also be more people in the morning time when the wind is offshore or in the evening at sunset. In the earlier hours there will be more people exercising or surfing. In the later hours of the morning, there will generally be more families and people staying for longer periods of time, often setting up with umbrellas or other shade. If it is a hotter day, there will be increased numbers throughout the day. Numbers generally increase, again, around sunset – some watching the sunset, others exercising. If the wind remains offshore and warm in the evening there will generally be even more people at sunset. At nighttime the numbers again decrease. If the conditions are good for fishing, there may be people there beyond dark. And in the morning, if the surf is good, surfers will usually be the first ones there, often with swimmers. In the winter months, numbers significantly decrease unless it is a finer day, or unless the surf is good. If the wind is strong (often a sea breeze), there will also be an increase in kite-surfers or windsurfers. In comparing the course of the seasons to the course of the day in relation to human activity, therefore, the nighttime is generally akin to the colder months – the daytime akin to the warmer months.

We also have the phenomenon of ‘the week,’ however. I can only imagine this was once less of an influence on human activity in this location than it currently is. People go to work (even if they are ‘working from home’); generally this happens Monday to Friday, and generally 9am to 5pm. Outside of these hours the shoreline is generally busier with human activity, especially during the weekend. Within these hours it is generally not as busy. We can say, therefore, that, very generally speaking, 9-5pm Monday-Friday (especially when school is in session; school holidays add another element of increased activity) is akin to the colder months or to night-time at the beach, while outside these hours (during daylight, at least) is akin more to the warmer months or to the daytime. (My general time of beach activity is pre-9am Monday to Friday, as well as Sunday). We also observe here the phenomenon of a rhythm that is not adhered to by the mineral, plant or animal kingdoms; it is a rhythm created, at least in part, by and for human beings. (Each day of the week, of course, relates to a planet [Sun-day, Moon-day, Saturn-day and so on.)

One final word on human beings at the beach shoreline. We have so far observed the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and the human being. With the mineral kingdom we have observed an inorganic and lifeless realm (at least in terms of the material phenomenon); the material but also organic

and life-filled realm of the plant kingdom; the material, life-filled and conscious realm of the animals; and now the realm of the human being, which is also material, life-filled and conscious, but with the additional phenomenon of self-consciousness. Unlike animals, the human being is aware of its own consciousness – the fact that we can even say such a thing points to this uniquely human capacity. It also shows us in what other ways the human being contains all the other kingdoms, and how the other kingdoms of nature reveal the human being spread out. In observing our own consciousness we can also become aware of when our thinking takes on the qualities of being more inorganic and mineral-like in activity, separating things out in isolation; when it is being more connecting, flowing, life-filled and imaginative; when it might be more conscious and inspired; and when it might be more self-consciously intuitive. In what way these qualities of the *activity* of thinking (or consciousness), not so much its content, may also relate to the phenomena of earth, water, air (and light), and warmth, we can also ponder as we look at these particular phenomena in relation to the oceanic shoreline.

Beach: Earth

Much of what is observable in relation to the earth 'element' of the beach has been alluded to above, especially what we can call more 'formal' characteristics. This of course includes what we have mentioned during the section on the mineral kingdom, especially looking at the sands. But in a certain sense we could also say that much of what we have touched on above also relates to the earth element. The earth element is also inherently present in the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom and in human beings, albeit brought into relation with processes of water, air, light and warmth – with processes of life, consciousness and self-consciousness. Through the vehicle of water, life is brought to the plant kingdom, leading to processes of growth, and also to animals and human beings (how water shapes the earth element and the mineral kingdom we will explore further in the next section). Through an internal 'space' – an interiority – be it physically or psychologically, processes of consciousness and movement are brought to the animals – we could say this is connected to air (but we can also see the workings of light in this process; how the air element [and light] work upon the various kingdoms of nature and other elements, we will explore further below). And in the activities of human beings – whatever the individual human being might choose to do or to think – we see the workings of a consciousness (and a self-consciousness which is aware of its own consciousness) which is the same but not the same as all other human beings, carrying an element of commonality and yet individuation and self-possession expressed in the word 'I' (or similar in other languages – a common word [i.e. a word we use in common] which we can all say to mean something different to that which everyone else will mean when they say it) – the vehicle or (partly) physical expression of this can be found in processes of warmth (how this warmth element works into the kingdoms of nature and the other elements we will also look at below).

As touched on above, all of these elements can also be seen as expressions of levels of consciousness available to human beings, because all these elements are present within the human being.

When we speak of the earth element, therefore, we touch on this element within all the kingdoms of nature, but also the level of consciousness which perceives all these kingdoms of nature. If we are honest, the majority of Western thinking currently understands the human being and all of the natural and social worlds through the earth element of consciousness, which we might also call materialistic thinking. Obviously the results of this approach are not incorrect – we have rightly come a very long way in our understandings of the material world in recent centuries (hence the need to not go into too much detail in this direction in this book; these findings can be supplemented from elsewhere) – but these results are only partial; they are the result of one level of thinking or mode of consciousness – to this we can continue to add, and in so doing also come to know the material world more fully.

The beach shoreline is not only the sand and the material aspect of the plants, animals and human beings that appear there. It is also everything that appears there as living, conscious and self-conscious. But to help us understand this

further, we can return to the phenomena under observation and see what they reveal out of themselves, which we will do more fully below.

The grains of sand of the beach – like the plants, animals and human beings – are impacted by the movements and activities of water, of air and light, and of warmth. They are nowhere merely static, nowhere fixed, but always in some kind of dynamic relationship. This is more evident at a shoreline, but it is the case everywhere. In the same way, the human physical form cannot exist without water, air (and light) or warmth. When the processes of life, consciousness and self-consciousness depart the human being, then death has taken place and the physical body returns to the earth from which it came. Perhaps the closest picture of this upon the earth is a desert landscape – especially one that tends towards pure sand (though even there we would find other activity). This tendency does exist at the beach shoreline – there is a tendency towards death – where the sand is less infused or integrated with processes of life, consciousness and self-consciousness (observe also the washed-up detritus of the beach, whether in the form of limestone or other minerals, or animal shells and coral, seaweed and dead animals including fish, starfish and jellyfish, even man-made things – often these all represent the 'spewed-up' life from the metabolic realm of the ocean during and following the 'feverish' storm). While there is a relationship between these death processes and the human being in the form and quality of the skeleton, it is more aptly discovered in the activity of the nervous system, which is generally in a state of death and of impeding life (observe how many brain cells die each day, the resulting tiredness and need for sleep) in order that consciousness can emerge (which in turn creates more death within the nervous system). The nervous system centred in the head is an accurate imagination for the more sandy, mineral, and more broadly earthly element of the coastal shoreline (notice the increase of movement and life – plant life, animal life, human life – as we proceed inland from the beach shoreline towards the more metabolic and limb polarity further inland, which suggests an increase of life within the earthly element of the mineral kingdom [but also of the plant, animal and human kingdoms] akin to the increase of movement and life activity within the human digestion, metabolic processes and limb activity of the lower part of the physical organism when compared to the head region; this leads again to a picture of the human being lying down with head at the beach shoreline with digestion-metabolism and limbs pointing off inland, with a more rhythmic space between).

In the firmness or otherwise of the sand measured while walking the shoreline we could say similar things. With each step under the water *inside* the current high-wave line we usually find very firm ground (we could say more nerve-sense), *at* the current waterline itself the sand is often much softer sand partially filled with water and air (more metabolic), with a transition phase in between (more rhythmic). Higher up, where the water has reached furthest and retreated, the sand is firmer again (more nerve-sense), with a softer rhythmic phase in between; while in the slightly drier sand it becomes more soft again (more rhythmic), and on the very dry sand it is very soft (more metabolic). (Sometimes we might also be tempted to say that, further into the water itself, from the firmer and more nerve-sense shoreline, the

sand can move a bit more underfoot – that it can grow slightly softer and move somewhat more in the direction of the metabolic; this experience is, however, much more subtle than on drier sand, and depends on a number of other conditions including wave and underwater bank and trough activity, as well as the amount of time spent standing in the one place, and so on, and therefore cannot be said to be a reliable image – it remains a kind of 'image-question' only, to be explored further.) From this we can also form a general initial picture of the human being lying down with head near the shoreline and limbs extending inland (though this goes through a subtle 'double mirroring' process, as outlined above, before continuing on further inland). (The transition to more life-filled activity also takes place within the water as well, as we have observed in relation to plants, and animals such as fish, with corresponding images that we have already touched on in those chapters.)

Again, this earthly element – and all of the material world – is never truly fixed, and to learn more about just how it is never fixed, it is perhaps best if we move directly into an exploration of the water element.

Beach: Water

We can speak of water in its own right as part of the beach shoreline, but in doing so we are also forced to speak of it in relation to the other kingdoms of nature, and the other elements including the earth element. Water has the tendency to fill any container; whether this is a glass of water, a puddle, a pond, a lake, a river or the ocean, the same phenomenon prevails. The lands of this planet are the container of the world's water. At the same time, water shapes the earth as it interacts with it. (Air and light and warmth also play their role in this shaping, as we will explore later.)

When we look at the water at the beach we can be struck by its contrast with the sand. Where the sand is dry, the water is wet; where the sand tends towards stillness if left to its own devices, the water tends usually towards movement of some kind (even if that is simply towards the shape of the sphere). Where the beach sand brings forth limited life out of itself, or houses little life, the water – including salt water – is the home of vast amounts of life.

In looking at the water itself, we see that in its movements we can notice a number of things, including the activity of waves. In his book *Sensitive Chaos*, Theodor Scwhenk calls the wave a "horizontal vortex."[5] The *vertical* vortex can also be seen in the water at the beach, especially where there are rips and where the presence of sand in the water makes the movement of the water more visible. Schwenk describes the vortex as an archetypal pattern in water. (Small vertical vortices can also be observed clearly on calmer days if one stands still in the water and watches as waves move past the legs, on the shore-side of which, on both side of the legs, vortices will appear, turning in opposite directions; if there is backwash also present, one can watch as vortices again form on both side of the legs as the water runs out to sea.) He also describes different waves – one where the stationary wave formation stays more or less the same and water runs through it, as we might see in a stream or river, and one where the water stays more or less stationary (though some movement does occur) and the wave runs through it, as is the case with the waves at the beach.

Wave activity is influenced by many things, as any surfer will tell you. At this particular stretch of beach, wave activity is influenced from the direction of the mineral kingdom/earth element in the form of underwater sandbars. Here the moving wave encounters something which does not move quite so much (as itself) and forms into the crashing horizontal vortex of the wave, which is 'mis-formed' only by gravity as it falls/collapses back to earth, not completing the full vortex (though the closer the wave comes to the archetypal vortex, the closer it is to perfection from the point of view of the surfer). Of course, wave formation changes from day to day, week to week, season to season, year to year. Generally, in the more metabolically-active (in relation to water and waves) colder months, wave activity is increased, while in the warmer, light-filled and 'sensory' months, wave activity decreases once again towards stillness.

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[5] Theodore Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos*: *The Creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air*, Sophia Books, UK, 2019, p. 37.

Another relatively easy polarity to observe is the movement of the tides. I have generally limited my beach shoreline observation to the morning hours, and this, of course, will influence my overall observations. Nevertheless, the tide also leaves clues or signs on the beach as to its activity in the meanwhile – that is, while I have been absent. The connection of the tides with the activity of the moon is the first observation to be made here. Generally speaking, when the moon is at peak north or peak south each month (that is, when it is furthest north or south in the sky), then tides have their largest range. When the moon is in mid sky twice a month, then the tidal range seems to bunch up closer together and there can be more than one high or low tide (more in and outgoing movements) per day because the range is so much smaller. (That is, the 'daily wave' of the tide is larger or smaller each month in relation to the polar or otherwise position of the moon in the sky.) Tidal levels also change throughout the year, with other factors also playing a role in what we can observe of water levels on the shoreline itself – especially seas, swell and wind. These additional factors are related to atmospheric phenomena including barometric pressure connected to high and low pressure systems which bring storms and winds from certain directions, which we can talk more about when we come to the air element. The great turning of the earth itself should also be kept in mind when we consider such factors.

In talking of atmospheric phenomena, especially clouds and rain, we also, of course, have to do with the water element at the oceanic shoreline, which we will also focus more on when we come to consider the activity of the air.

Needless to say, oceanic currents also play a role in this particular stretch of beach, but they are not so easy to identify with the naked eye; the warmth that exists within the water at different times of year can give us clues about the presence of such currents.

If we are able to acknowledge the activity of the moon on the tidal activity of the water, I am willing to admit the possibility of its influence upon the water element as it exists within the plant kingdom, as well as the animal kingdom and the human being, subtle as it may be (given that water constitutes such a large part of the makeup of the phenomena of these kingdoms.) (For instance, fish activity related to the moon cycle is something any angler will readily discuss.) Likewise, if I am ready to acknowledge the influence of the moon on the tidal activity of the ocean, and its potential influence on the kingdoms of nature, then I am, again, open to further observations around the influence of the planets (and even constellations) on the water element, even more subtle as these influences may be, as well as, in turn, the influence of the activity of the planets (and constellations) on plants, animals and human beings. However much this goes beyond the immediate scope of our inquiry here, the path lies there for future observations. (Indeed, others, such as Schwenk in *Sensitive Chaos*, also point in this direction, and others still have conducted observations of and experiments involving such activity, including in relation to the plant kingdom.)

What does lie much closer at hand when we arrive at the beach are observations we can make about the water's activity in relation to the beach sand

itself – what we might be tempted to call the shoreline proper. Here we have the ever-shifting and changing interaction between the earth element and the water element. They interact in rhythmic dance, with water encroaching onto the domain of the earth with each wave, with each high tide (which, as touched on above, could be said to be a ‘daily wave’), with each season including the wilder colder months (which could be said to be the ‘annual high tide,’ or ‘annual wave’), with each storm, and with larger cycles and rhythms as well. Likewise does the earth enter into the domain of the water with each receding wave, and with each lowering tide (the daily ‘receding wave’), and with larger cycles as well.. What we encounter on arrival at the beach is the current signature or snapshot of the rhythmic dance between the earth and water elements at present (influenced also, of course, by air and light and warmth). We could also say that the archetypal form of the earth element on the shoreline of the beach – what we might call the bay – interacts with and is formed with the archetypal form of the water element on the shoreline of the beach – the wave (be it horizontal in the form of waves, or vertical in the form of activity such as rips).

In this rhythmic dance between elements we encounter the infinite variety of shoreline forms at the beach. Just as there is an infinite possibility of wave forms, so there is an infinite possibility of bay forms and of shoreline structures, though the archetypes remain the same. We can observe the infinite forms with our senses. With our thinking or consciousness we can perceive/think the archetype, if we are prepared to follow a thinking activity which also follows the transition or shoreline from a thinking activity or quality which is more earth-like in its separation and division, even dryness, lifelessness and stillness, to one which is more liquid, flowing, connecting, life-filled and moving, without losing the discernment and gifts of precision that the earth-like consciousness makes possible. Here we come to a shoreline in consciousness that exists also with a rhythmic dance of mutual interaction, which is able to leave its mark in the thoughts or artistic forms we express.

Upon looking at the bay formations at the beach we can already guess at what is the kind of activity of the water and waves that day. We can tell the tidal level and whether it is coming in or out, and when the last high or low might have been (and to where it reached), as well as look ahead to the next. Likewise, if we are to observe only the water and waves, we can guess at what kind of bay formations we might find on the shoreline. With the calmer flatter ocean of summer, the bay formations can be flat and wide, with ridges, and sometimes small cliff faces; or we may see the formation of one long ‘wall’ of around 30 degrees gradient running parallel to the shoreline, the top of which is more rounded or angled or cliffed depending on whether the water is able to scale it or not, with the gradient tapering away to apparent flatness as the bay curves north. Ridges may develop into a kind of arrowhead. The size and direction of the waves (and wind) will impact the cliff formations, the ridge directions, the formation of arrowheads out of ridges, the width of smaller bays, their duration and so on. Even in the midst of the wilds of winter storms, with large seas and swells, the beach shoreline still retains the tendency to

bay formations (even if it is only subtle), and on calmer winter days mirrors much more obviously the waves that break on the sand banks further out. For where does the sand come from that forms the sand banks that enable the waves? – also from the shoreline, of course, carried out by receding waves, and especially by rips when they form. Walls can also appear along the beach in the winter months where ‘closeout’ type waves appear on banks further out (often, it would seem, the formation of cliffs and walls, and bays more generally, seem to slow the movement of the water that is itself involved in forming them; where cliffs occur water is less likely to make it over the top of the wall – there is sometimes a cliff tendency in the ‘armpit’ bend of the larger curve of the beach where sometimes waves come in from more of a north and south direction at the same time, with the water generally not making it over the cliff at the top of the wall, while elsewhere on the beach the water runs over the wall.) (How the activity of air and water in the broken waves mirrors the activity of clouds above we will explore more when we observe the air element.)

Some other observations of the shifting sands of the beach shoreline are as follows. The wall, touched on above, that can begin to form in late winter when the storms no longer overrun much of the beach sand can last throughout summer, forming an almost straight line in the sand (parallel to ocean) for about 200m from the surf club northwards, before the wall begins to curve more obviously and smaller bay formations with ridges begin to appear, while the gradient decreases. The angle of the wall will change as more sand is deposited upon it (usually increasing in steepness if the water does not make it over the wall; or usually decreasing if the water does make it over, depositing sand further up the beach; an ‘older’ wall lip in dry sand was seen April 25, 2022 alongside a newer wall lip of sharper angle). If the water does make it over the wall then recedes again, then cliff formations may appear in the day(s) that follow; if the water makes it as far as the dunes, it will also ‘remove’ sand from that area, increasing the gradient there (seen April 27, 2022). If the water does not quite reach above the top of the wall, it can be that cliff formations also begin to appear in the wall at the high tide line. (Additionally, on April 21, 2022 I observed a couple of slight ‘collapses’ or depressions in the wall sand within the high wave line – almost as if somebody had been standing there previously and the water had removed the sand from around their feet, but I had observed nobody on my approach; upon standing on the slightly depressed area, the sand was much softer and collapsed much more easily than elsewhere on the wall.) If the water makes it over the wall, then the wall top is more rounded. If a considerable amount of water makes it over the wall, then sometimes water will pool at the lowest point above the wall which is usually at another point before the sand begins to climb again to the dunes (at the more ‘springtime’ stage of the year the beach often presents as three tiers – one an angled line from the dunes down to this pooling point, then a relatively flat section [sometimes a slight incline; sometimes with ‘ripples’ perpendicular to the shoreline that incoming water has helped form] to the top of the wall, then another angled line down to the water; at lower tides, when the water makes it only part way up the wall, it can be that these three tiers repeat, or are recapitulated, within the wall itself). If the tide makes it over the wall, then the gathered water may also run north

or south (parallel to the shoreline) depending on the gradient of the sand and the water's exit or entrance points through the wall back to the ocean. The water that gathers and pools has become cut off from the receding tide and will either sink through the sand, evaporate, or become reconnected to the ocean again at the next high tide and, partly at least, run back out. The patterns left in the sand when the water recedes from such poolings appear as very intricate cross hatchings of meeting water surfaces. Where the water flows in and out through a 'breach' in the wall, cliff formations may also form on either side of this breach, running east-west (perpendicular to the shoreline and usual cliffs), with such breaches often being wave-like or snaking in form (this observation can be a precursor to our river observations, and may well represent a 'river' in miniature – perhaps the smallest and briefest on earth; in a similar way, the cutoff pooling areas can also point us already to our 'lake' observations). Wherever the water runs back into the ocean after a retreating wave, we can usually see a kind of wave-like/winding film (running parallel to shoreline) as the last and slowest of the water retreats back to the ocean. This same waving/snaking form is replicated in the high tide line, as well as the lines left by the retreating tide in the small or larger pieces of seaweed that remain on the beach sand, in shell fragments or rocks, or in very small lined formations of sand (as well as in the line of dunes further up the beach). Big or small, the waving, weaving, snaking rhythmic form is left by water in the sand, and in many ways this is connected to the bay formation itself. The bay, no matter the size, is part of a larger winding, rhythmic wave-like form, as the shorelines of the world's land masses attest – nowhere does the straight line prevail, at least not for long (even within man-made shorelines, as Schwenk has shown, water will still seek to weave and wind).

At low tide at the same time of year – once the weather begins to move to its more nerve-sense polarity of the warmer months – we can also see the sandbars left within the water by its metabolic activity of the wetter months of the year. Then the overall bay of this particular stretch of coast can resemble three smaller bays, even five, as marked by these sandbar formations within the water at low tide. (Where sandbars exist this seems to be where the first 'cliff tendencies' appear in the dryer sand; as mentioned, next to sandbar formations is also where rips tend to appear.) As the months get warmer these sands move again and more of a single bay form can prevail, albeit sometimes with a smaller bay to the south, even as the long and straighter wall formation remains. Within the water itself we can find that the sand is not uniformly flat but it now contains numerous winding troughs and divots, formed through the winding and rhythmic interacting dance with the water. (On December 20, 2021 – a peak north moon at low tide – I see that in one section these troughs are very rhythmical in shape – around half a dozen appear, all of which are shaped as a kind of V in the sand, with the more pointed end indicating the direction from which the moving water comes – on this occasion from the south. I have also observed wave-like forms in the sand under the water running at right angles to the main direction from which the water approaches; this usually means these waving lines run parallel to the shoreline, unless there is a strong cross current on an otherwise calm day, such as the low-tide morning of December 20 mentioned

above.) On these occasions the ‘sandbarred’ ocean often seems more ‘river-like,’ and one can wonder at the state of the river before the river was exposed more fully to the activity and processes of the ocean through the removal of the sandbar across its mouth, and then to dredging.

In many of the above cases, I have observed, I feel, something which Schwenk also points to in his thorough observations of water, and that is that the water of the beach shoreline seems to place obstacles within its own path (be they the sand of banks, bay formations, cliffs, walls, or in the seaweed that forms on the shoreline [later becoming covered with sand and forming banks or walls]), and seemingly does so to the benefit of the surrounding ecosystem – i.e. the water does not wear away and erode as much of the total landscape ecosystem in which it exists (this process seems to be accentuated in the phenomenon of backwash where water, sometimes ‘bouncing’ off of a wall it has encountered [often with a loud thud that reverberates through the sand nearby as the wave crashes onto or punches into the wall], and after running slightly up the face of the wall, turns and runs rapidly and forcefully back out to sea, changing the shape of oncoming waves, and occasionally forming its own swell or waves that run in the opposite direction to usual, with trough formations potentially occurring in the sandbanks below; these phenomena are different to rips which form, in a way, their own kind of organism within the ocean, whereas backwash seems to part of a rhythmic back and forward movement [I have also seen backwash occur in the river when an outgoing tide bounces off the fencing on the upriver side of the water police at Harvey Beach]). Walls, ridges, cliffs, seaweed ‘dunes,’ and bays in general, all have the effect of stopping the water from flowing further up the beach and causing erosion further inland. Is this not the same effect human beings are hoping for with their man-made ‘groynes’ which we can also see from here on this stretch of beach? Water itself, in a sense, seeks to do the same, though it can only do so as part of the larger rhythms and forces of which it is a part.

In our observations here we also touch on a threefold activity of water which Schwenk describes as being sensory (in that it receives influences from other elements such as the wind, warmth, the moon, potentially the planets and so on), metabolic, in that it is able to ‘digest’ and move around as if with ‘limbs’ anything that it might interact with including beach sand, and that it is rhythmic and regular in its activities such as breaking waves and flowing forms (we will come to this meandering flowing form more obviously when we look at the river, but it can also be seen, as touched on, in water that is trapped at the beach and which then slowly meanders back to the ocean below). Here we find again the human being, this time within the water element itself.

If we wish to observe this threefoldness again in the activity of the water at this shoreline, we could say that the deeper water, with its currents and large swells and seas, seen here between the shore and the islands, is more metabolic in character, while the water closer to the surface is more sensory, taking in, as it is, the great variety of air and wind and light and interacting with the world around it in this way – the surface of any water seems more sensitive than other parts of it, in a way

akin to our own skin. While in between these deep dark depths and the light-filled surface we have a mediating, rhythmic element – a third aspect – sometimes calmer and more light filled, sometimes more filled with swell and seas from the depths, sometimes housing a more rhythmic current. Where waves appear the metabolic element has made its way up and through to the surface, but can then move through a rhythmic process again (indeed, the rhythmic sound of waves lapping on the shoreline can remind one of a heartbeat) and reach a degree of sensitivity as it stretches up the shoreline sand while lager, crashing waves are more metabolic. Thus we might see in this a human being that stretches with head on the water's surface down into the depths with its limbs, while it may also lay on the water with limbs extending through the waves horizontally out to sea, with its head reaching inland, and beating heart and lungs in between. On calmer days this might be more obvious than on stormy, wintery days, but here the human being may simply be contracted in one direction- the ocean much more metabolic, with only a small sensory element. The human being of the ocean water is more sensory – more head – during the calm months, and more metabolic – more limbs – during the wilds of winter (with each storm a winter in miniature, and winter a storm spread out; each calm day a summer condensed, and summer an extended calm day).

Needless to remind ourselves, water is present in all living things, and we can observe many of the above forms and activity also in plants, animals and human beings, but also in relation to the mineral kingdom itself, as we have been observing above. This is also the case, for instance, with sea shells. In one white, relatively-flat and -wide shell of the beach we see the form of the bay itself, be it larger or more closely resembling the smaller bay between two ridges, maybe one with ridge formations present (and of course, the movement of water as part of this). Here the 'lines' within the shell run horizontally, much like the lines of the retreating tide, with the edges fanning out and, which, if continued, one feels may end in a vortex if they were not stopped, in a way, by the edge of the shell – by 'air' (this form is, in a way, similar to the cuttlefish remains so often washed up on the beach). In similar shells lines run vertically, and in one with more red tones there is a wavelike form throughout these lines similar to what we might think of when we picture a clam shell. Alternatively, we may see a coin-like (more two-dimensional) shell with a spiral on its surface. Additionally, if we observe the spiralling vertical vortex (more three-dimensional) shell formation, we clearly see the vortex given form (I have yet to find a shell of this kind that, from above downwards [from the tip downwards], fails to turn clockwise; if continued through the earth to the northern hemisphere [and culminating in a point/tip] such a turning would appear, from 'their above downwards,' also clockwise). This same spiralling vertical vortex form (also, from above, most often clockwise) can be seen in the plant life at the beach, including in the spiralling form of the trunk and the spiralling rhythm of branches and leaves of bushes and trees. (It can also be found in seaweed, of course, as can the waving/snaking formation also be found in seaweed leaves, especially the larger leaves.) In some ways we could call the plant kingdom vertical vortex given form – rips slowed down to the point of apparent pause and fleshed out in the earthly

element – slowly and rhythmically shedding their outer, dead, mineral layers, while the living, fluid, watery inner vortex continues growing and living within.

Again, we come to the need for an organ of perception for the activity of water – one that, in consciousness, is more water-like than purely earthly or material. How the above also relates to the air element we shall consider next.

Beach: Air

Like water, we can also observe what we might call the air element at the oceanic threshold through its effects on the other elements and kingdoms of nature, as well as somewhat more directly.

As to the effect of the air on the earth element, this is perhaps more obvious at the beach than in many other landscapes. The fine-ness of the dry sand means that a wind is able to shift and move around this sand in all manner of directions. When the wind blows strong from the west, for instance, the path leading through the dunes towards the beach can be carved into a kind of canyon whereby the top layers of dry sand are heaped up by the wind into large mounds on the south side of the path; the area closest to the beach is usually carved out most forcefully, and reaches new depths as the lower sand further dries and is blown onto the mounds, or forced out the eastern end of the path onto the more open areas beyond, where it creates flat surfaces of sand that grow progressively deeper. The whole effect is that the path through the dunes resembles something of a winding course, like a snake, and one can see on the 'cliff faces,' on either side of the lower areas, sedimentary layers of sand as one walks on the firmer sand beneath, usually while getting blasted in the face with sand if the wind is still strong and if one is headed in the direction of the beach.

Sandy areas not clumped and somewhat held together by dunes or by piles of seaweed are the most vulnerable to the wind. Some days, when the wind comes in strong from the south, I have seen the whole upper surface of the beach migrating north in a kind of knee-deep, misty fog. (I imagine that the sand in this wind only settled upon reaching a more 'solid' location in the limestone cliffs further up the beach; limestone, we might add, is also worn away by wind from outside though over slower periods of time, and also forms into concave structures which, in a sense, 'contain' air – we can compare this to the much slower wearing away of granite, which, again, usually forms more convex structures.) Likewise, as mentioned above, it is easy to tell the direction of the prevailing wind by the small, piled-up lines of sand that it leaves behind the shelter of exposed blades of buried seaweed; the lines are the sand that has remained – that has not been blown away – because it has managed to gain a slight refuge behind the plant kingdom now, essentially, turned mineral (i.e. lifeless). These lines in the sand act, as mentioned, like weather vanes, announcing the direction the wind has been blowing from. (Additionally, after the wind has blown in a sufficiently strong way, there often remain wave-like forms in the surface sand at right angles to the direction of the wind.)

The wind also acts, of course, indirectly upon the mineral kingdom through the watery element. The ocean that is whipped up by an increased wind into a boisterous foaming of waves will shape the mineral beach in the ways touched on in the section on water above. The wind comes into contact with the surface of the water and shifts and folds the water over itself in similar ways as it does with the surface of the sand. In strong winds the wind will take up some of this water and send it into the air – will blanket the air of the entire shoreline with a spray of water so that you cannot help but walk in a misty cloud of airborne water. On other

occasions the air will play a part in the formation of water spouts – I have seen one at this particular beach about 300 metres offshore, moving north, about 20-30 metres in diameter, turning anticlockwise, and eventually linking up with a thin funnel of small diameter reaching down from grey wispy clouds above, until it almost appeared as one continuous funnel; it took all of 3-4 minutes to dissolve as it moved from Leighton Beach to Cable Station beach; in some ways this is evaporation made visible in a vortex. On other occasions, the wind will push the waves further and further up the beach. The wind will also create chop in the water; it will cause waves to crumble and foam; and in the stronger storms the air will pick up the foam that has formed and carry it up above the water in a kind of separate secondary wave – a secondary layer – taking it even beyond the edge of the water itself and onto the sand where the ankle-deep foaming mass blows along and over itself settling only where it cannot blow any further. (On some days the activity of foam on breaking waves is mirrored in the foam blown up the sand, as well as in the clouds blowing across the sky; a difference between the foaming waves and the clouds being that the former are air processes within the water element, while clouds are water processes within the air element.) From the direction of the misty spray, of the crashing waves, and the clumps of foamy air it is possible to also tell the direction of the wind and its activity. Indeed, all these phenomena also mirror the movement of the sand on the beach.

Not only that, the clouds above – the moisture further up in the air (often increased, it seems, around the period of full moon) – also speak of the activity of the airy element. Some of these clouds are lower to the ground and more full of water – are darker – and seem to resemble more the watery element below. They can be thicker and fuller than the other clouds, more metabolic and even willful it would seem. Sometimes these clouds release their rain on the shoreline, and it can be in the airy element, and the water it carries, that a kind of secondary ocean can break over us; and it doesn't seem to matter if we are standing in the ocean or in the rain – it is all much the same experience. Other clouds are similar to these water carriers – are thicker and more clumpy, but do not rain at present – these also seem like active, digestive processes expressed through the watery element within the domain of air. Other, much higher, clouds are like the opposite polarity, playing out in light, long wisps of white, sometimes barely noticed, streaking as they do above the other clouds or on their own; from these clouds we can also sometimes tell the direction of the wind, but they can also announce a coming wind or a wind higher up. These are very sensitive clouds, moved hither and thither by the wind, and are less active from out of their own kind of 'metabolism.' In some ways, these clouds are shaped more 'from without' by air (sometimes shaped also into the forms of waves), while the thicker clouds seem more shaped 'from within' by water, though air and water do co-shape them both. In between these polarities are clouds which seem to be more of a balance of being shaped from within and without, of being water and air; they are rounded and full to a point, but still shaped and sculpted by air; they seem more rhythmic and regular, and sometimes a whole sky can be full of them, including when

the wind is not too strong or too calm; they can also announce coming weather in the form of more clouds of the first kind – of storms.

There are of course nuances between each of these primary forms of clouds, and different types can appear at different levels of the sky. Luke Howard originally gave them the names we use in the Western world today,[6] and Goethe appreciated, and commended him on, his efforts to delineate the clouds in this way.[7] In the rain-filled, dark cumulo-nimbus as well as the larger and thicker cumulus clouds we can have a picture of the digestive, metabolic and in some ways centrifugal processes of the human being (centred in the abdomen and limbs); while in the finer, thinner and more sensitive cirrus clouds we can find the more centripetal nerve-sense processes of the human being reflected (centred in the head). In between these, the alto clouds (though not named by Howard) are a picture of the rhythmic processes of the middle realm of the human being, including the processes of lung and heart. There are of course other types of clouds, including the more layering or foglike stratus clouds (named by Howard) and, of course, various combinations of these clouds (also named by Howard) at various levels of the sky. But from observations such as these, if continued imaginatively, we can have a picture of the human being standing above the water or the earth, here on the beach shoreline or elsewhere, in such a way that it stands with its limbs and metabolic-digestive processes at the lowest levels and rises gradually to the highest levels of cirrus. On the days when the cumulu-nimbus extends all the way to the heights and the sky is full of water and rain, then we see an over-zealous metabolism of digestive processes such as we might find in fever. Conversely, if we have no clouds, or if we have only cirrus in the heights, or a thin layer of stratus, then we can see an increased presence of nerve-sense type activity – a picture of clear thinking (perhaps even too much thinking, or to much nerve-sense stimulation such as we might experience when we get too much sun). Between these polarities, we find the archetypal image of the cloud, which usually comes to mind when we think the thought ‘cloud,’ or such as a child might draw when we ask them to, which can sometimes bring a feeling of calm.

In attempting to observe the activity of the airy element distinct from the water or earth elements we find ourselves in a more subtle area. Indeed, we can have the experience of feeling the wind on our skin or in our hair, or we may smell something unusual, or hear the air rushing past our ears (all nerve-sense organs of perception), but otherwise we are generally observing the effects of the air on other elements or kingdoms of nature – it is, in itself, to the eyes at least, invisible. At this point we are perhaps also invited to consider our own breathing processes. It is usually only a more disordered state that brings our own breathing to consciousness for us (such as coughing, sneezing, exertion, stress, confined spaces, unusual smells, air-born

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[6] Luke Howard, ‘On the Modification of Clouds,’: https://archive.org/details/essayonmodifica00howagoog/page/n24/mode/2up accessed May 16, 2022

[7] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, ‘In Honour of Mr Howard,’ 1803: https://tottenhamclouds.wordpress.com/luke-howard/goethe-in-honour-of-mr-howard/ accessed May 16, 2022

pandemics and so on). Air is an element that we live within without usually considering it. However, as touched on above, we are in a position to manipulate it if we wish, though it will then continue along without our conscious intervention if we need it to. The work of the heart, as also touched on above, is somewhat different; we are less able, if not completely unable, to alter its rate if we wanted to. Again, both heart and lung belong to the rhythmic processes of the human being – the heart more connected to the metabolic-digestive processes (which we are completely asleep to outside of illness processes), and the lung more connected to the nerve-sense processes (though both still exist within the rhythmic processes/system).

In the air, therefore, as an element we are usually unaware of unless we turn our attention to it (or unless it is 'disordered'/'unusual' such as in strong winds, as mentioned, or pollution-filled air), we also have a picture of our own consciousness. This is not a picture of our watery, vegetative processes of life and growth, which are physically connected more to our own digestive, metabolic and reproductive processes. The air is more connected to our awake, nerve-sense processes taking shape and functioning centripetally – from outside in – as air does in the sculpting of the highest clouds, or the waves and foam, or the sand and pathways at the beach. Working too strongly on the earth element directly, air can lead to erosion and decay, as it can do when it works too strongly on our own physical organisation. When it works into the watery element, this process is more tempered in terms of its effects on the earthy element or physical organism. This is, perhaps, as difficult to observe as the working of the atmospheric gases into the oceans of the world, but it takes place nonetheless (it can also be seen, perhaps, with rain on the beach, which lends a kind of protective crust to the sand, stopping it from being blown away). The air element is also a sphere in which the animals live, containing hollow spaces as they do within themselves, or the capacity to give song (such as the birds can) to the character and quality of a whole landscape. But it generally only works from outside the plant in, for example in the shape of the leaves or petals (centri*petally*), which otherwise would be all round or spherical, like the form of leaves on more tropical plants – like the form which water always tries to make – though hollow, air-filled spaces can also exist within the flowering and reproductive parts of the plant – those parts which tend, essentially, more towards the animal kingdom. This can be seen to express a kind of striving of the whole watery element of the plant, culminating in the flower (including its colours), into the air and into the light (which we will touch on more in the next section). (Plant poisons are something which we could consider further in this direction – where the airy element meets the water element – including their use by humans, in small doses, as medicines; though this goes beyond the immediate scope of the current exploration.)

The way in which the air element works further upon the plant kingdom can be seen in the seeds that are carried from one location to another – at the beach this is especially evident in the warmer months, particularly when a more easterly wind is blowing; on these occasions we might walk the shoreline and find the seeds of spinifex plants blowing across the sand (or even into the water) like tumbleweeds.

One might also see dried-out branches with seeds (these may possibly be dune onion weeds). In these cases we see, working down into the plant kingdom, the activity and processes of the air element and, to an extent, the elements of light and warmth. It makes sense that this is most visible in the moving around of seeds, given that these form in the part of the plant where the watery element is touched by air and light and warmth but are now given form in seeds which carry future life (and possibly a kind of condensed, potential warmth element) over to the potential life of a new plant – but, again, the element of air is required for this to happen. On other occasions, of course, animals are required for seeds to disperse, and we find here again a connection between the air element and the animal kingdom, especially bird life. On occasions when the wind is strong and we are slightly further inland, we can also hear the sound of the wind in the movement of the tree leaves, with she-oaks being the most striking example of this. Here we can also intimate something of the connection of sound and hearing to the element of air, in this case as it works from the outside upon (and through the leaves of) the plant kingdom.

Together with other animals, birds are, as we have observed, also found at the beach shoreline in relationship to the air element. We could say that birds exist within this element of air; in some ways we could say that they are the air element given form. In the warmer months I have observed four juvenile crested terns with their sharp-angled and thin forms slicing through the morning air and light against the backdrop of the light blue northern horizon, such that sometimes when they turned they became almost invisible, as if swallowed up again by the air and light within which they were flying, only to reappear again when they turned once more. (Similarly, in early April, 2022 I observed two white-faced herons flying from south to north and slightly inland, but soon lost them against the background of the light blue morning horizon to the northwest – more on this when we come to the light element). I've also often seen seagulls flying very low over the sand into the wind, before turning up with it and gliding low over the ocean, then rushing up, slowing down, then gliding low again; and then, when the wind changes, I have seen them do the same thing but from completely the other direction. Cormorants and terns will also fly fast with the wind, and then slowly and deliberately into it. Likewise, birds will also tell us the direction of the wind if they are huddled on the sand, especially seagulls with their chests facing the wind and their beaks buried away from it in their wing feathers. Flight and resting behaviour of many birds exist in the element of wind which shapes them from without, but in such a way as if, we might have the feeling, again, that the air is almost shaping itself – some part of the wind has given itself form (think of the form of the feather, for instance). In addition, we can also consider the internal space of birds and other animals – of how much hollowed out or enclosed space there is within them when compared, for instance, to the plant.

As we have already touched on above in the section on human beings, in observing the activity of the air element in relation to human beings at the beach shoreline, we can say that, generally speaking, on calmer days there will be more people at the beach than if it is windy. However, there may be an increase of kite surfers or windsurfers if the wind is favourable. But other factors also play a role in

such observations, including temperature, sunshine, time of day or week or year, and so on. Generally, however, given the choice, and given relatively similar conditions otherwise, it would seem that human beings would prefer to be at the beach shoreline when there is less wind. Too much wind is perhaps akin to too much nerve-sense stimulus, in the same way, again, that we might complain of sun exposure (though it can also have an awakening effect should we find ourselves in the condition of being too ‘asleep’ or too much in life processes and not awake enough; the cooling effect of the wind can also have a similar effect). As mentioned above, human beings will also try to mitigate the effect of wind on the beach shoreline, especially on the mineral kingdom, through the use of windbreaks and groynes, or through relocating or ‘sculpting’ sands by the use of machinery.

Though we do not observe them at the shoreline per se, we do see in the satellite imagery of the earth – including meteorological maps – all the phenomena of the airy element from an additional perspective. Barometers also speak to us of these phenomena – and that is the high and low pressure systems of the earth. In these phenomena we see the twisting, turning movements of air from areas of higher pressure to lower pressure, and the turning of vortices such as we have observed in the ocean (though in this case it is not water often turning the mineral kingdom, or air in the form of foam, but the airy element turning the water element). Highs move anti-clockwise, and lows clockwise in the southern hemisphere, and vice versa in the northern hemisphere; this phenomenon alone speaks to us of a rhythmic balance or breathing around the earth. In the winter months of walking this shoreline in 2021, there was a large increase, on previous years, in the number of lows and cold fronts that have moved across the beach. Earlier in the year, these were warm, coming down from the tropics, then were both tropical and from the polar areas (south/south west), then increasingly more from the pole during the winter months. Such extreme wet and cold weather found its counterpart in the northern hemisphere in the form of record high temperatures and fires, as well as flooding in places (as we also had here and elsewhere in Australia). In this way we can have a feeling for the air element as it moves around the earth, as much as we can have a feeling for the watery element of the earth in our previous observations, and of the earth element itself, all of which exist on a moving, turning planet. (We could also say more about rising and ‘sucking’ low pressure systems, and lowering and ‘pushing’ high pressure systems, as well as positive and negative IOD phases, El Niño and La Niña etc., but again I am trying to not stray too far from that which I can observe directly.) From this we can also ask questions of the relations of the earth as a whole to the whole human being, which we will consider in more detail later.

In addition, we should not conclude our observations of the airy element and move into looking at the phenomenon of light without briefly also touching on the element of warmth. Warmth also has an effect on the airy element, as the summer seasons of this stretch of coastline clearly demonstrate. The prevailing weather pattern of this location in the summer months unfolds with regularity, or has done so since Westerners arrived. The coolish morning easterly blows off the land towards the relatively warm water of the coast as the sun rises over the earth made cooler by

the night. Then, later in the day, in the early afternoon, after the sun has warmed the land, the wind will shift to the south west and blow in from the now relatively cooler water of the ocean, cooling the relatively warmer earth. ‘Sea-breeze’ and ‘the Fremantle Doctor’ are names given, by non-Aboriginal people, to the (often very strong) afternoon wind.

This working of warmth into the airy element also takes place within the human being. In as much as we exist within the airy element, as animals do, we are also able, unlike animals, to become aware that we exist in it – are also able to become conscious of our own consciousness, aware of our own awareness; the capacity for us to be able to do this comes from our self-consciousness. In a more physical sense we can observe how much more shallow our breathing becomes when we are immersed in cold water, or in cold temperatures more generally, or when we are or others are in a state of shock, or when we are generally colder or more stressed or fearful. Here we have an active air element within the human being with less warmth than might be required for good health – the warmth element (or self consciousness) does not come and enter enough into the air element or the water and earth elements, and we are in the grip of fear, cold illness processes, and eventually to scleroticism and death. Too much warmth processes on the other hand can also lead to illnesses and also, potentially, to death. This polarity (and I have my wife Katie to thank for the following way of looking at warmth), we might be inclined to call hot, while the former cold, and warmth, we may also feel, is more of a balance between the two polarities (but more on this later). In a less extreme sense, we can usually think (and breathe) best and feel most healthy when we are neither too hot nor too cold (with temperature regulated either through external environmental conditions and clothing, or through our own consciousness processes). Needless to say, there is much more to explore when it comes to the warmth element in the human being and in the natural world – these are intended to be only preliminary remarks about the way warmth works into the airy element on this shoreline, and what this might reveal to us about human processes. We will come more to this when we look at the warmth element itself throughout this book.

But first, let us turn for a moment to phenomena of light at the beach shoreline, especially related as they are to these considerations of the air element.

Beach: Light

I have never experienced a light so clear, bright, sharp and intense as that of Noongar country in the south west of Western Australia. It seems to be a shaping force of the landscape itself.

In the mineral kingdom and earth element, light plays a role in the drying out of substances, including sand or limestone on the beach shoreline (warmth also plays a role in this same process, but we will explore warmth processes more in a moment). Light, we could also say, in some ways, seems to be found *within* some minerals, such as silica/quartz., or metals such as gold.

When it comes to water, whether it be in the individual drop, in the spray blown off the top of a breaking wave, or the falling rain on the horizon or above the ocean, light can be observed, including in the formation of colour, such as the whole colour spectrum in the form of rainbows. This particular stretch of coastline is well suited for observing rainbows, especially during the transition into and out of the wetter months, of which we had many in 2021. The best conditions for rainbows seem to be when there are rain-bearing clouds on the western horizon around sunrise, and where there is space between clouds in the east for the sun to shine onto the rain in the west or south west; it is almost like the light of the sun paints the spectrum of colours upon the falling rain with a brush. The rainbow is there, as an archetypal form and, if the conditions are right, across its whole arc it will reveal all of itself, from red to orange to yellow to green to blue to indigo to violet – sometimes also plainly revealing two extra colours of magenta/peach blossom before the red on the outer edge, and a kind of emerald green beneath the violet. When the colours are most vivid, a second rainbow may also appear on the outer side of the first rainbow, with its colours reversed. (As a contrast to the vivid rainbow, I have also seen one in early December on a day with no visible rain – the rainbow, on the western horizon, was only the right hand edge of the bow, and was extremely faint – right on the edge of visibility – so that if I looked directly at it it would seem to disappear; interestingly this appeared on a day with a number of alto cumulus clouds in the sky so that the mid-morning sunlight met a fair amount of darkness, and the sky itself felt to me like it might 'break into colour' at any moment – but more on this soon.) As mentioned, such colours may also appear in the spray of waves, but also in the smallest drop such as on a spider web after rain or in the morning dew, or in the scales of some fish, or in different kinds of oils, and so on. The activity of light on clouds is also apparent come sunrise or sunset, when they glow different shades of the 'warmer' red spectrum before fading into grey.

It is clear from these examples of light in relation to water that the sun acts as a light source. But so too could we say that the atmosphere of the earth does the same – Bühler calls the atmosphere of the earth a kind of "second sun."[8] If this was not the case, whenever we were not in direct sunlight (such as when the sun set or before it rose), it would be dark. In some ways this phenomenon can also be seen in the gradation of colours of the sky at sunrise and sunset. On this particular stretch of

[8] Walter Bühler, *Metamorphoses of Light*, Temple Lodge, London, 2015, p. 4.

beach at sunrise we can look to the west and see the shrinking shadow of the Earth upon the atmosphere in a shade of indigo or violet as the sun rises in the east, with a faint line of magenta above. Likewise at sunset we can look to the east and see there the shadow of the Earth, with the same hues as the western sky in the morning now growing larger, again with a line of magenta above; while to the west the sunset horizon sky glows orange, yellow, to green to blue higher above (I have also seen, On December 14, 2022, a line of magenta above the gold of the sunset western horizon, with some green in patches further north.) During the day, needless to say, the sky is blue – directly above it is deeper blue, while to the horizon it is a lighter blue. At night, the sky is dark apart from the light shed by the stars or our electric lights here on earth.

Colour is something Goethe was deeply interested in. He considered his book on colour theory[9] to be one of his most important works, if not *the* most important. Goethe's observation that colours arise through "the deeds and sufferings of light"[10] is helpful for our own observations. Part of what Goethe identified was that colour emerges where light and darkness meet. Put simply, when light appears in front of relative darkness the cooler, blue spectrum arises. Where relative darkness appears in front of light, the warmer red spectrum arises. (While this does not explain all colours, it does help me to understand the colour of the sky and, to an extent, of the ocean.) The sky horizon during the day, for instance, with the atmosphere being thicker, from our perspective, than directly overhead (and therefore also more light filled relative to the darkness of space behind it) appears as a lighter blue; while directly above us, the atmosphere, being thinner from our perspective than the horizon (therefore less light in front of the relative darkness of space), appears as a darker blue. Likewise, the sun at sunrise and sunset, being a light source behind the now darker (relative to the sun) atmosphere appears as red-orange-yellow (where the atmosphere/relative darkness is thickest, especially when there is pollution or smoke); while at midday the sun seems almost white directly above, behind the now thinner layer of atmospheric (relative) darkness. Here too we can understand the 'shadow of the earth' as a light (i.e. the atmosphere, though now much darker than at midday) in front of darkness (space), which therefore appears as the darkest hues of the blue spectrum, gradually fading into darkness.

Where green appears in the sky, such as above the western horizon at sunset, we have a case of the light of the sun still raying into the horizon sky, even though from our perspective the sun has set; so we continue to see the growing-lighter warm spectrum from red to orange to yellow (as we look upward) meeting the increasingly-darkening (as we look eastward) cool spectrum – where they meet we find the green colour. In some ways do we have here a case of darkness (the western horizon atmosphere [relative to the lighter sun]) meeting other darkness (space higher in the sky [relative to the lighter atmosphere]), with the relative light of the sun in between, bringing together the lighter hues of both

[9] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Theory of Colour*, CUP, Cambridge UK, 2014.
[10] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe's Theory of Colour*.

spectrums in the green? Where magenta appears, for example on the eastern horizon[11] above the shadow of the earth at sunset, do we have the light of the sun (raying into the relative darkness of the eastern horizon atmosphere) coming together with the light of the atmosphere (in front of the relative darkness of space) in the shadow of the Earth?; that is, from the west, above the shadow, do we have the light of the sun raying its reds to orange to yellow (ascending upward) into the atmosphere, while the atmosphere closest to the horizon in the shadow is still slightly lighter than the space behind, leading to the darker colours of the blue spectrum? Is it a case of where these two relatively lighter areas come together in front of the darkness of space, that we find the meeting of the darker hues of the red spectrum, and the darker hues of the blue spectrum in the magenta? (All of these instances/questions can require some observing and willful thinking and imagining in order to picture.)

We can also, more generally speaking, consider the quality of light itself throughout the seasons – the light of summer, for instance, is akin to the washed-out light of midday, while the light of winter is, generally, more nuanced with much more darkness, while the seasons in between seem to reveal a light that itself verges on colour (where many rainbows can often be observed).

In a certain sense we may also find an imagination arise for us that each day is like the whole of the year: midday is like peak summer, while midnight is akin to midwinter, dawn is a kind of spring, and sunset an autumn. (No doubt, more nuanced gradations could be identified in relation also to the Noongar seasons.) We could even go so far as to see a whole lifetime in this process: that dawn is birth, midday the middle of life, dusk as moment of death, with night time possibly understood as a period between lives. Is it also too far from these thoughts to experience the way that midday is perhaps the clearest expression of the light-filled nerve-sense system – the wide-awake thought life – of the human being, while night-time is the much more unconscious and sleep-filled realm of the metabolism and digestion, as well as the willful activity of the limbs? In the colours of dawn and dusk – in the ‘evening’ of light and darkness (where colours emerge) – do we not find the expression of the rhythmic system of the human being, and the place that perceives and can more deeply experience such rhythmic interplay of colours – the feeling life?

Upon considering the colour of the water in the ocean, I would also suppose the following. On a sunny summer day, the water closest to the shoreline appears clear, slightly further out it is a light green, then a light blue, and further out it is a dark blue. This particular stretch of beach during the warmer months is usually all white sand below the surface. Therefore we also have in the lit-up water itself a lighter medium than the slightly darker (though still very light) seafloor below (that is, the water acts as a kind of ‘atmosphere’ for the slightly darker/relative darkness of ‘space’/ocean depths below). The light enters the water colour and goes from clear to green to blue the further into the water we look – as the relationship of darkness compared to light increases (i.e. more darkness as the water gets deeper and less

[11] A green eastern horizon seen at sunset coming into Bali November 5, 2022.

light penetrates into and onto the sandy floor which grows, therefore, increasingly darker), and darker hues of blue appear. In a sense, the shallower water is akin to the horizon of the sky (a clear, light blue with more lit-up atmosphere/water), while the depths are more akin to the atmosphere beheld directly overhead (dark blue with less lit-up atmosphere/water), or even the shadow of the earth as it transitions to the dark of night (deepest water with even less/no lit-up atmosphere/water). (Sometimes, in the colder months during storms, and with a great deal of seaweed and sand moving in the water, the water itself appears a shade of light milky-green – there is no transparency, but we move straight to green; at night we have only a black ocean, perhaps with moon or stars or man-made lights reflected, but otherwise all light removed, reflecting also the black sky above; on one autumn day of April 21, 2022, I noticed a large number of limestone rocks in the wave-break area in a small section where the water was a milky green colour, while the rest of the water around it was clear – upon swimming in this section the sand underneath also felt unusually fine; the next day the swell was reduced to almost no waves, there were less visible rocks present on the dry sand, and the water had returned to clear. Needless to say, whenever we see seaweed on the ocean floor, the colour of that water appears relatively much darker [light in front of much darker darkness].) In this way in which light works into the water, we can also have an experience of the human being lying down in the ocean, head on the shoreline, with feet stretching out into the depths, as well as a human being standing with its feet on the ocean floor – on the obscured depths – with its head rising towards and touching the clearer surface. (In a similar way, we may also have a picture of the atmosphere itself in relation to the human being, with the light blue horizon as being more nerve-sense, the deeper blue directly above as being more metabolic, with more rhythmic space in between – that is, an image of the human being with head on the horizon where the atmospheric light is thickest, with limbs flowing off into the deep blue directly above, where atmospheric light is thinnest, and rhythmic system in between.)

To continue our observation of light in relation to other elements, it can also be that we have light with and without warmth, but we will come to this more in a moment.

In terms of light's relationship to the kingdoms of nature, in plant life we see vegetation at the beach striving towards the light in the cooler months, and carefully engaging with it during the very hot months. Light becomes a kind of food source for the plants, lifting themselves up from the earth to reach it. In and with it, the plants and trees move through their life processes of seeding, stemming, noding, leafing, budding, flowering, fruiting and seeding.[12] Light goes hand-in-hand with the air that plants inhale and exhale. Light is what comes from outside to meet the liquid life and growth processes of the plant, which arise from within it. Together with the air, light seems to shape the plants on the shoreline from without – be it their stems, their branches, their leaves, their calyces and buds, their flowers, their 'fruit' or their

[12] See also Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Metamorphosis of Plants*, MIT Press, Cambridge USA, 2009.

seeds. We do find, in some plants, such as the thick-leaved fan flower, a thicker form of leaf, expanding more centrifugally (though even here the leaf is thick on one side but somewhat thin on the other, and its edges are serrated). Likewise, thicker leaves can also be found in the sea spinach or coastal pig face (but even these relatively thicker leaves are highly formed and/or differentiated from outside). Most of the plants at the beach shoreline, however, have thin leaves (if any), thin dry branches and trunks, thin parts of the flower, thin seed pods (such as the wattles), and thin seeds (such as the spinifex). Everywhere at the beach shoreline, the plant seems more air and light than vegetative matter. Generally speaking we can *see through*, to an extent, a relatively large amount of Western Australia's bush (as compared to, say, a tropical equatorial rainforest); the grasses of the beach dunes are an extreme version of this (the beach itself is, in a way, 'all light'), in the shrubs it is harder to see through when they are more dense, in the trees it is also possible to see through the spaces between the long thin leaves, but vision is much more obscured than at the dunes, for instance. It is in the flower, however, as touched on in the previous section, where the light comes into full play in relation to plant life. It is as if, as mentioned above, light kisses this otherwise 'dark' or vegetative realm from the outside, and colours emerge. And what colours there are in the plant life of this part of the world. Even at this small stretch of beach, we find the expansive yellow of the wattle, the strong red of cocky's tongue, the reflective blue of the thick-leaved fan flower, and so on.

In the animals, this colour is like the air element mentioned above, though even more integrated. The colour of the animals of Noongar country – especially the animals at home in the air element, the birds – are as striking as (or even moreso than) the colours of the flowers. The beach does not reveal the full spectrum of animal colours, however, much in the same way as it does not reveal the full force of the colours of plant flowers (or as much as midday does not reveal the full colours of the sky or of the sun), but it reveals some. Riegner has written on the differences of colour between the more nerve-sense oriented mammals as opposed to the more rhythmic, and the more metabolic.[13] As a generalising and simplifying of his observations, he, while observing African mammals, points to a kind of 'two-tone' in the more nerve-sense-oriented animals (think, in our location, of the black and white of the wagtail or the colour of some small marsupials or rodents), a kind of monochrome in more metabolic animals (think of the cow or some kangaroos [though kangaroos, being more nerve-sense within the metabolic realm also contain a kind of two-tone]), and a more spotted and striped expression amongst the more rhythmic animals (think of the stripes on the back of the Tasmanian Tiger or the zebra; of even of the more rhythmic animals within the other realms, such as the numbat). In terms of birds of the beach, we tend to see a relatively small amount of muted colours, often a general two-tone with some other colouring (think of the seagull, the crested tern, the cormorant, the welcome swallow, the singing

[13] Mark Riegner, 'Horns, Hooves, Spots and Stripes: Form and Pattern in Mammals' in *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, State University of New York Press, New York, 1998, pp. 177-213.

honeyeater, the plovers, and so on). We do, however, occasionally get a glimpse for what is possible in the colourations of bird life when we see, for instance, the bright red of the beaks of the pied oystercatcher or the Caspian tern, as well as the flashes of yellow and black and white stripes in the New Holland honeyeater, the warm pink of the pink and grey galah, and so on. In connection with this it can be interesting to note the way in which the small birds of the areas much further inland tend to be very colourful (think of fairywrens and robins and so on), as can the birds, including the many ducks, of the lake shoreline. (The colours of the birds of the lake and river we will consider more when we come to those sections.)

It is in animals where the light of consciousness also arises as an inner capacity, including through the hollowing out of internal spaces such as in the skull and spinal column, amongst other organs, as mentioned above. In this sense, light does not work only from the outside upon the animal kingdom, as it primarily does in relation to plants, but also appears as an inner capacity of consciousness. (We could also have followed a similar line of observations in relation to the air element of the beach shoreline – we will do this more fully in relation to animal [especially bird] life at the lake, where more animals appear.)

Light in relation to the human being is something we need not say too much about here other than to point to the large amount of light pollution created at night, and created by holes in the ozone layer above Australia which can be at best uncomfortable and at worst deadly. Too much light can be as deadly for human beings as for animals and plants, and we are creating situations in which there is an excess of it, not to mention the light we work with within our homes and workplace. In some ways we can say that at the beach shoreline the human being is approached by a large amount of nerve-sense impressions in relation to light, and is made relatively awake in terms of the light of consciousness and thinking – at midday in summer this nerve-sense activity and awakeness of thought can also become too much; in the morning it can help us to awaken to the day. The beach shoreline is a place of the light of the nerve-sense system and of thinking, centred as these processes are in the head. (Likewise, as in the animals, light does not only work from outside upon the human being, but also appears as an inner light of consciousness.) The fact that we can even talk about or reflect upon such processes, however, also points to the capacity for self-consciousness which the human being contains and which the animals do not. How the beach shoreline, including the light thereof, relates to the element of warmth we shall consider next.

Beach: Warmth

In considering warmth it is almost as if we approach another ‘shoreline’ in and of itself. Warmth is both material and immaterial. It is related to nature, to social life and to consciousness. It is quantitative, qualitative, and has also to do with characteristics that immaterial processes stamp upon the material world.

We may feel the warmth (or otherwise) of the beach sand upon our feet. This can be so warm in the summer months, especially around midday, that we are unable to stand for too long in one place and may be forced to either wear something on our feet or run for the cooler sand. At this point the cooler sand is that closest to the water. In the colder months it is the opposite: especially in the early morning, the sand can be so cold to the touch that we are forced, again, to put something on our feet or run to the warmer sand which, at this time of the year, is the sand closest to the water.

Warmth activity in water can, in this sense, be seen almost as a kind of mediating force in which it warms the earthly element in winter, and cools it in summer. Different currents in the water also have to do with warming or cooling processes, and these would be more known to year-round swimmers or even to surfers. Warmth acts into the watery element. (This can also be observed, somewhat more subtly, in processes of humidity, evaporation, condensation, precipitation and so on.)

Warmth is also active in the air element, with winter storms either bringing in cold air from the south, or slightly warmer air from the north (or both combined); here we see cold fronts bringing rain from closer to Antarctica, and tropical lows bringing rain from closer to the equator. Warmth in the air element can also be felt in the winds that blow from off the desert, then off the ocean in the summer months. In addition to warmth born on the wind, it can also be felt in pockets of air in different places. Between the dunes and the carpark at Leighton Beach, for instance, there is a grassy area cleared of trees and shrubs which also sits as a kind of hollow in the earth; in the cooler months one can walk through this area and clearly feel areas of cold air and areas that are much warmer. (Even more difficult to observe are warmth processes involved in the air element that then interact with water – gases that then go into the ocean.)

The connection of warmth to light is fairly obvious, and can be seen in the temperatures of the summer months compared to those of the winter months, as well as day-time temperatures compared to night-time temperatures. However, some nights, devoid of light, can also be very warm. Likewise, some winter days, while full of light, can also be extremely cold. Additionally, we can observe that the quality and intensity of sunlight is different on a 24-degree day in summer as opposed to a 24-degree day in winter; we could say the same for the different quality of warmth of such a day (which is perhaps also where the ‘feels-like’ temperature makes its way into weather forecasts, though we must presume a level of fixed-ness when it comes to the temperature that it supposedly feels like on such occasions – i.e. that we presume the ‘feels-like’ temperature also doesn’t actually feel like something else). In

any case, we can therefore note that light and warmth are not one and the same; nor does warmth have to do with temperature measurement alone.

Warmth in relation to minerals other than beach sand is a much bigger theme, but we have access to limited amounts of minerals at the beach shoreline. Plants also rely on a certain range of environmental warmth conditions for their survival – too warm and they will die; likewise if it gets too cold. Different plants require different ranges of warmth. Needless to say, the plants we find at the beach shoreline are relatively resilient or hardy, and are able to withstand relatively hot and cold conditions. Generally the plant takes in its warmth from outside of itself – that is, from the periphery or the ecosystem as a whole. (We may wish to look further into processes involving volatile oils and seeds in plants in order to pursue the warmth element further within the plant kingdom.)

Of course, animals also have optimal ranges of warmth, though this differs, of course, between, say, the birdlife of the shoreline, and the fish. European honey bees, for instance, which we see from time to time at the beach, even on or near the water, inhabit hives which are very similar to the optimum warmth of the human organism – around 37 degrees celsius. (When the temperature reaches this point there is usually a relatively large number of people at the beach shoreline.) Animals, to varying degrees, have an ability to regulate their own body temperature, not relying solely on the direct conditions of the external environment – here, something of the warmth element is further internalised in a way that it is not within plants or minerals.

As human beings we not only receive warmth from the external environment, and not only can we regulate our own warmth with further measures such as clothing, exercise and so on, but we are also able to *create* external sources of warmth which then work back upon us, such as fire, heating/air-conditioning even clothing, deliberately-warming food and drink, and so on. No other kingdoms of nature are able to do this; we are also *creators* of external warmth conditions.

Turning to observations of our own consciousness, we can feel that when an idea fills us with enthusiasm (and not an idea which is merely exciting for a moment, or speaks to our shifting temptations or desires, or is fleetingly illusory) this can also kindle within us a quality which we could call warmth – the warmth of enthusiasm. Often the thoughts that ‘kindle’ such enthusiasm have to do with much longer periods of time, or life directions we might feel called to take – they feel as if they are somehow related most closely to who we are as individualities. Such ideas do not merely illuminate us for a moment, or blow through like a quick wind, or simply help us see connections or even identify and differentiate phenomena, but somehow bring phenomena into a progressive story with momentum, somewhat like our own biography, to which they may be intimately related. (This may also lead to measurable temperature changes, but I have not measured this as yet.)

In terms of the space of consciousness which can house such thoughts, we find that our ‘warmth consciousness,’ for want of a better term, goes beyond the materially-discerning consciousness of the earthly element (akin to minerals), or the living, fluid consciousness of the watery element (akin to vegetation), or the inspiring

consciousness of the air element or of light (akin to animals); rather, we have, in warmth consciousness, to do with a kind of consciousness which is self-aware. In addition to materiality and form, to life, and to consciousness, which we find in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, the human being is, as we have mentioned, able to attain to self-consciousness, unlike the animals – is able to reflect upon its own consciousness, as we are doing here.

What one can discover here is the individualising force which distinguishes us from all of nature, and from all other human beings, but which at the same time has the potential to act as a bridge to all of nature and to all other human beings, as well as to the kind of 'enthusiastic' thoughts (and what lives in these thoughts) that we touched on briefly above. The warmth element of the human being can be experienced as measurable temperature, which expresses its presence (too little indicates its lack in the physical organism potentially leading to or indicating chronic illnesses of a more sclerotic nature, while too much can indicate acute illness such as fever or inflammation); it can be experienced to an extent in the sympathy or antipathy we might feel in relation to experiences (including in nature and social life), but more so in how we control or perceive or learn through such sympathies and antipathies; and it can be experienced in the connections mentioned above in relation to the natural world, to other human beings, and to the world of consciousness itself, including the immaterial world of ideas and all that flows through this. The warmth element of the human being is a kind of fire or kernel – a kind of seed of warmth that requires more warmth in order to germinate and grow more fully. We are the seed and the landscape tender both, and the fire maker (or kindler) in this sense also, although our own warmth element also remains open, in this way, to all that comes towards it. In this sense, it also finds itself, in terms of identity outside of itself – in all we have so far been considering of the natural world, but also the social world, and the world of thought and ideas. It is, in a sense, what separates and what potentially connects us, both.

We could say the warmth element is the individualising character in the human being, but also the individualising activity present in all the different species of the kingdoms of nature, albeit in different ways. It is also the individualising quality of a landscape – the identity of this particular stretch of coastline, which can be experienced both physically, in terms of physical warmth, but also in thought, as an identity, which can also have the effect of a kindled warmth of enthusiasm. This can be experienced 'wherever' we give attention to in relation to all the phenomena of the natural world we have so far been experiencing, and to the landscape as a whole; it is an objective reality, and yet experienced consciously, in freedom, within ourselves. (We will speak more of this when we contrast this particular shoreline landscape with the other landscapes that follow.)

It seems important to also mention here the actual element of fire in relation to our observations. The closest one is able to come to it now on this stretch of beach is the remains of a fire that someone might have had the evening before, or the smoke from house fires (or restaurant kitchens) where people still use them, or in the smoke that can gather over the city or over the ocean from controlled or uncontrolled

burning taking place north, south or further inland. (Fire is, of course, more of an issue in other parts of the city, Noongar country and elsewhere than on this shoreline.) Generally, the Western approach to fire is to be fearful of it – to control it directly through water or chemical suppression, or backburning; or indirectly through clearing vegetation or through 'prescribed' burns which can, however, become very hot and thereby cause destruction and harm to plant and animal life. The main fear here is loss of (human) life and (human) property. I am, again, not in a position to share any Aboriginal wisdom in relation to the use of fire in this country, but there are those who are – who are prepared to share and are sharing this wisdom today. It is clear that fire and this land have gone and will continue to go hand-in-hand, regardless of how we choose to engage with it now and going forward. One option would seem to be a working *with* fire in creative ways based on observation, experience and wisdom of the kind touched on above in relation to the warmth element; the other would be to continue with the way things are currently handled by those in power in the Western world (applying really only a kind of earth-element thinking) – a path which would seem to end only in further loss of life and property, not only for human beings but also for plants and animals, and for the landscape as a whole.

Again, not much fire activity takes place on the beach shoreline. It is, in large part, as we have observed, a place of nerve-sense activity and, in contrast to the life of vegetation further inland, is much more a place of death than of life. There may be air to help with the burning process, but the 'fuel load' of plant matter is simply not here, or not here in vast amounts as it is further inland. Fires may start or end at the beach shoreline, but they do not blaze here, for the conditions are not conducive to it. There is relatively little warmth in our nerve-sense and thinking activity – only until such activity unites with the other parts of what makes us human beings do we really begin to feel the warmth or fire of enthusiasm. These parts, together with other shorelines in this area, we will explore further in a moment. But let us first take a brief glance over the beach shoreline as a whole.

Beach: Landscape as a Whole

So, in some ways, we can see the warmth element as a kind of organising force for the landscape as a whole, and the warmth element or self-consciousness of the human being as that organ of perception which perceives this organising force, thereby recognising itself in it – in the world around. By organisation here we do not mean a mechanical kind of organisation of cause and effect, but rather the kind of organisation that an *organising idea* or *imagination* can bring to a group of related phenomena; it creates a wholeness and manifests in the parts. That is, an organising idea/imagination – or we could even say *being* – is to be found in all of the phenomena thus far considered. Only in the human being do we find this self-organising idea within each individual. Whereas in the animals and plants and minerals we find it spread out over whole species – over all animals, plants and minerals of the same species – in the human being we find it in each and every individual. Every human being is an organising idea unto him/herself, and as such has a unique role within the whole landscape because the human being can choose to consciously connectwith, and find itself related to and reflected in, all other phenomena. Through this, the human being has the possibility to connect to, be responsible and care for the world around it, which in this sense we could also mean to co-participate in the future and further development of phenomena.

The warmth element is related to all phenomena. Even language itself can reveal these connections. In a cell we speak of *organelles*; cells combined with other cells and tissues comprise individual *organs*, which then make up *organ systems* which, all together, comprise an *organism* or being. In this way we are justified in speaking of the human being as a being, but also of speaking of other phenomena of nature as beings, even of ideas or imaginations also as beings. These latter phenomena are ‘organisms’ which can act as an *organising* force for all their component phenomena, and are perceptible to the warmth element of human thinking or consciousness – to that beingness within us which makes us distinctly and uniquely human, and at the same time connected to all else, right down to the *micro-organism*. The ‘whole’ is thereby contained in all the parts, and can manifest in various ways. (‘Organism’ initially meant an organic or living structure or organisation, and has now come to simply mean a living animal, plant or body exhibiting organic life;[14] we are perhaps in a position, therefore, to again advance the definition of the term).

It is in this sense that we can also speak of a landscape – in this case the beach shoreline – as an organism, as a wholeness, as a being, as a phenomenon containing the warmth element that is related to the human being. This is perhaps most perceptible when the different phenomena of the beach shoreline seem obviously in accord – and this is often the case in more extreme conditions. During calm, summer days, especially mornings, with no wind or a slight easterly, no swell, no seas, no clouds, the sky as blue as the water, we can find a shoreline with few

[14] “Organism” in Etymology Online: https://www.etymonline.com/word/organism accessed May 16, 2022.

‘bay’ formations and ridges, or we may find that the slow advance or retreat of the tide has been involved in the gentle lapping ashore of waves which is creating distinct bays, perhaps with cliffs to one side of a rounded ridge line of a small bay (perhaps coming across a few shells with the same form as each bay, or perhaps a wall is present) – in the case of a calm and still day such as this, with the sun coming over the eastern horizon, some seagulls slowly flying along the shore, or else sitting in a group on the sand where there is no seaweed, with beach sand sculpted by yesterday’s feet, plants in the dunes a similar golden colour to the morning sun and horizon sky, perhaps the odd whitebait jumping, with a cormorant diving here and there further out, maybe a school of mullet or herring or even salmon circling, with dogs running the shoreline further north – in all of this, we can perhaps have a feeling for the way in which the warmth element works calmly into the light stemming from the sun or from the atmosphere as a whole; the way the warmth element works calmly into the air element, into the water, into the earth and sand, and through the way in which each of these elements impacts upon and relates to one another – working also into minerals, in plants, in animals, and is present, as a kind of warmth source also, within the human being, organising the landscape of its own organism, including the physical organism, its life processes and consciousness, which it is so often connected to, especially in our time, in the same way that fire requires the air element in order to burn, in addition to a fuel load such as wood. On such a day as this we can have a feeling for the organising wholeness – of the landscape as a whole – of the organising activity of the warmth element throughout all related phenomena.

Likewise we may find ourselves at the beach on a stormy, winter’s day in which cumulus clouds come billowing in on a fierce wind off the ocean, blowing dry sand into canyons in the funnels of beach paths, with high swells, crashing waves, and churning wild seas, the sands perhaps flattened by all these elements in an overall washing-over or smoothing-out process, a sun that is hidden behind dark cumulonimbus clouds with little other light coming from the rest of the atmosphere; seaweed might be strewn across the whole shoreline or pushed into one corner of the larger bay – often the north west corner – with shells, dead fish, starfish, coral and other detritus washed up in the seaweed; or perhaps the waves come reaching in wide fanning rounds all the way up into the grass of the dunes, the foam of the waves blowing off their crashing surface and gaining life and momentum of their own as they slide up the searching shoreline waves and beyond them, across the sands towards and into the dunes, mirroring somewhat the clouds and waves and blowing sand, the water almost as dark and grey as the clouds above, with mist blowing off the ocean, or uniting with a shower that comes rushing in across the sea on the wind, a rainbow to the south west perhaps – full or partial – if the sun is able to shine through the clouds for moment, seagulls straining into the wind along the duneline, a cormorant or tern flying low along the water then rising up before sinking down again.

In the case of such a winter’s day we can also get a feeling for the wholeness of the landscape organism – the way the warmth organism works into the light, the

air, the water, the earth, and the way these elements interact upon one another, affecting the sand, the plants, the animals and human beings (who tend to stay away on such days). Reminding ourselves of our previous observations and reflections, we could also say that the extreme summer beach scenario expresses more the human being relatively calm (though also perhaps expanded outside of itself) in thought, feeling and will activity (or we could also say nerve-sense, rhythmic and metabolic/digestive processes) – the whole scene is directed by an organism calm (if not expansive) in thinking, directed in some ways by more light and air, albeit stillness of air. The second, winter's scene, however, seems to tend more in the opposite direction, with forces seeming to rise up from below – from the more (usually) unconscious realm of metabolic-digestive processes, where life and the water element tend to predominate, almost completely overshadowing our thinking processes. The will of the beach scene is much more on display on these winter days, and through the watery element (and, to an extent, the air) can move anything; there can be a wildness here, but also a force at work which tells us and speaks to something of our own willful capacities and organs of perception.

As mentioned above, this annual rhythm (in some ways also relating to Earth activity) also expresses itself in the daily rhythm (in relation also to solar activity), in a monthly rhythm (in relation also to lunar activity) and, to an extent, also a weekly rhythm (in which the other planets may also be involved). In some ways, the watery element gives a fluid 'structure' to these rhythms, but it is the warmth element that can perceive this, and which gives these rhythms a higher organisation. The connection between the rhythmic organs of the lung and (especially the) heart, and the warmth element is something we can only point to here. (It is perhaps enough for now to note that in the circulatory system – in the movement of blood – we also find that which brings warmth to the human organism.) In all of this we can also have a feeling for the balancing activity provided by the overall organisation or guidance of the warmth element, and can glimpse its connection to health-promoting forces – to salutogenic processes – involving, of course, the immune system, which has to do with determining what is 'I" and what is not I.)

We can therefore say that the warmth element also has (in conjunction especially with the water element) a kind of temporal aspect – that is, the warmth element can provide not just a spatial organisation, but also a temporal one, which is also obvious in the remnants of the workings of yesterday or last-night's tide upon the sand, or in the movement of the seaweed of yesterday through currents of water and wind, or in the increase or decrease of swells and seas in relation to the progression of cold fronts of storms, and so on. In short, the warmth element connects the landscape across the daily rhythm (in the same way that we are the same person every morning when we wake up – there is *continuity*), but also in the larger rhythms such as monthly rhythms, seasonal rhythms, and annular rhythms...as well as much larger rhythms observable to those who are able to give their attention to the necessary phenomena over much larger periods of time.

The experience of this interconnecting (spatially and temporally – connecting also to other places and other times) warmth element, or organisation, can, of

course, be expressed imaginatively/artistically (through stories, song, dance, art and other media) – something Goethe said that the essential phenomena of the natural world actually calls human beings to express in such ways: “He to whom Nature begins to reveal her open secret will feel an irresistible yearning for her most worthy interpreter, Art.”[15]

(This beach shoreline, we can say, is, overall, predominantly a place of earth and air and light [with some warmth]; of minerals, limited plant life, small animals, and predominantly reflective human beings. It is a place, primarily [in relation to the rest of the landscape], of the head – of nerve-sense activity, and of death, watched over by the seagull and the dog. It connects to a very thin stretch of land between ocean and river – a built-up separation of limestone. In a way it holds back death from encroaching further inland, but at the same time connects to the other processes of the rest of the landscape organism.)

What the lake and river shorelines can teach us in addition – or as supplement – to the above, we shall see next. We can also, at this point, begin to wonder what relationships there might exist between these nature shorelines and the ‘shorelines’ of social life...and whether society itself can perhaps also be seen as, as Joseph Beuys posited, a work of art.[16]

[15] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections,* Penguin Books, London, 1998.
[16] Joseph Beuys, *Energy Plan for the Western Man*, Four Walls Eight Windows, US, 1991.

Lake: Approach

Approaching a lake, we can be immediately struck by a range of impressions that contrast strongly with the experience of the coastal shoreline. In this case we are approaching Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont.

Again, it is worth keeping in mind the inner attitude or orientation with which we come to our observations of particular landscapes. It may be that we feel a slight hesitation on entering a landscape, or perhaps we feel we are not meant to be in a particular landscape – that we feel uncomfortable on being there. Or else a landscape may not reveal anything to us unless we approach it with a certain amount of reverence, as touched on above. On other occasions, we may feel like it is very easy to engage in observations of a particular landscape. Such experiences/observations as these can also be viewed as phenomena to be considered as part of an overall exploration.

Needless to say that, as with the observations of the coastal shoreline and all landscapes for that matter, there is of course a temporal landscape as well as a social landscape which can, in a certain sense, be just as present as the natural, spatial landscape in front of us. In the case of this particular landscape, books have been written and oral histories have been shared, especially since the arrival of the tall ships in this place. In addition to this post-colonial historical element, there are of course oral histories of this place that pre-date colonisation. Again, this is not my knowledge or wisdom to share. But I wish to acknowledge it, of course, as I do in relation to all landscapes mentioned in this book.

Again, for my part, I can only approach these places from a modern Western direction, albeit also having been invited into some level of relationship to this place through the sharing of stories by Aboriginal Elders.

My relationship to this particular landscape is more recent than my experience of the coastal shoreline. It has only been in recent years – perhaps the last 10 or so – that I have been able to enter into observations and connections with this lake. In the last couple of years this has become more regular, with one weekly visit (Saturday mornings), and other irregular visits throughout the week.

Before writing this brief introductory chapter today I travelled again to the lake and tried, as much as I was able, to approach it with fresh eyes – as if I had never been there before, or as if I had come, again, straight from the ocean, which I travelled along in order to get there. I wrote this at the beginning of the Noongar season of Djilba – in mid August, 2021 – and in one of the wettest ‘winters’ on record. At the same time, what in the Western world is called the experience of ‘spring’ was also beginning to unfold.

As you can therefore imagine, the lake was full of water – the fullest I had ever seen it. Much of the plant life in the vicinity of the lake was also leaning towards blossoming, especially certain acacias (including prickly moses), hakeas (three-leaved), grevilleas (crithmifolia and spider net), guichenotia and so on. On any day we might also be struck, on approach, by the amount and variety of bird life in the vicinity of the lake, including tree birds such as magpies, crows, butcher birds, white cockatoos, white- and red-tailed black cockatoos, willy wagtails, mudlarks,

New Holland honeyeaters, singing honeyeaters and so on. And then, as we get closer to the lake, we might find the wetland birds also in large numbers, including some with chicks, which we will talk more about later. We might also be struck by contrasts in soil type, especially within the lake itself as it fills and dries out on an annual rhythm, or otherwise by the soil nearby the lake. One of the first impressions may be the sheer size and variety of the trees around the lake, especially in contrast with what we have so far been observing at the beach seashore. A different experience of the wind, or of clouds or light (in relation to the beach shoreline) might also be apparent to us.

In short, in the abundance of new impressions which can approach us, in a somewhat undifferentiated, though potentially differentiated, wholeness – especially on a day such as I wrote this – we can have an experience of an abundance – even overabundance – of life (and even colour) in contrast to the beach shoreline. The whole place – from soil, to plants to trees to birds and other animals, to volumes of water, can seem to us on first impression – especially in the wetter months – to be an expression of verdant, burgeoning life.

And upon spending even a relatively short amount of time at the lake – though usually I stay for at least half an hour or more, either in one place or walking the whole lake – we too can feel as if renewed (though in what sense we will explore further later).

The further differentiation of the various phenomena of the lake – while continuing to make room for the wholeness of the archetype or guiding idea or imagination as it relates to and is contained within the various parts – and what this may reveal to us of the lake shoreline, as well as its relation to the oceanic shoreline and to the human being, will be attempted, at least in (wholistic) part, in the chapters to come.

Lake: Mineral

The quantity and quality of the plant and animal life that live and grow near the lakeside is itself an indication of the mineral kingdom that is present in the area (as well as, of course, other things, such as the water element.)

In many ways, the mineral kingdom of this lake is not totally dissimilar to the mineral kingdom of the oceanic shoreline nearby. The sand of the beach and the dunes is similar to that of the lake, although the context in which it exists is completely different. The only real reminder of the sand as it occurs in the context of the beach shoreline can be found in the bunkers of the nearby golf course. At the lake shoreline, as well as in the surrounding parklands and playing fields, the mineral kingdom is held in place by and supports the growth of a prolific amount of grass. Moving closer to the lake we pass through shrubs, larger trees, bushes, sedges, reeds, grasses and so on, all the while getting a clearer look at the relatively darker sand beneath and between these plants. We may also of course cross or walk along a bituminised path or, on the other side of the lake, one covered in limestone sands (or, now, concrete), also reminding us of our beach shoreline. Looking to the dark 'bed' of the lake itself, especially as it empties or fills, or is completely drained of water, we can have another experience of the lakeside mineral kingdom.

Water from the surrounding area finds its way here through a series of natural and man-made water courses. When there are heavy rains, such as we had in 2021 (on the day of writing this, lake level read 1.84 metres), then the lake will of course begin to fill. During the dryer months, the lake may completely dry out, leaving a lake bed that is first dark and muddy, but that then dries out and cracks into more angular forms of grey colour. The dryness brings angular forms to the otherwise relatively rounded edges of the lake (mirroring the rounded forms of water droplets itself), which can remind us of the angular forms of the limestone at the beach shoreline as opposed to the more rounded forms of granite which we see more of in the hills of Perth. The last area to dry out, and therefore the deepest area, is at the southern end of the lake. When (and if) the water of the lake has receded, the grasses and other small shrubs of the lake bed grow and proliferate towards the edges of the deepest and most central areas in the southern part of the lake, where only the cracked ground and dead tree stumps may remain.

When the first rains come again and (if the lake has dried out) puddles begin to form, what is buried in the ground comes to life once more (such as grasses, insects and so on, but more on this later), so that what seemed dead and lifeless now reveals itself as having been a holding space for patient life. This 'death' polarity of the lake during the summer months most replicates what we have already observed at the beach shoreline, where the dead and lifeless mineral kingdom is at home, and so often plays host to the same (such as dead plant and animal material that washes ashore). Here however, on the lake shoreline, what may become lifeless and dead will not remain that way, but will swing to the complete opposite polarity of life; the lake shoreline contains the seeds for this life even within its greatest outer expression of lifelessness. The mineral kingdom forms a foundation for this activity. It shifts from hydrated, dark and muddy, to dehydrated, lighter, cracked and dry over

the course of the year (moreso after years of reduced rainfall). The beach sand also moves from hydrated to dehydrated, but does this in relation to each wave, on a daily basis with the tide, monthly with the course of the moon, and annually according to the seasons. The beach-sand shoreline is forever shifting as the other elements work into the earthly element and shift the mineral kingdom. The shoreline (or 'waterline') of the lake is determined almost exclusively by water, with the mineral kingdom barely moving at all. Perhaps we could also say that the shoreline and its mineral movements is to the lake what the coastal shoreline is to the ocean as a 'global lake'. That is, what appears to us on the beach to be a large shifting of the mineral kingdom on the shoreline is actually – if we were to perceive, from high above, the whole global ocean lake – only what amounts to the gentle lapping of the water on the lake's edge.

In a global 'lake,' however, there is, of course, much more activity taking place (or on scales), including in relation to the mineral kingdom. Here at Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, there is relatively little mineral movement, other than what the water element carries into the lake. There are no great oceanic currents here, and no 'tidal' movements that I have observed. The mineral kingdom here is the vessel, the container, which the water element fills, taking on its shape, which gives it its Noongar name (or one interpretation of which that I have heard) when seen from above.[17] Here we have a low point in the landscape, as the oceans of the world reveal a low-point in the landscape of the globe. Historically, I imagine this place would have looked somewhat different – other works have touched on this.[18] Suffice it to say, the waterways and wetlands as a whole of the Perth area have undergone considerable change at the hands of non-Aboriginal Australians. The destruction of the river mouth (destroying limestone) and the dredging of the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River, together with the 're-claiming' of land have altered the 'organism' of this whole area, including the lakes of the wetlands ecosystem. Western agriculture, industry, housing and other building have also added their stamp to this particular place (the history of which is relatively accessible), including a now-filled-in rubbish tip to the north-east of the lake.

What confronts us when we approach the lake today is the result of all of these and other impacts upon the whole of the landscape organism of this place, and all that lives here. The mineral kingdom is equally affected, though in what ways may not always be so readily accessible to our sense-perception – we may require more technical devices or historical records or oral stories to observe and understand quantitative and qualitative changes to this place over time. What confronts us today, however, especially at the wettest time of the year, is a lake shoreline full of life, with a mineral kingdom that plays host to all of it – seemingly porous on the one hand to the plants and animals that live on and grow out of it (as well as the water, air and light and warmth that interact with it from above), and on the other hand to the deeper layers where other life may exist and where the water (and other elements in

[17] See the oral storytelling and cultural tours of Noongar Elder Dr Noel Nannup.
[18] Including Denise Cook, *That Was my Home: Voices from the Noongar Camps in Fremantle and the Western Suburbs*, UWA Press, Perth, 2019.

their ways) may continue to seep through, going further down, until the summer months when the lake (in years of reduced rainfall at least) will dry out again from the surface and the edges of the water towards the centre of the southern area and the depths.

The whole movement is like a breathing process, connected to the water, which reveals the mineral kingdom of the shoreline in a particular way. The process moves out from and back into its lowest point, its advance smoothed over by rains and water flowing in, its retreat marked by a gradually drying and evaporating process. All the while, the mineral kingdom of the lake remains relatively still, moved only by the water it hosts, and the air and light and warmth that dries it and sometimes blows upon it. In the summer months the mineral kingdom and lake as a whole (especially when it dries out) is more a picture of the ‘death’ pole related to the nerve-sense processes of the human being, which rely on death processes to carry out their tasks in relation to consciousness. In the wetter months, the whole picture is more one of the life polarity relating to processes of growth, metabolism, digestion and reproduction expressed in the human metabolic-digestion system, where there is also a kind of limb-like reaching to the polarity – to the extremity of the lake. In the case of the mineral kingdom of this lake we could say that the life element is always there, but in a way it almost becomes surrounded by the bright, light-filled, airy, nerve-sense elements of the summer months, which encroaches upon it from the periphery, with the life polarity seeming to give way when (and if) the lake completely dries out. But even then the grasses of the lake bed are ready to grow, and the eggs of insects and other invertebrates lie in wait. In relation to the mineral kingdom, it is almost as if the human being stands fully upright here with feet in the lake in winter, spreading out and around, head in the light of the winter sun; only to gradually coil back into itself and crouch down again, covering the body with arms and head resting on top of all come the summer months (when the hard surface of the lake may remind us of the human head), the whole human crouching, almost as if in seed form, waiting to uncurl again.

Lake: Plants

As mentioned in the previous section, one of the first things we are struck by on approaching this or other lake shorelines is the abundance of plant life. Approaching from the east of the lake we first encounter, for instance, very large peppermint trees, large plane trees (conspicuous in their European-ness through lack of leaves in the cooler months), very large gums, large bottlebrushes, a large Moreton Bay fig, a couple of illyarrie, large paperbarks and so on; from the south (and in other places to the east and north), Moreton Bay figs, Norfolk pines, she-oaks, a plane tree; from the west, tuart trees, more paperbarks, she-oaks and other melaleucas; from the north, she-oaks, a couple of pines, palms and large gums; with large peppermints and native pines throughout the golf course to the south east. Of course, many other trees can also be found, but already here we find ourselves amidst a different horizon than the one we encountered at the beach shoreline. Everywhere we look, even amongst so much cleared land, we find it is the green of treetops that meet the sky, and not a flat, oceanic horizon line.

Amidst the larger trees we also find many smaller trees and shrubs, including numerous acacias, grevilleas, hakeas, banksias, melaleucas, she-oaks, cypress trees, basket bush, as well as coastal daisybush, guichenotia, fan flowers, berry saltbush, vines (such as native wisteria), some very large zamias to the west, and much more. Strikingly, the ground beneath the introduced fig trees is bare of pretty much anything except for fallen leaves, figs and their seeds. This mirrors somewhat the cleared land of the golf course, playing fields, and old rubbish-tip areas. Considerable revegetation has happened in places through the work of local 'friends of' volunteers, mostly on the eastern edge of the lake, and in pockets on the northern side. The area that *seems* to be the most 'untouched,' is to the north west of the lake where paperbarks lie at the lake's edge, with tuarts, zamias, hakeas, banksias, grevilleas, parrot bush and other trees lining the side of a small hill up to a little ridge further to the west (that houses a sculpture relatively concealed by overgrown vegetation). This area of trees, bushes and shrubs seems a bit more 'biodiverse' than the areas around the large fig trees or, of course, the monocrop and monochrome grasses of the cleared areas of land.

Revegetated shrubs tumble their way along the east side down towards the water, while on the west side there are she-oaks, cypress trees, paperbarks, and other melaleucas (which can flower profusely, including during early December, 2022). In general, the trees and bushes near the lake's edge on the west side (especially the north west) may be slightly larger than the many shrubs on the east (except for the much larger figs, scattered gums, paperbarks, and so on). Where there are figs (and sometimes large gums) – that is, the largest trees of the lake shoreline – they are, generally speaking, accompanied by relatively small shrubbery. Where there are no large figs (or gums), the smaller trees and shrubs appear, again, generally speaking, to be somewhat larger in size than plants that accompany the figs and large gums.

On the eastern edge, amongst the fan flowers, but elsewhere on the lake too, there is also sword sedge, being the first of the stem-like plants (parallel veined

monocotyledons), other than the grass of the sports fields, that we might see. Moving inward towards the lake from the fig trees in the north-east area, we also find further banksias, paperbarks and other melaleucas. From these areas inwards we come to still finer stem-like monocotyledons such as rushes. On the eastern edge, there is a small plant that grows on the lakeside of the rushes (i.e. on the lake bed itself) which turns from green to pink to almost red. And in the area most internal to the lake, we have grasses which go from a golden yellow in the warmer months when/if the lake is dry (fanning out and dancing under the breeze); a shining, shimmering green after the earlier rains; and are completely submerged during a wet year such as 2021, providing food and nest sources for swans, coots, hens, ducks and so on.

(Much fungus can also be found around the lake after a substantial period of rain, especially where there are areas of rotting dead wood, or on the base of dead trees. Mushrooms have the appearance of a root system rising above the ground – a plant without leaves or real flowers; they are a kind of 'blossoming' root system,[19] and speak to us of a nerve-sense system that has risen above ground, feeding not on light [as other plans do] but on dead and decaying matter. [Grohmann has pointed out that mushrooms open towards the ground, while flowers open upwards towards the skies].[20] Such is the relative life of this shoreline – even the usually and somewhat 'dead' [relative to the life of the metabolic/limb/reproductive polarity] root system, akin to the human nerve-sense system, seeks to grow and flourish above ground at the lake.)

Needless to say, there are also other plants present, and more could be said about them. But what even an initial survey such as this reveals is that what we find here, at the lake shoreline, in terms of plant life, is similar to what we also find stemming out from the beach shoreline, though with greater variety and in a much more condensed form. Bearing in mind, again, the introduced nature of many plants but that the conditions in which they can thrive are, to a degree, somewhat 'constant' (and, in many ways, conditions are what we are largely concerned with here), we can say that what unfolds over a large area of land at the beach shoreline, culminating in large trees such as tuarts hundreds of metres away in North Fremantle closer to the river (or, extended, runs further inland, reaching, in some ways, a crescendo in the Darling Scarp of the hills) – all of this we find also in the shoreline of Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, though in the space of a dozen and not hundreds of metres.

As an image, therefore, in relation to plant life, the beach shoreline reveals to us an area of nerve-sense activity which is much larger when compared to the lake shoreline – that is, the human being of the oceanic shoreline has a much larger head than the human being of the lake shoreline, who has a smaller head, but a much larger metabolic-digestive area. Indeed, the water level may even tempt us to conclude that there is very little nerve-sense activity at all at the lake, though there

remains the tendency towards this polarity nonetheless, including in the dry areas and the forms of grasses, rushes and sedges, and what we can also observe in the animals, which we will come to in a moment.

The lake shoreline therefore presents us, in terms of vegetative plant life, an image of the human being with a head area (relatively small) nearer the centre of the lake very rapidly moving into a rhythmic system of lung and heart, and also rapidly into a metabolic-digestive and limb system in the larger trees. This picture can be seen, in terms of plant life, both as the human being lying down, but also inverted vertically – that is, standing on its head – or, perhaps to be more accurate, as a kind of diagonal appearance, somewhere between horizontal and vertical, as the appearance of plant life itself appears.

It is perhaps worth re-emphasising the changing nature of the plant life of this particular location, and of all of Whadjuk and Noongar country since colonisation began. The impact of this human-ecological-social process has, of course, also been felt by everything else we are considering here, including the plants. We can recognise this and see the historical dimensions of it even in what confronts us when we approach the plant life of the lake today which reveals this temporal story out of its own existence and the contexts in which we find it. This is a reality that our observations themselves can reveal. We shall touch on this further as we carry on with the rest of our observations, and will come more closely to the matter when we look at human activity at the lake – all of which can also, again, be seen as seeds for a more explicit observation of social life.

In all of these considerations we may be tempted, as you perhaps already have been by the considerations of the previous sections, to ponder, especially as the water level rises and falls throughout the course of the year, what actually constitutes the shoreline. My colleague Horst Kornberger has said that rivers are still rivers even when they are dry.[21] What of shorelines when rivers or lakes are dry? We can perhaps continue to hold this as an open question for now. Briefly, at this point, reflecting on the etymology of the word ‘shoreline,’ we are directed to the noun *shore* and find its meaning generally as we have been considering it as the meeting of land and water, stemming from the Proto-Germanic PIE root *Sker* which means ‘to cut.’ We also find that most other Indo-European languages have many words for land bordering water, while English has but this one. And in it we also find the verb *shore* which means to prop – to support with a prop – which in turn can be used as a noun – “for temporary support of something” – which is, in another sense, how we have also been using it here.[22] (As to the location of the shoreline we can perhaps then say it is as much ‘out there’ as it is within consciousness, the one acting as a prop to help us shore up our understanding of the other.)

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[21] Horst Kornberger, presentation at ‘Rivers of Emotion Symposium, University of Western Australia, October 24, 2012.

[22] “Shoreline” in Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/word/shoreline accessed April 21, 2022.

In any case, the water and land line (or cut) of the beach or the lake or the river is not a stagnant one, and in a certain sense will never be found to be in the same place as previously, especially if we also factor into the expression of the shoreline the many varied components as we have been considering here, none less so than animal life, which we shall turn to now.

Lake: Birds

When we approach the lake from, say, the east, in the morning perhaps, with the sun at our backs, with our eyes we might first notice the various trees that confront us. But if we were to close our eyes, or at least give more attention to the world of sounds, we would immediately be struck by the large range of birdsong all around us. The first sounds we hear could be the high-pitch screech of the rainbow lorikeet – an introduced species from the eastern states. This small, brightly-coloured bird has a very loud and raucous scream, especially when they gather in numbers. We might also hear some of the familiar birds of Whadjuk Noongar country, including the short sharp but more musical chirping of the ring-neck/twenty-eight parrot, and the also high but somewhat more melodious sounds of the mudlark, or the calamitous long squawk of the white cockatoos, often in the fig trees (but also landing on dead logs in the lake's centre before shuffling down towards the water to drink; once I saw one almost land on a coot), the short and sharp squawk of the pink and grey galah, the sweet, rich and melodious song of he magpie, the sly and deeper loquacity of the crow, the short-sharp attack of the butcherbird, the chiddy-chiddy of the willy wagtail, as well as the kaa-kaa of the introduced kookaburra, and so on. All of these birds reside in the trees surrounding the lake. (If we were to consult Noongar language resources on bird names, we would also get a feel for the way in which Noongar names resemble the sounds the birds express [and through this, a different layer of their nature may become possible to observe], whereas the English names generally point more to what the bird *looks* like.)

We may even find the sonorous yet higher-pitch cries and shrieks of the white-tailed black cockatoo, or red-tailed black cockatoo. These larger birds need larger trees to feed from, and will move through this area as part of larger flight paths. We may even find some of the waterbirds of the lake venturing up into the cleared land of the golf course and surrounds, such as the purple swamp hen, the (especially if there is water in the lake) Australian shelduck, the wood duck the Australian white Ibis, as well as the straw-necked ibis. All of these birds also have their own sound (revealed in their Noongar names) – the shelduck gives out a kind of high honk, the ibis sounds somewhat similar but with less of a quack, the swamphen seems to summon up a horn-honk from the depths of its being (and the earth itself) and blurts it out for all to hear.

As we approach the lake itself, we may, depending on the time of the year and on the year itself, encounter a great variety (or not) of other birds. Many of the birds already mentioned will be found here year-round, and will be here even if not many waterbirds come in a particular year. The swamp hen remains at the lake the whole year, roaming its edges. After a lot of rain in 2021, there was not initially a great variety or number of birds at the lake; as the warmer months approached, however, the birds swelled in number and variety (then, as the water receded, especially from the northern part of the lake, the bird numbers became very condensed in the southern part of the lake; they remained this way until rain came again early April 2022, when bird numbers and varieties began to decrease again, presumably with a larger option of water elsewhere). One bird that did reappear with

the first rains was the coot (his close relative the dusky moorhen will not usually be seen as often or in as high numbers; but he has been seen in greater numbers [dozens] at the lake early to mid April 2022, especially to the east of the gazebo area). Both these small black birds (the former with a white nose, the latter with red when breeding), give out high-pitched squeaks, though nowhere near as high as the lorikeets. We may also see the Australiasian grebe at the lake, which can resemble a young coot, both diving under the water in similar ways. We will also find the small welcome swallow darting and chirping (a very high chirp) from time to time as it circles, sometimes in great numbers (including on April 18, 2022) in the air above the lake, sometimes rushing and falling again, catching (presumably) invertebrates of some kind. The slightly more reclusive buff-banded rail with its colourful bronze bands can be found on occasion in or near the rushes and sedges at the eastern edge of the lake near the viewing area (I have also seen it just to the south east of the gazebo at a 'bend' in the lake shoreline, as well as just west of the gazebo, and on the western edge of the southern part of the lake opposite the viewing area to the east), sometimes making a sound like chalk scraping down a blackboard and jumping spots. Another bird that can appear flitting amongst these rushes in flashes of rusted brown rufous is the reed warbler; I have also seen several spotless crakes at the edges of grasses and rushes on this same eastern edge, as well as, I believe, a grassbird.

Then we may come across the black-winged stilts and red-necked avocets who walk the shallower edge of the waters (barking like small dogs), together with the two ibis varieties we have already touched on, as well as black-fronted dotterels near the gazebo area in the western area of the lake (on occasion chirping together in a circle, with the sound reminiscent of their walking gait), or on the western edge of the southern part of the lake. Then we may encounter the great variety of ducks who visit this lake, such as the shelduck already mentioned (by far the largest of the ducks), as well as the wood duck also with a resonant deep quack, the Pacific black duck (a slightly higher quack), the Australian shoveler, the pink-eared duck which sits lower and longer on the water (seen with chicks as late in the year as mid March in 2022, when there was still considerable water in the southern part of the lake), the blue-billed duck which dives under water, and the grey teal (the quacks of which are somewhat similar, perhaps getting slightly higher as the size of the bird decreases). From time to time we might even see the slightly larger chestnut teal with the green head, or the musk duck which 'sits low' on the water, dives down and swims for long periods underwater with a tail similar to a cormorant (the only duck here besides the blue-billed duck which I have observed here diving underwater [on October 22, 2022 I observed the musk duck dive under water and come up underneath a Pacific black duck which flew, startled and quacking to the nearby land at the southern edge of the lake]; though on May 11, 2022 I, for the first time, also observed a shoveller twice diving under the water, though apparently not looking for food but rather as part of cleaning itself, which it commenced to do upon returning to the surface; I have also seen a shoveller diving at Bibra Lake).

Towards the centre of the lake, but still in water shallow enough to reach the grasses or reeds below is the black swan. The swan is by far the biggest bird to grace Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, and has by far the deepest honking sound when it wishes to make it (seen mating in south west coroner of the lake in front of the jetty on March 19, 2022, prefaced by the ritual dance of overlapping necks diving down – this occurred at a time before the usual mating season but when plenty of water was left in the lake from the year before; two were also seen, unusually, on May 25, 2022, on the grass area in front of the viewing area on the eastern side – no swamphen was present at the time). (As a side note, in the warmer months of 2020-21 the cygnets seemed to have grown their wings just long enough, with just the right amount of water remaining in the lake, for them to be able to take off and move somewhere else before the lake dried out; the picture that, for me, emerged from this was that of the water of the lake receding, in a way, *into* the formation of the wings of the swan, until there was just the right amount of length to both wings and water for them to take off and leave; in 2021-22, however, the lake did not dry out, and the newborn swans did not appear to leave the lake at all.) The pelican may also alight here from time to time but I have never seen one on the lake (I saw one flying above the lake on the morning of April 6, 2022, flying north to south, circling the lower part of the lake three times, then heading further south in the direction of the river). Nor have I seen the large eagle above (both of which I have observed circling above other lakes south of Perth, including, on February 20, 2022, at the Spectacles, where paperbarks grow within the water area), though there is the swamp harrier with brown tinge that seems to launch and land from more sheltered areas in the north east of the lake, gliding with wide brown wings as it does so, though often harassed by magpies and crows (this attacking/anger action appears to be a kind of ‘speak-like’ gesture) – when the harrier (or other perceived threats/raptors) flies over, the ducks, coots, stilts and other birds will usually scatter in unison (this fear response appears to be a ‘contracting’ gesture), but often also convening in general species groups, to another part of the lake, including the centre (in 2022 the harrier seemed to reappear at the lake at the transition from the hotter towards the cooler months [bunuru-djeran]). The same phenomena may also take place with the smaller raptor the Australian hobby. In that northern area of the lake, especially after heavy rains, but with still enough land to move around on, I have also seen the egret and even the western spoonbill. (In the shallows near the gazebo I have also seen the spoonbill looking for food, sweeping back and forth like the shoveller or a metal detector, flipping up sand when something is found.) In that same area I have also seen the sacred kingfisher, with blue wings swooping low overhead. In the wet year of 2021-22, the nankeen night heron also took up residence for a time on the eastern edge of the lake, fishing from the reeds and grassy areas. I have also seen a black-shouldered kite in trees in the western corner on one occasion, as well as two ospreys on dead logs in the northern part of the lake near the gazebo in early December, 2021; this is where I also saw the long, spear-like darter in the month of February, 2022, as well as white-faced herons on a number of occasions.

Occasionally, too, seagulls will also be present, swimming or landing on dead logs or arriving in larger numbers when the first rains appear (we will touch on one observation of this in the next section). (I have also observed, on April 9, 2022, a single seagull harass and scatter a whole flock of black-winged stilts; while on September 17, 2022 I observed a flock of seagulls high above the ground dive-bombing a raptor of some sort.)

In the more densely treed area to the north and west there are also a number of smaller birds such as the blue splendid fairywren and other fairywrens (as well as scrubwrens), grey fantails, as well as a range of other smaller birds which I have not spent so much time locating or observing, but my assumption would be that there would also be the New Holland honeyeater and the singing honeyeater, as well as, possibly, thornbills or weebills. (I have also seen smaller birds elsewhere around the lake, including in the larger trees near the eastern edge where I have spent most time; these include silvereyes in the flowering paperbark by the eastern viewing area on April 18, 2022.) Again, I have not spent as much time observing in the northern section of the lake and, where the water birds are generally on display for all to see, as are the larger tree birds, these smaller scrub and brush birds are much more fleetingly glimpsed, though we can still hear their highest and 'chirpiest' of all bird sounds.

We can also approach the world of birds in terms of colours. The larger birds of the lake threshold such as the swan and the ibis have two main colours – black and white, but the colours are somewhat inverted in relation to each other. The harrier is mostly brown and white. The swamp hen appears black on first look but comes also with blues and purples, and a red beak. The coot and moorhen are mostly black, the ducks are a mix of muted combinations of colours, including the stripes of the pink-eared duck which also remind us of the buff-banded rail, but also have flashes of brighter colours such as the green of the underwing of the Pacific black duck, for instance, the blue of the blue-billed duck, the green neck and orange underbelly and feet of the shoveller, the pink ear of the namesake duck, the green head of the chestnut teal, and so on. The wagtail (and herons and stilts) are also mostly two colours. Some of the smaller birds are more diverse in colour (such as the New Holland Honeyeater), and some are incredibly bright (such as the splendid fairywren); such brightness also occurs in other varieties of small birds (such as scarlet robins, golden whistlers and the like) in drier or more forested areas of the state.

(We can also note that the young of the swamp hen, various ducks, the coot, swans and so on are often muted in colour. The swamp hen, for instance, will remain a black colour, with black beak almost until it is fully grown – only then does it begin to take on the purple and blue feathers and red beak of the adult hen. Here we notice the colour aspect also in a temporal way within bird and other animal life, pointing to a kind of 'embodied light' aspect of the psychological or consciousness activity of the animals which only comes to more complete expression later in life. In the plant kingdom, however, this really only comes to expression in the flowering processes, suggesting that this light activity (and the psychological aspect it relates

to) is not embodied in the same way as in the animals but visits the plant as if from ‘without’ – from outside the plant. In the plant this is also a temporal expression of maturing processes which occur later in the plant’s development – when reproduction becomes possible. In the plant, therefore, we have light and colour as if from outside, coming and then going again in the temporal processes of flower growth and decay; in the animal, this becomes embodied permanently in the colour of feathers and beaks etc. What visits the single plant from outside every season – its light-filled consciousness [attracting with it bees and birds and insects] – is embodied in one process in the life of the single animal.)

We could also say some things about the relationship of some birds to others. Ducks, for instance, on the shoreline edge, will move for the swamp hen when it comes running through chasing another swamp hen; swamp hens will also scatter coots from their area; the coot fight one another and put tails up (I observed one male attack a female and that female's mate then stepped in and they fought with claws, with the female behind her mate); swans also raise feathers behind them when challenging one another; the coot intimidates the black duck and the wood duck, as well as the black-winged stilt, but not the shelduck; I have seen the shelduck (with three chicks) scatter the white ibis, Pacific black duck, the grey teal and the purple swam hen on a grassy area; the stilt walks through the black duck, wood duck and shelduck without issue, and will scatter the dotterel from its area; I have seen a Pacific black duck push beaks together with another Pacific black duck until one of them capitulated; I have, again, seen a single seagull scatter a whole flock of stilts; the swans and the stilts seem to happily occupy the same area; sometimes the coot or black ducks will move for a flapping or landing swan; the black duck (as well as the coot) allows the pink-eared duck to occupy the same log as it does; while willy wagtails and mudlarks will harass and chase a kookaburra (a mudlark also swooped me and several others on several occasions around October 2, 2022 near the eastern viewing area – it may have had a nest in the eucalyptus tree nearby – while a butcher bird swooped the mudlark); I have also seen a wagtail harass a swamp hen on the eastern water’s edge on Dec 10, 2022; a reed-warbler might swoop a wagtail; I’ve also seen wagtails harass a reed warbler until it retreated back into the reeds; a rail will chase a crake, with one rail seen ‘puffing’ its wings as it did so; magpies will chase cockatoos (I have also seen, on December 7, 2022 a magpie hassel two pink and grey galahs on the ground near the eastern edge carpark); a swamp hen might shoo a reed warbler; and crows and magpies will chase raptors. Very generally, therefore, it would seem that many birds will fight within species; the coot will fight larger birds, but not the shelduck or swan or the swamp hen; otherwise all birds of around the same size seem mostly to get along, and will generally defer to birds of a larger variety, though larger birds are sometimes harassed by smaller birds, who either respond by a kind of shooing or by departing; the coot seems to be the biggest 'challenger'; then we have the magpie and crow who attack raptors who, in turn, will kill smaller birds. Issues seem mostly to arise in relation to mating (within species), or when food-gathering or nesting areas overlap

with other birds (between species), or when birds (including chicks) are seen as prey.

So what can we make of this plethora of bird life around the lake, including where we might find them, their colour and form, as well as the various songs they express? It is worth noting that, at the beach shoreline, we do not find anywhere near the variety of birds as we find here at the lake. No doubt this also has to do with the quality of water, which we will come to later, but we can also say, as we have looked at in the previous section, that we also do not find such an abundance of plant and tree life at the oceanic shoreline as we do here. Some birds come for the water, others find their homes within the trees. (I saw on March 1, 2022 the crow by the mud of the retreating water's edge; at one point he tried to follow the black-winged stilt and the grey teal and got his feet all muddied and stuck; he looked down at them then jumped onto a stick instead – his feet are not webbed like the teal, nor are they as splayed as the much lighter stilt.) Others still, such as kanamit the welcome swallow, are more often in the skies (with nests in sheltered places such as the gazebo structure).

We can again consider the relationship of all birds to the nerve-sense processes of the human being – that all birds are very much ‘awake’ with all their senses, have extraordinary powers of sight and of hearing, can be very fast in their movements and are very much at home in the air, though they also have the ability to ‘touch down’ in trees or on water or land. They take in either vegetable or meat or insect foods and, with little digestive processes, expel their unassimilated waste/faees in an almost liquid form. They are, in short, awake, nerve-sense, ‘heady’ animals. But, within this, as we have touched on at the oceanic shoreline, there are a variety of gradations (some more nerve-sense, some more rhythmic, some more metabolic) at home in different parts of the lake shoreline.

Generally, and depending on water levels, the swan – the largest of all birds – is found more towards the centre of the lake. This large bird is much slower in movements, is not as easily scared and can be more approachable (especially in other locations), and we are reminded of its deep song. I would be tempted to describe the swan as more metabolic in quality within the overall nerve-sense realm of birds. But, within the metabolic realm of the birds, I would also say the swan is not as metabolic-digestive as the pelican, and not as nerve-sense as the eagle or (elsewhere) the peacock, for instance. I would call it a rhythmic bird within the metabolic birds, here occupying more the deeper waters of the lake where it builds its nests high to stay above the water, using its neck to bring the deeper parts of the lake to the surface, flying at times (indeed, in this sense, we may even be reminded of the dolphin [as we will explore more later], though in the swan the activity is somewhat inverted – that is, it lives in the sky and air but reaches down into the water, rather than the other way around). (Additionally, it may be worth noting that on one occasion I overheard a conversation about the coot having to make up for its lack of a long neck by diving down – that is, what the swan achieves below ground with its neck the coot achieves by diving down. The depths that are easy for the metabolism-digestion need to be 'striven for' by the rhythmic system; the swan does

this rhythmically, and the coot in somewhat of a 'nervous' manner.) I would call the ibis, that wades the edges of the lake and beyond, also metabolic-digestive in polarity, but more nerve-sense within this spectrum, with its long beak digging down, especially into the cracks in the mud for food when the first rains have come, and with its call slightly higher than the swan. The swamp harrier and hobby, as well as the herons, I would also call nerve-sense oriented within the metabolic sphere. The swamphen on the lake edge I would call more rhythmic overall, but with metabolic tendencies, walking as they do, colourful as they are, and boisterous as is their song. The swamphen is the rhythmic guardian of the lake shoreline year round (it is always present at the lake, even when all other birds have gone), as much as the seagull is the guardian of the beach shoreline. The black cockatoos I would also call more rhythmic overall but with metabolic tendencies, being as large as they are but also kind of ‘sleepy,’ and never moving all that fast, such as the raptors might. The cockatoos, while similar in quality, occupy a different area of the landscape organism to the swamphen – where earth meets sky rather than where earth meets water. The ducks I would also call rhythmic overall, and then again rhythmic within this (though ranging across a spectrum), balancing in form, size, colour, song tone and position within the lake (they also move rhythmically from centre to edge). I would also place the magpie within this central position of rhythmic within the rhythmic birds. The crow, again, I would also place alongside the magpie, but with slightly more cunning nerve-sense qualities within this, while the white cockatoo I would also place next to the magpie but with slightly more metabolic tendencies, so therefore in the direction of the black cockatoos, but not quite so far. (Thus we find, of the birds that live more in the trees, the magpie in the central position in a similar way to the sun is within the planets, with the crow, while occupying a similar rhythmic quality, slightly towards the nerve-sense polarity, and the white cockatoo, also occupying a similar rhythmic quality, slightly towards the metabolic; with even the colours of the magpie seen, perhaps, as a coming together of the white and dark of these other two birds.) The pink and grey galah is probably somewhere near the white cockatoo, while the mudlark, the stilts, the coot, the moorhen, the grebes, the crake and the buff-banded rail are probably rhythmic with more nerve-sense tendencies within the rhythmic realm. Within the nerve-sense birds, the one with the most digestive-metabolic tendencies I would say is the willful willy wagtail, prepared to fight with anybody; with those with the more rhythmic tendencies being the New Holland honeyeater, the singing honeyeater and all the colourful birds of the scrub including the fairywrens, and possibly also the dotterels; with those with the most nerve-sense tendencies being the welcome swallow as well as the smaller thornbills, weebills, possibly the silver eyes and reed warblers, and so on.

We can see from this very brief and general synopsis that many of the most colourful birds occupy the rhythmic category either within the nerve-sense (the colourful scrub birds such as the wrens, but also including, perhaps, the lorikeets), rhythmic (all the ducks as well as the magpie – but also across the whole rhythmic realm such as the buff-banded rail, the spotless crake, the galahs, the mudlark, the swamphen and so on), or metabolic-digestive realms (the swan is actually three

different colours). (To this we can perhaps also add the observation that it is often the rhythmic part of the bird – the chest in particular – which is so often colourful, be they purely rhythmic birds, or rhythmic birds within the metabolic or nerve-sense realms.)

'Vertically' speaking, the larger birds seem to either rest on the water's surface, on nests, or on the lake's edge (with some, at times, resting in trees or dead logs, such as the harrier, the spoonbill, the kite, the osprey, the darter); while often flitting above, at various heights, is the welcome swallow. The swan and the swamphen do not fly too far if they do take off. Regularly coming in to land and taking off again are the ducks, white cockatoo, the seagull, the coot, the stilts. Those flying across without landing are, again, the more mid-sized birds, but those tending towards nerve-sense qualities, as well as nerve-sense birds such as the willy wagtail. From this brief survey of bird flight and resting activity, we could say that, in terms of bird life at the lake, we have a picture, generally speaking, of the human being standing upright, with the more metabolic-digestive qualities closer to the lake's surface (and, in a way, underneath the surface as the swan dives down), with the head in the area that the swallow occupies, sometimes very close down when the lake is dry, sometimes very high up when it is full, with the middle area occupied by all the rhythmic birds of the lake, swimming and coming and going through the air. (We can also say that the welcome swallow, darting across the surface of the lake or higher up, often turning in ever-widening circles, moves at the speed of thought; while the swan, gradually tipping 90 degrees to reach the reeds below the surface to slowly pluck them up and build its nest, moves more at the speed of digestion. In some ways we could say that the welcome swallows are the thoughts of the lake expressed, while the swan is the lake's very digestion. At the same time we can notice, on some days – particularly when the lake is full – that the swamp hen moves generally rhythmically – though sometimes running, sometimes stopping – to higher ground beyond the shoreline such as the golf course where he is, in a sense, an extension of the rhythmic border – the rhythmic system – of the lake itself, while on other days he walks across the very middle of its dry or almost-dry surface. In this way a similar picture appears as the one above, and also suggests the way in which the speed or movement of the birds [other birds could also be observed in this way; in this case we have merely indicated 'representatives' of the nerve-sense, rhythmic and metabolic realms respectively] reveals also their place within the organism of the lake as a whole, as well as their relationship to the human being.)

'Horizontally' speaking we can observe the large swan in the lake's centre, the rhythmic ducks in the middle region, together with the coots and moorhens, and then the more nerve-sense-orientated rhythmic birds (stilts, rails, mudlark/magpie-larks, crakes, grebes) and nerve-sense-orientated metabolic birds (the ibis, herons, egrets), but also the more purely nerve-sense birds such as the the wagtail and reed warblers at the water's edge and beyond it onto dryer land. From the water to the edge of the lake, in relation to the birds, we therefore have a picture of the human being lying down with feet in the centre and head at the edge of the lake, with a more rhythmic area in between. From the nerve-sense shoreline further onto the land the

birds again increase into the rhythmic realm of the larger birds (together with the larger trees) in many places, although there are also a variety of smaller birds to the north, then growing increasingly metabolic (such as the cockatoos). We therefore can say we have a preliminary picture – or another picture-in-outline – in which the human being lies down with feet in the centre of the lake and head at the shoreline mirroring another human being on the land – that is, with heads touching (or at least close) at the moving watery shoreline, with a rhythmic area in the water as well as another on the land comprised of the birds of the surrounding trees, and metabolic-digestive-limb area reaching inland to the larger birds (such as the red- and white-tailed cockatoos), and going on to the pelican by the river, or the emu even further inland (and which, we can imagine, would have once frequented this same area).

(A final word on/to the ducks: Ducks are so often migratory birds – that is, birds of the rhythmic system migrating – breathing in and out – across the horizontal landscape. In some ways they are a landscape's lungs, extending on air currents to the extreme edges of the landscape. During 2021, when it was so wet and so cold, it took a long time for the ducks to return to the lake. The ‘inhale’ took a long time to come back. Perhaps this was also telling us of unusual activity within the rhythmic system – particularly the lungs – of the landscape organism, and possibly also the human organism [and potentially the social organism] at this particular moment in time. [This was also a year of a large number of tropical lows pushing down from the equator – that is, a year of increased humid air or, we could say, air with more water/‘life’ within it]. Yes, this was also the time of the COVID pandemic. [Amidst this year of 2021, at the peak of the water levels, a somewhat solitary diving musk duck appeared, ‘migrating’ as he also does from surface to under the water – turning the usual duck migration 90 degrees and diving down into the depths]).

Lake: Other Animals

Needless to say, the first and potentially overwhelming impression of animal activity at the lake shoreline is that of the bird life. The vast majority of my visits to the lake have occurred during the day, so I have no observations of any nocturnal animal activity. It is likely that there is animal activity around the lake in the night-time, including both native and indigenous animals.

Rabbits (though I have seen no burroughs), foxes, neighbourhood cats and dogs, mice and rats could all potentially be found here, though I have not seen any. Native marsupials could also be present. (A small group of around 15-20 quenda / southwestern brown bandicoots were released into the surrounding lake area in February 2022, with 'burroughs' constructed for their housing. It was not until May 11, 2022, however, that I actually saw a quenda: it was near the grassy section of the shoreline by the viewing area on the eastern edge of the southern part of the lake; there were no swamphens present in this exact location at that moment, only slightly further north. The quenda dug around in the dirt near the water for a time before heading into the sedges and fan flowers higher up the bank. Upon its return to the grasses the swamphen saw it and cautiously approached. The quenda did not seem too concerned, but it did retreat slightly, at which point the swamphen chased after it for a few paces. When the quenda returned again, however, the swamphen seemed to move 'onto the back foot,' appearing somewhat uncertain. The quenda then moved into the fan flowers and sedges, travelling north, where it spooked a reed warbler which flew out into the rushes of the lake. The quenda then re-emerged further to the north, and the swamphen continued in the grassy area where I first saw the quenda. All the while a butcherbird watched on from above, but did not swoop. On May 25, 2022 I also saw a quenda briefly in the same area, with a rail nearby, as well as some Pacific black ducks which either didn't seem to care or notice it.) Likewise there is quite probably a large range of reptiles here, such as blue tongue lizards and various snakes, including dugites and tiger snakes.

But if we are to limit our observations to our actual observations, then I can report (in addition to the quenda sighting above), merely, the following.

In the wetter months, in addition to the sound of birdsong, on approaching the lake it is possible that we will also hear the sound of frogs. This is less obvious at the southern end of the lake, but more so at the northern end of the lake where it is slightly higher and therefore shallower ground with more rushes and dry-land possibilities amongst the wet. Colleagues who record and report frog sounds would have more to say on the different types of frogs at this lake, but it is clear that in the frog itself we have an animal that is very much at home on the threshold – in this case the lake shoreline. The frog begins life in the form of a tadpole, swimming like a fish in water. Later it continues its life as what we call a frog on drier land, but always close to water. (As to whether the frog actually comes from the tadpole, I would direct you to the work of biologist Craig Holdrege.[23]) That is, the frog seems to

[23] Craig Holdrege, *Do Frogs Come from Tadpoles? Rethinking Origins in Development and Evolution*, Nature Institute Perspectives, 2017.

occupy both sides of the shoreline – the wet and the dry, the water and the land – and does so even in the metamorphosis of its own physiological growth/transformation. We have spoken of the seagull and, to an extent, the swamp hen as guardians of these particular shoreline thresholds, but we must also count on the frog as being similar in this sense (as a kind of 'guardian' of the archetypal water-land shoreline or threshold).

Another animal that undergoes a similar metamorphosis is the butterfly, which is also present at the lake, as are moths. Needless to say, therefore, that caterpillars are also present. There are numerous black, hairy caterpillars, relatively large, generally appearing after rains, as well as larger red and white hairy caterpillars. (What I assume to be Portuguese millipedes are also present at the lake.) The butterflies I have seen are generally the more common Australian painted lady and the like (though I did see blue butterflies on the grasses on the east side of the lake on December 11, 2021). I have observed that black hairy caterpillars are sometimes to be found on the ground, and on small shrubs and plants such as fan flowers, three-leaved hakeas or guichenotia (I have also heard they like weeds). The transformation of the caterpillar into a butterfly (or moth) is a transformation from the earth element into the air. The frog moves from water to earth and back again; the caterpillar from earth to air, touching down again on plants when necessary. The butterfly (or moth), we could say, is the guardian of this earth-to-air threshold which, in relation to shorelines, is less horizontal and more vertical. Butterflies and moths also carry this in the metamorphosis of their physiology, as do birds in a certain sense. For birds, however, their transition from being earth-bound to air-bound is less 'transformative' and more part of their observable (and in some ways more linear) developmental journey; while for the caterpillar to the butterfly or moth this happens, in a sense, much more 'foundationally' and behind closed doors. The equivalent would be if the bird, when almost ready to fly, were to go into a larval stage – if it *then* went into an egg stage – and emerged ready to fly or flying. In a certain sense, with the birds, we could say this 'larval' stage unfolds in the environment of the nest, which, in some sense, is a kind of bottom half – a cracked version – of the egg that they earlier emerged from (but, again, the growth journey is more linear than in the butterfly or frog). (I have observed the cracked eggs of the swan lying on the edge of their large nest.) The egg stage of the bird could also be seen as a kind of larval stage, the preceding stage being left to the imagination.

A similar egg process takes place for the long-necked turtles of the lake. I have only seen a handful of turtles at Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, and they have mostly been pointed out to me by others at the time. On most of these occasions they were near the gazebo towards the western edge of the lake. And on these occasions the water was not very deep – the small turtles could be seen moving through the reeds at the base of the lake. In fact, they were more easily spotted by observing the gentle movement of the grasses above the surface of the lake than by looking for them directly. Here too we have an animal that lives both below and above the surface of the water, but is far more active and at home below the surface. It moves out of the water to lay its eggs, with the young emerging from

the egg and quickly moving into the water, reminding us somewhat of the activity of the cygnet, the coot and other water birds that also quickly move into the water, albeit remaining above the surface for the most part. The turtle moves very quickly from earth to water, and tends to stay there until it too lays its eggs. (I saw a dead turtle floating on the water's surface early December, 2021, also near the gazebo; on another occasion, a few weeks earlier, I spoke with researchers from a nearby university who were trapping and counting turtles – they had captured dozens of them over the course of a few days. Near the river at the University of Western Australia, on September 13, 2021, I also came across a small [less than 10cm] turtle on grassland moving away from the river. And on February 27, 2022, between Market Garden Swamp and Boodja Mooliny reserve I observed three turtles in one pond, and one in another [two putting their heads up to look around; one doing so in each pond].)

There are, also, many dogs that appear at the lake shoreline, most of them on the walk paths, and many pulling along their 'owners' on leads behind them. On one morning, however, I spotted a dog running south along the lake edge chasing ducks. It was not having much luck, but the ducks and other water birds didn't seem to be particularly impressed. The dog got gradually muddier as it hit the south end of the lake, but then found it couldn't really travel much further, being somewhat hemmed in by fencing and bushes on one side and water on the other. A friend – Pete – and I, together with a ranger, eventually escorted it out and found its owner. The dog appeared to be part dingo, or at least resembled the dingo. This experience, of course, called to mind the much longer history and more varied animal life that would have visited the shores of this lake, no doubt including the dingo, the kangaroo, the emu, the echidna, the goanna and many more marsupials and reptiles. In terms of the marsupials – unlike the monotremes, birds, reptiles and turtles – the gestation and incubation period takes place not inside the egg but inside the womb. In terms of the kangaroo, for instance, this is continued on into the pouch. In a sense, then, we could say that in the egg we have a kind of externalised womb; in the nest a kind of metamorphosed egg; and in the pouch also a kind of externalised, metamorphosed womb. The dingo and other canines do not have pouches (cats are said to have 'primordial' pouches).

(Mammals such as the kangaroo [but also the koala and the wombat on the east coast, as well as brush-tails, ring-tails, gliders and other possums] have pouches [all of which are diprotodontia – meaning, literally, 'two front teeth'], but so too do *poly*protodontia [meaning, literally, 'many front teeth'] such as the Tasmanian devil and the bandicoot, as well as the monotreme echidna. Animals which make use of nests and eggs, very generally speaking, tend to be what we are calling more nerve-sense animals [including bird life, insects, reptiles, fish, frogs, seahorses {eggs and pouch}, snails – but also, interestingly, the monotremes such as the platypus and, again, the echidna – as well as the turtle and the crocodile which, while perhaps not being so obviously nerve-sense, are perhaps more nerve-sense within the metabolic realm, and are very old or 'primitive' animals – and so on]. While the, also generally speaking, more rhythmic animals, such as canines, do not lay eggs or

have [usable] pouches, they do raise their young with care on teats, for example, and often have large litters. The more metabolic marsupials such as, generally speaking, the diprotodontia, have only one offspring at a time, though sometimes multiple generations can be supported at any time [for example the kangaroo which can support up to three generations – one in the womb, one in the pouch, one feeding from outside the pouch.[24]])

(The polyprotodontia quenda can be seen as an overall nerve-sense marsupial [with the diprotodontia such as wombats and koalas and kangaroos, again, generally being more metabolic], but within this nerve-sense realm of the polyprotodontia the bandicoots are perhaps more metabolic than the more nerve-sense polyprotodontia such as the numbat, or the more rhythmic thylacine or Tasmanian devil.[25] That is, the only quenda I have seen at the lake is a more nerve-sense marsupial but of the metabolic polarity within this nerve-sense area – he walked the water-earth threshold [which, as we have been observing, is a more nerve-sense threshold] of this more metabolic shoreline of the lake.)

The only other animals I've seen at the lake shoreline are bees, flies, mosquitos and other insects. (After the first warm day – 30 degrees – of the season of kambarang on Oct 16, 2021, flying ants could be observed in great numbers, as could an increase in flies; and dragon flies appeared on the lake surface, especially at the south end, with smaller blue ones, and larger grey ones – seemingly dozens or hundreds; spider webs could also be seen at the lake, especially with dew on them in the morning light – in some ways spiders, through their webs, can be seen as 'capturers' of the whole landscape). The bees I have seen have all been of the European variety. Again, as touched on in relation to the beach shoreline, bees are beings of light and of warmth – in many ways, also of social warmth. (For a more thorough exploration of the current bee crisis, see the work of Horst Kornberger.[26]) The bees at Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont are most noticeable on the flowering trees, especially the eucalypts on the western edge of the lake, as well as in paperbarks during their flowering around Easter time. Their soft buzzing hum (or the smell of the nectar they are chasing) is the first thing that usually alerts us to their presence, including their hives. In many ways we can say they are beings of the threshold of air and light, as well as air, light and warmth (again, the temperature of the hive organism is almost identical to that of the human organism).

Flies tend to increase during the summer months, especially if there has been rain around that time, as touched on above. Surprisingly I have only ever seen one mosquito at the lake – though, again, I have generally only been there in the daylight hours, and almost never at sunset or just after.

After the first rains at the end of the hotter months, on April 10, 2021, I once observed a large flock of seagulls alight near the deepest part of the lake where

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[24] Albrecht Schaad, 'The Marsupials' in Wolfgang Schad, *Threefoldness in Humans and Mammals: Toward a Biology of Form*, *Vol 2*, Adonis, NY, 2020, p. 769.
[25] Albrecht Schaad, pp. 723-785.
[26] Horst Kornberger, *Global Hive: What the bee crisis teaches us about building a sustainable world*, School of Integral Art Press, Western Australia, 2012.

water gathers first. In addition, the welcome swallow flitted very close overhead, straw necked and Australian white ibis sank their beaks deep down into the cracks further out from the deepest point, with the swamphen parading round the muddy areas more often in the grasslands. Two shelducks circled then eventually came in to land, with two pacific black ducks eventually doing the same though landing on the water and expecting more of a slide-in entry but pulling up short, while the willy wagtail flitted about, staying mostly on the ground. My assumption from this activity was that the birds were eating insects which had hatched from larvae – insects which had laid dormant in the mud of the lake over the warmer months, now made active through the first rains. (Insects can also be seen *in* the water from the small jetty once the water levels rise high enough to see them – around early September.) In this small snapshot itself, in terms of animal life as a whole, we have a very general picture of the nerve-sense processes near the centre of the lake where the water first gathers (the insects and the welcome swallows), rhythmic processes around this (the seagulls and ducks), and the increasingly metabolic activity at the edges (the swamp hen and the ibis). In this picture of animal life the head lies in the centre, the limbs at the periphery, and the rhythmic system of heart and lungs in between. All of this is brought to life/quickened by the watery element. (It is interesting that at this transition of the lake from death processes to processes of life – at this re-enlivening of the death process – what we have called the 'guardian' of the threshold of the beach shoreline – the nerve-sense and in a way death polarity shoreline – the seagull – should make its appearance here at the lake in great numbers.)

This picture of the human being at the lake shoreline, in relation to animal life, can also be extended (both spatially and temporally) to include the kangaroo and other marsupials, the echidna, the goanna and other reptiles, and other animals that, generally speaking, get larger the more we go inland and the more we go back in time (including to so-called 'megafauna'). That is, in one sense, we could say that this place has become increasingly nerve-sense in its orientation. The place has grown more 'heady.' (Needless to say that non-Aboriginal human beings have also influenced this process, as we have seen already in looking at the other kingdoms of nature, and as we will explore further in the next section.) Very broadly speaking we could also say that the centre of the lake, from the perspective of animal life, is more nerve-sense, the periphery (spatial and temporal) more metabolic, with rhythmic life more in between (such as the dingo or swamphen roaming the water's edge). We can also think of the multiple other thresholds at the lake, touched upon above, in terms of animal life, including seagulls, swamphens, tadpoles, frogs, caterpillars, butterflies, moths, bees and so on (many thresholds are crossed here, from earth to water to air to light and warmth, and even life and death), which we can perhaps hold in mind as we move to the next section related to human beings at the lake shoreline.

Lake: Human Beings

Most of the human activity at the lake shoreline takes place on the walk path around the edge of the lake. Here we find people walking, jogging, cycling and so on. There are elderly people (some of whom partake in birdwatching), middle aged people, and children. There are males and females.

Further back from the walk path there are two children's playgrounds – one to the east and one to the south west. There is some housing close by to the south, south west and the north west. Alfred road runs behind the bushland to the north. Parkland lies to the north east and east, a golf course to the south east, playing fields of a boys school lie to the west, and slightly north of those are the fields of a local cricket and hockey club. The shed for the 'friends of' the lake (and their revegetation work) lies to the north east. At the golf course clubhouse are two cafés and a gym, with a swimming pool not far behind that. There are tennis courts to the south of the pool, and a state-level football club just to the east of these. Housing is interspersed along the edges of the parklands and playing fields and extends far beyond on all sides.

In short, there is a kind of buffer of human-made (or -tended) space around the lake. The first layer has to do with a kind of individual personal pursuit (looking at the lake and connecting with nature, walking for exercise, jogging, cycling, painting, photography, revegetation planting and gardening, etc.). Interspersed with this are social activities where people do any of the above activities with others. Some individual activities have an element of bettering or improving oneself/one's self. Some individual activity also has an element of improving the place. Much of the social activity has an element of enjoying the company of others (but also of improving the place, especially in the revegetation work). Still within this first layer around the lake we also have from time to time interschool cross-country events of the local boys schools – here we have an element of self-improving coupled also with organised competition. (Interestingly, the running track moves from the lake path out into the parklands also.) Moving off the path around the lake and further into the space around it, we also find golfers, swimmers, tennis players, gardeners, cricketers, footballers, hockey players, soccer players, people at the gym, and so on, as well as picnicers and the like. Here, amongst other things, we also have more of a move into organised competitive activity – it can be both individual and social, but often increasingly social. If it is not competitive, it remains social activity in some way, especially at the playgrounds with their barbecues, as well as the cafés nearby. This then continues on into the state-level football club (also with a gym), and so on. As mentioned, a (boys) school lies to the west, but there are also others to the south (also a boys school) and another to the north-east (co-educational). Houses hold families, other buildings act as supermarkets and shopping precincts to the east and south, and further east we have the state agricultural showgrounds – all of which grow increasingly social in nature, and competitive in a more economic sense.

Closer to the lake, therefore, we could generally say that we find people more individually improving (even if it is only responding to an inner need to 'go for a walk,' to be 'in nature,' but also painting, and so on) or testing themselves (through

exercise, bird identification and the like) in one form or another, with some form of a connection to the lake shoreline itself. This then grows into more of a competition directly against others in some form of sporting arena the further out we travel (with decreasing connection to the natural context in which it takes place), which then generally morphs into the economic and social competition for existence the further out we go (with potentially even less connection to the natural world). Even if competition is not so front and centre in people's activities, we generally move from individual to organised social to, let's say, increasingly disorganised social (or, perhaps, economically-organised social/anti-social) activity the further out we travel into the city. We therefore find an individual and social polarity, with organised social activity somewhere in between; a physical/cultural self-improvement/competition and an economic self-improvement/competition polarity, with an organised improvement/competition polarity with very clear rules and rights (sport) in between; and we seem to have more of a connection to the natural world at one end of the polarity, and a much-reduced connection to nature at the other end (think of the indoor shopping/mall precinct of Claremont or anywhere similar, including the 'central business district'), with some kind of a balance between these polarities in the sporting fields in between.

We can also ask at this point, Where is such individual and social activity healthy? Where is such competition healthy? And where is such connection to the natural world healthy? (But, again, these are mere seed questions for now towards a greater exploration of social thresholds more explicitly.)

The proximity to the boys school(s) generally means that there are more males active in the area nearby. The football club and cricket club would probably currently cater for more males than females. And, at a guess, I would assume that there are slightly more males than females at the other sporting areas nearby, though the ratios may be much more balanced. Overall, however, even by the positioning of the boys school alone, the area is more frequented by males and, given the school age, by younger males (pre, mid and post adolescence), who are engaged in some form of individual and social, physical and mental, self-improvement and/or competition. (On weekday mornings, however, especially during normal business hours, it must be said that, as one might expect, there are more elderly than younger people at the nearby cafés and golf course.) Closer to the lake, though, I have also seen large groups from the boys school engaged in some kind of observation activity with the lake itself involving work in small groups and, sometimes, the use of drones. The number of soccer and tennis balls that also end up in the lake, further illustrates the amount of activity engaged in by younger people at or near the lake. In some ways we could therefore say that this shoreline, in relation to human beings, could be seen as a kind of physical as well as mental testing ground for individual (especially) young men in varying levels of interaction with the same, especially as they cross the 'shoreline' of what the West calls adolescence.

This is looking at the human aspect somewhat directly. Indirectly we could also say that human impact can be found already in each of the areas we have so

far been observing. Human beings have directly shaped the mineral kingdom of the lake, have altered its plant life, and have had an impact upon its bird and other animal life. Slightly more indirect activities have also played a role in these impacts upon the natural world – this continues now with ongoing building; management of sporting fields with fertilisers, pesticides, fungicides, herbicides ('cide' comes from latin meaning 'killer,' meaning, therefore, that human beings have introduced into this place, and elsewhere where there is 'life,' an additional increased element of 'death'); but also revegetative activity (i.e. the organised social activity, with the intention of caring for the lake, of the 'friends' group), and so on. In a larger sense we could say that the whole of the area where water comes from to flow into this lake is connected to this lake – the whole catchment of the lake is part of the shoreline of this lake – *is* the lake. Therefore, everything that runs off the roads and gardens and industry of the surrounding area (or even overflowing sewers, which I have also seen at the very edge of the north west corner of the lake) – all the man-made oils and plastics and everything else – also has an impact on this lake in one form or another.

And then, of course, we also have the human history of this place. In terms of pre-colonisation, Aboriginal Elders can tell you more about the relationship of human beings to this place. (Public talks by Aboriginal Elders [including those organised by the 'friends' group], as well as public tours that visit the lake, also address this theme.) Since colonisation, various interviews have taken place with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and a number of histories have been written. Much has been and is covered in such accounts so I will not go into the use of the place as market gardens, as a place where Aboriginal people were 'permitted' to camp post-colonisation, the use of some areas as a rubbish tip, development by Alan Bond and others, its more present façade, and so on.[27] Suffice to say, human footprints are never too far away – are found in the mud of the stories of this place (the same way we might see actual footprints in the lake today). How human beings relate to it (including its minerality, its vegetation and its animal life), be it through the earth, water, air and light or warmth/fire (which would, presumably, have previously played more of a part in relation to the surrounding area) elements we will consider further in the next sections.

[27] Some of this history can be found, for instance, in Denise Cook, *That Was My Home: Voices from the Noongar Camps in Fremantle and the Western Suburbs*, UWA Press, Perth, 2019, as well as elsewhere.

Lake: Earth

In the earth element of the lake we find the mineral kingdom outlined above, but also how this mineral kingdom is brought into relationship with processes of life in the plant kingdom; processes of life and consciousness in the animal kingdom; and processes of life, consciousness and self-consciousness in the human being. All of these aspects, and in a way the whole material activity of the lake shoreline, can be considered when we observe the earthly element.

The principal role of the earth element on the lake shoreline, especially as it relates more purely to the mineral kingdom, is its function as a holding vessel. As touched on above, the shore bed and edges of the lake provide the container or receptacle into which the water of the lake will find its form. To a certain extent, the water element also shapes this earthly container, but nowhere near to the same degree as does the water of the coastal shoreline shape the earth element there. Here, at the lake, there are no large waves, strong currents, significant tidal extremes, howling winds, and so on. The water here is somewhat more 'restful' in its repose within the receptacle that is also restful in its holding. Even as the usual annual changes or 'tide' of the lake shifts from full to empty each year, the earthly element changes relatively little in the process. The most significant change to be observed in this 'breathing' rhythm is the way the earthly element is either submerged and wet, exposed and muddy, or dry and cracked. These three phases can also be likened to metabolic/digestive processes, rhythmic, and nerve-sense processes respectively. On the one hand they have a connection to water processes, but on the other hand, they also are exposed to processes of air and light, as well as warmth, once the water processes retreat. Therefore we can see again the way that processes of air and light and warmth are intimately connected, but can overpower the landscape or human organisms if the watery element is depleted, moving them towards the polarity of nerve-sense processes and of death. The other polarity, in periods of great water, is the metabolic-digestive polarity with its processes of life. The muddy phase can be likened to rhythmic processes, and points to the way in which processes of air and light and warmth can be brought into relationship with processes of water through the rhythmic, middle region of heart and lung, and its corresponding psychological processes of feeling cognition (not self-directed emotion, but a feeling life as sense organ for objective phenomena).

This dance between wet and dry extremes of the mineral kingdom can also be seen in the soil around the lake where plants and trees and grasses grow. In an effort to maintain the 'life' polarity, especially of introduced grasses, a great amount of water is expended (presumably from underground aquifers through bores) during the warmer and dryer months through reticulation. This activity can be pictured as a taking from underground reserves in order to make the surface area more moist (in an area where trees have been cleared). This is perhaps akin to human beings attempting to make their skin look healthy and 'youthful,' while at the same time continuing to wear down themselves and their reserves in the process – that is, without addressing more fundamental issues.

When the mineral kingdom is brought into processes of life in the plant kingdom then it assumes forms as directed by the guiding idea or archetype of the plant, as it expresses itself in its many varied species. The mineral kingdom becomes the material that the sculptor (the plant) uses to create its forms. These forms are generally the more ‘rounded,’ ‘spherical’ and ‘full’ wherever there is more water present, such as, relatively speaking, here at the lake. Generally, the plant forms of Australia tend more towards the nerve-sense polarity, when compared, say, with plants of the equator. That is, Australian plants generally tend towards being more formed from the outside in – they are more finely sculpted from outside than the rounder leaves and trees of the tropical rainforest, for example. This has a relationship with the large amounts of air and light and warmth in this landscape. Relatively speaking, however, the leaves and plants of this more metabolic-digestive (in this overall landscape) lake shoreline will generally be slightly more rounded than those of the more nerve-sense beach shoreline we have been observing. We can include ‘leaves’ in this description because, in a way, the leaves can tell the story of the plant as a whole, and vice versa (that is, the plant's whole story [or poem] can be told through the leaf). A more round and spherical leaf (spherical forms are, again, what water drops and larger water bodies will naturally seek to form) will indicate a more round and spherical plant. A more finely formed, differentiated and sculpted leaf will form part of a similarly sculpted plant.

The mineral kingdom is also brought into processes of life in the animal kingdom, but is here brought also into relationship to processes of consciousness and one-sidedness of function. Birds, for instance, are specially suited to flight (i.e. through wings), but even within the bird realm there are some birds with physiological functions that morph more into specialisation connected to swimming (e.g. duck or swan feet; the tail of the cormorant) or walking and grabbing (e.g. swamp hen feet – I often see the swamp hen grabbing a rush stem with its foot to pull out the central stem with its beak, or else walking along several stems to weigh them down so that it can grab and eat the seeds) or digging/sifting/shovelling (e.g. the beak of the spoonbill, ibis or shoveller), and so on. Here the physiological functioning of the animal is determined by its guiding idea or beingness in the same way the plant is, manifesting in the many specialised forms of the animal kingdom (consider the specialised scent capabilities of the dog, and all they can achieve with their jaws), and the consciousness that accompanies this.

In the human being this mineral kingdom and earthly element is also brought into relationship with processes of life and consciousness (where the human being is not specialised like animals, however, but carries all specialisation in a balanced form [specialisation is, in a way, ‘held back’]). The human being has the potential to also realise him or herself as the ideal sculptor of his own material, earthly, physical processes, which is connected to the human being’s capacity for self-consciousness. (I deliberately say here ‘potential.’)

Much more could, of course, be said of the earthly element in each of these cases. On its own, it can, in a certain sense, be thought of as lifeless, and something that can be understood with a lifeless, material consciousness (one that can

understand the material world through number, measure, weight, position and so on). But as soon as we seek to understand the essential guiding or organising ideas working within the earthly element, which seem to almost hover outside of its physical expression in the mineral kingdom, as well as how the mineral kingdom comes into relationship with the other kingdoms of nature, and how the earthly element relates to the other elements of existence, then we require different and more living organs of perception to observe and understand phenomena.

Lake: Water Element

If all of the material world, as touched on in the previous section, can be seen as the material which the sculptor uses for the artwork, then the water element can perhaps be seen as the sculptural hands of the artist. The watery element takes what is otherwise lifeless and dead in the earthly element and brings it into living, dynamic form (other than, again, the mineral kingdom), as per the guiding idea of each particular species within the landscape. But it is the water in the landscape itself which can help us observe this phenomenon most clearly.

Unlike the ocean landscape, or the river landscape, when it comes to this particular lake we have to do with a water polarity which (usually) moves from present to absent (or directly invisible) and back again to present. That is, the lake (usually) dries out during the warmer months. During the wetter months, the water from the surrounding landscape will drain into the lake – this area can be called the lake's catchment. And so from the perspective of the water element, the lake can be seen to be as large as this whole catchment. In some ways, it could also be said to extend beyond this catchment area through the activity of evaporation taking place over the ocean and then falling from clouds above as precipitation. Interestingly, cirrus clouds were seen above the lake on December 1, 2021 in the clear form of waves.) We could also therefore say that, from the perspective of the water element, the lake is as large as the area from which oceanic evaporation then condenses and becomes the clouds that then release rain that falls in the catchment of this particular lake. We are also forced to consider, however, the water that lives below the lake bed in the aquifers and subterranean channels below ground. Without a visual observation of this activity, however, it is difficult, at least for the Western mind, to bring such considerations into accurate thoughts or images. We can say, however, that whatever water exists below the bed of the lake and is drawn up by either tree roots or man-made bores, or which passes from above down through the lake itself and finds its way to such depths, can also be seen as part of the 'expanded' water element of the 'larger' lake. We can again keep such considerations in mind when we consider where the 'actual' shoreline of the lake may or may not lie.

When it comes to the water itself we can say that it is different in quality and makeup to the water element of the oceanic shoreline. While water also falls as rain at the beach, and is absorbed into sand or taken up by plants, the dominant water activity is that of the saltwater of the ocean. At the lake, or this one at least, we have to do with 'fresh' water – and by freshwater we obviously mean non-salt water. The water birds and other animals of the lake are able to drink the water, which many would not be able to do at the ocean. If we also look into the water we may also find a great number of small invertebrates swimming in the water, to the point where it can look like there are almost as many invertebrates as there is water; that is, there can be observed at times an abundance of animal life in the water. Of course, there is animal life also in the water of the oceanic shoreline, but not usually condensed to this level. We could even go so far as to say that, generally speaking, the water of the lake shoreline tends much more towards life than does the saltwater of the oceanic shoreline, and that the primary difference has to do with the fact that one is

salty, and the other is not – that salt, as taken up by and dissolved in the water element, is an indicator and expression of the nerve-sense polarity – the polarity of death processes within the organism. Thus, even within the water organism itself we have polarities of life and death processes. Perhaps this is even more obvious further up into the catchment of the river, and in the various salt lakes that have emerged through the 'clearing' of land – through the death of trees and death processes of a landscape as a whole.

To continue furthest in the metabolic-digestive direction of the water element (though, not necessarily of animal activity within the water element – we are focusing here more on the water element itself) we could come, perhaps, to the kind of sulphurous thermal springs of New Zealand, which I have not experienced to the same degree in the continent of Australia, and which point to the differences that can exist between islands and continents. Australia as a whole, in this sense, could be seen as more nerve-sense; New Zealand more metabolic-digestive.

Generally speaking, the fact that this lake itself (usually) dries out, and that it is not a spring-fed water body, or sulphurous in nature, points to this same idea just mentioned – namely, that even the more metabolic lake shorelines in this area (there are ones which do not dry up) are not as 'life-filled' as they are elsewhere around the world. Even in the lake shoreline in this location, processes of death – including the elements of light and air which also come to expression in the nerve-sense polarity as increased consciousness emerges – are more dominant than the element of water and life than they might be in other lakes around the world.

Nonetheless, in relation to the local landscape we are considering, including Australia as a whole, this lake is a place of water and of life. As touched on in the previous section, the various grasses, bushes, plants and trees all take water up into their own forms to grow and flower and fruit and reproduce as they must, guided as they are by their idea or archetype. So too do animals also grow and reproduce in relationship to the water element and the plant kingdom, as they must according to their own guiding idea in the context in which they find themselves. So also human processes relate to the watery dynamics of this place that express themselves directly in the visible water, but also in relation to the activity of the plant and animal kingdoms. (As touched on above, the mineral kingdom also relates to all of these processes, including minerals taken up into the water element; how the air [and light] and warmth elements relate to the water element at the lake we will explore more in a moment.)

No doubt there is a connection also between moon activity and the lake, albeit more subtle than the tidal activity of the oceanic or river shorelines. And with this, I am, again, also prepared to concede that there are connections between the water and the activity of the other planets (and even the constellations). I have not, however, observed this directly at this stage, and so will leave it aside from further considerations for now.

When we consider all these activities and dynamics of the water element in this particular location we may be drawn to the lowest point of the lake – the last place to hold water as everything dries out, and the first place where it gathers

considerably after the rain. (When the lake does dry out, it does so not only from the edges inward but, in the more shallow areas towards the centre, earth will also begin to appear, thereby, in a certain sense, brining the periphery to the centre [and the centre to the periphery] in the drying process.) It is as if this is this point from which the breathing out of the immediate shoreline begins, and the point to which the inhalation of that shoreline leans towards; it is the place where the water flows out, and where it sucks in. There may also be a kind of vertical element here in relation to the water that falls from above, and the water that sinks further below. (We may have a picture of this particular point in the lake as a kind of belly button, connected still, even when dry, to a watery umbilical cord.) From this point – from the point of view of the water element – we can imagine the human being standing up and out as the water fills the lake, its legs extending down into the subterranean depths, and its head rising up to the clouds above, its rhythmic element expanding and contracting as the lake fills and dries – one long exhalation and inhalation each year – expanding to an increased metabolic-digestive activity in the wetter months (as wide as the lake's watery edge in some ways, but as wide as the whole catchment in others), and contracting again to a more nerve-sense activity in the drier months, crouching down, revealing, again, only the dry scalp and skull in the hottest months, retreating, perhaps, underground (or into the root systems of the plants and trees, which, still, have somewhat of an affinity with nerve-sense activity), before expanding and growing again during the wetter months.

(From yet another perspective still, in relation to the water element, we could also say that the dry lake is akin to the beach shoreline, the full lake is more archetypally 'lake-like,' and the in-between filling and emptying is akin to the flowing water and other activity of the river – but we will come more to this river activity later; let us turn, first, to the air and light and warmth elements as they appear at the lake shoreline.)

Lake: Air Element

The first thing we notice in relation to the air element, as we experience it at the lake, is the contrast with which we experience the same at the beach shoreline. As touched upon earlier, the oceanic shoreline reveals a vast expanse of air activity, from the water upward, all the way to the horizon and, obviously, behind us as well; we can feel ourselves to be immersed in it – from wind, to clouds, to a visible expanse unobstructed by anything, and an auditory experience of wide open spaces. Even slight breezes will be felt at the beach because of its openness and, in a certain sense, vulnerability to the 'sculpting' of the air element (though, in contrast to the sculpting of the water element, the air sculpting feels to occur more from 'outside in.'), as we are sculpted too while there. We experience the wind (and air more broadly) at the beach shoreline directly in this way, but also perceive its activity through the movement of the sands, plants and animals (especially birds); through the activity of the clouds; through its impact on the water and the waves; through its relationship to light quality; and through its relationship with warmth (either cooling or warming). We can feel ourselves at the beach shoreline to be inside a vast breathing process of some much larger organism – one that, we feel, may even stretch the whole globe.

At the lake shoreline, this experience is almost the opposite. As we approach the lake, as touched on earlier, we find a horizon and skyline obstructed by trees – we are in a more enclosed space. While we can also experience the wind directly here, we tend to experience it more in its effect, including in the sight of swaying trees, the sound that it makes as it moves through the trees, the sight of it as it moves across the water, or the prevailing direction that birds might face. When we do feel it directly, it often has to be a very strong wind; likewise, if there is a more gentle wind at the beach, at the lake we, generally speaking, experience things to be very calm and without much wind at all, if any. Thus, while at the beach we can experience ourselves as part of a great global airy element – as a kind of delicate weather vane for the air activity of the world – at the lake we can have an experience of a more contained and constrained airy element that, while connected to the world around it, also has a kind of climate of its own. The human being at the beach can feel him or herself extended to the widest peripheries; while at the lake, this experience can feel held in a much smaller sphere – in a way, more focused.

Thus we can also say that with a general increase in the overall activity of the watery element (and its manifestations, including in animals and plants), we can find here at the lake a general, overall decrease in the activity of the airy element. With more metabolic-digestive activity at the lake we also find relatively less nerve-sense activity than at the beach shoreline than at the beach shoreline. (Note the sensory experience of the air element of the beach shoreline mentioned above.) We can also say that where we have more processes of life, we obviously have less processes of death (which are, again, associated with nerve-sense activity providing the foundations for consciousness to emerge). Thus we may have the experience of feeling more awake at the beach shoreline in terms of thinking activity, while at the

lake shoreline we may find a kind of life-filled force which is more connected to our metabolic-digestive activity and to our will.

What is relatively absent, however, in terms of more direct experiences of the airy element at the lake (when compared to the beach shoreline), we find expressed, metamorphosed and transformed in other ways. The prolific nature of animals of the air element at the lake is striking when compared to the amount and species-variety of birds at the oceanic shoreline. As we have already touched upon, many of these birds at the lake are what we call waterbirds, yet all birds are connected to and indeed shaped by the air element – they are, we could say, the air element given form (in the context of whichever part of it they inhabit). The birds of the wetland are those with more of a tendency towards life and, in a way also, metabolic processes. We have the larger birds such as swans here; at other lakes we find also pelicans. What we have called the guardian of this lake shoreline (the purple swamphen) is much larger than what we have called the guardian of the oceanic shoreline (the seagull). The lake birds are all animals of the air element in the context of the way in which the air element expresses itself in relation to the lake shoreline, be they more metabolic or nerve-sense birds.

So what is absent at the lake shoreline in terms of the airy element itself is, in many ways, transformed and metamorphosed into a large number of animals and the consciousness which these animals exhibit. This is in contrast to the beach shoreline where relatively few birds (and other animals) are present – consciousness stays, in a way, more within the air itself at the beach shoreline. At the lake, however, the airy element seems almost ‘sucked out’ of the air and is instead found within the consciousness of animals. And even if we are reluctant to go this far in our observations, we may still be able to observe the way in which the relatively reduced direct and indirect experience of the air element at the lake is transformed also into the song life of birds. We have touched upon these sounds and songs above. Unlike the air element that works from outside onto the earth element (with far less impact here than it has at the beach shoreline), as well as the watery element (likewise) – as well as on minerals and plants (and also on animals and human beings) – what we find in the sounds of the animals and especially the birds is the air element expressed from within outwords. What is outside in the air element becomes transformed – inverted, essentially – and expressed through the individuality of animal species, especially birds. We could say that what is lacking in the air element of the lake shoreline is made up for in the air element as expressed through the songs of the animals, especially the birds. The animals, especially the birds, give voice to the whole landscape, expressed as it is through the individuality of each species (we will come to human beings in this respect in a moment).

We say all animals because birds, of course, are not the only animals able to make sounds. Some animals, including crickets and cicadas transform the air element and create sounds not from inside their own organism out but by using their bodies as instruments, as if still from outside. In a certain sense we might be therefore tempted to say that these insects are closer to transformed plant life in terms of the way the air element works from outside upon them. Other animals,

including frogs, bring this airy element up from out of themselves in the many and varied sounds they make across different species. These songs of the frog do not have the high, melodious sounds of the birds which express the whole ‘octave’ (or at least the higher ranges – the more nerve-sensory, in some ways) of sounds belonging to the air element but, rather, the frog seems to almost drag something up from out of the watery element – out of the muddy depths of the earth-water shoreline, which is the part of the ecosystem which it gives expression to (in sounds belonging more to the lower ranges – more metabolic-digestive sounds of the depths, we could say). Other animals such as mammals can do likewise, but nowhere are animals sounds as pronounced as they are in the birds.

On the day of writing this section I visited the lake and, for the first time, heard the sounds of a marching band from the playing fields of the nearby school. Bagpipes were part of the sounds heard. And so in the activity of the air element in relation to the human being we find not only the ability to sing and to communicate in language, we also find the ability to create musical instruments that, in a certain sense, mimic the activity of sound production in the animals. We have instruments that bring sounds from outside-in like drums and clapping sticks, but we also have instruments like bagpipes and didgeridoos that bring something from within outwords. In some instruments, such as the string instruments but also the percussion instruments, we also find a kind of fusing of these two processes where something is struck from outside, but then resonates in a hollow space. In many ways, as a side note (pun unintended), we could talk further about the nerve-sense activity of the string instruments, the metabolic activity of percussion instruments, and the rhythmic activity of the wood and other wind instruments, each of which have more nerve-sense, rhythmic and metabolic polarities within their own particular grouping (think the viola, flute, cymbals [or triangle], as contrasted with the double bass, french horn and bass drum). But this is of course a whole other field and takes us too far out of our current line of observations – I mention this only because of the experience of hearing the band on the morning of writing this section (and we may note it was a ‘marching’ band – a band engaged in movement, in activity of the limbs and will). What it also helps us see is the way in which the human being is able to connect to everything in the airy element either through the way it can ‘recreate’ (or elaborate on) sounds out of its own organism, or otherwise fashion instruments and tools with which to do so. This again points to the way in which the human being can be seen as spread out across the whole landscape, this time in relation to the transformed airy element of the lake; or, conversely, the way in which the human being can be seen as the whole airy landscape condensed (and also, potentially, recreated/elaborated), not in such a specialised way as the particular and unique expression of the bird species, but in a more general and comprehensive way related to all airy sounds. Coupled with the use of language, we can see the way in which the human being adds something extra to the consciousness that is expressed through each animal species in its own way – that is, a consciousness that can be not only aware of itself as consciousness, but can also be aware of the way it is connected to everything else around it (thereby [re]creating reality through the

conscious activity of thinking), including the consciousness (and sounds expressed through the airy element) of the animal kingdom, with the ability to (re)create/elaborate on the whole landscape (including the airy landscape) through language and through sounds, including music. (In some ways we could also more generally say that the human being can, through its creation of culture and art, in this case music, also elevate the natural world to another level.)

Lake: Light

We have already touched on the way that our experience of light at the lake shoreline is different to that of the same at the oceanic shoreline. At the beach, our experience of light is such that everything usually appears very clearly, very sharp, and exposes us to long distances. At the beach, light works with relative darkness in such a way that everything seems very clear to our vision. This activity of light at the oceanic shoreline works right down into the mineral kingdom in the erosion of limestone and the drying of sand (as well as the colour experience of both), as well as the clarity and colour of the water, the many different types and colours of clouds, the colours and hues of the sunset and sunrise skies (as well as the shades of blue of the sky above compared to that of the horizon), the plant life of the dunes, the fish and birds and other animals that we might see, other human beings, and so on. At the beach shoreline, light usually works in such a way as to make everything appear in its fullest clarity and sharpest relief. Everything seems as if awash with light and, in a way, most obviously around midday in midsummer, almost 'washed out.'

At the lake shoreline, however, this experience is much more tempered. We cannot see to the horizon, and therefore we are not left with the complete gradations of blue sky with the lightest blue of the horizon (with more atmospheric light to look through to the darkness of space behind, thereby revealing a lighter blue), but instead we are left more with the darker blue of directly overhead (where there is less atmospheric light to look through to the darkness behind, leading to a darker shade of blue). (I often find, for instance, that I can track flying birds more easily at the lake shoreline, if they do not disappear behind trees, than at the beach shoreline, where birds seem more often to disappear into the lighter background of the sky, especially when they are closer to being in line with the horizon.) The colour of the soil at the lake is much darker than at the beach, as is the water itself. Plant life is also much darker with more variety when compared to the (relatively) lighter greens (and golds) of the dune grasses and bushes of the beach (though grasses also turn gold at the lake in summer when it dries out); and the flowers at the lake are generally more colourful than those of the oceanic shoreline. The waterbirds of the lake are much darker in colour when compared to the bright white of the seagull (think of the various duck species and the black of the swan, which hides its white under its wings). The smaller birds of the lakeside trees can be more colourful than the smaller birds at the beach (e.g. the fairywrens) and, at the same time, more difficult to find; they live in the shadows of the larger trees, occasionally revealing a flash of bright blue or yellow or other colours. We can try to imagine a small bird like wrens at the beach shoreline (especially on the sand area itself), and are forced to admit that it is either very difficult to do so (unless they are found in sheltered dune areas with larger trees), or else we'd be compelled to imagine the bird's colours being much more faded and washed out.

It is also, generally, more difficult to know, at the lake, when we might encounter another human being, or whether there are other human beings on the other side of the lake from where we are (at the beach we can usually know from a single glance how many people are there; on the more open and exposed straighter

path of the eastern shore of the lake we can see slightly further, though still not as far as at the beach). The sun rises later at the lake, and sets earlier behind the trees and hills; shadows are longer and thicker. There are some spaces around the lake where very little light penetrates at all, such as under the large Moreton Bay figs. When light does land on the surface of the water and reflects back at us, it is much more bearable than the large stretches of ocean that can dazzle us, especially during the long afternoons of summer. (The water surface also tends to reflect the colours of the surrounding plant life and the darker blue sky above, making it generally darker and more colourful or 'wider' in colour variety than the usual blue reflections we observe at the beach shoreline.)

I have also observed rainbows at the lake shoreline, though far less frequently than at the beach. The rainbows I have seen at the lake, however, are sometimes more complete, with one complete double rainbow I distinctly remember; even this rainbow seemed far away, however, as if it actually was to be found at (and 'belonged to') the beach (which is only a few kilometres away from this particular lake). When seeing rainbows at the beach, however, they always seem to belong there – to the oceanic shoreline landscape – everything does, all the way to the horizon. The lake landscape is far more contained.

Our experience of the light as we might encounter it at the oceanic shoreline is such that if we spend too much time in it, especially uncovered, we can find ourselves feeling somewhat 'light-headed.' And here, once again, the genius of language can reveal certain deeper aspects of our own experience that we might not always give attention to. Building on our observations of the activity of light (as well as air) at the oceanic shoreline, we can say that our senses – especially our vision (the lake is perhaps more auditory than the beach, when it comes to sense activity) – are very active at the beach shoreline. Everything at the oceanic shoreline has the quality of crystalline, light-filled clarity, which is something perceptible to our eyes because our eyes are – in a way – fashioned by such activity. Goethe said that the eye was fashioned by light.[28] In some ways we could say that the whole nervous system is similar (in relation to that which each sense perceives; Goethe went so far as to say that "every new object, well contemplated, opens up a new organ of perception in us"[29]). In relation to the light element, the beach shoreline is a place of the nerve-sense system – of the head; when compared to the experience of the lake shoreline, the beach is, relatively speaking, a place of the nerve-sense system – of the head – and, with this, we could also say of thinking.

In contrast to the beach, the lake shoreline is a place of decreased light and increased darkness; things are not as washed out or faded at the lake. There are greater ranges of colour experience across different phenomena. We could, from our limited observations thus far, say, as Goethe did, that it is through the increased

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[28] Specifically: "Light has called forth one organ to become its like, and thus the eye is formed by the light and for the light so that the inner light may emerge to meet the outer light."

[29] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe quoted in Alan P. Cottrell "The Resurrection of Thinking and the Redemption of Faust," in David Seamon and Arthur Zajonc [Eds.], *Goethe's Way of Science: A Phenomenology of Nature*, State University of New York Press, NY 1998, p. 257.

interaction of light with darkness that colours actually appear. Even when colours appear at the beach shoreline, such as in the sunrise or sunset, this has to do with increased levels of darkness when compared to, say, midday (when it is almost too much for some, including me, to be present at the beach, especially around mid summer). With the increased darkness of the lake shoreline, more colours appear than are present at the beach, or appear in such a way that they seem less washed-out and faded – the colours of the lake shoreline seem more robust and full. Of course, sometimes there are not as many colours at the lake as at the beach (such as at sunrise or sunset), but generally not because it is too light, but because it is too dark (darkness, of course, also comes to the beach). When darkness increasingly prevails, there is also a relative reduction in the presence of colour. Relatively speaking, however, when compared to other places in Australia or globally, the darkness of this particular lake shoreline is not particularly dark. There are much darker places in Australia, and definitely much darker places globally. When compared to the rest of the world, Australia experiences much more light than other places – its darkest places are also much lighter than the darkest places of other landscapes elsewhere around the globe. And so it is here too at the lake shoreline when compared to the beach shoreline – while it is darker in comparison – at the other end of the light-darkness polarity – it is still much lighter than many places elsewhere around the world. Even when there is a denseness of trees, the leaves are such that the light is still able to penetrate through them to some degree (note the 'darkest' trees – the Moreton Bay figs – are originally from more tropical areas) – as if they too were more sculpted by the light, as if their forms (especially the leaves), which would perhaps otherwise tend more towards the rounded form of the water drop, are held at bay, are held in check by the light and sculpted from outside.[30] (We can see how much the fig tree relies on the water of this place – is found only near enough water to sustain its more 'rounded' form.) It is through these spaces it itself, we could say, has made, that the light of even this relatively dark shoreline is still carrying out its sculpting (from outside) processes. (Though affected by interaction with light, the *colour of* minerals, as well as plants and animals takes place, however – again metamorphosed – in a similar way to the air element; that is, from within outwards). Even in what we could call the more digestive and metabolic processes – even limbic processes strangely mirrored in the length of trees and the long darkness of their shadows – light does still appear or interact with the darkness, and so we also have the colours of the lake shoreline.

Nonetheless, in relation to the beach shoreline we have been observing, at the lake we have a shoreline comparable to the qualities of activity that take place in the enclosed darknesses and more unconscious realms of the digestion and metabolic processes more broadly. If the beach is, in relation to light, a place of the

[30] The large eucalypt near the eastern edge viewing area has large, long leaves, while the smaller eucalypt slightly further south has smaller leaves, and the smaller peppermint slightly further south has smaller leaves again. However, the new, young leaves of the large eucalypt are much more round, indicating that they grow longer and thinner over time, moving from qualities associated with the water drop towards qualities associated with light.

light-filled qualities of the nerve-sense system centred in the head, so the lake shoreline is a place of the qualitatively darker processes of digestion-metabolism-limb activity. The beach is a place of light and clarity; the lake of darkness and life and growth, as the many fungus varieties will also attest to. When processes of light and darkness meet (including in relation to cloud activity), then we find the colour spectrum appear.

(In many ways we can also see this polarity play itself out within the lake shoreline itself. The wetter months are far darker than the dryer, more light-filled months of summer. In this case, we could again say that the lake shoreline is much more like the beach in the warmer months – that it moves closer to the polarity of the beach shoreline – while in the wetter months it is ever-more dark. This is the annual aspect. In the months between, such as what the Western world calls spring and autumn, then we see more colours appear at the lake threshold, but also at the beach shoreline, when we have an increase in rainbows in the autumn months, and in some new plant life and flowers in the spring months [but this also takes place at other times throughout the year]. We could also say that, in relation to light, the ocean shoreline is more 'lake-like' in the darker, wetter months, with increased plant life and seaweed and so on. Likewise, of course, in the daily rhythm, the middle of the day at the lake marks when the light is most ‘beach-like’ – when it is most nerve-sense in polarity – while midnight is when it is darkest and most metabolic (and, perhaps, most extreme or even archetypally lake-like), while towards dawn and dusk when it is increasingly colourful (and perhaps we can wonder, at this stake, whether this is ‘river-like,’ but more on this soon).

If we speak of these processes of light and darkness in relation to human consciousness, as light is so often compared, especially in language (‘the lightbulb went on,’ ‘I saw the light,’ ‘clarity of thought’ etc.), then we can, again, say the beach is a place of clarity of thinking activity. At the lake shoreline, relatively speaking, we can say that we can have an experience of the forces of the will – of willful activity. As mentioned above, the lake shoreline is still tempered by light – and therefore the light of thought – in Australia (and especially at this particular lake); but this is a place of the experience of willful activity, nonetheless. In some ways, at the beach shoreline we could say we have an experienced of will-imbued/supported thought, such as the activity of human reflection or contemplation can involve; while at the lake shoreline we could say that we can have an experience of thought-imbued/supported will, as human activity, including organised competition, can involve.

How all of these processes of the lake shoreline relate to warmth and fire, and to the self-conscious activity of human beings, we will explore further in the next chapter.

Lake: Warmth

Historically speaking this area would, of course, have formed part of an extensive, complex, and thorough burning regime by the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation. To imagine that this burning can be somehow recreated in isolation from a thorough understanding of the entire landscape with all of its kingdoms and elements of nature, and especially without an organ of perception for the element of warmth and fire, is to completely misunderstand the way that this element needs to be worked with as the fruit of a wholistic world perception/conception. For non-Aboriginal people, the pathway must be built towards this activity so that we can not only begin to appreciate the wisdom of the people of this place, but also so that we can begin to take our own first steps towards an understanding of the warmth or fire element in nature, how it relates to us as human beings, and to begin to grasp what the landscape requires from us in order to be healthy.

There are a number of observations we can make when it comes to the warmth or fire element of Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, and again it will help us if we refer to our previous observation of the coastal shoreline. In encountering the mineral kingdom around the lake we can have the impression that there is a great deal of life and activity taking place when compared to the sand of the beach. Various worms, insects, mammals, birds and other animals engage with the mineral kingdom of this place, as does the plant life that extends its roots down into the soil, as well as the great variety of fungus that extends up out of it. (Many plants also lose their leaves, flowers and bark which fall onto the soil and decay.) The impression we can get is akin to that of a compost heap into which we can insert our hand or even a thermometer and feel the warmth contained therein. What is contained deliberately in the small-scale organism of the compost heap can be seen spread out and dispersed across the larger organism of the lake ecosystem. This is the case, again, when compared to the sandy and limestone element of the beach shoreline. In the mineral kingdom of the lake we can have a feeling for the similarity with the digestive-metabolic processes of the human being where healthy warmth activity has its place. (If this warmth activity extends out of this place into the nerve-sense processes in the case of an inflammatory immune system activation [as part of a healing process], then we have in the human being what, again, we call a fever.) At the beach shoreline, the cold, crystalline, clear, dry, sober activity of thinking prevails when it comes to the warmth element in relation to the beach sands of the mineral kingdom.

So too in the plant kingdom of the lake we find a much greater variety and activity than we found at the beach, and this too we can feel has some relationship to the element of warmth (and fire). Perhaps it is in the seed that we can have this kind of experience most readily (though we can also find in volatile oils something of a similar process within the plant itself, but we shall limit our observations in this direction for now). While seeds are not warm to the touch, many do require warmth to germinate, including warm soil; many Australian species also require smoke/fire. In interacting with warmth and fire/smoke from outside, something is activated within the seed – it finds an environment in which it can unfold its potential. This unfolding

usually takes place in darkness, from the original formation of the seed (except for strawberries and emu bush, where seeds form on the outside of the fruit), through to embedding in the soil, and then in germination as the seed – now a growing plant – strives upwards towards the air and the light, but also sends roots further down into the soil. We find in the seed an activity akin to the warmth and darkness (including the darkness of consciousness) of the digestive-metabolic-limb (and we may also say reproductive) processes of the human being – activity which offers a 'continuation' possibility to processes of life and growth. At the 'end' of the life of the plants, including trees, the more mineral and dead element of these vegetative life processes – the dead skin that is shed – can then become fuel for fires; if burned consciously as part of a wholistic worldview, this can be achieved in a healthy and creative manner, one that may also include the burning of other parts of plants. (I only point here at possibilities from a Western perspective – for information on Aboriginal cultural burning, please consult publicly-available materials by Aboriginal authors and practitioners.)

In the animal kingdom the warmth element is, of course, also active. What the seed seeks in the warmth of the soil or in fire or smoke, the bee finds in the hive or nest, the embryo in the womb or the egg, the newborn in the pouch or the nest – even in the 'fluffier' feathers of newborn birds these processes of increased warmth can also be observed. Everywhere warmth is required for the initial stages of life which begin more as metabolic-digestive processes, including limb formation, which are much more active than nerve-sense processes at this stage. (In this manner we can observe the lake as a place of new life and growth.) The greater variety (and numbers) of animal life at the lake shoreline points to the presence of these warmth processes in a way that contrasts to the beach shoreline and the animals there.

Warmth reaches right down into everything physical, everything earthly. It also permeates the water element, primarily through the activity of the sun which not only provides light but also a degree of warmth. Processes of evaporation, condensation and precipitation are also taking place at the lake as water warms and enters into the air element. (Air which we experience as more humid has the quality of increased water, but also of increased warmth; while dry air can feel hot, but not so full of water and, in some cases, not as 'warm' in quality as humid air, even if the actual temperature may be higher.) The air element around the lake can feel warm or cold depending on the season of the year, as well as the time of the day, as well as wind activity. In a certain sense, we can have a feeling that in the warmer months, the warmth element – including as it exists within the other elements, especially air and light – is very much permeating the whole landscape, to the point of drying it out. Further fire, unconsciously used, at this extreme heat point or just before, would enter into a destructive process. In the colder months, we almost have the feeling that this outwardly warm element of summer retreats into the mineral kingdom – into the ground, even into the seeds that might also have moved into the ground. (To burn at this cold extreme would lead to fire/warmth that would not 'catch.' Instead, a period which follows the warmth 'into the ground' would seem most desirable [we want the fire to go out] – this speaks both to the time of year and the day – when

more watery processes come to the fore [be they evening or ‘winter’].) In each day, we can have a kind of recapitulation of this same process of the external warmth of the day moving into the internal warmth of the night. In some ways, this process follows the journey of the sun itself.

In the human being, as already touched on, we find a further and unique expression of the warmth element. Like animals, the human being seeks to regulate its own warmth in the absence of external warmth (humans do not have specialisations, as animals do, in relation to external warmth, such as fur or feathers or scales). But unlike animals, the human being can (re)create an external warmth in the form of fire (but also clothing, shelter conditions etc.). The human being can make and work with fire. This itself is a picture of the creative faculties and capacities of the human being. The human being not only has a sense organ for the phenomenon of warmth and fire, it can create this as well. The ‘spark’ of creativity that is given to the rest of nature from without is, in the human being, turned into an inner, creative capacity. The human being contains something that is expressed in nature as soil, seed, (volatile oils,) egg, womb, pouch, hive, nest, fire, and so on. This is related, it would seem, to that which enables the creativity of the human being. It is the same self-conscious activity we have spoken of previously. The mineral may have form, the plant may have form and life, and the animal form, life and consciousness, but only the human being is conscious of its own form, life and consciousness, and this reflectivity is connected to a creativity that does not exist elsewhere in nature in the same way. It is a further elaboration on the picture of the sun setting into the earth each day – the warmth and fire and creativity of the kingdoms and elements of nature has ‘set’ into the human being as seed potential for (re)creating the world. (This relates also, of course, to culture and to social life more broadly.)

Of course, this process and capacity comes with great responsibility, and if this is not put in service of the rest of the world as a whole then we find the human being can be as destructive as an uncontrolled and unconscious fire in peak summer. If the creativity of the human being is not connected to the rest of the natural-social ecosystems of the world, it can be as destructive as a summer fire disconnected from the seasonal processes of nature (or else as inconsequential as a wet, winter fire that never really catches). Likewise, if the fire of creativity has gone out, then as much debris piles up (‘de-presses’) as it does in nature around us, making movement almost impossible, while also creating conditions dangerously vulnerable to any passing spark that someone else’s fire – someone else’s ‘creativity’ (though disconnected from the whole) – may set ablaze.

We can have a feeling, therefore, for the interconnectedness of warmth, fire and human freedom and responsibility in relation to nature and to social life. There are great teachings and learnings that surround such wisdom, which we can only really point to here; but we can have the feeling a lake threshold such as this is full of such teachings as these. For, in social life, we have to do not only with how such processes of warmth in relation to freedom and responsibility may unfold in ourselves, but also to how they may unfold in others, and how what I do with my own

creativity affects or enables the creativity – the warmth and fire – of other human beings.

In the (outdoor) fireplace of the evening, we can have the experience of looking up into the night's sky and seeing the planets and the stars beyond them, and also have an experience of this same kind of warmth and fire, as well as the same kind of potentials for freedom and the responsibilities that come with being a human being in relationship to other human beings (and the natural world). The sky can appear to be a whole cosmos filled with such creative flames – with such fires – and with which we form an interconnected whole. To become more aware of this element/capacity within us, and its relationship to the whole of the world/cosmos around us (as well as our various responsibilities therein), seems, to me, to be part of what this particular lake shoreline is inviting us to consider.

Lake: Landscape as a Whole

There are some days, especially in the dryer months, but also when there is some water present, where I cannot deny the desire to run across the lake – be it across the dryer parts, the grasses or even the shallow water. The friends (mostly female) I am with at those moments often laugh when I express this, and none of them confirm any similar desire of their own. As mentioned above, there are a large amount of people who choose to spend some of their non-work time jogging the perimeter of this lake at any time of day, and any time of year – though this seems to occur more often on weekends, in the morning and evening, and in the dryer months.

If we are to compare the two landscapes touched upon thus far, we can again say that in all of the areas of observation that we have focussed on, the two landscapes appear as opposite ends of a polarity. Needless to say, however, aspects of the one also appear within the other. The beach expresses all that we might relate to the human being at the nerve-sense pole – everything salt-like, more lifeless, light-filled, airy, clear, bright and open. The soil quality (in terms of the life that can grow out of it) is poor – merely sand. The beach shoreline is watery, yes, but of the kind that does not bring large amounts of life, at least above the water. Further within the water itself there is life, as there is from the dunes inland and, to an extent, in the air above; but along the shoreline itself, plantlife – the great expression of landscape life – is absent. The plants that are in the ocean at this location grow further out/down, in the darker areas, and are revealed when the more metabolic activity of storms with larger seas and swells cast them along the shoreline, where they soon die. Here, too, gather the animal life of the ocean, thrown ashore and thrown across, for the most part, the threshold of death. When the life of the oceans – be they plant or animal – appear on the dry(er) shoreline of the beach they usually die, if they are not dead already (of course, there are some exceptions to this, such as turtles and seals, as well as penguins etc.). Likewise, when plant, or even animal, life above ground finds its way to the oceanic shoreline or, rather, as is occuring in our times, the sea levels rise to the level of above-ground life, then this too, as touched on above, usually leads to death, especially of above-ground plant life. The activity of water, wind, light and warmth at the beach shoreline can be extreme and intense, and with this activity these elements are also involved in great movement and changes within the earthly element.

The beach threshold is a place of reflection for the human being in as much as the human being reflects through nerve-sense processes upon themselves and the world around them, and therefore also in relation to processes of death. Even if this process is not conscious, processes of nerve-sense-related consciousness are at work. The beach shoreline seems to be a place for the thinking polarity of the human being. That we (or many people) visit the beach at sunrise and sunset means we also ‘soften’ the more extreme experiences related to the thinking polarity, and to death, in these moments. (Though, in some ways, sunrise and sunset can generally be likened to birth and death respectively, mid-day remains a time of peak nerve-sense activity in relation to the light of the beach shoreline, with sunrise and

sunset more connected to feeling activity, experienced also in the colour of those times of day.)

The lake shoreline – especially freshwater lakes, and especially Glabamaanup / Lake Claremont – appears at the other pole to the beach shoreline. The lake threshold, from what we have so far observed, appears as a shoreline of life. The soil quality is high (in terms of growing things – parts of this lake were once used for market gardens); grasses, plants and trees are in abundance; bird and other life is varied and numerous, and this is the place where many birds come to create life, give life and grow life. When compared to the beach threshold, the light at the lake shoreline is reduced, the wind lessened, and the quality of darkness more present (and with this comes, also, increased colours). Warmth permeates the area. Human beings at the lake shoreline are more active than merely sitting and absorbing as they so often seem to do at the beach. (Of course, humans also sit at the lake [especially nearby cafés], and are active at the beach, but the ratios of sitting and activity would seem to be reversed in each location.) Human beings around the lake are most often walking, jogging, running, riding, racing, competing in one sport or another, playing on playgrounds, golfing, exercising at the gym and so on; relatively few seem to just lie and receive from/sense (or reflect in relation to) the environment. Rather, their limbs are active, their metabolic-digestive-limb activity is 'in full swing.' Relatively rarely are the seats by the lake occupied and, if they are, it seems to be only for a moment. More often, people stand next to the seats and benches before moving on. When they do look out into the lake, it is usually a very active and willful looking, especially for bird life, but also plants and water levels in general. When people look out at the oceanic shoreline, it seems to be more as if they are allowing the ocean to 'look at them.' The lake is a threshold of life-filled, metabolic-digestive-limbic willful activity. It is a place that can inspire the human being to action.

When considering this quality of the lake shoreline in relation to that of the beach shoreline, a picture from Greek mythology comes to mind for me. Again, and needless to say, there are of course Noongar stories of this particular place – stories that connect with other stories into a meaningful whole. But, again, these are not my stories to share, and of course I am not not privy to them all, but only to what has been shared with me in the contexts that I have been in. Such knowledge, in any case – whether Noongar or Western or from somewhere else – is also responsibility, and we, at least those of us coming from a Western direction, are generally better off not grasping after 'answers' or knowledge (especially from outside the Western direction) but rather developing the capacities with which to see for ourselves – capacities and faculties – poetic, if you like – which can reveal their own knowledge and answers, and therefore responsibilities, when we are ready for them. (In this sense, existing imaginations and stories/'myths' can also help us [when approached with an open, 'ungrasping' gesture] to develop such capacities and faculties for ourselves.) Likewise, of course, we need not seek to overlay one particular mythology onto that of another place; what I share briefly in the Greek myth below I do so more as an imagination from a particular direction – a Western one, given this

is the direction we are coming from in all these observations – to better understand, in this case, not so much the place, but the processes taking place within the human being.

With this in mind, the Greek story which emerged for me when considering both shorelines is the story of Prometheus. Prometheus (meaning ‘far-seeing’) was punished by Zeus for stealing fire from the gods and giving it to human beings. He was nailed to a cliff where each day an eagle came and pecked at his liver. Each night, however, his liver recovered and he became more healthy again, only to find himself at the mercy of the eagle once more the next day. (Interestingly, during this time, he was visited by Oceanus – God of the ocean stream – who looked upon Prometheus and offered him his reflections: When asked by Oceanus if he could do anything for Prometheus, Prometheus replied: “What can you do except look at my suffering?”) What is taking place in this myth? For me, this is none other than the experience of the human being every day and every night. The eagle is a bird – which are all animals of the nerve-sense system – a nerve-sense bird within the metabolic polarity. It is an expression of will-imbued thinking. It is not a willy wagtail, or an even more nerve-sense bird such as the welcome swallow – it is more metabolic than that (but when compared to, say, the swan or the pelican, it is more nerve-sense in its activity). The eagle flies high in the air and light, and with crystal clear vision can spot its prey from great distances. I have never seen an eagle at these particular shorelines, but I have seen its close relative the osprey (at both shorelines). (I have perhaps once or twice seen a white-bellied sea eagle in the distance at the beach, but they may have also been ospreys.) The eagle is a bird of light and air and clarity and wide-open spaces – and it is a raptor – a bird of death. It is a bird of nerve-sense processes (albeit will-filled) – of thought processes – and of death. It is as an expression of the waking hours of the human being, with nerve-senses completely open to the world around – wide awake, constantly willing ourselves to new levels of height – of clarity and understanding – of seeing.

But what is the effect of such activity? We grow tired, we age, we need replenishment through sleep, through processes of life, including time with plant life. We seek darkness and, often, warmth (be it from fire or bed covers). (The fact that we so often, in these moments, reach for the cold light of a screen [television, phone, computer] runs counter, therefore, to our actual needs, and is instead a further continuation of the pecking away at our liver, albeit more of the kind of the welcome swallow, given there is little of our own will involved.)

What, then, is the activity of our liver in this respect? In some ways we could describe the liver as the throne upon which the metabolic-digestive-limbic and therefore willful activity of the human being sits. The liver has the greatest regenerative capacity of any organ in the body – that is, it can grow back. It is literally the giver of life for the human being. It lives in the dark, is somewhat unformed but rather fills the space left for it (in the same way water fills the space that contains it). Unlike all the organs of the nerve-sense polarity (eyes, ears, nose, mouth, tongue), it is asymmetrical. It is not of the light, of the unenclosed spaces, nor of the air, nor

crystalline clarity. The liver is dark, enclosed, life-giving, soft (ideally), and warm. It is the night element of the human being – that which replenishes us.

(There are few meat-eaters at the lake shoreline. Those that do eat meat, such as the swamp harrier, hobby, crow, magpie, willy wagtail, herons, osprey etc. usually occupy the dryer parts of the lake. All the birds in the water itself appear to be vegetarian [though there are vegetarians amongst the birds on dryer land also]. The swamphen – what we've called the lake shoreline guardian – is also vegetarian. (It is perhaps worth noting that the more rhythmic to metabolic swamphen generally prefers to eat the bases of the rushes, pulling them out with its beak and holding it with its feet while it strips away the coarser bark to reach the softer centre of the stem; the smaller and more nerve-sense oriented reed warbler, for example, prefers, on the other hand, to eat the small seeds at the top of the stem). At the beach shoreline the guardian – the seagull – is an omnivore. Other birds of the beach shoreline are mostly meat-eaters – the cormorants, terns, oystercatchers, sea eagles, ospreys – all of whom engage with the water area to feed – with the beach vegetarians more active on the dry side of the dune plants [though other meat eaters can also be found there].)

Thus the human being stands between these two polarities: the conscious day polarity of the human being with the eagle pecking at our liver (in some ways from the top down, and from the outside in) – at our forces of life; and the more unconscious night polarity where the liver and the forces of life are able to recover and replenish the whole organism (in some ways from bottom up, and from inside out). In many ways, therefore, we can also see these two polarities in the threshold of the oceanic shoreline and the lake shoreline (in some ways the threshold into death and the threshold into life, respectively). This is not an either/or distinction however, for, as we have seen, the night polarity and the winter polarity also come to the oceanic shoreline, as too mid-summer and midday come to the lake shoreline. Everything is in some way moving between these polarities of life and of death, or night and day, wet and dry, metabolic-digestive and nerve-sense, will and thought, and so on. What we find, however, is that some phenomena reveal one end of this polarity more than others.

We would not be forming our reflections in accordance with reality, however, if we were not to consider a third element within this polarity that regulates or creates a rhythm between both extremes. For we also have the seasons between the wettest and driest, hottest and coldest; we also have dawn and dusk and the 'evening' of the light; we have times when plants flower and animals raise their young; when the wind is less extreme; when colours and rainbows are more apparent., and so on.

That is, we also have another water threshold to consider in addition to that of the ocean and that of the lake – one between the constantly moving water, and that which has more of a tendency to stagnate. In the next section we will therefore turn our observations and attention to the river shoreline.

In Response to a New Sculpture at the Lake

Goethe has famously said, as mentioned above, “He to whom Nature begins to reveal her open secret will feel an irresistible yearning for her most worthy interpreter, Art.” With this in mind, together with our explorations of the lake shoreline and oceanic shoreline thus far, we are also in a position, perhaps, to interpret and evaluate for ourselves any ‘artworks’ that may appear in such places.

In one sense, the whole of the human being’s interaction and relationship with the landscape can be seen as an artistic activity – anything the human being does as part of this relationship can be seen as being artistic. And, in a way akin to the principles of Joseph Beuys, every human being is, in this sense, an artist. It is a question, however, of whether the human being is artistic in accordance with the inner, we could say, lawfulness of the observations they have thus made. For Beuys, this process was in relation to social life – we have to do here, rather, with nature, as Goethe’s comment above points to. Nature and social life are, of course, closely connected, as we have been touching on so far.

(Needless to say, the relationship of the human being to nature and to social life, and how this relates to art – including the artwork of society and of man’s overall relationship to the external world – long ago already reached a high expression in the Indigenous cultures of the world [from the direction they approach from], including, of course, the Aboriginal people of Australia, and in this case the Whadjuk Noongar people. Again, this is not my knowledge to share. The intention here is, again, to attempt an expanding of the contemporary Western pathway or direction towards an understanding of reality as a whole, as well as towards artistic expression in the broadest sense of the word.)

So, in this sense, whatever man-made activity that occurs in relation to a natural landscape can be seen as art. How well such activity accords with the revelation of nature’s “open secret” is for each of us to determine. This process is further intensified when it comes to the creation of what we more commonly today call art. It is in this sense that we can observe a sculpture placed at the location of the majority of my observations of the lake thus far – near the viewing area on the eastern shoreline, towards the southern end of the lake. The sculpture depicts a slightly-smaller-than-life-size elderly, male-and-female couple with stooped shoulders looking towards the lake, the right hand of the female is on the left leg of the male, with the left arm of the male behind the back of the female – in this sense, ‘supporting’ one another. It appears to be made of a hollow bronze, and is stuck to the ground and to a concrete slab upon which the forms sit. The sculpture is called ‘Together’ and, as mentioned in a small plaque next to it, depicts the impact of COVID on the community, especially the elderly, and the way that “together we supported one another” (words are used in the past tense, therefore placing the pandemic in the past, but this was before COVID really arrived in Western Australia [the sculpture was installed in September 2021]). Established bushes and a fence were removed from the eastern side of the viewing area at the same time the sculpture was installed, while a fence (with signs originally saying ‘temporary,’ before the signs were removed) was erected around the lake shoreline itself. Based on our

explorations thus far, and whatever other observations we may have made at this, or even other, lakeside shorelines, we can determine for ourselves the level to which it relates to what is revealed in the natural landscape.

As far as the social landscape is concerned, which we have also touched briefly upon throughout our explorations of this particular environment, we can also determine for ourselves how much it relates or otherwise to the observations we have made, including observations of human activity in relation to the lake.

It should also be known that in the hour or so I sat there, with others, around sunset, on the day after it was installed, many people came to look at it, especially the elderly. A number of them remarked on their 'enjoyment' of the sculpture. Those I was with, of a younger generation, expressed similar sentiments. I have heard more such sentiments since then.

My intention here is not to judge or criticise the sculpture or anything else for that matter, but to continue our observations further into the relationship of the human being to nature (and, to an initial extent, social life), and to explore how this relates to everything that is created out of such relationships – including to what level of relationship we are referring to and engaged in when we observe the world around us, and then *act*.

In some ways, Goethe's overall orientation comes to mind here again. Namely, that science is the process of coming to the essential nature of phenomena, while art is science turned into deed.

(As a follow-up note, a poem has now been written and turned into a smaller sculpture to the east of the existing one. We may now ask, In what way is this new art form of the poem related to the context in which it exists, if it takes as its content and subject the sculpture mentioned above? What is reinforced in such a process, and what is omitted?)[31]

[31] Some readers may also be aware that there exists a sculpture (near houses in the north west corner of the lake parkland) marking the old site of Aboriginal families' homes. This area is now considerably overgrown. It seems mostly unnoticed and possibly vandalised.

River: The Approach

The area of river shoreline in North Fremantle that I haven rhythmically returned to over the course of the last few years is a stretch that runs, roughly, from the old wooden traffic bridge (Queen Victoria Street) – walking on the north side of river – towards the limestone cliffs where the river curves/bends significantly. During the period of most observations, the first stretch from the wooden bridge upriver to the sporting oval has been walked most weekday afternoons/evenings; the stretch from the cliffs back to the sporting oval has been walked most Sunday mornings, but on other occasions too. In more recent times, the afternoon walk has generally taken place on the stretch from the sporting oval to the start of the cliffs.

Like the other landscapes explored thus far, others have been observing this area far longer than I have, including, of course, the Whadjuk Noongar people. Still, a start must be made somewhere. The following, therefore, is nothing other than an exploration of observations from the start I have made thus far.

At the lake shoreline we have a water level that rises and falls over the course of a year through rainfall, evaporation, absorption, and other factors touched on above. At the beach we can add to these phenomena the oceanic movements of currents, tides, waves and so on. Our central experience while standing at the lake shoreline, in this respect, is one of the stillness of water. At the beach shoreline we, generally speaking, experience the throwing ashore and retraction of water through the activity of waves – of *waves* that move, as Shwenk[32] has pointed out, and *water* that remains relatively still.

At the river shoreline we can also find these phenomena depending on the conditions – that is, of stillness and of the movement of waves. And while it also occurs at the beach shoreline, we can find at the river shoreline the experience of water that flows past us. Standing on the shore, the water at the river is not only still (like at the lake), nor does it mainly come towards or away from us (like at the beach), but it also flows past us. In most rivers this will usually be from upriver to downriver. In places exposed to the ocean and tidal movements (especially near river 'mouths'), this movement past us can also be from downriver to upriver. (In terms of tides we also have to do with historical contexts, and whether a river has always flowed through to the ocean, or whether the river's usual activity has been impacted upon – and to what extent – by the activity of human beings. This is most definitely the case with the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River where the mouth of the river was destroyed, and where significant dredging and other activity has taken place over the last 190 years.) In the current movement of the river we also have the experience of a pause between the change of tidal directions (at peak high or low tides).

What this 'flowing past' aspect of rivers also brings about are, again, as Schwenk points out, *waves* that remain still while *water* flows through them (we will explore this more in a moment when we look at the water element at the river shoreline). Why I introduce this phenomenon now is that it can help reveal to us, at

[32] Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos,* p. 31.

least in part (a part that is connected to and contains the patterns or archetypes of the whole), the way in which the shoreline of the river expresses something new in relation to the other shorelines we have so far explored, and in terms of how this relates to the human being. As we will see, it is not merely that the river shoreline expresses some kind of ‘middle ground’ or ‘middle point’ between the qualities and activities of the beach shoreline and the lake shoreline – it is not some kind of intermingled balancing of the two polarities; it is in fact an expression of a third element – autonomous of and at the same time interdependent on the two other autonomous and interdependent shorelines. What it is, and what it relates to in the human being, is not merely a middle balance or intermingling, it is a third area between the two polarities that also regulates the interactions between all three areas.

Again, at the river shoreline we have to do with phenomena and activities also taking place at the beach and lake shorelines, as we shall see. But perhaps the connection to a much greater catchment area – even all of it – can be more clearly experienced through the river shoreline. This includes, as we have touched on, the flowing past – the movement – of the water in relation to the land of this shoreline. But we have also to do – as we do at the beach or the lake – with observations connected to water that falls from the sky, that is carried from the surface of the water back into the sky, water that moves through the sky, and water that moves under the ground. Sticking as much as possible to our observable phenomena, we may not clearly notice all of these activities, but we shall perhaps test this a little. We therefore have to do with a flowing of water – in this place at least – that is not only one-directional, nor is it only ‘horizontal,’ although water does travel from land that is higher above sea level to land that is lower – we also have to do with a cyclical movement of water (and also a kind of breathing in and out). How this relates to the other elements and to the kingdoms of nature, we will again explore. And through these observations we will perhaps be able to step or see through, somewhat, the all-encompassing presence of the watery element and understand in what ways the human being is connected to all we observe.

Relatively speaking, in a similar way to the other landscapes explored, we are dealing with but a small part of the overall river shoreline – the overall river landscape, or catchment in its entirety. But we will be treating this small stretch, hopefully, as a doorway that we can look through to the river shoreline landscape as a whole – as a droplet connected to the larger movements, patterns and landscape of the fluid element of the world, and how this is connected also to the human being.

River: Contextual Landscape

It is worthwhile noting that during the period of writing this section on the river an arts festival was also taking place in relation to the river, including the stretch I have been observing these last few years (the event mostly took place between the two traffic bridges). Earlier in 2021, a different arts festival also held an event on the south side of the river looking back towards the cliffs on the north side, further upriver.

Again, the purpose of observing such activity is not to judge such human activity, but to understand it in relation to what we can observe of the landscape – natural and social – as a whole. We have to do here with whether we are able to come to the essential nature of a phenomenon – its archetype, as Goethe has called it, or its "idea" (Schiller) or spiritual aspect, as others have called it.[33] But we also have to do with the direction and the approach we take in order to observe and experience such phenomena. Do we deal only with the fruits of such a path that others have walked? (Indeed, such fruit can be helpful for the further development of our own pathway if we wish to take up such activity.) Or do we seek to observe and experience the process of arriving at such observations objectively ourselves? The next question must therefore be, From which direction did the 'fruits' of such a path emerge? That is, which pathway led to such fruits, and how does this pathway relate to the pathway most connected to my own direction of observation? And finally, How does what I can perceive, or the fruit of the pathway closest to the one I walk, relate to the fruits and pathways of other directions – of other knowledge systems?

We have to do here with authenticity of knowledge and its shadows – appropriation and subjugation (but also with illusion and fantasy). Either we stand in relation to such wisdom authentically when measured against our own context – if this is a Western context and a Western direction then we have to do with science and more fundamentally the powers of perception/observation (and of joining these with concepts in the activity of thinking), and then expanding such observations and thinking to include the whole of reality, in the manner appropriate to that reality – or we do not. If we are not prepared to walk such a path then we risk the appropriation of the fruit of other knowledge systems (and, potentially, their methodologies) for ourselves; or else we risk the subjugation of our own insights or methods to the insights or methods of other knowledge systems – both possibilities are closely related. (Illusion and fantasy relate only to what we ourselves perceive/create unrelated to an objective reality also experienceable by others from their direction.)

The other danger that should be mentioned is that we stick so firmly to our own particular direction and methodologies that we are either not prepared to interact with the knowledge systems of others, or else that we use those other knowledge systems only to support our own direction. Authenticity is again required here when it comes to the interaction with other directions and knowledge systems. Contextual and historical respect here is also paramount, but it cannot replace the initial authenticity required to identify (and authenticity that can emerge from the

[33] See, for instance, amongst other things, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Fortunate Encounter" in *Goethe: Scientific Studies*, Suhrkamp, NY, 1988, pp 18-21.

identification of) one's own path, including the methodologies and fruits thereof. In finding first a solid ground – albeit one made more of water – we can then more fully and authentically interact with others who stand on their own ground – that is, who act from their own direction.

We are then in a better position to observe together the various natural and social phenomena of life (including historical phenomena) to the fullness of their reality. By doing so we are also in a better position to create things out of such shared understandings – all of which together can be seen as the great artwork of humanity. What we now call 'art' is nothing other than a condensation of such processes. The same dangers as above also exist, needless to say, in the creation of such artworks. The strength or otherwise of the creative process – the level of reality to which it is prepared to go – therefore determines the level to which the 'artwork' itself is an expression out of such realities.

Artworks themselves (including the overall artwork of social life), can therefore also be observed in such a way as we have been observing these particular shoreline landscapes. Like a landscape can open up onto realities beyond the material, so an artwork can open up onto the thinking and perceiving processes that stand behind its creation, and the particular creative forces or beings active or absent therein.

But all of this is merely by way of introduction – let us now begin our observation of the river shoreline with the mineral kingdom in which it reveals itself.

River: Mineral

If we turn our attention to the mineral kingdom of the river shoreline we are, in a way akin to the beach (though not as extreme), struck by its movement. And its movement, again, comes about primarily in relation to water. The sands of the river line the unwalled banks of either side (including ‘beaches’ on the northern side that begin upriver of the old traffic bridge and stretch to Harvey Beach), and the river bed itself. Where there are man-made ‘banks’/walls these are often made in relatively straight lines from limestone bricks. Where human beings have deposited more large rocks on the shoreline, these are also generally made of limestone. Two inlets, which occasionally join up (a dozen or so metres inland) at higher tides, appear upstream of the concrete traffic bridge of Stirling Highway, and I presume them to be man made – this is also where a large amount of limestone rocks have been deposited.

Looking across to the southern side of the river, the majority of the dry shoreline is comprised of limestone wall (at least at higher tide) until one approaches the boat ramp downriver of the East Fremantle Yacht Club. More natural sections of sand appear here, together with several limestone groynes. Back on the north side, the more ‘natural’ stretch of land from the end of the apartment buildings upriver of the old traffic bridge continues past the inlets and on to the Pier 21 hotel and the Moorings apartments which are (limestone) walled areas where boats are moored. This wall then continues to the amphitheatre downstream of the water police, and the limestone-walled ‘beach’ (Harvey Beach) upriver of the water police which then gives way to sheer limestone cliffs. At this point in the river it is relatively easy to discern a large sandbar in the centre of the river where the river curves past the cliffs on one side and the yacht club, groynes, café and boat ramp on the southern/eastern side.

As the tide rises and falls it reveals more or less of the river sand and limestone – either natural or human-placed. After rains, the minerals in the river will also change (as does the river’s colour – often darker after rains), bringing soils and nutrients from much further up the catchment. However, the degree to which this is observable in this particular stretch of river is also determined in large part by whether the tide is outgoing or incoming, and the amount of rain received in the catchment as a whole. Such soils and nutrients from upriver can then become deposited on either bank, and after rains these can also be further distributed out to sea. (Where the river shoreline begins and ends, in this respect – in terms of the mineral kingdom – must also be seen as part of a much larger area and cycle.)

(The soil at the lake shoreline is relatively rich and full of life. The soil at the beach is sandy and only coastal plants and shrubs grow. The river shoreline soil is somewhere in between, housing both small coastal plants and shrubs as well as larger trees such as tuarts. We can again have a picture here of a polarity between the nerve-sense or head-like processes of the ocean [the ‘river's mouth’] and the metabolic-digestive quality of the lake shoreline; as well as this middle, rhythmic element of the river which we will come more fully to as we continue our observations.)

The appearance of limestone cliffs or sandbars and banks in relation to other upstream and downstream formations on the same side of the river, as well as

formations on the other side, can also be observed somewhat rhythmically, and therefore also in relation to the water element. Alternating patches of cliffs and sandbars on one side (and also in relation to the other side) appear in dynamic relationship with the movements of the water element and that which works through it, but we will explore this in further detail later.

Again, we also have to do here with the landscape or flow of history itself – of contextual time. This whole area of what is now Perth city was once much more separated from the oceanic shoreline – and this was because of a limestone and sand bar that lay across the 'mouth' of the river further downstream. (In this sense it is perhaps more correct to call this shoreline part of a larger wetland system, in terms of this historical connection; however, the river [and especially this stretch, it would seem] would still have been a river as part of such a wetland.) It is assumed that the mineral kingdom and its components looked somewhat different when the bar was intact than what currently exists, and perhaps a hint of this can be found in what appears after heavier rains (though this increased soil activity also currently appears through increased soil erosion due to clearing of the catchment area). The limestone bar, so I am told, was only breached by water occasionally throughout the course of a year (a winter 'flushing' of water took place).

The dredging of the river that followed the destruction of the sand and limestone bar has also altered the nature and activity of the mineral kingdom in the river. Further sand and limestone has been removed throughout the river in order to create depth for boats, with 'reclaimed land' increasing in area as part of this same process. The mineral kingdom has been moved by human beings, and then by the increased water movements that have resulted. As the river became connected to the activities of the oceanic waters of the world, and much of what we have also observed at the beach shoreline, so the river has changed in relation to these interactions. Today, as the oceanic waters of the world continue to rise, governments, businesses, organisations and individuals are busy rebuilding the river's limestone wall in front of whatever pieces of land/real estate they are seeking to protect from rising sea levels. (In one sense they are attempting to rebuild the old river-mouth bar but in relation only to – and to protect – separate smaller pieces of 'property' in which they have some interest.) These walls are usually not curved like the rest of the river, but are generally straight, which has its consequences in relation to the water element which, as we have touched on but will explore further, always strives towards winding, snaking movements (and not straight lines).

In limestone we again find the process of an initial building up of deposits, then a wearing down – a wearing away. A building up, and a wearing away. It is a process of consolidation of old elements, including shells (which have been built up out of what has been received from the environment by small molluscs in the water), and then a wearing down of these as they continue to age. (Some shells found on the river shoreline are flat shells shaped like the bays of the ocean, while others, often found in their thousands at the inlets, are more three-dimensional spiral in nature.) (Additionally, I often observe shells and shell fragments lying *on top of* the sand within the high tide line, and when I dig I do not find further shells below the

surface – the shells appear to be ‘sieved’ to the top of the sand in such cases; this dynamic also speaks of nerve-sese and metabolic polarities). Limestone itself speaks of age, but also of movement and the consequences of movement in relation to the water element. This movement of limestone, however, takes place in a much slower way than the movements of sand itself, which change from season to season, month to month, even tide to tide. (While walking the river sand we generally feel it to be similar to the firmness we find at the beach, though over a more compact area, with the water’s edge moving less than it does at the beach.) Seen in isolation, limestone, as mentioned, exists in a polarity to granite which builds up out of itself in more rounded, convex forms, as opposed to the withered (and weathered), cave-like ‘concave’ forms we see in limestone. As also touched on, one could potentially view this polarity as a qualitative difference between young and old, even metabolic-digestive-limbic and nerve-sense. It is interesting to note that a large part of the groynes at the ocean are granite in nature, whereas here in the river they are limestone. Indeed, limestone has also been mined from the hills nearby in North Fremantle, and has been turned into many local buildings. Limestone absorbs, to an extent, not only water, but also, it would seem, the weather from previous days, reflecting it out again in the days that follow – there seems to be a delay of environs with limestone – that is, we could perhaps also say it is ‘old’ (qualitatively) and seems to live somewhat in the past. Whereas granite comes across, qualitatively, as youthful, rounded like the physical form of a younger human being, with water streaming right off of it (we could say this qualitative viewpoint comes more from the perspective of the water element than the earthly). In the more nerve-sense coastline of the ocean granite is used to counter the approaching elements. Here, on the river, limestone has been used. At the lake, little to no man-made (mineral kingdom) banks have been created (such work focuses more on shoring up the banks through plant life).

The river shoreline – as it exists today – in relation to the mineral kingdom, is one that changes rhythmically as one travels along the shoreline. The limestone – more nerve-sense (in relation to the more metabolic-digestive-limb nature of the sand) – gives way to sand (again, comprised of minerals such as quartz and limestone). We go from stretches of nerve-sense activity to more metabolic-digestive activity (in terms of the mineral kingdom) and then back again to nerve-sense processes. This changes rhythmically on one side of the river, but also in relation to what happens between one side and the opposite side (i.e. one side will have limestone cliffs and often deeper water, while the direct other side is shallow and sandy – this rhythmic alternation, therefore, also takes place in relation, generally speaking, to the shallows and the depths, though this depends on location; but more on this in the coming chapters). (The further up the river we go, and further up its tributaries, the closer we also get [especially in the hills of the Darling Scarp] to granite formations, therefore providing a larger overall polarity, with rhythmic variation, within the larger river shoreline.) A picture may emerge for us here of human beings lying, *on the edges* of both sides of the river, with head to feet, then head again, with head usually directly opposite feet on the other side [and vice

versa]; as well as another picture of alternating inverted human beings lying *across* sections of river, with head on one side and feet on the other, before the positions of head and feet invert in the next human being lying across the river, and so on.

This rhythmic alternation of more nerve-sense and then more metabolic, when it comes to the length of the river shoreline on one side or in relation to the other side (as well as, to an extent, the depths of the river shoreline and the shallows), is not however, some balance between the generally more nerve-sense processes active at the beach shoreline and the generally more metabolic processes active at the lake shoreline (or, perhaps we could also say 'upriver') – rather, it is an expression of a third kind of ecological shoreline landscape that exists between these two polarities. Indeed, before colonists arrived here, this rhythmic interaction between the two other polarities would have been, presumably, much more subtle and, in a certain sense, refined. Now it appears as a more 'obvious' expression of a kind of third element within the landscape, placing the other two shorelines also into sharper relief. All three shorelines, as mentioned, remain autonomous in a certain sense, but of course also interdependent.

Even in the expression of the mineral kingdom, the river reveals the rhythmic processes of heart and lung in the human being. In some ways, these processes are expressed most fully in the mineral kingdom.

The way the water element is directly active in the phenomena of the mineral kingdom we will observe further later. But let us next turn our attention to the plant kingdom and what it can further reveal to us about the river shoreline, including the shoreline's relationship to us as human beings.

River: Plants

Perhaps even more so than at the oceanic or lake shorelines, human activity at and near the river shoreline has shaped the ecological landscape so that it is difficult to know what the situation was like pre colonisation. This goes for the mineral kingdom just as much as it does for the plant kingdom. Within this particular stretch of river we can also be struck by the distinct lack of – that is, removal – of plant life, as well as its re-insertion.

In place of the plant kingdom, the activities of human beings have taken precedence (especially housing and industry). Where plant life remains, or has been re-planted, then certain observations can still be made in terms of the conditions in which plant life is able to exist, and the patterns in which it is able to do so.

Upriver of the port area on the north side of the river, near the old timber bridge, we find wild grasses growing on the slope of a steep bank (rising to the road above), followed by the more manicured lawns in front of apartment buildings as we move upriver. These lawns give way to the manicured shrubs in the gardens of these apartment buildings as we move inland by the water's edge. Behind the apartment buildings we find a few native plants such as peppermints, as well as some introduced trees such as palms, olives and the like lining the streets and roundabouts of the closest roads. If we continue upriver along the shoreline, we find more native species such as tea trees, she-oaks, smaller gums and paperbarks. Seemingly planted along the walkway in places – including at walkway bridge 'crossings' (this includes the banks of the two inlets on the upriver side of the concrete bridge) – we find knotted club rushes, sword sedges, spinifex, thick-leaved fan flowers, wild oats, sea sponge and other rushes and small plants. On the higher ground (sometimes covered with water) of the two inlet areas we also find smaller bushes (resembling samphire) often found in salt lakes. Further up the banks on dry ground near the inlets we have the smaller bushes mentioned above, as well as saltbush, grasses and trees such as tea trees, paperbarks and she-oaks, as well as some smaller eucalypts. Moving inland from the inlet areas, we find ever larger trees, including more she-oaks and paperbarks, as well as tuarts and palms. Here we find a native plant nursery growing seedlings, as well as a community garden full of small plots of largely non-native plants. Going further inland along Stirling Highway we find even larger tuart trees, ilyarries, pink- and yellow-flowering gums, she-oaks and a poplar; and along Johanna St next to the oval we find the large Norfolk pine, and large eucalypts. Continuing upriver along the shoreline near the sports oval we find further tea trees, paperbarks and she-oaks, some acacias, as well as smaller bushes again such as spinifex, sedges, rushes, and the like. Inland from here we find peppermints, larger eucalypts and, further inland but still running parallel to the river next to the sports ground, the Norfolk pines. At the Pier 21 hotel we find something of a repeat of the previous apartments, with the odd palm tree here or there, an illyarrie, frangipanis and other introduced ornamental plants. Further upriver we find a couple of eucalyptus trees where the water is much deeper than the downriver stretch we have just walked, with further bushes on the river side of the grass near the Moorings apartments including coastal daisybushes, sword sedges, knotted club

rushes, thick-leaved fan flowers, cypress pines, cockies tongues, native wisteria and so on. If we continue inland up the limestone hills the verge plants seem to get ever larger, going from bushes and smaller bottlebrushes and smaller eucalypts to larger eucalypts including tuart trees. Going upriver and slightly inland at the water police into the limestone cliff area covered in more native vegetation, we find peppermint trees, grasses such as hare's tail and feather speargrass, and smaller shrubs including cockies tongues, guichenotia, coastal honeymurtle, coastal daisybush, berry saltbush, some smaller balga, acacias, cypress pines (which give the hill its Western name), as well as more tea trees, other melaleucas and the tuarts. Where the river is at its deepest, running along by the cliffs, we find (seen from a kayak on the water) large she-oak trees closest to the river (many covered in cormorant droppings), a club rush or two, a tea tree or two closer to Harvey Beach; at the next level up we have mostly tuart trees, with some cockies tongues closer to the ground, and a peppermint here or there (plus a large palm closer to Harvey Beach, as well as what appear to be several aloe vera plants); then at the highest level we have mostly acacias, with some tuart trees, cypress pines, and a tea tree here or there. (While the tuarts here are large when compared to the surrounding trees of the area, they are still not quite as large as other tuarts elsewhere, such as those at the lake shoreline (and other lake shorelines [including Manning Lake] – this appears to often be the case in areas of heavy limestone [more nerve-sense processes], as if growth [and life] is held back – however, flowering activity can often be high in such places, including here [the connections between the air – and light – element and the flowering processes of plant life can again come to mind].)

Inland from here we find further verge trees which are also relatively large for this area, such as she-oaks, bottlebrushes, frangipanis, maples, olives, paperbarks, larger eucalypts (including red-flowering gums) and so on.

(As a side note, I do notice even in the way I write about this stretch of river that I seek to ‘walk along’ and describe with the flow of the river; as opposed to the beach which feels more like describing one particular spot; while the lake feels more like describing the wholeness of the place, almost from the inside out. In a similar way, often when I go to the beach it is to walk briefly, enter the water, reflect for a moment, and leave; the river I usually walk; at the lake I try to sit and take in the whole thing.)

From all of these cursory observations we can already begin to see something of an archetypal pattern in terms of the conditions for plant life along the river shoreline, even if some of these are non-native plants, or if they have been ‘reintroduced.’ And that is, somewhat generally, that along the sandier areas by the river, we find conditions suitable for either smaller shrubs, rushes, sedges or grasses, or else smaller or leaner versions of trees such as she-oaks, tea trees, paperbarks, or even eucalypts such as tuarts. (Many of these trees closest to the river are now dying and falling over as the saltwater sea levels rise.) Moving further inland, or onto firmer limestone near the deepest water, we find more variety of plants, as well as larger plants culminating in the tuarts either inland along the highway, or up at the top of the cliffs by the bend in the river. (We could also say,

generally, that the sandier areas of the river, in terms of plant life but in other ways also, tend more towards the qualities of the beach shoreline, while the area near the cliffs tends more towards the quality of the lake shoreline.)

From these general patterns it is relatively easy to form a picture of the plant life at the river shoreline in relation to the human being. We can form a picture of the human being lying down with the head at the river's edge, with the digestive-metabolic-limb area stretching off inland with the larger trees, with the more rhythmic bushes and smaller trees somewhat in between. Again, species that might otherwise be much larger trees further inland, seem to be kept more in check closer to the river's edge – they seem slightly smaller or thinner, and also risk complete thinning out, loss of life and death as the salt waters rise up to meet them. The salt water of the river brings death, and the closer to the ocean the river is, the saltier the water is. This is, again, a nerve-sense quality of death – of death within the nervous system in order for consciousness to emerge – of crystalline sense organs devoid of processes of life and growth, but that are as still, and in a way 'fixed,' as the head itself is – the seat of all nerve-sense processes, and of thinking activity on the level of consciousness and psychological/soul processes. Here the plant forces are kept in check, are not so full of life as further inland, or where the sand is also less affected by salt, such as at the lake. And yet, these are also trees that we do not usually find in the even-saltier and more extreme (also in other ways) conditions of the oceanic shoreline – they are still trees growing right by the water's edge, albeit not as large as those of the lake or further upriver or uphill from the river's edge. These are trees expressing relationship with nerve-sense processes, but processes not as polar or extreme as those of the oceanic shoreline – they are, rather, somewhat more regulated or rhythmic.

Likewise, the larger tuarts and other larger trees further inland from the river, or uphill on the limestone cliffs, are much more metabolic in quality. But they are not as large as the trees which find a home on the banks of the lake shoreline, be they native or introduced, such as the massive Moreton Bay figs, or trees we might find even further inland. These are metabolic trees along the river, but they are not as metabolic as some of the more polar or extreme trees along the edge of the lake shoreline or further inland. They are, again, more regulated, more rhythmic in quality.

From these observations we can also form another picture of the relationship between the plant kingdom of the river shoreline and the quality of processes within the human being. Not only can we form a general picture of the human being lying down with head near the water and feet stretching inland, but also a somewhat moving one, for this picture itself changes somewhat rhythmically depending on the size of plants at the shoreline which are sometimes small shrubs, grasses, rushes and so on; sometimes trees; sometimes larger trees (though all within the polar extremes of what we have previously observed at the oceanic and lake shorelines). That is, the image of the human being, always with head to the water, seems to shift from larger head and less metabolism, to smaller head and more metabolism (as well as a more balanced phase in between), generally, the further we travel inland, but always in relation to the mineral kingdom and the turn and depth of the river.

These changes represent a rhythmic activity in and of itself (in a similar way to what we have already observed of the mineral kingdom).

In addition to this, we can also picture, out of general observations of the plant kingdom of the kind made above, an overall picture of the human being in relation to the river shoreline where the head of the human being lies downriver, and the limbs stretch further upriver and inland, with a more rhythmic regulatory section in between (but depending, also, on the bends and alternating depths of the river).

Needless to say, as mentioned above, these images, based on plant life observations, also have a relation to the mineral kingdom already touched upon, including the depth to which this mineral kingdom exists under the water. The shallower shoreline water, as mentioned, currently belongs to the sandy stretches where the smaller bushes and smaller trees currently predominate at the (salty) water's edge, but become larger as we move inland. Where the deeper water and limestone cliffs are to be found, we find the larger trees close to the water's edge (the water cannot, at present, reach them). In terms of plant life we move from more nerve-sense to more metabolic activity respectively in each case, with something of a rhythmic phase in between (however, as we have seen, this also has a lot to do with water-levels and the death processes present in salt-water). We will talk more about this phenomenon when we look more specifically at the activity of the water element.

Finally, we should also mention the plant life that we find either dead and washed up upon the river's banks either in the form of leaves or tree branches (another death process, but also a cleansing out of such death processes towards the oceanic shoreline and the more extreme death process at work there), as well as the plant life that lives under the water's surface within the river itself. This plant life under the river's surface does not seem to be quite as full of growth forces as the plants that live in the water at the lake, where grasses can grow up through the water green and flourishing at the beginning of the warmer months, with large rushes growing there year-round. Nor are the river grasses as thin and 'stick like' as some of the grasses of the beach shoreline which seem to throw themselves ashore even in the more gentle of storms. (On April 13 and April 14, 2022, a very large number of round, light-green seaweed formations [similar to sea cauliflower] were seen on the river's higher tide line near the sports ovals – on closer inspection they seemed full of air, and connected to a single small, darker green leaf-shaped formation with a pointy end, not totally dissimilar from a tiny hot-air balloon with 2-D basket attached, or a leaf that has grown a flower in the form of a rounded ball, with which they can float.) The grasses of the river shoreline are neither as full of life and growth as those of the lake, nor as full of death and withering process as the beach shoreline (especially the more nerve-sense grasses of the beach shoreline). (The underwater grasses by the deeper water near the limestone cliffs are much taller than those of the sandier areas, though still do not break the surface [or, rather, they grow to the water's surface but then do not push through the surface but rather float near the top of it – this can also provide us with a picture of the growth of plants more generally, especially above-ground plants, whereby we can perceive that it is the forces of the

watery element that bring about growth and life, overcoming as they do so the forces of the earth element which, on their own, would lead only to decay and death – but the plant does not go beyond this water element, welcoming the air and light into its periphery from outside only – such is the general picture of all plants that these specific underwater plants can provide for us]; elsewhere, on sandy areas [including near deposited limestone rocks], underwater plants seem to grow calmly in rounded clumps, not breaking the water's surface.) We seem to be able to see underwater river plants less obviously than at the beach, but more obviously than at the lake (at least while they are growing underwater only – as soon as they reach near the surface or beyond, we can see them at the lake more obviously than at the river, and more obviously at the river than at the beach, unless seaweed has become detached at the beach and is floating); and plants are often larger at the river (especially those near the cliffs) than those at the beach shoreline, but not quite as large or rooted in living networks as the grasses and other plants of the watery areas of the lake shoreline (the underwater river plants of the cliff area exist qualitatively, again, somewhere between those of the lake and those of the sandier areas of the river). The underwater river plants are more rhythmic (i.e. between underwater ocean and lake plants) – representing, as we have so far observed within the overall qualities of plant life at the river threshold, an autonomous yet interdependent middle realm between nerve-sense activity and metabolism-digestion-limb activity – between consciousness and growth – between the forces of death and life – a third area between these polarities related to the rhythmic activity and functions of heart and lung within the human being – of circulation and regulation – of feeling activity between the polar psychological/soul activities of thinking and willing. But we will explore these characteristics further as we continue our observations, including into the activity of animal life at the river shoreline.

River: Animals – Birds

Birds at the river shoreline are more diverse and higher in number than at the oceanic shoreline, but less so than at the lake shoreline. At this section of river we find a range of birdlife, from the smaller birds such as the welcome swallow (often seen flying high above the river), the willy wagtail, singing honeyeaters, New Holland honeyeaters, and lorikeets, to crested and Caspian terns, white cockatoos, pied oystercatchers, little black cormorants, pied (and little pied) cormorants, butcher birds, seagulls, magpies, crows, Pacific black ducks, white-faced herons, rufous/nankeen night herons, darters, black cockatoos, egrets, ospreys, black swans and pelicans. (I have also seen what was either a peregrine falcon [or less likely a collared sparrowhawk] near the two inlets one afternoon; a similar bird was seen on the south side of the old traffic bridge on December 7, 2022.) Again, while these birds are much greater in variety (and usually in number) than those that appear at the beach shoreline, they are far less in number (and usually in variety) than what might appear at the lake shoreline – often they only appear at the river as single birds, or in pairs. Some birds are to be found here year-round, others only for certain periods of the year, and others only drop in, it seems, from time to time. Each species seems to have a certain area that they feel at home in, and a kind of pattern in their activity and movement – we will touch on this as best as we are able, with the observations that we have been able to make with daily visits (usually walks) over a period of a couple of years.

The deeper waters of the river, which do not dry up the same way as the lake (usually) does, or aren't as deep and distant as the ocean, seem really only to be the domain of the pelican. The pelican seems happy to move amongst these deeper waters, and also to (and along) the edges, often finding a perch on the limestone rocks by the jetty between the two bridges, or else on the rocks on the ocean side of the train bridge. Even when pelicans do fly, it is often over the deeper waters of the river, rising up slightly to flap their wings to avoid touching the surface of the water, and then gliding down again, their bellies almost touching the surface. When they spiral up into the air, and even back down again, it is also often over the central area of the river. (The only birds which I have seen spiralling upwards are pelicans, eagles and darters – all larger and more metabolic birds; seagulls may also rise for a short while in upward spirals, but they usually become shaky, change course, or shift direction, though I did see one spiral for a long while on the evening of May 14, 2022.) One rarely if ever sees a pelican actually walking on dry land. When they happen to find fish they will either swim as fast as they can or else perform a kind of flap-hop to catch up to the fish; they then use their beaks in a kind of sideways scooping motion to trap the fish in the flap beneath the beak. I have also seen them jumping almost straight up and spearing down again with their beak while hitting the water with their feet, then using their beak to scoop up water and potentially fish, before draining out the water with up-and-down movements of the beak while not letting out the fish (like a kind of sieve). (Interestingly, I also heard, mid-march, 2022,

one tapping together its beak three times – tap, tap, tap – as it swam past the beach in front of the sports oval.)[34]

Of course, other birds also use the central part of the river, especially the cormorants as they move up and down the river, above and below the water's surface, using their strong tails to propel them through the water, fishlike. When fish are being hunted, it is often the cormorant which provides the best indication of where the school is located, and the pelican will often follow the lead of the cormorant as if it were a kind of sense organ. (In mid March, 2022, on the side of the river near the sports oval, I once saw a pelican and black cormorant fishing together and at one point they seemed to circe one another, looking at each other as if to say, 'so where are the fish?') In a similar way, the crested tern will fly above the central part of the river, and perform a role similar to the cormorant though in the air element. What the cormorant achieves under water, the tern achieves in the air – it is almost as if the cormorant was shaped by water, and the tern shaped by air. The cormorant is sleek and rounded, the tern all angles – the tern spots fish from great heights with acute and sharp vision, then will tuck in its wings and dive beak-first down into the water like a spear and then come up, often with fish in beak, shake itself off, maybe throw a fish in the air if it has one, catch it again (as I have also seen darters do while still in the water; I have seen the darter do this at Harvey Beach; on other occasions I have seen it at the same location staying underwater for almost a minute, as well as fly so low overhead as to almost swoop me on two separate occasions), swallow it and fly on. The tern does not hunt while under water like the cormorant but will dive through the surface, as if the top layers of water were a continuation of the air element, in order to reach the fish it spots from above – if it misses the fish on the first go, it will not spend additional time swimming underwater searching for it further, like the cormorant. When we see the cormorant, tern and pelican moving in the same area, we know there are fish there – when the seagull is also present, then we know they are fairly close to the surface.

The seagull will also inhabit the central part of the river, either in the air above or floating on its surface with the tides. They will not, however, dive under the water like the cormorant, or use the air as a kind of weapon in the same way as the tern. Nor will the seagull go as far vertically or horizontally as the pelican. The seagull's movements cross the river, but also go up and down it. They will eat fish and other meat, but they will eat other things too – almost anything, really – given the opportunity. Their eyesight does not seem to be as sharp as the tern, often flying past schools of fish. Unlike the pelican, they are prepared to walk on dry land. In this particular stretch of river they often find their home in large numbers on the south bank downriver from the concrete traffic bridge (i.e. between the two traffic bridges),

[34] On December 14, 2022, at Green Place Reserve in Mosman Park I observed a pelican attempt to sneak up on a school of mullet in the shallows; he first swam past then wheeled around again with his neck tucked in as tight as he could get it before shooting his beak like a spear, though on an angle into the water in front of him; on this occasion he came up empty. (On the same day at Green Place Reserve I heard the crying of a young osprey, and then an adult flew out of some trees to the north and took flight after a pelican – it got closer and closer until they disappeared around a downriver bend; a short moment later, the osprey reappeared.)

where a water drain runs into the river. They will often be there at low tide when there is more exposed sand. After rains they will also gather occasionally on the northern side between the bridges where another water drain runs into the river. Here, and elsewhere, they gather in large flocks of around twenty or more; and I have observed on occasion that there is one bird, at least, that seeks to assume leadership in a particular gathering/group. At night they can sometimes be seen floating or flying in large numbers under the lights of the concrete traffic bridge. They seem to sleep in these same locations, unlike the cormorants which seem to sleep in trees or on pylons at the water's edge, and the terns which I have never seen sleep – I wouldn't be surprised if terns rested in a kind of airy cloud sometimes (as an imagination).

Ospreys, which I have seen nesting – though further upriver near Dyoondalup / Point Walter, Freshwater Bay in Peppermint Grove and near Cove beach in Cottesloe – create their nests high above the landscape, often in large tuart trees or pines. Ospreys like to hunt, often in the colder months, from the street lights above the traffic bridges, especially the old traffic bridge near the north side looking upriver (on September 30, 2022 I observed one Osprey on the usual street light looking down at its mate which had been run over on the road below; on April 12 the following year there were two Ospreys on the light again). The osprey tends to fly along the banks of the river when they do fly, otherwise they seem to wait very patiently on a perch and rely on their sharp eyesight to spot fish. When they do strike, they will enter the water feet first, unlike the tern, and try to grab the fish in their talons. If successful, they will fly out of the water with the fish (usually larger than those caught by the tern), and even stop flapping for a moment to shake themselves dry, before continuing their flight. They will often take their prey back to their nests upriver.

(As a side note, I have also seen a small hawk or falcon near the train line chased by crows; and, on May 22, 2022, a similar-looking bird with kookaburras near the native tree nursery by the river.)

The black swan will usually only travel as far out into the water as they are able to tip over at 90 degrees and still reach down with their necks to feed on the grasses below. As such, they usually only stay to the edges of the river, as if it were a kind of lake. In some ways, the swan inhabits the river as if it were a lake, though I have not seen them raise young on this particular stretch of river in North Fremantle. They are often found here near the river bend by the cliffs, out on a large sandbar in the middle of the river (or near the Pier 21 hotel or by the sports oval); at lower tides they are able to reach grasses on this sandbar below (they can also seen enquiring about food near boats that may be in this area, or near people at Harvey Beach). In this way, one can also have a feeling for the location (and number) of black swans throughout the whole of the river before the sandbar was destroyed and the river dredged – when the river was part of a larger wetland; and, in a way, more 'lake-like.'

I have also, in mid December, seen a single shelduck (the largest of the ducks we have been observing at the river shoreline) flying low to the river into a strong south westerly wind in the evening, crossing from the middle of the river over to the

south side, which is somewhat more protected from the wind on afternoons at that time of year, and flying on towards the ocean (in April I saw a pair doing similar). In mid February I have also seen a single Pacific black duck paddling near the amphitheatre to the downriver side of the water police, about 10 metres from the bank, and in early April I have seen two pairs fighting near the Pier 21 hotel. I have also seen a pair in the same location throughout April and May.

On the water's edge is generally where we find the egrets and herons, sometimes slowly walking and pouncing on smaller fish in a way similar to the terns, though from the land (with sometimes only their larger footprints pointing, at low tide, to their earlier presence). (I observed on May 6, 2022 an egret flying south along Thompson Rd, about half way between river and ocean.) They will stay still for very long periods, as if branch- or tree-like, then spear themselves into the water, beak first. They sometimes walk the shoreline, and can be seen around the two-inlets on the north side, but also at the river cliffs near the bend and sandbar, as well as near the Moorings apartments. I have seen a white-faced heron on limestone rocks near the jetty between the bridges, hopping from one to another then striking with uncoiled beak; at the inlet I have seen a white-faced heron use its feet to stir up prey under water near plants, then strike from above (performing as one organism what a duo might do – e.g. dog and bird – in a larger landscape). I have also seen numerous rufous/nankeen night herons in this area, including with the more striped colours of juveniles in February, March, April and May. The night herons, as their name implies, are often seen in the early evening or night, either flying up or down river, and often alighting on boats on either side of the river, in trees near the cliffs, or on jetty pylons. (I was told by a neighbour – Vivienne Howson – that she had seen, late March, a great number in a tree near the East Fremantle Yacht Club on the south side of the river; the next day I travelled there, and noticed first the great amount of droppings on leaves and on the ground. I counted 12, including 2-3 juveniles, in one eucalyptus tree on the edge of the water, with another two in a nearby pine. There were small and large feathers scattered in the tree, on the ground and in the river. I have also seen a single one in one of the two large eucalyptus trees by the Moorings apartments on May 3, 2022, indicated by the droppings on the path below, and another single one [and a single adult with juvenile on May 10, 2022] on May 5, 2022 in a tree above Harvey Beach when I was looking up to follow the path of a low flying darter; I have also seen a darter in a eucalypt by the Moorings being repeatedly swooped by a seagull on May 10, 2022.) The peregrine falcon (or, possibly, sparrowhawk) I saw inland from the inlets in a small tree, about eye level, and it looked as puzzled to see me as I did it, before it flew off.

Other birds are generally found in the trees, with limited interaction with the water itself. These include the local wagtails, honeyeaters (A baby New Holland honeyeater was seen on April 25, 2022 on the ground near a bush in front a house next to the Moorings apartments – it slowly hopped back up the branches to adult birds above), silvereyes (seen on the clifftop on April 25 in large numbers, with a New Holland honeyeater 'crying' nearby), magpies, kookaburras and crows; as well as the flocks of lorikeets, doves, white cockatoos, pink and grey galahs,

kookaburras, and black cockatoos (seen eating she-oak nuts on the water's edge between the bridges), some of which, such as the crows and white cockatoos, will fly *across* the river, and less so *up* or *down* the river in the way that the birds we've been exploring above will often do. (White cockatoos seem more often to gather on the south side of the river, especially in the fig trees by Zephyr café near East Fremantle Yacht Club.) I have also seen black-faced cuckoo shrikes near the cliffs and elsewhere near the river, including near North Fremantle Primary School. Further inland in this area we will also find owls from time to time, including boobook owls, as well as pied butcherbirds between the river and ocean (near where Staples St meets Stirling Hwy, as well as behind Apace nursery near Stirling Highway). I have only seen pied oystercatchers in flight mode up or down the river at this particular stretch, usually in pairs. (The smaller plovers have been seen, from a kayak, on the water's edge near the cliffs early December and again in February.)

From such initial observations we can already begin to discern general patterns. The deeper waters of the middle of the river provide the contextual home for the activities of the more metabolic birds, including the pelican – the most metabolic-digestive-limbic of the birds here, and then the swan which, while being metabolic, is more rhythmic in quality within this metabolic realm. The osprey is also more metabolic, though nerve-sense in orientation within the metabolic realm. The egrets and herons (overall more metabolic), as well as the cormorants and terns (overall more rhythmic), are more nerve-sense still within these respective realms, with the seagulls lying somewhat more in the middle – with more of a rhythmic quality within the rhythmic realm. Again, we might be tempted to see the seagull as a kind of guardian also of the river threshold, though this function seems somewhat more tempered or regulated than the activities it performs at the beach threshold. It would appear that the seagull moves between the beach threshold which, as we've been exploring, is more nerve-sense and in a way deathlike in quality (when compared to the birdlife of the lake shoreline, for instance), and the river shoreline where it seems to often seek a place of fresh(er) water, as if it sought, in a way, to wash off something of the death shoreline here at the river (likewise it could be said to take something of this more living quality of fresh(er) water back to the realm of death at the oceanic shoreline). The river shoreline therefore performs a kind of middle rhythmic or regulatory function for the seagull, and the seagull performs a kind of regulating activity within the river shoreline, moving through all parts of it, and moving also between it and the beach shoreline, as well as (though less often) the lake shoreline; it will come in large numbers to the river shoreline, though usually in smaller numbers to the lake shoreline (except for after the first rains at the end of the dry season). It would seem that the seagull is also joined by other shoreline bird 'guardians' at the river threshold, including the more metabolic pelican and swan (as well as the osprey), together with the more nerve-sense terns and cormorants (within the rhythmic realm) and, in a sense, also the herons and egrets (nerve-sense within the metabolic realm). (The swan and pelican seem to be increasingly visible at the river in greater numbers from the time of Bunuru – February and March – onwards; many larger birds – swan, osprey, night heron, egret and darter seen together on the

full moon evening of March 18, 2022, for instance.) The bird guardians of the river shoreline seem to shift between more metabolic and more nerve-sense, with the seagull still seeming to play a central but more regulatory role within this – at the beach he is often the solitary bird, while at the lake this role is often left to the slightly more metabolic purple swamphen (especially during years when the lake dries out).

Beyond the water threshold, we again find the smaller birds such as the more nerve-sense honeyeaters, welcome swallow, wagtail and lorikeets, moving to the larger and more rhythmic magpies, cockatoos and galahs. Further inland we find the larger owls, and even further inland, or back in time, we would also find the even-more metabolic emu.

From these general patterns we can begin to form a picture of the bird life of the river shoreline in relation to the human being in such a way that the more limb-metabolic-digestive qualities or activities of the human being can be found in the deeper water, while the more nerve-sense activity and qualities centred in the head area can be found at the water's edge, with more rhythmic activity in between. The human being lies in the river with feet in the centre, head near the water's edge, and rhythmic areas of heart and lung in between. This is then mirrored on the dry land, with head close to head (the smaller land birds mentioned above; but also, as we have observed elsewhere, often a bit of a space between heads occupied by either the seagull or, here, the herons and egret – that is, by more rhythmic [seagull] or even metabolic activity [albeit more nerve-sense within this metabolic activity in the case of egrets and herons]), and then the rhythmic area extending inland (through crows, magpies, white cockatoos and the like), and larger birds stretching off even further inland (black cockatoos, ospreys, eagles, emus and so on). Just how this is expressed in the birdlife of the area will shift rhythmically with the tidal movements of the day, and the seasonal movements and changes of the year (and larger patterns throughout the years); migratory practises of birds will come into play, as will rainfall, plant life, fish activity, pollution and other human activity. (We could also perhaps, preliminarily, in relation to bird life at the river, have an image of another human being standing on the water's surface, with more metabolic limbs extending slightly down into the water [pelicans and swans], with the head higher up [the welcome swallow], and more rhythmic activity in between [many of the other birds, including seagulls, {flying} cormorants and terns]; though this image can also change and even flip with the increased flight of pelicans, swans, ospreys, darters, herons and other larger birds above – that is, in the moments when they take to the sky.) In a way, the bird activity of the river is not as 'contained' as that of the lake, where there is a kind of womb-like 'holding' for the birth and growing of new life, including birds. Nor is the river as exposed and open to all the global sensory inputs of the world, including the context in which birds are active, in the same way as the oceanic shoreline is. The river is a balancing third force between these two polarities – a regulating and rhythmically modulating force. This stretch of river is now more affected by the qualities of the beach shoreline as a consequence of the destruction of the river mouth, but the general conditions and qualities which govern it can still be observed through its current bird life. It is not as much of a place of birth and

growth and variety and numbers of birdlife as the lake is, nor is it as much a place of death and exposed nerve-sensory impressions as the beach shoreline is (often to the point where there is a lack of birdlife). The river is a third factor between these two polarities.

We must also, of course, remember that bird life itself is more at the nerve-sense end of the overall spectrum of the animal life of the world. For a global picture, we must also compare birds with all animal life, including mammals, such as cows, horses, deer, pigs, cats, dogs and the like. Birds are much more closely connected to rodents such as mice, with their sharply attuned nerve-sense activity. Australia as a whole is generally devoid of the ungulates (hoofed animals) mentioned above, and even of canines (though, of course, dingos and ‘tigers’ also exist or existed here). Australia as a whole, in relation to animal life, but seen also from other directions as well, is generally a place of more nerve-sense activity, especially when considering the whole range of animal life. This includes bird life. Perhaps this helps us understand also why the numbers of these generally nerve-sense animals are limited in the more extreme nerve-sense polarity of the ocean in a country which is already extremely nerve-sense in orientation (and, perhaps, why we find so many smaller birds in other locations, including further inland) – the conditions at the oceanic shoreline perhaps goes too far for already-nerve-sense birds, on occasions, towards death. Though, this is on the extreme end of the spectrum, for we do find a number of the birds found at the river also at the oceanic shoreline; they can be seen in this sense as performing a regulatory function by venturing between the river and oceanic shoreline – especially to the water area (such as the cormorants, ospreys, terns, pied oystercatchers and so on, and exemplified in the activity of the seagull). At the other end of the polarity we also see the swan, egret, herons, darter and more rarely the cormorant and seagull at the lake. We can have an overall feeling of the circulatory system of the human being here – the moving of the blood and the air throughout the whole organism, returning as they do to the rhythmic middle ground, in this case the river.

River: Other Animals

While bird life makes up most of the noticeable animal life at the river shoreline, in a similar manner to the other shorelines, there are a number of other animals that are noticeable on closer inspection. Many of these other animals live within the water, and some live on/in dry land, including the dog, which makes its appearance again at this particular stretch of river shoreline.

On approaching the river quietly, we may spot a crab scuttle off a limestone rock into the water – these can be smaller or larger crabs (smaller crabs can be found under rocks in the inlets). Sometimes spiralling, three-dimensional vortex (vertical wave) shells line the flowing course of the outgoing tide in the inlets along the river (and can be found in great numbers on the river bed itself, especially near the two inlets near the nursery). These shells seem to be (or were) inhabited either by smaller crabs or molluscs. (On occasions, such as Feb 13, 2022, I have seen many small grey mounds in the water of the inlet, with trails in the sand running in between them.) Often the larger crabs are to be seen further out into the water on larger rocks (such as near the jetty between the bridges; or on the limestone rocks near Harvey Beach where I saw a blue swimmer crab apparently mating with a less colourful female – interestingly this is also the only day I observed and talked to a crab fisherman in that same area) – these crabs do not get washed up with the rising and falling of the tide, but follow their own volitional movement within the ebbs and flows of the daily, monthly and seasonal rhythms.

We may also see jellyfish of different kinds within the water or otherwise washed up on the sands. These are mostly creatures of the saltier water – the larger of which, including the brown jellyfish, seem to live mostly in the deeper parts of the water. Smaller, clearer jellyfish may also be seen, including ones with stingers; the stinging variety (including the small blue Portuguese man o' war jellyfish) is usually more at home in the ocean.

We may also see various varieties of fish in the river. Small fish such as whitebait may find their way up the two smaller inlets on higher tides. Larger mullet will sometimes swim in schools along the water's edge, jumping out of the water from time to time. Other ocean fish can also make their way up the river, including tailor. (Seagulls and terns were seen circling 'bubbling' water on February 27, 2022, near Pier 21, with a large school of whitebait [with blue tinge] being pursued by tailor flashing out of the depths and eating them; the whitebait were corralled between boats and jetties.) I have seen a cobbler early to mid December by the jetty between the two bridges (upon seeing us he swam slowly towards rocks further out in a snaking, wavelike movement akin to flowing water and the overall shape of the river). I have seen flathead and flounder a bit further upriver from here (and bream further upriver again). Different fish inhabit different areas and depths of water, and sometimes the only way to see them is to pull them out of the water. Needless to say, larger fish usually inhabit deeper water, at various depths, but they can also come out of these depths to feed. Fish can move both up and down the river, and from the depths to the shallows. This is also true of the dolphins which can be seen often at this particular stretch of river. They will usually be seen swimming upriver or

down, but may linger in places if they are chasing fish. (On March 26, 2022, a large Large pod of 8-10 was seen with 2-3 juveniles rounding up a large school of large [~30cm] mullet moving upriver from Pier 21 to the water police where the dolphins corralled the mullet at the amphitheatre, picking them off; smaller dolphins came close to shore, floating on the surface, occasionally remaining somewhat stationary with nose hole above the water, moving head from side to side like a shoveller duck observing the mullet then going under; the pod jumped and fell and played over the top of one another, especially the smaller ones, including those further out into the river. [A similar process was observed May 10, 2022 with two smaller dolphins near the amphitheatre and several larger dolphins further out; one of the dolphins nearest the shore of the amphitheatre remained stationary and breathing above the water looking towards the shore but with eyes still underwater for around 5 minutes.] The mullet school rippled the water along the shoreline from Pier 21 to the water police, then back and forth; this was a day of very high tide after rain.) Sometimes dolphins swim right along the water's edge if it is deep enough. (Dolphins were seen consecutively on February 10 and 11, 2022; on the 11th, a large pod moved upriver towards the jetty near Pier 21, then turned back upon my kayak – I stuck to the southern side, heading upriver, and they went past on my left, with a very small one passing under the kayak, white belly up; the following day, there seemed to be less dolphins – one adult with a baby and, nearby, another adult with a larger dolphin. On the evening of March 12, 2022 two dolphins were seen approaching two dogs right on the river's edge – one dog barked and tried to enter the water to chase the dolphins. Two dolphins, one older, one younger, were seen on April 23, 2022 near the sports oval heading downriver – they both put their heads up for a time and observed a nearby kayaker; presumably the same ones were seen April 25 near the Moorings where they swum by two Pacific black ducks and a rufous night heron.) When they are chasing fish, they can turn on bursts of great speed if they wish. They therefore move up and down the river, from side to side and, famously, from below to above, sometimes leaping completely out of the water.

Sharks are also to be found in the river, though I have never seen one. They rarely attack humans, though a man was bitten by a bull shark in early 2021. Prior to this, it had been about 100 years since a fatal attack by a bull shark in the river. The attack in 2021 took place at the deepest point in the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River at Jenalup / Blackwall Reach. Of the 36 known fatal shark attacks in Western Australia, six have taken place in what we'd now call the metropolitan area. On the oceanic shoreline there are more attacks and more deaths than in the river.[35] Needless to say, there are no sharks at the lake shoreline. (There is, of course, a relationship between sharks and fear; and from the above we can say that, when comparing the shorelines, shark attacks at the beach lead more frequently to death, to injury at the river shoreline when they do occur, and to neither at the lake because sharks are not present there, and therefore neither is the fear associated with them – the will at the

[35] On Saturday February 4, 2023, a girl was attacked and killed by a shark near the old traffic bridge by the river in North Fremantle – she reportedly jumped off a jetski in order to swim with dolphins. THis was the first fatal attack in the river since 1923.

lake is otherwise engaged; at the ocean it is most susceptible, and the river occasionally so.)

Other, smaller marine animals can be found on jetty piers, pylons, rocks, boats, the riverbed itself, and so on. These include the mollusc shellfish animals such as oysters, mussels, barnacles, etc. These are animals that closely resemble plant life in their nature, growing in one place and taking in nutrients from their surrounding environment (out of which they form their shells).

(I have also been told that there are numerous seahorses, especially in a certain location not far from the ocean, but I have not confirmed this for myself. Further up the river, and its tributaries, there are marron – a large freshwater crayfish native to this area – which I used to catch in Jane Brook when younger.)

Stepping further shore, the most common animal we find is, again, the dog. If one were to visit this place from another planet, one might think that this area – especially the beach and river shorelines of North Fremantle – actually belonged to dogs. Often, pairs of dogs are seen playing together – on many occasions they are of the same species. Often they will also be seen in the water, fetching sticks or otherwise just swimming. (On March 26, 2022 a black labrador was seen swimming about ⅓ of the way across the river, then returning, not going with its master, not fetching, just swimming; on April 24, 2022 one dog was seen running along, jumping and barking (complete with football in mouth) at each breaking wave on the sandbank at the mouth of the upriver inlet). Dogs are also to be found on pathways slightly inland, and they are to be found on the sand of the shoreline itself. From time to time they can be seen digging down into the sand as if they were looking for something, and one can wonder if they might in fact reach another water source down there, such is the depth of their ‘wells’ on occasions.

In walking on warmer days we may hear the song of cicadas in the grasses and trees. Occasionally, we might also hear different frog sounds. Needless to say the birds also share the air with flies, especially in summer, and also with mosquitos, though they usually only come out after sunset on this particular stretch of river.

Of course, other insects, worms, caterpillars, butterflies (I noted blue butterflies and white moths on November 28, 2021, in the grassy area in front of the apartments between the bridges), spiders, bees, dragonflies, snails and so on would certainly find home here too, but I have not made particular note of seeing them, nor have I especially sought them out. (On the evening of April 8, 2022, I did notice ant mounds of yellow sand between pavers in the walkway between Pier 21 and the Moorings, suggesting approaching rain, which then eventuated in the days that followed.)

I have also seen many small and larger skinks in North Fremantle – the largest of which was at the limestone cliffs near the tuart trees. Bobtail lizards are also to be found further away from the river shoreline, and no doubt there are some snakes around as well, though I have not seen any to date.

From these general observations of the animal life at the river shoreline, some general patterns can become apparent. When we find animals of the oceanic shoreline in the river, even the larger metabolic mammals such as dolphins and

sharks, they tend to be more of a rhythmic kind – there are no whales to be found in the river, nor do we see the larger sharks such as the great white. We also don't see many seals (I have never seen any in the river), for instance, which might be seen as being more nerve-sensory mammals amongst the metabolic polarity of ocean mammals. That is, among the more metabolic ocean mammals, we don't see the more extreme metabolic (larger whales), nor the more nerve-sensory (seals etc.), but we do see the more rhythmic in the form of dolphins and medium-sized sharks. These mammals inhabit the deeper parts of the river, especially the area closer to the ocean (but upriver as well, as mentioned), and may come to the river's edges from time to time, as well as above the water's surface (the whole dolphin on occasions; sometimes the fin of the shark). These mammals express a rhythmic middle space in the river shoreline, for they are the more rhythmic representatives of metabolic water mammals as a whole. They move between salt water and slightly fresher water, between ocean and upriver, between the depths and the shallows, between the water and the air (which the dolphin needs in order to survive) – this up-and-down movement also, again, speaks of the regulatory activity and quality of the dolphin between more nerve-sensory and metabolic polarities – the heights and the depths. (In many ways, we could also say that the dolphin and the dog are two other guardians of the river shoreline – one where water meets air, the other where water meets land.)

It is a similar case with the fish of the river shoreline. The largest saltwater fish do not enter the river, and the larger fish that do, such as the mulloway, are presumably fewer in number than they once were. There also seem to be, generally, fewer small fish than what we might see in the shallows of the beach shoreline. The kind of fish we see in the river shoreline are more mid-sized, swimming sometimes on their own as well as in schools, sometimes also moving of their own volition through the air (such as the mullet). They move up and down the river, as well as from the shallows to the depths, as well as up and down the inlets. Different species are at home at different water levels, but they will also move through different levels as they swim. Even the blowfish is a kind of regulator of the water by eating all sorts of waste, bait and barley; it is large in numbers and toxic to eat. (Blowfish are one of if not the most common fish to be seen in the river today. They are sometimes seen on their own, sometimes in schools; when they are caught they can puff up full of air, displaying the spikes on their body; they are fish of water and of air, which speaks also of their poisonous nature [consider what we have previously mentioned in relation to poisonous plants].) (Many dead blowfish were seen under the newer traffic bridge on December 19, 2021; upriver on the same day water was being pumped into the river along a sandy path from the football field oval, with nearby river water somewhat murky. I am told that this water is water that ran into the holes where new light poles were dug for the sports oval – does this also suggest that there is the possibility of other water movement under this stretch of land?) The more poisonous animals, including marine animals, can often exhibit more nerve-sensory qualities, and are often more at home in salty ocean areas. We can also see the blowfish in this light; it is a nerve-sense animal more at home in the salty areas of the

river shoreline – and from this direction also we see that the river has become more nerve-sensory over time.

Animals that deliver a painful sting can also be viewed as poisonous animals. These include the Portuguese man o' war (though, again, I do not usually see this animal in the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River, being more extreme in its nerve-sense orientation). Indeed, it is hard to find a more fitting picture for the nerve sense system than the jellyfish. It looks almost as if it is completely nerve-sense in its whole physiology – it appears as if we are looking directly at the nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord. The smaller jellyfish with longer tentacles are even more nerve-sensory in their orientation, and are to be found more at the oceanic shoreline. What we find in the river are the mid to larger sized brown jellyfish, as well as other smaller ones. These are, when compared to other animals, more nerve-sensory in orientation, but more rhythmic and potentially metabolic than the smaller stingers. They move more with their pulsing rhythms through the water. They can be found at any depth, but are usually seen from around mid-depth to closer to the water's surface – the more nerve-sense water depth. Virtually all the smaller Portuguese man o' war stingers I've seen are on the water's surface at the ocean, or dead on the sands. I have not seen any jellyfish in the lakes of Perth. When they spend too long washed up on the shoreline, they have spent too long in the more extreme nerve-sensory realm where death predominates.

The more metabolic crabs inhabit the more metabolic depths of the river, the smaller more nerve-sense ones the more nerve-sensory shallows, including ones found underneath rocks in the inlets. But crabs will also move up and down the river and from the depths to the edges as needed, even as they inhabit this whole spectrum in the form of various species.

Shellfish remain still and without limbs or movement in the more shallow or, generally, surface areas, looking as though they were small, soft brains, taking in what comes from their environment as the senses do. However, they also metabolise what they encounter, filtering the water wherever they are found, and building their shell. In this way – more from the perspective of the mollusc – they could also be seen as a kind of little liver, filtering and metabolising and building out of all that comes to meet them. But more from the point of view of the river landscape they are essentially engaged in a kind of 'breathing' as they filter the water. So in some ways they could be seen as the lungs of the water – the rhythmic system – the alveoli of the river (this also points, in a way, to kidney activity – to, interestingly, the only symmetrical [usually nerve-sense] organs in the abdomen, which we could say more about but this would take us too far from our current line of enquiry). Apparently molluscs do not use their gills to breathe, as fish do, but to eat.

The usual smaller animals such as insects, other invertebrates and so on inhabit the shoreline in the air and on the ground. The canine, while having an area marked out for it at the beach shoreline, seems often more at home here on the river. The dog, within all mammals, sits between the larger metabolic extreme exhibited for instance in the hoofed ungulates such as the cow, and the more nerve-sensory extreme exhibited, for instance, in the mouse. The canine is an expression of a third,

rhythmic middle quality between these two extremes. Even the teeth point to this middle realm – between the incisors of the mouse and the molars of the cow we find the canines. This third, middle range was previously inhabited in this area by dingoes. Now we find introduced dogs. The larger of them will sometimes go further out into the water, the smaller ones will usually stay to the shoreline itself, or not go in the water at all. The medium sized dogs will be active somewhere between these other extremes.

The larger, more metabolic reptiles are to be found where the larger more metabolic trees are also found; the smaller ones closer to the oceanic shoreline (where rodents, for that matter, are also found). The largest lizards are found further inland on Noongar country, in our time.

Other, larger, more metabolic mammals such as kangaroos and emus are now only found further inland.

From all of these observations and general patterns we can form a further picture of the river shoreline, this time in relation to animal life. We can perhaps form a picture for ourselves of the human being again lying down with head at the shoreline and limbs stretching off towards the depths of the river, with a middle realm in between; another, mirrored, human can be seen touching heads at the shoreline, with limbs stretching off inland to the current home of emus and kangaroos; and yet another human being we might see underwater with the top of their head reaching the water's surface and limbs stretching down into the water's depths, with middle realm of heart and lung in between.

Within all this, however, we can also have a feeling for the way the river, in relation to the previous shorelines under observation, and the various other animals we find or don't find there, occupies a kind of breathing, circulatory, middle space – acting as a kind of shoreline of heart and lung in this particular landscape as a whole.

We can also see, however, even in relation to animal life, the way that human activity, especially during the last 190 years, has impacted upon the river and made it more nerve-sensory in quality – on the one hand there has been a general reduction of more metabolic species (including dolphins, larger fish, kangaroos, emus, goannas and so on), and on the other hand an increase in more nerve-sensory animals (jellyfish, blowfish presumably, and so on). The river, as regulatory rhythmic shoreline, has been (and remains) a place where this balancing act has been (and is) expressed; now we see it, however, more tilted to the polarity of nerve-sense qualities than, presumably, it has been, (again, as this country as a whole could also be seen to tend generally towards, though more on this later).

How this general process and the above images relate to a more focussed observation of human activity at this stretch of river shoreline will be our attempt in the next section.

River: Human Beings

Observing human activity at the river shoreline provides another opportunity for comparison with the oceanic and lake shorelines. At the river shoreline we find human beings active on land, in the water, on the water, above the water, and on the threshold where water meets land.

Perhaps the most common place we find human beings is along the pathways some metres back from the river's edge. Generally they are walking, including walking their dogs. Sometimes a cyclist will ride past, or people will jog, but this is generally not as common as someone walking. Human beings will also walk on the area to the river side of the pathways all the way up to the water's edge. In this area they will sometimes sit on grassland or on benches a couple of metres back from the water (there is a group of women who seem to meet in the same seating area/gazebo every Friday afternoon). Generally, however, people are usually walking rather than sitting. Inland from this section, people are sometimes seen inside their apartments or houses near the water, driving vehicles on nearby roads, or else sitting in trains, cycling or walking upon the bridges that span the river. At the sporting oval they can be engaged in competitive sport, especially cricket and football, training for the same, or exercising, including exercising their dogs. From Wednesday to Sunday a mobile café van is set up on the downriver side of the sporting oval near the peppermint trees. Across the road (Johanna St) from this, there are often people active with work in the nursery, including within the community garden plots.

Occasionally, especially on warmer days and weekends, people can be seen standing and walking within the water itself, especially near the inlets. Sometimes they will be standing while fishing – stationary in one particular spot – and sometimes they will be wading, lure (or more rarely fly) fishing their way (usually) upriver. On warmer days, with suitable wind, people are sometimes seen swimming out into the river (near the sports oval), or else swimming up or down (I have only seen them swimming down; though this may have been dependent on tide) the river in the deeper water. At Harvey Beach and near the cliffs further upriver, people will throw themselves off the jetty or cliff ledges (at specific locations where there are no underwater rocks and the water is deeper) into the water. People will also be seen standing on or swimming on top of the sandbar in the middle of the river where it bends near the cliffs (usually close to their boats). Occasionally, people are seen snorkelling in the water (usually near the sporting oval), sometimes looking, presumably, for crabs (or prawns). Scuba divers are more rarely seen, but are not uncommon – also looking, presumably, for crabs and prawns. It is not usual to see people swim from one side of the river to the other (though, as mentioned, people do swim down [or, possibly up] the river in summer, or sometimes 'take a dip').

Upon the water's surface itself we find human beings active in a range of different pursuits. From kayaking to canoeing, to dragon-boat racing (seemingly exponentially growing), surf ski-ing, foiling (electric or otherwise), stand-up paddle boarding; not to mention boating of various kinds, whether in dinghies (I have seen many on the edges of the sand bar sometimes in the early evening, sometimes in

the early night with lights on, including mid May 2022 on strong outgoing tides – they were presumably looking for prawns), on jet skis, larger motor boats, sail boats, ferries, and so on. These water-surface activities can be full of movement (for the human being involved), or they can take place while the human being is somewhat stationary, or with a mix of both. Generally, the smaller the craft and the less motorised, the more active the human being is within it. The boats and dinghies will often drop anchor in places, especially near the cliffs (sometimes tying up somewhere on the shore in order to 'face' the cliffs), and will sometimes fish from these positions, or else use them as a base for swimming or entertaining themselves in various ways. The ferries do not stop but plough steadily on, creating wake and waves on the shoreline as they go. Occasionally it is possible to see people of smaller water craft (such as kayaks, surf skis or foils) catching a ride in the wake of a larger boat as it travels up or down the river. I have spoken with one person who commutes to work upriver in Crawley on an electric foil device.

We have not been dealing so much with the southern side of the river thus far but, from the northern side, one can observe human activity on the southern side with a café, footpath, road, benches, pub and houses visible, more or less in that order (with gaze travelling away from the river), and in close proximity to the water. Generally the water sports take place more from this northern side; this changes at the boat ramp by the Zephyr café (what this is, in some ways, connected to we will talk more about when we discuss the flow of water).

The general patterns we are able to discern from these observations are that, for the most part, human activity at the river lies, again, somewhere between the polarities of human activity at the oceanic and lake shorelines. On land, generally speaking, people will sit or lie stationary on the sand of the beach shoreline, especially in summer, for long periods of time. Of course, there is also activity at the beach shoreline, as we have observed; but compared to the other two shorelines, there is a much larger proportion of people being stationary at the beach shoreline. At the lake shoreline, this stationary activity is greatly reduced, and the amount of movement around the lake is much higher – people at the lake are running (often racing), jogging, riding, playing on playgrounds, walking as part of competitive golfing activity, or playing some kind of competitive sport (cricket, football, soccer, hockey, tennis and so on). At the river, there are also, occasionally (and especially in the warmer months), people sitting or having a picnic or frequenting the café (though this is portable and comes and goes on specific days). People at the river are not, generally speaking, sitting in as great a number or for as long a period of time as they do at the beach shoreline. Nor are people at the river as active as they are on land at the lake shoreline – yes, some jogging and cycling takes place on the pathways, and competitive sport will take place at the ovals, but there are only two grounds for cricket to take place simultaneously, and only one ground for full-sized football to take place at any one time, meaning the numbers or frequency of activity is much less when compared to the sporting grounds in totality near the lake shoreline. In comparing being stationary, exercising and walking at the river shoreline, we generally find human beings are more often walking (though, as

mentioned, with periods of being stationary, on the one hand, and of sporting activity on the other). On land, it is a place of more rhythmic, regulated activity than the large amount of stationary activity at the beach and the generally larger amount of more-often extreme movement at the lake. (Additionally, we can also say that, very generally, people are more solitary at the ocean, more in larger groups at lake [including competitive sports], more often in smaller groups at the river.)

(As an aside, when people walk their dogs at the river shoreline they often stop and talk to others doing the same, with the dogs also interacting, before moving on. This seems to happen far more often than at the lake threshold where people tend to continue walking much more quickly, if stopping at all. At the beach, people are generally more open to standing (or sitting) in one place for longer periods; at the dog beach, there can be moments of extended and lengthy pauses, with interactions where people stand, sit, or swim while their dogs also interact – there is seemingly more stillness at the beach than at the river. Again, from this perspective, the river occupies a rhythmic, alternating middle place.)

When it comes to the threshold of water and land, this area seems to be more often trod at the beach shoreline, including with dogs (as touched on above). At the lake, this area is virtually inaccessible, though we can note the episode with the dog at the lake shoreline mentioned earlier. We find that standing or walking on the threshold of where water meets land at the river is not quite as common as at the ocean but much more common than at the lake – again, the river occupies a third middle ground of its own between the two other shorelines.

When it comes to entering into the water and swimming, we find a similar pattern as with inhabiting the threshold itself. Much more people are prepared to enter the water and swim at the ocean than at the river, including for the activities of snorkelling and scuba diving. (We should note that the ‘baths’ of Bicton and Claremont are no longer really in operation, though many people used to swim in these locations.) I have never seen anybody swim at the lake, and it is probably illegal to do so. At the river, we find a third realm between the polarities when it comes to people entering the water.

Needless to say, people do not ‘cross’ the lake in Claremont – they do not travel in the air above it. The ocean is crossed only in plane or helicopter travel. The river is crossed by bridges, and we can engage with these on foot, bicycle, motorbike, vehicle or train. We can also fly across the river, of course, though it will merely be part of a larger trip.

No so-called watersports take place at Galbamaanum / Lake Claremont, nor at most (if not all) lakes around Perth. From our observations we can see that a great range of watersports take place at this point in the river, possibly, in some ways, more so than at the beach shoreline. But if we also take into consideration the wave sports at the beach shoreline, including surfing, bodyboarding, kitesurfing, windsurfing, foil surfing, the variety of activities may come out somewhere near the same. In terms of numbers, however, when the waves or wind conditions are right, we can see hundreds if not thousands of people engaged in water sports at the beach – far greater numbers than what we might find on the river (or at least this

particular stretch of it). Again, in terms of watersports at the river, we find a middle ground between activities at the lake and oceanic shoreline. This is perhaps repeated in boating activity when it comes to jet skis, motor boats, sail boats and so on, though, of course, a great number of boats are moored in the river – but a busy weekend at Wadjemup / Rottnest will reveal how many of these boats become active *in the ocean* (the organised swims to Wadjemup / Rottnest are extreme, condensed, examples of this oceanic boating activity). Sail boats, of course, use the river in great numbers due to the presence of wind and reduced wave conditions. Sail boats themselves can be seen to be a kind of middle ground between the large, fast and mechanical (in some ways we could say more metabolic) activity of motor boats, and the smaller, overall-slower people-powered activity of water sports exposed as they are to the surrounding environment and elements in a receptive and sensory way, often engaged in very fast movements to perform their often brief actions (e.g. surfing). (From another perspective, we can say that the activities of human beings, and not of the motorcraft itself, is much more still, idle, and nerve-sensory when it comes to what human beings actually do on motor boats; while human beings engaged in water sports are much more active and metabolic, often using all their limbs with relatively little time to think or reflect.) In this sense, we could also say that sail boats occupy a middle ground between motorboats and people-powered water sports, as well as between human activity on motorboats and in watersports; with sail boats being somewhere between the two polarities in terms of size, speed, distances covered, but also physical activity, including raising sails, tacking and so on – rhythmically interspersed as it is between moments of stillness; one moves between activity and reflection on sailboats (slightly more so than when surfing, for instance, where one may be more often paddling, duck diving, etc.). The sailboat exists in the element of air – of breathing and of circulation; it is little surprise then that we also find it in the rhythmic middle ground of the river (as well as in the ocean; elsewhere, of course, we might also find them in lakes, but not here).

From these preliminary observations we can begin to form a picture of the human being in relation to all human activity at the river shoreline. The more active and willful metabolic activity of human beings takes place in deeper water (swimming, snorkelling or water sports) or else set back from the river on land. The more reflective, nerve-sensory activity takes place in apartments, in vehicles, on boats (especially motorboats), or in picnics or cafés, or otherwise sitting or pausing near the water's edge. On the shoreline itself we generally find people walking, fishing or crossing in and out of the water. Even the stationary activity of the fisherman, or the person sitting on the shore or at a café closeby is somewhat more active than the sitting that takes place at the beach, though less so than what we find at the lake, where there is very little sitting at all (other than at the nearby cafés which are set back from the shoreline); likewise, there is generally more activity at the lake compared to the most energetic activity at the river. So while we might have an image of the human being with limbs again extending into the water's depths and another with limbs extendings inland, with heads against the water threshold, one within the water mirroring the other on the land, even this picture is tempered with

rhythmic flow and space between the two beings. (In some ways we could also say the heart and lung rhythmic system of the images of the human beings can be seen to extend across the shoreline from the land into the water, while at the same time extend out of the water and onto the land.) The river shoreline is, overall, also a place of rhythm in the head and in the digestion and limbs, as well as in the rhythmic system itself (which extends from the water's depths closer to the shore, and from inland closer to the shore).

When compared to the ocean and lake (in relation to human activity), the river is, again, to be seen as the rhythmic, circulatory system of heart and lung between the nerve-sense head polarity of the beach, and the metabolic digestive polarity of the lake. The river here lies between death and life. It is a place not so much of thinking and reflection as we might find at the ocean, nor the willful activity that we might find at the lake, but between these extremes it is a place of feeling activity – even the river sports are much more rhythmical than the often sporadic water sports of the ocean. I even recall a symposium (near the river) at the University of Western Australia where a couple of friends and colleagues presented on the theme of 'rivers of emotion.' Rivers, in relation to human soul activity, would appear to be a place of feeling activity more so than the reflective thoughtspace of the ocean, or the willful activity of lakes; at least this lake, this stretch of river, and this ocean.

(As a side note, the sheer number of motor boats that move up and down the river, no matter how slowly they might attempt to do so, causes waves to wash up on either bank through their wake. This has the consequence of further eroding the river banks. The image that can emerge when considering this is that the initial dredging of the river continues through the ongoing usage of boats on the river, especially, now, motor boats. The boats act as their own dredging mechanisms and further erode each bank. The [generally] more-nerve sense line of the water's edge rises further inland through the kind of wave activity (the larger the more metabolic) we usually see only at the beach shoreline – in so doing, however, as a consequence of ongoing boat activity, the metabolic area and activity of the river is increased – the digestion grows and also pushes the head further out. Whether this process is healthy for a landscape which is, overall, largely nerve-sense and 'fixed' in its orientation can be determined for ourselves.)

In all of these observations, not just in relation to boats, we also see the large impact of human activity on this shoreline, especially, of course, since colonisation – be it in the form of industry (especially the port), infrastructure (roads, bridges, train lines and the like), businesses (such as cafés and so on), other private property (houses, apartments, jetties, boat pens and the like). Generally, we now observe private and state ownership (and state management of public-access areas) of what has traditionally been managed culturally. Even from a Western perspective we can observe the way in which what is held in common by human beings – 'the commons' – has become owned (by state or individuals) through the commodification of land. (We will go more into this in future works, but even now we can note that a commodity, by definition, is something that can be produced, distributed and

consumed. This may apply to the *fruits* of work taking place on land, but can it really be said to apply to land itself?)

Needless to say, these observations do not extend past the observations of human activity at the river *today*, and up to a point they cannot. The activity of the Whadjuk Noongar at this and other river shorelines is, of course, a very broad theme which can be taken up by seeking out resources which the Whadjuk Noongar themselves choose to make available. We are, again, attempting here to approach phenomena from an extended Western direction. In so doing it is also hoped that we – all human beings – can find additional common ground upon which we can better care for this place, and potentially for the Earth as a whole.

In the next section we will move onto brief observations of the elements in relation to the river threshold, beginning with the earth element.

River: Earth

In a certain sense, as with each of the shorelines we're exploring, the earth element encompasses everything we have so far observed – all of the physical world which makes up our observations. The earth element stands for everything we can see with our physical senses. The earth is materiality.

In another sense, even if we stay with what our physical senses can perceive, we can also begin to understand the working of the other elements in relation to the earth element. For, in reality, anything that has life is not also without the water element (and not without some relationship to the light and air elements, and the warmth element). Even the inorganic realm of minerals, devoid of these other elements within them, are worked on from without – from outside – by these other elements; the rocks and the sands of the shoreline do not stay motionless and unaffected by the workings of water and air and light and warmth. The same can also be said of plants, animals and human beings once they die. Upon death, the water element, the air and light elements and the warmth element have all left the lifeless husk, which is now subject to the laws of the mineral kingdom and the inorganic realm – of, in this sense, the earth element.

So, and in a sense this holds true for all of the areas under observation so far, in order to view the earth element in its pure form, we would need to be able to exclude the workings of all the other elements. We would need to imagine away the water element, the air and light elements and the warmth element. In so doing we would end up with, as a picture, a world that is dry, essentially lifeless, without an immaterial experience of light or colour or warmth – or without, really, any *quality* at all. To perceive such a world we require only an organ of perception which is the same (i.e. the intellect). And, to an extent, this materialistic understanding of the world has now successfully been achieved. The danger lies in all our thinking remaining at this particular level or narrowness, because this will also become the world that we end up (/are) creating. As a picture, we can imagine the shoreline of the river in this sense – sand, limestone, plants without life, animals and human beings the same: a dry husk devoid of life (picture the she-oaks, tea trees and paperbarks dying along the river's edge); an essentially lifeless, unconscious, un-self-conscious desert as a picture of a material world conception. Yes, the shoreline contains the earth element – yes the world is comprised of material things – but this is not all that exists (and even to understand the material world fully we need to go further into it).

We see the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms. We see the earth element, the water element, air and light and warmth – and if we are prepared to do so, we can, through these kingdoms and elements, also begin to see all that works through the earth element, the water element, the air and light elements, and the warmth element, and how they relate to one another. This has been our, albeit preliminary, attempt thus far, and continues to be so.

Therefore at the river shoreline we find the river sands constantly in motion with the back and forward activity of the tide and other water movements, and the limestone rocks being initially built up and then washed away. Governing the tide we

find the activity of the moon and quite possibly the other planets (and constellations) also. We find the activity of plants that grow on and out of the rocks in the water, as well as animals within the water such as dolphins, which in some small way also affect the sands on either side of the river, or the movement of other animals within shells which then wash up, lifeless perhaps, on the river's shore. We find the activities of human beings in the water affecting the movement of sands through the wakes their boats and other crafts make, but also the way their industry and lifestyle affects water quality, rainfall patterns, rising sea levels and so on. The air and light work directly upon the sands and rocks, moving them, wearing them down. Plants and animals on land work and weave through this water and air element, interacting with and forming the earth element as they do so. Human beings also influence the quality of the air, which has consequences also on the weather patterns, ozone and other atmospheric conditions, including wind and light activity, and how this works upon sands and rocks at the water, as well as on plant and animal activity which in turn affects the mineral kingdom. The warmth element works also directly upon sand and stone, further wearing them down, but also on and in plant life and animal life, on and in the water, on and in the air and light – all of which, as we have mentioned, affect the working of the earth element.

All other kingdoms and elements of nature work upon and within the earth element. In a higher sense, the rest of the world infuses the material world with form, life, consciousness and self-consciousness.

In having a mineral kingdom on the river shoreline of sand and of limestone, we have a picture of the earth element which is eroding, then perhaps slightly built up by sand and shells, but then eroding again. It is a fragile, crumbling landscape of delicate forms – of concave patterns, and indeed of genuine cave formations – it is, again, a picture of old age – of the head polarity of the human organism, especially when compared to the life-filled quality of granite. Again, from a more literal or even earthly direction, granite resembles more closely the human head, with its rounded forms and convex nature, while the concave forms and metabolic movement of limestone resembles the interior hollowness of the abdominal spaces and organs of the human being. However, when it comes to qualities of life processes – more, we could say, from the direction of the water element – we can have a feeling for the expansive, centrifugal forces of granite, as opposed to the contracting, deteriorating, crumbling and centripetal forces of limestone. Granite is of life and, in a sense, growth, while limestone is of death – of some further layering and building up, perhaps, but only of previously dead material, and only to crumble away again.

The mineral kingdom of this part of the world is especially old (be it granite or limestone) and nerve-sense in polarity, which makes the appearance of the more metabolic, younger – in a way more childlike – *quality* (not geological age per se) of granite rocks (which we find further 'upriver') all the more striking. But where this process is artificially induced or altered – for instance through the destruction of the limestone bar at the river mouth, the dredging of the river, the continual use of boats on the river, together with the more macro effects of human industry on the kingdoms and elements of nature – then we find an old and nerve-sensory landscape damaged

through such activity. And it is a damage that eventually leads to a speeding up of the death process – to further nerve-sense polarities (including, for instance, salinity problems, coastal and river erosion, the death of trees along the river's edge prevalent in North Fremantle, top soil erosion, imbalance and extinction, aquifer depletion, and so on). Even the mining and moving of limestone from this area in order to create buildings is a kind of speeding up of the nerve-sense processes wherein we create more and more 'caves' (i.e. houses and buildings) for ourselves. The only difference is that these caves are not in accordance with the rest of the landscape organism in the same wave that the caves of North Fremantle, for instance, are; one is the home of the individual human being and possibly their family, largely devoid of nature; the other is the home of the creative forces of the whole of nature, including that which has shaped the whole winding course of the river (and all waterways) itself. In some ways this points to the whole journey of humanity, and the whole evolution of consciousness. Human beings now build and inhabit their own caves. The question is whether these caves – whether the caves of the human head and of human intellectuality – can be exited by human beings who, from there, through freedom, choose to take what they have learned from such a journey and once again perceive (and partake in the co-creation of) reality *as a whole*, and not only the material, earthly element. (Again, I speak from the Western direction here – from the direction of those who have journeyed furthest in this direction of materiality – a journey which has, of course, affected the whole of the Earth, for better [in terms of the many great achievements of a materialistic natural science and the technologies that have emerged from this], and for worse.)

(The choice of whether or not to do this – whether or not to put what we have learned on such a journey into service of caring for *the whole*, or not – appears now to be completely in our hands. The various ecosystems of the world, including human social systems, seem to urgently await our answer. The lack of any decision – or even lack of awareness that a decision exists – would also seem to be, by default, a decision for a continuation of the 'status quo' – the current reality.)

Just how the other elements of nature (and the various kingdoms) relate to the activity of the earth element at the river shoreline will be further explored when we look more specifically at each of them in the chapters ahead.

River: Water

Whenever we think of a river, or lake or beach, it is often the water that we picture. All the other elements are there, as are all kingdoms of nature, but it is the water that comes most to mind. From one direction this makes sense, for without water – at least at some point in time – there would be no ocean, river or lake, and no shoreline. From another direction, water is only one part of the whole shoreline ecosystem and landscape. And from yet another direction, we can also see water as the medium through (and upon) which the elements of air and light and warmth are also able to work, as water (and the other elements) also go about shaping the earth element (and all the various kingdoms of nature). Rightly understood, we need to consider all of these aspects when we observe the activity of water at any shoreline, including here at the river.

As we have already touched on, to consider one part of the river we must also consider the whole of the river. As also mentioned, a river is not just as large as a single, identifiable origin on higher ground – it also encompasses and includes all the tributaries and smaller creeks and brooks and storm drains etc. that flow into what later becomes this particular stretch of river. It also includes related underground water. It includes the water that evaporates from the ocean out at sea, is carried in clouds and then deposited back over the land before running into tributaries and this river. In this way this river also has a connection to other catchments and rivers where rain falls in addition to this particular catchment. One could also say this extended 'river' is in the plants that take up this water, in the animals and human beings that drink it, and in the animals and human beings who eat the plants, and in the animals and human beings who eat the animals, and so on. In short, the river – in relationship with other rivers – is a large, individual and interdependent organism that plays a role in the landscape as a whole – a landscape which stretches as large as the landscape of the Earth. It remains so through different time movements – from ice ages, to the wet and dry parts of the annual season, to the ebb and flow of the daily tides. (As a side note, I see increasingly higher tides. On March 26, 2022 I observed a tide of probably around one metre, with large daily variation, probably during a peak north or south moon, with water coming up through the drain grate near Apace nursery, and over a large stretch of Johanna St towards the first house on the street; as well as up over the wooden jetty near Pier 21, over the steps at Harvey beach, and through the entrance to the jetty at Harvey Beach – this was also a day of observing dolphins feeding on large mullet. On April 25, 2022 I observed two vortices form as the same drain grate emptied then overflowed – the first two vortices spun towards each other, close, in mirror form [outgoing water], the second two turned away from each other at the edges of the grate [incoming water]. In mid May, 2022 I found seaweed washed up *on top of* the jetty at Harvey Beach, and across the highest areas of the 'beach.' On May 22, 2022, at 5pm – about four hours after a 1m high tide, and also after much rain – Johanna Street was flooded near the drain grate all the way to the second house on the block, with water flowing over the footpath – both inlets were connected and the pathway leading next to the nursery was flooded.; the following morning, about three hours before a high tide of 0.9

metres, a similar scenario played itself out at the inlets. On May 23, 2022, at around 5:30pm, after a day of heavy rain, I observed Harvey Beach completely flooded, and the jetty under water; the high-tide line the following day was well into the trees near the sports oval.)

In again attempting to limit our observations, as much as possible, to that which we ourselves can perceive with our own sense, let us again come to this particular stretch of river and see what it might be able to tell us of the organism of the river as a whole.

One of the first things we may observe is the way in which the water element impacts upon the mineral kingdom (and earth element). Generally speaking, if we move from upriver to downriver we find, mostly, that wherever there are cliffs and deep water on one side of the river, on the direct opposite side there is a sandy shore. Of course, this is not rigidly true, given that there has been so much disruption to the mineral kingdom within and on the edges of the river over the years, but generally speaking this is something we can observe. From Dyoondalup / Point Walter to Freshwater Bay to Mosman Park to Jenalup / Blackwall Reach to Green Place Reserve and nearby Chidley Beach Park to Bicton to Minim Cove to the cliffs at North Fremantle to the sand downriver from East Fremantle Yacht Club to the sandy stretch in North Fremantle we have been observing to the deeper water on the southern side, this general pattern can be perceived. Needless to say, the closer to the ocean we get, and the shipping port nearby, the more this process becomes increasingly diffuse (also as the walls on either side attempt to limit and shape the natural flow of the water). But generally speaking, however, this pattern can be observed. Not only does this deep-to-shallow-to-deep water pattern alternate from side to side but it also, of course, alternates on one side, from deeper water and cliffs to more sandy and shallow stretches. In the midst of all this, we must also mention the shifting sandbar in the middle of the river where it curves at the cliffs in North Fremantle. (One of the few other places I have seen a sandbar such as this [of course, we also have the more visible, above-ground sandbar of Dyoondalup / Point Walter] is the sandbar in Geography Bay near Dunsborough – a north-facing beach often more lake-like [or even river-like] in its gesture than usual oceanic shorelines in this landscape.)

Seen from above, therefore, what we find is an overall winding or snaking course to the river. But, as Theodor Schwenk has observed in his water research,[36] what we find is that there are two main winding forces at work within this overall winding. Two snaking currents flow side by side in parallel down the river, one pushing up against the other so that where one is wide, the other is more narrow, and then this swaps over as the next curve in the river is traversed and further shaped. Schwenk takes this research and these observations also into directional flows involving water surface, depths and middle ground, but we are already stretching what we can observe with our senses in a non-experimental context. In any case, whenever we find deeper water and cliff tendencies we find there a

[36] Theodor Schwenk, *Sensitive Chaos,* pp. 15-26.

narrowing of the closest winding, snaking vortex and pushing in from the other bank by a widened, snaking vortex, which leaves, on the other bank, a shallower sandier element, and vice versa as the two winding courses snake their way in elongated, flowing vortices along the river, involving the surface and the depths. The limestone cliffs are presumably further eroded in this process and the eroded parts that are taken from them laid down in the next section of river, which is presumably/potentially then slowly taken up and deposited upon the next stretch of limestone further on, gradually building (though, of course, this is somewhat more difficult to observe directly without sufficient time).

From an expanded perspective we are able, therefore, to have a picture of an overall snaking activity – a snake – which moves through the land, and also within this, in moments more or less obvious or apparent, also the working of two snakes.

Indeed, if we attempt to limit our observations exclusively to the water element by eliminating the other elements, we can also see other movements in this particular stretch of river that are no doubt different from what they would have been before colonisation. We find, presumably, much more tidal activity than there would have been, and this can be revealed most obviously after heavy rains. Sometimes after heavy rains, when the topsoil of land has been washed away and the river becomes full of this topsoil, other nutrients and the colouring of leaves from further up the river, we find brown water which, to a degree, makes obvious to our vision the movement of the 'fresher' water in the river. On the outgoing tide, after heavy rains, this coloured water can also be observed all the way out into the ocean (now much more salty, of course). On the incoming tide the clearer blue of the salty ocean water can be seen moving up the river. On one occasion I saw, extending from East Fremantle Yacht Club running in a straight line across the river to the north side, a clearly visible dividing line between brown and blue water – between, to a degree, fresh and salt water. This back-and-forward movement we can also describe as a kind of working and interacting of two forces – the fresher one definitely more snake-like – sometimes more enmeshed and mixing together, sometimes more distinct.

(The tide will sometimes make curves around concrete pylons on the downriver side of the newer traffic bridge, with ripples behind it. One can tell the tidal direction by water surface disruption behind static objects such as pylons, buoys, and so on, as well as, often, by which way boats are pointing, or which way leaves or even birds such as seagulls are floating. One can also tell by waterline levels and dampness on sand and rocks, but also water movement more generally, especially when swimming. We should also keep in mind the phenomenon of peak high or low tide where there can be observed a kind of resting pause between inflow and outflow [or vice versa] of the water, where sticks or leaves or birds do not move on the surface, where plants below lie still, where boats point sometimes in different directions, where there are no ripples or vortices around pylons or buoys or boats or fences. This phenomenon is harder to observe at the beach where other movement/wave activity takes place, or at the lake where I have not observed tidal activity; it seems most obvious at the river – at the site of rhythmic, regulatory

activity, of circulation akin to the activity of both heart and lung [but also the respiratory and circulatory systems more broadly].)

The water's surface can also tell us about the movements of water as well as the shapes of the mineral kingdom underneath. Where the water moves more quickly on the surface during a rising or outgoing tide (in relation to other water around it), we know that there is a channel of water moving at a faster speed, and that this may also relate to the form of the earth below. Animals can also alert us to this phenomenon, particularly the fishing animals such as dolphins and the cormorant, which are often active in this particular stretch of river on the edge of where the faster moving current meets the more slowly moving side water – here is where the deeper water meets the more shallow, and from this we can perhaps suppose that this is where the fish they are pursuing also like to dwell in the water from time to time, full as it must be with passing food and nutrients for them also, or else where the dolphins (and fish) can perhaps swim more easily. I have also seen, however, many fish swimming in the shallower areas as well, presumably to avoid larger fish and dolphins which seem to only occasionally go to the water's edge to feed [but are clearly visible when they do, such as on May 24, 2022 when two dolphins came right to the edge of the wall near the Moorings apartments – often they are heard expelling air before they are seen], and are more often observed in the deeper water or where it meets the shallower.) This area of deeper and shallower water is also where we will see, from time to time, dinghies or fishing or crab lines also located (this also includes on the edge of the sandbar near the cliffs). Here, in this faster and slower moving water, related to depth, we can also have a picture of a kind of central line of snaking movement.

On the ingoing and outgoing tides we can also watch, in the two small (or single joining) inlets on the north side of the river in North Fremantle, the scale-like forms made by the water as it snakes its way up the inlet, and then, eventually, back out again. This water also tends to flow in a winding, snaking course. The patterns it leaves in the sand as it recedes reveal the activity of the meeting of water surfaces that take place usually unseen within the water itself, unless there is resistance from stationary obstacles, or unless we can see through to the sand below in places such as this, or unless there is something visible in the water such as foam. Within an overall snaking form we see the varied criss-crossing or cross-hatching (like snake scales) of surfaces as they interact within the water, and in relation to fixed forms such as rocks. (I have also noticed such patterns with the naked eye on the bridge walkway at Canal Rocks near Yallingup on May 1, 2022, when water was rushing through a channel in the granite rocks below, bouncing off either side and creating cross-hatchings on the water's surface; interestingly I saw the same pattern repeated in a child's cardigan the following day – she described them as "dragon scales," but I believe we could also say "snake scales.") In these two inlets on the river, sandbars will also form as the tides carry the sand in and out and move and deposit it (sometimes 'waves' are left in the sand of the bar, either above or below the waterline, running in a waving motion parallel to the shoreline; sometimes different coloured sand will appear on either side of the bar – grey sand was observed to the

river side early February 2022, with lighter sand to the inland side). One can also catch ‘glimpses’ of the river as a whole in such moments, including the sandbar that once existed at the mouth, with more permanent limestone layered on over the years.[37]

Once again, Schwenk describes waves as horizontal vortices. We can see vertical vortices at the oceanic shoreline, but I have not seen one at the lake. Vertical vortices occur at the river but usually only when flowing water meets an obstacle such as a buoy, rock, pillar, stick or so on. (I have also seen these vortices when water flows into the two inlets on a rising higher tide, and are especially visible when there is foam in the water, for example on March 13, 2022, with most vortices moving clockwise on this occasion.) Obviously we find horizontal vortices or waves at the oceanic shoreline, but, again, not at the lake unless there might be an exceptionally strong wind. At the river, we also find waves or horizontal vortices, but usually only in the passing wake of a boat. These are waves of the kind where water drops stay relatively still but the wave moves through them. The other kind of wave, seen more commonly where there are bigger rapids further up the river, but sometimes in miniature form in the inlets (or by the fence at the water police if there is a strong outgoing tide), is when water droplets move through a wave form that stays stationary (a rapid; standing wave). This we do not find at the oceanic shoreline (unless water retreats from a ‘pooled’ area), and not at the lake (unless, potentially, there is a strong flow of water flowing into the lake).

(On December 17, 2021, at the upriver inlet I watched water slip over the 'mouth' like a thin tongue spreading out across the also-tongue-shaped sandy incursions into the inlet, before rippling off at the edges where surfaces met, swirling in vortices, snaking inland. On the mouth proper the thin sheet of water seemed to get ‘caught’ on the ‘teeth’ of shells, creating A-frame trails behind them of changing angles depending on volume and velocity of water. In watching the rising tide as it enters through the mouths of the two inlets, including through sandbars that develop there, we can observe various archetypal forms in the water, including vortices [vertical and horizontal], as well as the overlapping rhythms that come through the meeting of surfaces [which are then imprinted on the sand when the water recedes]. We can also see quick thrusts of water entering through the channel – and can even see whitebait enter in through with it, which I have observed on occasions – here the animal kingdom within the water element seems almost to blend into one and the same entity with the water. Observing water that moves in rushing movement through a straight cut in the upriver inlet mouth, we can see that it then almost

[37] On the receding tide, one can also see wavy or even ‘bay’ formations on the sandbar of the upriver inlet, akin to the beach, but much smaller and closer together – these mirror the snaking form of the river overall; if within these waves we also see the bay form from above, then the bay is also an archetype at the river. That is, the bay form represents *part* (one section of one side] of the snaking flow of water. The ocean is therefore a very wide and uncontained river or lake (or contained only by continental shorelines), the lake a (tightly) contained ocean, the river an open-ended lake. The flowing form of water relates to the bay form – the snake-like movement of water. (We could also say that the lake is the river turned back upon itself – is water brought to rest – the snake coiled around itself in the form of a sphere). Water, as image, is a snake. But we will come more specifically to this in our final considerations.

immediately starts to wind, including trailing off into vortices – all made more visible through airy bubbles on the surface. Sometimes water moves in a breathing fashion into the inlets, in and out, at the same pace, with relevant forms revealed in the sand beneath. [Could we perhaps also say that vortices are more metabolic in nature; the meeting of surfaces in cross hatching more rhythmic; water that shoots straight through more nerve-sense?])

Waves, seen from one direction, could be seen to be an expression of a more metabolic-polarity activity or quality. They exist at the oceanic shoreline but not usually in lakes – at least not the particular lake we are observing here (where they do appear in lakes around the world [such as the Great Lakes of North America], there needs to be more of an overall oceanic quality to the lake). From the perspective of the water itself, waves are a more metabolic expression that throw themselves against the more nerve-sensory shoreline at the beach. At the lake the water itself is more calm, from this direction more nerve-sense, while the lake shoreline landscape as a whole is more metabolic. The river water, waves and shoreline as a whole, occupy a space between these two polarities; it also regulates between the two extremes. The river has horizontal vortices (through boat wake and perhaps strong wind), but not usually in as extreme a form as at the beach. The river has vertical vortices (but not in such an extreme form as at the beach [i.e. rips], and they sometimes require surface obstacles in order to emerge. The river has both moving and stationary waves (horizontal vortices), whereas the beach usually has moving waves only. Again, the lake does not have any waves or vortices of these kinds, except, potentially, in extreme conditions (more metabolic conditions such as extreme wind) or when there might be some kind of drain present.

We might be tempted to explore further blood circulation within the human organism in this direction, together with the activity of the heart; vortex movement here would be interesting to consider further, as others have, but this goes beyond the immediate field of our current observations, for now.

The air element can have an impact upon the water element at the river shoreline, especially upon the surface of the water. The river shoreline is one of the best places to observe the way in which the slowly moving and rhythmical course of the water element compares to the fast moving wind gusts that strike down upon the surface of the water and fan out in quick, sharp and unpredictable movements, and then are gone. On a larger scale, atmospheric and meteorological activity has an impact upon seas, swells, and, together with the moon, tides, and this of course impacts the activity of water in the river shoreline. The water here is sensitive to the activity of the air element, but less so than at the beach shoreline, yet more so than at the lake shoreline. From this we can have a picture of the air element affecting, from outside, more the human nervous system and head (beach shoreline) than the metabolism, digestion, limbs (lake shoreline), with the rhythmic system of the river lying again, somewhere between the two polarities. Taken to a psychological level of observation or imagery, we can have a picture of all that lives through the air element as fast, explosive antipathies or sympathies with the world around us – especially stressful emotions and feelings – and that these can have a particularly strong effect

on our nervous system but, also, though less directly, on our metabolism and digestion (this happens, of course, particularly where the nerve-sense system and the metabolic-digestive system interrelate). If the middle realm of feeling is strong and balanced, however, then often these stresses and antipathies and sympathies can also be held in a kind of healthy check.

Light also works upon the water element at the river shoreline. Light can play upon the water surface, but seems to do so much less than at the ocean, though more so than at the lake. Water colour is also generally less clear than at the beach, though more clear than at the lake. We can talk more about this when we come to the light element in a moment.

Needless to say, the warmth element is also active in the water element at the river. Temperature rhythms will be present in the water, and will relate in some way to annual rhythms, seasonal rhythms, and also with daily rhythms, tied as they often are to the activity of the sun. These temperature rhythms will also be expressed in a variety of ways, including algal blooms and so on. I wonder if the river's temperature range generally lies somewhere between that found at the ocean and the lake, but I have not measured this. But more on warmth, also, in a moment.

As already touched upon, the water element also works upon the mineral kingdom, within the plant kingdom (where we will also find spiralling vortex forms and other forms that show the activity of water and water surfaces moving through the living plant; as we also see within shells – including shells that spiral like a vertical vortex [clockwise from the point at the top], as well as shells that fan out horizontally like bays at the beach [which, if continued, sometimes give the feeling that they would end in vortices on each edge]; as well as in snail-sized shells of pure white colour seen on the south side of the hill that that leads to the top of the cliffs); as well as in relation to the forms of animals and the human being; all of which then work back upon the water element. In this sense, and in the larger sense we have so far been considering, water can also be seen as a material picture of immaterial formative forces that shape all material reality.

From all of these observations we can have a picture of the water element of the river shoreline as the circulatory system of a much larger organism – the catchment and landscape as a whole that, together with other rivers and catchments, make up the circulatory system including, in a way, the heart of the earth.

What we can observe further of the air element at the river shoreline we will explore next.

River: Air

When considering the air element at the river shoreline there are, again, several observations we can make about the way it relates to the other elements, as well as to the various kingdoms of nature.

When we approach the river shoreline what we generally find, especially if we have been to the beach or to the lake that same day, is that the river shoreline is usually not as windy as at the beach, though is usually more windy than at the lake shoreline. This is a fairly general observation, but one that usually holds true. Of course, it also depends upon which side of the river one is talking about, and also at which point of its many twists and turns one is referring to. But this fact itself we can also count as part of the qualities of the river shoreline. That is, wherever the wind blows from, there will be some part of the river that is more or less calm, be it on one side more than the other, or on one stretch or curve in the river than at another. This is not usually the case at the beach, where if it is windy in one place, it is windy everywhere, except, possibly, if a man-made groyne has been constructed. At the lake, where the wind is less pronounced than at the river, there can be a whole side or section that is more calm than another, but the contrast is usually not as dramatic as at the river shoreline. The river shoreline can be both windy and calm – can take on the general qualities of both the ocean and lake shorelines – *at the same time*.

Needless to say, there are days when the ocean is more 'lake-like' in its qualities in relation to the wind or air element, and days when the lake is more 'beach-like,' but even on these days the river qualities will usually lie somewhere between the two extremes, or combine both in a rhythmical way. Whether a morning easterly ripples the water along the north side but leaves the south side near the Zephyr café or Dome café calm, or whether an afternoon sea breeze comes up the river rippling many stretches but leaves the cliff area on the north side mostly untouched, or whether a northerly batters the southern side and leaves the cliffs further up river on the northern side towards Minim Cove mostly calm, the river again shows its regulatory rhythmic qualities.

It does so also in relation to the amount of sand movement or erosion to cliffs that the wind might cause. Again, this is nowhere near as severe as what we might find at the beach, where on some occasions the ground seems to be covered in a kind of mist, only to discover that it is the shifting windblown sands rushing past us. And yet this windblown movement of sand and erosion of limestones at the river shoreline is much more pronounced than at the lake shoreline, where this kind of movement and wearing away of the mineral kingdom by the wind seems barely to happen at all.

We have already touched, above, on the way the air element acts upon the water element at the river shoreline. This is most obvious when observing the surface of the water itself. Not only does this reveal to us the difference in qualities between the slow moving, regular and rhythmic movements of the water element, and the often much quicker, faster and more sporadic gusts of the air element, it also reveals the way they interact with one another – the one, to an extent, absorbing the other into it, the other disrupting the calm rhythm of the first. In addition, we can also

say that at the beach shoreline the air element impacts upon the water in a much more obvious and severe way than it does at the river shoreline. Any surfer, for instance, can tell you the advantages of little to no wind, or the preference for an offshore wind as opposed to the choppy conditions created by onshore or ‘cross-shore’ winds. Winds will change the whole character of the water element of the oceanic shoreline, not just the water’s surface but also wave activity and, presumably, what happens even deeper, below the surface. At the lake, sometimes the wind seems to have barely any effect even upon the surface, and one has the feeling that below the surface, there would be minimal impact experienced. The river shoreline, once again, seems to sit somewhere between these two polarities. The surface of the river water is changed by wind, and on stronger days it seems as though the general flow of the river, together with deeper elements, are also affected, at least on the side of the river, or sections of the river, where the wind is most strongly present. But, again, this impact is far less than that observed at the beach element, and is, indeed, often preferred by sail boats which can make use of both a relatively strong wind and relatively calm water conditions on the river. At the lake we find nether the surfer (nor windsurfer or kitesurfer etc.) of the oceanic shoreline; nor the yachts (or kitesurfers etc.) of the river shoreline (which is often the preferred location for learning how to kitesurf or windsurf).

The wind and air element, and its interaction with the water element, can also, of course, be observed in the formation and movement of clouds. (As an aside, on December 1, 2021 I saw, from the river shoreline, cirrus clouds in wave-like vortices formations.) Such observations are far more dramatic at the beach shoreline, where the horizon stretches out in front of us, and we are exposed to the many and varied movements of the great variety of cloud formations, from the more metabolic cumulus, to the more rhythmic alto clouds, and the more nerve-sensory cirrus formations. Of course these cloud formations vary according to season, the presence of lows and highs, temperatures, times of day and so on. This particular stretch of river is relatively close to the beach shoreline we’re observing, and also to the lake. Generally speaking we therefore find similar cloud conditions across all three shorelines on any given day. However, our experience of these conditions can be different in each location. At the beach shoreline we can see a great sweep of clouds above and beyond us, stretching out to the horizon – we can read what is coming and what is going. At the beach, it is as if our senses receive what is coming towards them from the very corners of the horizon. At the lake, this aperture, if you like, is much more restricted; everywhere our view is cut off by tall trees and hills. We still see some clouds and sky at the lake, of course, but everywhere our view is restricted – much more so than at the beach – we do not see a flat horizon. The river, yet again, lies between these two polarities in quality; we do not have the same breadth of vision and view of cloud activity as we do at the beach, but we have more than we might at the lake. This also changes, however, depending on the side of the river we are on, and the direction we are facing, due to the curve of the river we are walking and standing at, as well as the presence of nearby cliff formations and so on; breadth of vision can rhythmically change between wider (more beach-like) and

more enclosed (more lake-like) horizon at the river, whereas at both polarities it stays somewhat consistent.

The air at the river, like anywhere, can also carry warmth or coolness within it. The air element carries the warmth element – the warmth element enters into the air element. Winds from the south are generally cooler. The winds from the north, generally warmer. The easterly wind can be cool or warm depending on the time of the year or day, and the temperature of the ground in the desert. The sea breeze (south westerly) is also generally cooling, including on the afternoon of hot days; hence, again, the colloquial Western name of the summer afternoon sea breeze: the Fremantle Doctor. This cooling, but also the warming, breeze is felt in a pronounced way at the beach shoreline. At the lake shoreline, it is somewhat mitigated by trees, houses and hills nearby. At the river, it can be mitigated by the side of the river or the direction we face, given the nearby trees and houses and hills, but it can definitely be felt at a more full blast as well when one is exposed to it, be it a cold or warmer wind. But, again, this fluctuates depending on location on the river; it can be both calm and windy (and warmer or cooler) at the same time in different parts of the river. Again, we find here the river shoreline between the two other shoreline polarities.

How air impacts upon fire I have not observed at these exact locations, but we are generally familiar with the need for fire to have air in order to burn, and the way that the air can further ‘fan the flames’ of existing fires.

Of course, the wind or air element also impacts upon the plant kingdom at all shorelines. At the beach shoreline we will sometimes see plants completely bent by the wind as they grow, existing at a permanent lean. We also find many plants with indented leaf formations, or, generally, sections of vegetation which we are largely able to see through. At the lake, this is less so; plants seem to retain their general vertical orientation, and even plants of the same species as at the beach can seem to have fuller, more rounded leaves, with less indentations and penetration from the periphery by the air element. The bush at the lake shoreline is less ‘see-through’ than that at the oceanic shoreline. The river, yet again, seems to be somewhat of a mixture of both polarities, as well as being a middle ground between the two. We can see far in places (especially the more ‘beach-like’ areas of the river, where trees have died or thinned out, such as amongst the she-oaks, tea-trees and paperbarks by the inlets), not so far in others (including further inland or by the cliffs, which is, generally, an area of the river more ‘lake-like’ in quality). Some plants (especially slightly further inland or near the cliffs) seem ‘fuller’ than those of the same species not only when compared to plants at the beach shoreline, but also to plants at different parts (especially the more beach-like areas) of the river shoreline.

As we have observed, we see a large crossover of birds and other animals at the three shorelines. How they relate to the air in each place is worth noting. The birds at the beach shoreline are often above the water (seagull, terns, pied oystercatchers) or else on the land (seagulls, oystercatchers, sometimes plovers or dotterels); only sometimes do we find something like a cormorant *in* the water. At the lake shoreline, there are many birds, of course, but the majority of them are on or in the water – on its surface or diving (or at least entering their heads) under the water.

Even those that walk the edges of the lake are often within the water area itself; of course, the usual tree birds also exist but, generally speaking, most bird activity at the lake takes place within the water threshold (at least when water is present). At the river shoreline we often find both of these extremes – we have birds in the air above, we have birds in the water itself, we have birds in the trees and we have birds on the water threshold. The river shoreline birds are often standing in the water as well as on the land, including on boats and jetties and in trees (herons, egrets and so on – birds which, at the lake, are often within the water area on reeds or grassy areas and so on). While usually less in number than those found at the (wet) lake shoreline, birds at the river can seem more evenly 'spread' through air, water and land; the same could also be said when compared to the beach shoreline, where any birds present seem more often in the air or on the land. (Occasionally there will appear a mini 'armada 'of birds at the river, such as black cormorants, seagulls and pelicans – maybe also terns – when a fish hunt is on; but then also, soon after, no birds at all; one such flotilla was observed near the sports oval moving upriver on April 7, 2022 and included a pelican, seagulls and black cormorants; and another seen on April 13, 2022 included the same, minus the pelican.)

We have already touched upon the air element in relation to the activity of human beings at the river shoreline when compared to the lake and beach shorelines. Perhaps we can add that the beach shoreline is much more susceptible to wind conditions, in relation to human activity, than is the lake shoreline. If we were allowed to enter the water at this or other lakes, we would be tempted to do so with little consideration of the air element. At the river shoreline human activity is, again, dependent on wind direction and location on the river. One cannot surf on the lakes here even if one wanted to, nor kitesurf or windsurf or sail. At the beach, all of these things and more are possible. At the lake, really only floating around on some kind of device would be possible, including kayaks, canoes and so on. At the river we can do all of these water sports – depending on right conditions and location – except surfing (though people do foil [not electric] in the wake of boats).

From all of these observations we can again have a feeling for the river shoreline in relation to the air element, and also in comparison with the other two shorelines. And from this feeling a picture may emerge of the river shoreline, in relation to the air element, as a kind of lung or set of lungs. The river can be seen as a kind of lungs where the breathing of the winds of the world can move one way or another, depending on the global inhalations and exhalations, on local conditions, on temperatures and so on. The air can move quickly in places, and less quickly in others. It can link and connect upriver with downriver – perhaps in a similar way as the air element (especially through oxygen and carbon dioxide) works with the circulation of blood throughout different parts of the human organism. And this air can also be cooler or warmer depending on the global body condition and temperature, in the same way we might breathe the warmth of one room compared to that of another that is air conditioned. The river can be seen as the channel through which the airy element can move in and out of the landscape as a whole, linking also the more open and sensory qualities of the air at the beach shoreline

(including at the ‘mouth’ of the river), and the more metabolic and digestive limb-like qualities of the air element at the lake shoreline, thereby also bringing warmth or otherwise to the whole of the landscape organism.

And it is this air element, and all that stands behind it and works through it, that makes the landscape not just into one of life, but also one imbued with consciousness. It brings that which separates the plants from the animals, which is also what, in us (and in animals), we can distinguish between processes of life (which prevent the material form from becoming corpse-like) and processes of consciousness and, in a way, death; for consciousness to emerge, as we have already mentioned, death must be able to take place, as can be seen in the rapid and permanent dying away of nerve cells (compare the regenerative capacity of nerve cells with, say, cells of the liver). (This process is also linked, however, to the capacity for the movement of the metabolic polarity, especially the limbs, which animals and humans can do, but which plants cannot.) As such we can see this airy element and that of the breathing process as a rhythmic one slightly more connected to the nerve-sense system, while the activity of the heart and of the circulation is slightly more connected to the process of metabolism, though they both rightly belong to a middle realm of rhythmic, regulatory activity. In the nerve-sense landscape (of nature and the human being) the water and air elements approach more from the periphery, centripetally, while in the more metabolic landscape, they work far more centrifugally from the centre outwards (observe the way water levels of a lake rise all around its edge at the same time, as if filling centrifugally from inside out as water levels rise). Here, again, in this rhythmic landscape, we find a third quality between the two other landscape polarities which also integrates and holds them both in balance.

How this relates further to the elements of light and warmth at the river shoreline we will now explore.

River: Light

As we have already touched on in the previous section, the river shoreline lies somewhere between the vast openness of the oceanic shoreline, and the more enclosed quality of the lake shoreline that we have been observing. At the river, light falls on objects lying at not such a great distance as at the beach, but at a greater distance than at the lake. We can see further at the beach shoreline, and everything is more light-filled through a sun that is less obstructed by the darkness of shadows that come from trees or hills – the atmosphere itself, as a form of light source, is also far less obstructed at the beach. In some ways we, as we enter the beach shoreline, are stepping into light. This is of course at an extreme around midday during the peak of the warmer months, but every day carries something of this extreme light at the beach. The only real darkness at the beach, other than night, is caused by clouds. Clouds at the beach shoreline bring an otherwise darkness, and give it something of the quality of a lake shoreline. At night, and in the wetter months, the beach shoreline tends in the direction of the lake shoreline, in terms of light. Though even at night the light from stars or the nearby port (and their reflection on the water) gives the beach shoreline an expansiveness not present at the lake; and even in the depths of winter, we do find, at the beach, many stretches of blue sky. At the beach, especially during what in the West would be called autumn and spring, when light and darkness are more balanced, but also in winter, as contrast to the intense light of summer, we more obviously find the experience of colour, expressed especially in the form of the rainbow, as mentioned above. At the lake shoreline, however, the polarity of darkness prevails, with many tall trees, and rising land all around it that helps to carry the water to this low point of ground. The polarity of darkness at the lake is most extreme in the wetter months, especially around midnight. During mid-summer at the lake, when it often dries out completely, in the middle of the day, we can, again, have the experience of something of the quality of the beach – there is more light. (Needless to say, some rivers in Australia also dry out in summer, but not this particular one, even though its tributaries can.) The lake is more beachlike in the mid-day of mid-summer. Rainbows, as mentioned above, can also be experienced at the lake in the spring and autumn months, though are often obstructed by the surrounding landscape.

At the river, we also, of course, find the alternation between day and night, between the peak of summer and the depths of winter, and the daily and seasonal periods of balance in between. In some places on the river, the trees and hills (or cliffs) rise sharply so as to create areas of large shadow. However, when this is the case, we can often find that the other side of the river is in bright light, or there is more light just around the next bend. This situation is reversed when we are in the bright light and look to find the other side or the next bend in shadow. This experience can happen, though less pronounced, even towards the polarity of most light (midday in midsummer). Likewise, even in the middle of winter, in the middle of the night, we can find the many lights of stars, the port, houses and boats lighting and reflecting on the river. The river never seems to be completely dark, as the lake so often does. Nor does it ever feel to be completely light, as the beach so often

does. (Even at the brightest point on the brightest day, one feels that one could still handle being at the river; likewise, on the darkest point of the darkest day, the river also seems to be a place one could endure.) Again, this time in relation to light, the river shoreline seems to be a third quality that is not just a middle ground between the other two shorelines, but one which has its own qualities and polarities. It can be both light and dark, even at the same time; it integrates both light and dark; and as we have already seen, where light and dark meet we find the conditions whereby colour can arise.

One can sometimes observe a kind of colour on the surface of the river. Any rainbows that are visible at the beach are usually visible also at the river. (Interestingly, one can find the rainbow-coloured sea container sculpture on the south side of the river between the bridges, known locally as ‘The Containbow.’) With less of a horizon, however, I have seen less rainbows here than at the beach, and, depending on where one stands, sometimes less of the colours of the western horizon at sunset and sunrise. However, if one is able to rise to the top of the cliffs above the river, the river is often the best place to see the whole range of sky colours during sunset, from the ‘warmer’ colours of the western spectrum – red, orange, yellow – then green, then into the blue more directly above, and then the rising (even) ‘cooler’ colours as night approaches – the darker blue, indigo and violet of the rising shadow of the earth, with magenta above, that gradually fades towards darkness. The river can also be the best place to watch the clouds change colours from whites to gold to red to grey, depending on clouds on the horizon, as the light creeps from the eastern horizon towards the west as the sun sets. All of these horizon views are far more restricted at the lake shoreline. At the river, from the northern side generally, far more of the eastern horizon can be observed at sunset (from the clifftop, again, one can also look west); this means that the focus is also on sky and clouds that might be present above and to the east at around this time, which can be more observable than the viewing of the eastern horizon and clouds at the beach at sunset, where one tends to face west, and where the eastern horizon is more restricted by the ridge line and beachside apartments to the east. At the lake, depending on where one is standing, one is left, again, with a more truncated view of the area above the lake.

Light also gradually wears down and erodes the limestone of the mineral kingdom at the river, but also illuminates it, as if it were finding something like itself therein. It finds little of this at the lake, and finds even more of itself, one could say, in the limestone and bright sands of the beach. The light works upon the plants of the river in such a way that they, generally speaking, do not appear as washed out as the plants at the beach shoreline, but are not as thick and ‘full bodied’ as those of the lake – whether it be plant leaves or flowers (including fan flowers). Plant and animal life generally seem more colourful at the river than at the beach shoreline, though less so than at the lake. Birds at the beach shoreline often seem light-struck, including the seagulls as they bury their beaks and close their eyes as they face them away from the wind (and, often, the light), even as the rest of their bodies face towards the same. During some lighter days there seem to be very few birds at all at

the beach shoreline (though, very often during these years of observation the broken-winged seagull mentioned above was there; it was also occasionally seen by the cliffs at the river). This is also the case at the lake shoreline in mid summer (when dry) in terms of water birds at least (except the swamphen, as mentioned above). What we find at the river are birds that we also find at the other shorelines, but they also seem less washed out, maybe even less 'dried out,' than when we find them at the beach shoreline. The seagull often 'bobs' and floats in the river, or splashes by the fresh water drains, or circles easily above – whereas at the beach they seem much more determined in their work (except perhaps in the early morning when conditions are more lake-like), and seemingly far 'brighter' in their colouring – as if the light also found something of itself in them at the beach – but they also seem to mix and dissolve more easily into the background sand (or horizon colour, or light on the water) because of this. At the river, seagulls seem to be birds from the beach visiting for a while – their brightness perhaps more obvious, but less extreme – more muted, perhaps – and dissolving less into the (relatively darker) background landscape. (At the lake the seagull is very obvious). The swan at the river shoreline, on the other hand, seems less dark than at the lake – again, it is more obvious to see at the river than at the lake – it swims at the river in a much 'less-dark' landscape than the lake, its feathers and whole colouring seeming somewhat brighter. Where the darkness finds something of itself in the swan at the lake (but also the many waterbirds which don't usually visit this stretch of river), it brings, together with the light, more of a balancing of colour to the river shoreline.

I would venture to say that I have seen more sunburnt human beings at the beach than I ever have at the lake. And while human beings appear to jump into the ocean water and seem to come out more 'awake' than when they entered, the human beings at the lake seem to be more active physically (they do not enter the water – the human beings I have seen enter the lake water [scientists studying turtles] walked very slowly with waders on). Human beings seem to be active physically but not so reflectively at the lake, as mentioned above, as if they were a bit more 'still' in terms of thinking activity – their will is more engaged; while the beach appears to be a place of relative inactivity (though we have also observed much physical activity here, including during winter when overall conditions are more lake-like) for human beings (perhaps we could say for birds and other animals also), but of heightened mental reflectivity, including after swimming. At the river, people may swim but it does not necessarily seem as if they do so to wake or 'freshen' up. People are active at the river, but not in such an extreme way as at the lake. There is a light of thinking available at the beach threshold, which seems to shift more into a willful movement activity at the lake. At the river, the light of thinking or reflectivity seems to be somewhat more tempered than at the beach, though more heightened and less metamorphosed into physical activity than at the lake. There is, at the river, less a light of thinking, nor a relative 'light' of will activity, but, we could say, more a relative 'light' of feeling – perhaps we could say 'colour' or feeling.

Light plays on the water, as mentioned above, with some stretches of water lit up in sun reflection, with other areas in relative darkness – either on the other side or

around the next bend. This light on the water's surface, as mentioned, can be the light of the sun, stars, atmosphere or human-made lights. Colours can sometimes be discerned on this surface water. But light can also penetrate into the depths of the river. This is not as much as at the oceanic shoreline, where one can often see very far or very deep into the water, often when there is a sandy area below. At the lake, usually, one can hardly see into the water at all (unless an especially shallow area is in full sun), and it can almost be surprising when one can see a plant or turtle or the lake bottom a mere couple of feet below the surface. At the river, we can have visibility, and light can fall, a lot deeper than at the lake shoreline, especially in sandier places, but nowhere near as much as at the beach. Again, we can have some spots where we can see a great distance or depth at the river, while on the other side or around the next bend we cannot see very far at all (though usually further than at the lake). Again, we can find that light can penetrate both far and wide, as well as not far and not wide, at the same time at the river.

As already touched on, the light of the air and sky is not as vast at the river (especially to the west when standing on the threshold where water meets land) as at the beach, and not as enclosed as at the lake. There are places on the river where we can watch all horizons (if standing at one place, as mentioned above, such as on the cliff top; though also if we were able to be in different places at once – i.e. on one side facing west, and another facing east, and so on). As also mentioned above, the experience of light in the air is, again, more balanced at the river than at the other shorelines, including (especially when able to see all horizons) the experiences of the range of colour phenomena that appear in the sky at times when the light and darkness are more even (i.e. sunrise and sunset). (We can also see from these and all observations above, just how intimately connected are air and light.

Needless to say, light and warmth are also intimately related (as are air and warmth, as we touched upon in the previous chapter). In some ways we could say that light can be a vehicle for warmth, but this is not necessarily always the case. Sometimes light can be such that it is experienced more as 'cold.' Likewise, darknesses can be experienced as carrying a certain quality of warmth (or even heat). In addition, while walking, one can experience warm and cold pockets of air. In some ways, we can also experience warm and cold pockets of light. In many ways, the light at the river is not as warm as it is at the lake shoreline, but more so than it is at the beach. The beach light can be so extreme as to not contain much of the quality of warmth. And the light at the lake can sometimes be 'too warm' – almost like a compost heap, especially experienced as the water recedes during the warmer months. The light at the river, again, seems to exist in its own realm between the other two shorelines, including being both warm (or hot) and cool. And, in this sense, again, perhaps a more complete way of thinking about warmth – and I again acknowledge my wife Katie for this understanding of warmth – is not as a polarity with cold but, rather, as a middle ground between hot and cold. In this way, we can also experience, in relation to the other shorelines, the warmth that lives in the light of the river shoreline as being more warm – but we will go into this in more detail in the next chapter.

Generally speaking, again, we find that the light of the river shoreline lives as a balanced and rhythmic middle ground between the polarities of the other shorelines. It is not a static balanced middle ground but moves regularly and rhythmically both spatially and temporally. The river is a place of both light and darkness, often at the same time, and in this way can be experienced as a place, even if not always expressing it, at least on *the verge* of colour. The river shoreline itself is the quality of colour. In terms of light, it gives a middle ground of colour to the more nerve-sensory light-filled (from the periphery) realm of the beach shoreline, and the more dark, metabolic realm of the lake shoreline. The river shoreline is a rhythmic region of the heart and lung and circulation filled with colour. In terms of light, the river is not the extreme of light-filled thinking (with perceptions approaching from the vast periphery; centripetally) of the beach shoreline, nor the light-imbued (centrifugally) darkness of willful activity that we find at the lake shoreline, but rather it is the rhythmic bringing together of both in a balanced and interdependent yet autonomous (or at least differentiated) middle realm which, in terms of the soul qualities expressed here, could be called a place of colourful feeling life. Needless to say this has not to do with subjective emotions, but rather a feeling life as an organ of perception. In relation to light, and all that works and moves through light, and in relation to the human being, the river can be seen as the feeling organ of the landscape we are exploring.

How the river landscape relates more specifically to the warmth element, we shall explore further in the next chapter.

River: Warmth

As has already been mentioned, I find that this part of Western Australia is one of the most light-filled places I have experienced anywhere in the world. Meaning, the intensity and quality of the light here is more extreme than anywhere else I have experienced. This finds its expression, as we have seen, in the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the human being, but also in relationship to the elements of earth, water, air and also warmth. What I and others sometimes encounter from visitors to Australia is that they thought it would always be hot here – all the photos and film of Australia shows a place of sunlight and clear skies – they did not expect it to get so cold. Of course, this part of the world does get very hot in the warmer months. But, as we have already touched upon in the previous chapter, quality (and quantity) of light does not necessarily equal warmth.

Of course, warmth does have a relationship, on the one side, to measurable temperature. This is also connected to light and the air element, including wind, as well as the presence of water nearby, and the kind of earth element in the area, as well as the presence of trees and so on. With all of these interacting factors, it can be difficult to focus solely on warmth. But we can generally say, in line also with proximity to the ocean, that this part of the river is usually slightly warmer on colder days/nights than further inland, and cooler on hotter days. It would be interesting to measure whether the river is slightly warmer than the ocean on a cold day, depending on variables including light and wind and shade, and not quite as cool as the beach on a hot day, depending also on relevant variables, especially shade. In relation to the lake, it would also be interesting to see whether the river is, in fact – generally speaking – slightly cooler on warmer days, and slightly warmer on cold days. But these are more assumptions to be tested than anything else. However, reflecting now, and depending on shade and wind factors being somewhat equivalent, I would, very generally speaking, be more likely to go to the beach on a hot day if I wanted a cooler temperature, and to the lake if I wanted warmer temperatures on a cold day. If I wanted the next coolest place on a hot day, I would, again, generally speaking, go to the river, conditions being somewhat equal. If I wanted the next warmest place on a cold day, I would also go to the river, all things being equal. Again, if I reflect on *generally* where I would seek to go in relation to warmth, we can find the river lying somewhat between the two shorelines.

Conditions are, however, generally not equal. And again what we can find at the river are areas of varying cold and warmth (or heat) based also upon other factors such as wind and light and shade. That is, we are also likely to have areas of heat and cold at the river, depending on side and section, at any given time. This tendency to warmth variation is much more prevalent at the river than it is at the beach, where the whole stretch is exposed, more or less, to the same conditions of light and air (albeit with cold pockets further inland on the grassy areas), and at the lake, where, in a certain sense, the whole area is somewhat *contained*, more or less, within the same conditions. The river, again, in relation to warmth, can move between polarities at the same moment, depending on location, at least more so than the beach or lake. (Again, this can also happen at the lake, depending on wind

and sun direction, but it is usually more contained in its variations than the river which can also be seen as a lake with its two 'ends' open and further exposed to conditions outside itself, such as those conditions we might find at the beach, whereas a lake can be seen as a river with its ends, and therefore whole gesture, enclosed. Likewise, we could perhaps say that the ocean is a river that has broken its banks, or pushed them back as far as continental boundaries; and that the river is an ocean contained into a narrow flow with much closer banks.)

If we move even slightly further away from temperature, however, we can make some further observations in relation to warmth. When I continue to think of which shoreline contains more the *quality* of warmth, I feel, again, more inclined to think of the lake shoreline. This is quite probably also because of the general tendency of this part of the world to light and to nerve-sense qualities. If this country were a human being, it would be a very very old human being, perhaps *the* oldest. (From this direction, my colleague Horst Kornberger has described Australia as an old person, and New Zealand, for instance, as an adolescent.[38]) In relation to the concept mentioned above – that warmth lies between hot and cold – and in terms of the quality of age and of the different polarities of the human being, we could say that Australia is actually a very *cold* place. It tends much more to the nerve-sense polarity, though this moves more towards the metabolic in more northern, equatorial, wetter and warmer climates. It is these more northern, equatorial areas of land that we usually consider to be warm. In northern Australia, for instance, temperature range may not vary very much during the day or evening, or during hotter and colder months of the year. There is a lot of water that falls during 'the wet season' in the warmer months of these places. Compared to the rest of Australia these northern places appear much more metabolic in nature, though compared to the thick jungles of Asia, South America, Africa, or even New Zealand, they are much less metabolic – the tropical areas of Australia are still more nerve-sensory in nature than these other jungles and forests of the world. But, in some ways, the lake areas of the south west of Western Australia, and elsewhere, are a kind of tropical landscape in minute form, (albeit in relation to and in the context of this landscape; that is, relatively speaking). There is much more life at these lakes than in the surrounding landscape; there is, relatively speaking, much more warmth but, again, not so much when compared to the global landscape as a whole, which we will touch on more in the final section. When restricting our observations to the three shorelines we have been observing thus far, we can also have a feeling that the river has a warmth that the lake is, in some ways, unable to maintain year-round, given the extent to which it usually dries out in summer – the extent to which it becomes nerve-sese in its orientation – the extent to which it becomes 'old' and 'cold' most years in this way during the hotter, dryer months. (Again, other rivers in Australia can dry out, as can the tributaries of this river, even though this river itself does not.) Indeed, if it were a lake in the north of the country, it would be even more full during these hotter months, which correspond to 'the wet.' As it is, however, the lake swings towards the

[38] Horst Kornberger, personal correspondence.

polarity and warmth quality of the beach shoreline, which tends towards nerve-sense, age and coldness year round. It is the river that, in its regular, rhythmic qualities, tends towards a kind of warmth between these polarities – polarities which we might also call cold and hot. (The lake can be seen as being hot, or extreme in warmth *quality*, when it is full of life and water and the kind of 'composting' heat we have been observing above, manifesting in such things as fungus and the smell of decomposition [especially on the water's initial retreat], and so on.)

Warmth – in terms of temperature and in terms of qualities which relate also to the physiological and psychological qualities of the human being – relates also to all the kingdoms of nature and the other elements, as already touched upon. Warmth as temperature can wear down the mineral kingdom from outside (especially limestone), but also build it up again from within the earth's core (e.g. granite). Though we generally have limestone at this particular stretch of river, we also, as mentioned, have granite further up the river near the hills and beyond, as well as quartz (a key part of granite) within the sand. We also find warmth in relation to plant life, especially in their seeds and their oils, whereas we find light and air more in their flowering process and leaf forms shaped from outside, and water more in their growing, sprouting and spreading tendencies. We find warmth also in animals in the regulation of their body heat, and the way they are able to care for their young – we find it in eggs, nests, pouches and so on. In the human being, we find warmth in relation to body temperatures, which in inflammation such as acute fever can become hot, while it can become cold during cold weather exposure, shock, chronic stress, anxiety, other chronic cold illnesses, and so on. (Fever is, in this sense, an illness of youth – it has the quality of youth.) The heart and blood circulation also carries warmth throughout the organism. We will come to more psychological conditions in a moment.

When it comes to the earth element at the river shoreline, warmth works into all aspects of the physical and material world, and is, as mentioned, dependent on the inner workings of the other elements. Warmth works into the water element in the same way and is also dependent on the currents of the world's oceans, global temperature activity, evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and so on. Warmth also works into the global meteorological changes in the air element relating also to high and low pressure systems, cold fronts, air pollution, and so on, as well as to the movements of the sun throughout the day and the year, and changes in the light element more broadly; this is perhaps not as obvious at the river as it is at the oceanic shoreline, but is perhaps more so at the river than at the lake shoreline.

While considering all of these processes further, especially the quality of warmth as it relates to the human being (including processes of self-consciousness), we can have the feeling that, in a certain sense, many of these processes seem to occur 'from without.' That is, in looking at the different kingdoms of nature, we can have the feeling that the warmth element works from without or from the outside in upon minerals, upon the plant, upon the animal, and, in part also, upon the human being. When we look at the world with the sense organs within us related to the earth element then we can perceive and observe everything of the world that is material in

nature. This is a level of thinking that is of the quality of the earth, of the material world. When we look at the world with the organs of perception of the water element, then we can perceive also the activities of life within the world – this is not present in the mineral kingdom, and, as mentioned, everything from which life is gone takes on the quality of the mineral kingdom, including the dead trees on the river shoreline. The plant contains both the earth and water elements within it – in some ways we could say it is the earth and water elements or processes of the world made visible. Earth and water processes are also present within the animal, but something else is also added here; materially we have especially internal hollow spaces and organs (seen really only in the flower of the plant), but we also have everything we can perceive through the organs of perception related to air and light. Here we come to the soul/psyche – to consciousness. The mineral and plant kingdoms do not have this within them as individual manifestations. The animal has consciousness within it, to varying degrees, and with varying expressions, seated upon nerve-sense, rhythmic, and metabolic tendencies, as we have observed above at the river shoreline. From the welcome swallow to the pelican – from whitebait to the dolphin; but also the seagull, and the mullet. All of these animals have materiality and form, have life, but also psyche – they are conscious. They are not, however, aware that they are conscious. They are not self-conscious – only the human being has this as a faculty. This is the faculty – the organ of perception – related to the deeper aspects of the warmth element. Through thinking which contains within it the organs of perception for the warmth element, we can observe the warmth element as it relates to the world beyond the material, beyond life, beyond psyche, to the actual essential nature of phenomena – what some have called spirit – but also how this relates to materiality, life and consciousness. In the organs of perception for warmth that live in our consciousness we can perceive the essential/the spiritual at work in the world. This also includes the warmth element that does not manifest directly in the kingdoms of nature but which can be perceived in their general species as a whole (i.e. the guiding archetype, working from ‘outside in’ – or ‘inside out’ in terms of the human being; only in the human being is it directly manifest.)

What the river shoreline can also show us is that this warmth activity can be found not in a thinking that remains purely in the head, but one that must include the whole of the human organisation, and at the river shoreline can become more centred in the heart; that is, near the material heart, a watery heart together with a heart of air and light can, through conscious self development through the warmth of the human I – of the spiritual (in a way, poetic) individuality of the human being – in freedom, begin to take shape as a central organ of perception for the world around it, including the elements of earth, water, air and light and warmth; or of form, life, consciousness and self-conscious (or spiritual) activity and processes.

In this sense, we can again see the river as an organ of the middle realm of the human organisation between the polarities of the beach shoreline and the lake shoreline. (Perhaps also related to this, we can wonder, again, at how much water moves under this particular stretch of land that exists between ocean on the one side and river on the other, where sometimes we might glance from the river a ‘path’ that

leads off into the limestone towards the ocean, and ponder further the watery connections between both shorelines [as well as, slightly further off, the the lake shoreline, which is also not far from the river at that location], and how such connections relate to the human being.)

One cannot perceive anything unless there is a corresponding organ of perception with which to do so.[39] For now, let us reflect on what else the river shoreline as a whole has taught us, also in relation to the other two shorelines.

[39] Johann von Goethe, “Every object well contemplated opens up a new organ of perception within us.”

River: Landscape as a Whole

The river, as touched on above, is an open-ended lake, and an ocean enclosed on two sides. Its catchment extends to all the rivers, streams, brooks and so on that flow into it from higher regions and, as we have discussed, also the cyclical process involving the evaporation of water from the ocean, the travel of this water in clouds, and then the condensation and precipitation of this water back over the landscape and, potentially, back into this particular catchment area. It also includes related underground water.

The catchment of any lake is limited to an immediate catchment comprising lakes, smaller brooks and streams, stormwater drains and so on. Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont seems to only have water flowing into it when it rains – often we do not even notice the filling up of the lake and where this water comes from, only that the level continues to rise – that the shoreline threshold itself continues to expand.

The catchment of the ocean comprises all the river catchments of the world that make it to the ocean; it is the vast periphery of the world that flows into it.

When we think of the nerve-sense system of the human being, we also find all the corners of the external sensory world flowing into it, including through sight, sound, smell, even touch and taste. All expanses of the periphery flow into the nerve-sese system of the human being.

When we consider the metabolic, digestive processes of the human being, it is something that usually takes place unconsciously. Only in illness situations do we have a consciousness of processes taking part in this polarity of the organism. What is taking place as part of these processes is that the external world is being destroyed (think of food digestion), and then built up again as part of the wholeness of the human organism. There is, therefore, an upbuilding process that takes place here within the human organism (which we have also observed throughout the different parts of the lake organism). These building-up processes within the human being are also then extended outwards and back into the external world through the activity and processes of the human limbs. All that flows in from the external periphery is digested, and then built up in accordance with the wholeness of the human individuality which then, through the limbs (and more fundamentally the will), further shapes the external world; we can see the similarities of quality which take place here between the human being and the lake shoreline.

When, finally, we consider the activity of the rhythmic system – the system of heart and lungs and circulation – we can find, on the one hand, that the lungs are also open to the outside world, taking in air from nearby which is also connected with larger areas of air activity. We are much more conscious of these processes connected to breathing, and can alter them if we choose to do so, but only for certain periods of time after which our breathing carries on mostly unconsciously. On the other hand, we find the much more internal and unconscious processes of the heart and blood stream, which work inwardly in the body, and are really only exposed to the external world through the interactions with the outside air that takes place through the mixing of gases as part of lung processes. The blood also assists in the upbuilding of the human organism through what is ingested, destroyed and

integrated in the form of foodstuffs (this then also supports the limbs being able to be active in the world). So the processes of the middle, rhythmic system are open to the external world as well as the more internal world, but rhythmically balance out these two polarities in ways unique to itself. They rhythmic system is a third realm between the nerve-sense processes centred in the head but found throughout the whole organism, and the more metabolic and digestive processes centred in the abdominal and limb region but also found throughout the whole organism. The rhythmic system is centred in the chest area of heart and lung, but is also found throughout the whole organism. That is, breathing and blood circulation takes place throughout the whole body, as do nerve-sense processes, and as do digestive and metabolic processes, but each of these processes become more discernible within the organism *as a whole* by becoming aware of the qualities of each process as they manifest in the places where they are most centred.

And in a certain sense, that is what we are attempting to do here also with the landscape organism. The activity and processes of the river include the taking in of the vast external periphery through the rainfall which comes from water and air processes nearby. This area is larger than the area that leads into the lake, but not as large as the area that feeds into the ocean (the river is also open, of course, to the incoming tidal periphery of the ocean). So there is some connection with the external periphery which feeds into the river shoreline. But there are also processes of gradual building up, be they the mineral kingdom of limestone rocks, or the large trees that can grow by the water's edge, or the foods that attract larger sea life and other animal life, or the humans that come to feed on certain fish. The life is not as bustling and vibrant and growing as it is in the soil, plants, birds, and other animals as at the lake, but there is a kind of upbuilding process at the river nonetheless. That is, at the river shoreline, there is a breathing system that takes in from the external world, though not as much as at the beach shoreline, and there is a circulatory 'blood' system with building-up processes, though not as much as at the lake shoreline. (In some ways, in relation to the water element of all the shorelines, we find something that can point us to the lymphatic system within the human being. If the warmth element can also speak to us of the human blood and circulation, and the air and light elements can speak to us also of the nervous system, the water element can make us consider the lymphatic system within the human being. Lymph comes from the Latin *lympha* which means "water, clear water, a goddess of water."[40] The blood is a closed system, while the lymph is open; within the lymphatic system the tonsils are more open to the outside world at the nerve-sense polarity of the organism [where the lymphatic system is symmetrical], whereas the spleen in the metabolic polarity is open only to the inner body and to the blood.[41] In some ways we can feel a connection between the activity of ocean water and the tonsils, and lake water and the spleen. Warmth and water can be seen to work together in this way in

[40] "Lymph" in Online Etymology Dictionary, https://www.etymonline.com/word/lymph accessed April 22, 2022.
[41] See Johannes Rohen, *Functional Morphology: The Dynamic Wholeness of the Human Organism*, Adonis, Hillsdale NY, 2007, pp. 137-140.

relation to ‘immunity’ and to health [of both individual and landscape organisms].) But it is not just a mixture or combination of both polarities that takes place at the river shoreline. As we have seen from our observations above, the river shoreline is not just a coming together of the beach shoreline and the lake shoreline in some kind of middle ground – if it was, it would just be part ocean and part lake somehow (mis)matched together, but this is not the case at all. Yes, the river is able to hold these two polarities in balance, but only because it brings a third, middle process to the overall landscape organism – that of a rhythmic, weaving alternating regulation. This is not a mere middle point between the ocean and the lake, any more than the rhythmic system is just a middle point between the nerve-sense polarity and the metabolic-digestive-limb polarity. It is its own middle process that holds the others in balance and yet introduces a rhythmic dynamic throughout the landscape and human organism as a whole. The river system takes in water from the periphery and, to an extent, feeds this to the living land as the land requires, particularly higher up the river where the water is more fresh, at a scale (in terms of size) which is much larger than the lake.

If we are again to turn to the psychological processes of the human being, and to levels of consciousness, we can make further observations. As already mentioned above, and as Rudolf Steiner first pointed out, the nerve-sense processes centred in the head can be experienced as the seat of thinking activity within the human being. Likewise, the rhythmic processes centred in the heart and lung can be experienced as the seat of feeling – or we could say feeling perception – within the human being. And in the digestive, metabolic and limb process of the human being centred in the abdomen we can experience the seat of willing activity of the human being.[42] We can say, again, that the river shoreline has a connection to the feeling perception of the whole landscape and to that which lives beyond it (which we will come to more in the final chapter). Once again we can say that the lake, where much of the landscape is digested and then ‘repurposed’ in so much life, has a relationship to the will element of the landscape as a whole. And the ocean, where the connections to the nerve-sense element are apparent, is related to the thinking activity of the human being.

Again, much of the overall landscape in which each of these three shorelines exist, when looked at in relation to the world as a whole, is nerve-sense in orientation, so we can keep this in mind as we think of the landscape organism of the earth (which we shall explore more in the final chapter). When it comes to the elements of nature and the levels of consciousness connected to them, we have been focusing on the transition from the earth element to that of the water element as it lives in the landscape, and also, of course, towards air and light, as well as warmth. We cannot have a shoreline, however, without a place where water has existed, at least at one point in time, or in some form. And yet, we have also observed the way in which all the elements – from the earthly, to the watery, to the air and light, to warmth – work in relation to one another. So while we have been

[42] Rudolf Steiner, *Riddles of the Soul*, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1970.

considering all the elements of nature, we have perhaps been focusing slightly more on the element of water – that is, moving from and with the element and consciousness of earth thinking – thinking tied to the material world – and moving it into a dynamic with the watery element, with consciousness which is more fluid and water-like in quality. In this realm we find thoughts and concepts which are much more living, flowing and dynamic than the static thoughts of the earthly element – of the material world. To grasp this element as it exists in nature – that is, anything which is organic – we cannot use the same level of thinking which grasps the inorganic world. We require a thinking or consciousness which is itself more organic, fluid and alive. In this realm we may often encounter, in addition to concepts and thoughts which are more alive (and these too we can count as lawful and objective – just because they appear on the subjective stage of our inner life does not make them subjective, as any thorough reflection on the emergence of the laws of the inorganic world will also reveal; namely, that they also appear on this same stage) – we may also encounter pictures or imaginations. Again, these can be objective and lawful in nature, to the degree to which we are able to rise to such lawfulness and leave our own subjective fantasising behind. We have also, of course, considered the air and light element in our explorations. If this exploration was to be, for example, a *musicality* of shorelines, we would be able to express the content of our observations in different, musical, ways, and such an exploration may well be more 'attuned' to the inner dynamics of the element of air (and light) which can have a (lawful and objective) tonal quality to it (and in some ways we can feel more 'at home' within it). We have also considered the warmth element. And when it comes to the warmth element then we stand no longer external to anything but, rather, within its innermost workings, and within the knowledge (or being) of the phenomenon itself. We can know what we observe from the inside out – can know (or intuit) this also in objective and lawful ways.

In a certain sense, therefore, we have to do with levels of consciousness above the level of everyday consciousness which grasps only the everyday. We have to do with levels of consciousness or awareness which meet and perceive phenomena at the level at which they occur and operate. In exploring a poetics of shorelines, therefore, we have also encountered a number of imaginations, including in relation to the human being.

If we are to look again at the river shoreline as a whole in relation to the other shorelines, then we can see it as the middle rhythmic system of the human being – an area of heart and lung – where it flows in (or out) at the 'head' or 'mouth' of the river into the ocean – the head area of the shorelines of this part of the world – with Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont a place of digestion and metabolism, and of also turning this digestion into life-filled upbuilding forces in relation to the landscape organism as a whole. Head, chest, abdomen and limbs – the human being lying down with head at the ocean, chest at the river, and feet at the lake. This is but a microcosm, of course, of much larger landscapes, both here and around the world; this we will consider further in the final chapter.

All Shorelines: Reflections

By looking at the phenomena of three specific shorelines from various directions we have been able to build up some initial pictures of these shorelines, as well as of how they relate to the human being. Of course no phenomenon exists in isolation, and we have also attempted to show the way the various kingdoms of nature and elements of being interpenetrate and work with and sometimes through one another. By focusing on different parts of the shoreline we have attempted to look from various directions upon the whole shoreline which, in reality, can be found within each of its parts. The above represents nothing more than a mere beginning (or continuing steps) in this direction, but one which also takes note of the large amount of work already performed by various scientists and artists working along similar lines of inquiry applied to some of the phenomena we have been considering, and much more besides.

What the above can show us is the need to characterise phenomena from as many varied viewpoints as possible in order that the phenomena themselves may reveal whatever theories or wisdom or knowledge they may contain. In some ways, we are required to hold our concept-forming activity back, until concepts are more accurately formed by the phenomena under observation.

On one level, and from one direction, when we look at these three shorelines we can say, as already mentioned, that the archetypal form of the beach shoreline is the bay; the archetypal form of the lake shoreline is the sphere (akin to the water drop); and the archetypal form of the river shoreline is the winding, rhythmic snakelike form (though, we have also explored the relationship of these three forms to one another above). Based on this, we might also, again, be tempted to say that the more rounded form of the lake (even though this particular lake manifests in a slightly different form), is akin to the rounded form of the head organisation; the more open and expansive gesture of the oceanic shoreline more akin to the limb system; and the more rhythmic winding activity of the river more akin to the rhythmic system of the human being. There is also a certain parallel here with looking at the mineral kingdom and observing the polarity of granite and limestone and saying that the rounded forms of the granite are more akin to the rounded forms of the head, and the more concave forms of the limestone are more akin to the hollow spaces and organs of the metabolic-digestive area (though while still be open to the world à la the limbs). From one direction – from the perspective of the expanded earth element – this is the case. From another direction – more from the watery element – we can find in the upward-rising, strong and radiating centrifugal quality of the granite, processes which are more akin to the metabolic-digestive realm of the human being; while in the crumbling, decaying centripetal processes of the limestone we find process more akin to the nerve-sense polarity of the human being. So it is with the shorelines, where the concave and centripetal forces (of death and withering) of the beach shoreline (where also much limestone can be found), are more akin to the nerve-sense processes of the human being; and where the more convex and centrifugal forces of the lake shoreline (of growth and life) are more akin to the processes found in the metabolic-digestive-limb realm. (We can see here, again, a

quality of ‘inversion’ when it comes to these three shorelines when moving from the beach to the lake [and vice versa]; we can also see it, again, in the water that comes in from the periphery at the ocean, and apparently from the centre of the lake [though the water also runs in from the periphery of the catchment, including the sky above, we don’t usually notice this at the lake – we notice the rising of the levels on all the edges] when it is filling and expanding [with this also come the reflections working through the light element on the water’s surface]. Here too we find a shift from centripetal to centrifugal movement [in this case of water and light], with the river as the water (and light, in a way) flowing past, either one way or the other.)

In some ways we also find similar distinctions when we observe from the point of view of the psychological direction – that is, when we also consider the processes of thinking, feeling and willing as cognitive faculties – and we find that the beach shoreline has more in common within thinking activity, the lake more with willing activity, and the river with feeling activity. In all of these cases, as all our preliminary observations above have begun to indicate, all three realms of the human organism and the landscape organism, and all four elements, are to be found in each particular shoreline, as they are also found in each particular part of the human being. In observing phenomena from different directions we can see the way in which each part contains the whole, but where the whole is not merely the sum of the parts but contains within it a guiding idea, or what Goethe called an archetype.

Perhaps the river shoreline is where we have come most close to a recognisable guiding idea in the form of a poetic or imaginative picture, in terms of the movements and activity of a snake (though, again, we have also observed that the snake can be seen as an overall image of water processes and activity itself, seen clearly from above in the flow of the river, partially and one-sidedly in the bay, and coiled back upon itself in the lake. (Likewise, we might also say that the sphere or drop form, that all water seeks to ‘resolve’ into, can be seen most clearly in the lake. In the ocean we can say that this drop form is held by a bay on one side whose other sides are far-off continents, while in the river the elongated drop form is on a pathway – is winding towards stillness in the ocean or lake (or moving the other way on the incoming tide). We could even go so far as to say that the snaking of bends or ‘bays’ of the river are drops that would find resolution or completion if joined and brought together in an enclosed way with the alternating winding bay course of the other side of the river. (To state it systematically in summary: The archetypal form of the beach shoreline is the bay. The archetypal form of the river is the winding snaking form. The archetypal form of the river is the sphere/drop. The river is a bay that alternately continues on both sides; the lake is a bay that’s come to complete enclosure. The ocean is a snake whose other side is far off, and whose winding direction is vast; the lake is a snake that has coiled back around upon itself. The ocean is a drop enclosed by the continents which, if not there, would leave the water to shape itself into the sphere/drop of the globe; the river is a drop which is open ended and always moving but which tries to unite with the opposite side as it goes.) At the beach we have also come again and again to the idea of death – of a shoreline of death – together with wide-awake reflections. At the lake we have

approached the idea of willful growth and life and, to an extent, birth, but perhaps not so much of a physical birth (though the bird life does express this), but more of a birth into a new phase of life. At the river we've come to the winding flow that weaves throughout life.

Needless to say, we would need to observe more rivers, more oceanic shorelines, more lakes if we wished to build up a more complete picture of their shorelines in general. We have, however, focused in on three specific shorelines and observed their phenomena consciously over many seasons and season cycles. These are three shorelines that felt appropriate for me to observe and, in a way, these were places I was already visiting often before entering into a more conscious activity of observation and reflection with them.

And yet, while we cannot extrapolate these observations onto all beach, river and lake shorelines, these three shorelines, as parts of the whole, also contain within them something of the idea or archetype of all beach shorelines, all river shorelines, all lakes. This is why we can even understand one another when we say, from different parts of the world, "today I visited the beach"...or "lake...or "river" and share together something of the same guiding idea of the whole – of all beaches, of all rivers, or all lakes – which will necessarily take on individual characteristics given the context in which they can be found.

Therefore, what we find in the shorelines above as expressions of the ideas or archetypes of beach, lake or river will be different to what we find elsewhere in the world – even to what we find elsewhere within Australia, within the south west of Western Australia, and so on. As we have already touched on, what we find within Australia is a land much older than most places on Earth, much dryer, more light-filled, more windy, often hotter and more fire-prone. It is a land of many, many minerals, many, many unique and diverse plants with a staggering array of flowers. (The majority of flowers that I see do not close at night or in the shade as they do in so many other parts of the world – we can wonder about this in relation to the light present in the landscape.) It is also a place of unique and diverse animals. Many of these plants and animals are found nowhere else on Earth (and many of these are found nowhere but the local areas in which they grow). There are more than twice as many species of plants and animals in Australia as there are in Europe and North America combined, with close to half of these Australian species found in Western Australia.[43] It is also a place of unique and diverse (though interconnected) cultures. (There are many hundreds of Aboriginal clans or groups within Australia [around 500], more than 250 languages and over 800 dialects.) The plants are, we could say, often more 'mineral-like' – more like earth sculpted by air and light (hence also the many amazing colours of flowers) than they are pure expressions of the water element (as occurs, say, in a tropical equatorial rainforest; though pockets of this, as mentioned, do exist in Australia). The plants in Australia are, essentially, more nerve-sense in orientation, and more the expression of the workings of light and air than elsewhere in the world. Likewise the animals – think of how many birds we have

[43] Sign at the Stirling Range National Park, observed early January, 2022.

so far observed, and this is just a beginning of a beginning – are also more of the air and light, and tend much more towards a nerve-sense orientation than to a metabolic one. The historically largest animals – the so-called megafauna (though these were apparently not as large in Australia as they were elsewhere around the world) – of Australia have mostly died out. There are no native hoofed animals of the metabolic realm here (of which the cow is a kind of archetype). Even canines are few and far between (dingoes, the Tasmanian tiger). We have instead large animals such as the emu and the kangaroo which, while being the largest of the animals in this part of Australia and overall more metabolic (and apparently also considered surviving megafauna), are still inclined within this towards the nerve-sense polarity (as all birds are, as kangaroos are within the diprotodontia [compare with the wombat {also megafauna} or koala], and as all Australian mammals are when compared to the larger hoofed mammals [and even canines] of the world).

We therefore have in Australia conditions which tend much more to the polarity of nerve-sense than metabolic-digestive. It is a place primarily of the earth element, and of air and light, more so than a place of the water element and of warmth. Which is perhaps why fire needs to be consciously brought in and managed in such a way where it, in turn, can manage the land (as a kind of immune system for the land in the same way that the immune system of the human being – as an area of activity of the I – works through warmth [e.g. fever]) through human activity/creativity. It is perhaps also why we can be so struck by the phenomena of shorelines – primarily a contrast between water and earth – in this place, where the water element is not as prevalent as it is elsewhere in the world (or where it is present, though mostly at its edges, where the periphery and, in a way, the nerve-sense polarity [of death] further approaches from all sides). Therefore, when we think of beaches, wherever we are in the world, there is a chance that the beaches of Australia may come to mind. Or, conversely, if we think of Australia, we may well tend to think of beaches – at least this may be the case in the Western world. This may also have something to do with each capital city, and the majority of all cities in Australia, existing on a coastline, usually where a river meets the ocean. Australia, of course, is an island – a continent – surrounded by the oceanic shoreline.

In some ways, then, we could say the beach shoreline, taken to its nerve-sense polarity, ends (or begins) in Australia. The lake shoreline, however, taken to its polarity ends probably with a bubbling spring (which, as an image, we could liken to a vertical river, or a vertically moving snake) – a source that, unlike Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, continually bubbles up out of the ground. Such springs also occur here on Noongar country, but even these are of a more nerve-sense or light- and air-filled variety than, say, the bubbling hot springs of New Zealand, or of an equatorial country full of water and life and often warmth in the form of volcanic fire. The sulphurous hotspring processes of New Zealand, and elsewhere, stand in polar opposition to the salt processes of the Australian beach. With New Zealand's sulphur processes we also find granite processes (especially on the south island), large thick-leaved trees and plants, and an environment which

seems to be at least somewhat more able to tolerate the introduction of European hoofed animals. When we take the lake to its polar extreme we end up in places like New Zealand, and in more equatorial countries where there are more pronounced metabolic-digestive processes, and where the water and often fire element of volcanic activity predominate. When we think of rivers, we may be tempted to think of places like the Amazon, but even its relative inaccessibility points to its position within more of a metabolic-type landscape; it is the rivers of more moderate climates such as the large and winding European rivers, or the rivers of North America, China perhaps, parts of Africa, lower parts of South America and so on, that we may perhaps also think of. These rhythmic shorelines are found most archetypally in the more rhythmic places of the world, where the various elements are a bit more in rhythmic balance.

The shoreline beaches and lakes and rivers of the south west of Western Australia will therefore take on a nerve-sense, earthy, light-and-air-filled quality in relation to the overall global landscape – the global shoreline, if you like. Taken to a global level, we can perhaps say that the so-called ‘poles’ – the north pole and south pole – are the nerve-sense extremes of the Earth, while the lands along the equator are more the metabolic-digestive extremes, with the regions in between occupying some kind of middle ground with tendencies varying more towards one polarity or the other. (Again we can have here a picture of the human being mirrored, with heads at the poles, feet towards the equator and rhythmic system in between, perhaps with some kind of [potentially rhythmic] space at the equator.) The poles of the earth are places of light and air; the equator more of water and fire. The earth element perhaps exists at the poles in terms of water being so earthly it freezes into solid form, but also in the countries that come closest to the polar areas, such as Australia, especially the more southern parts. The melting of the polar ice caps through the pollution and subsequent warming of the Earth (including through ozone holes) points to an increase in the light and air element, and an over activity of the nerve-sense polarity (to the point of melting/melt-down). (In one sense, global warming, the melting of the polar ice caps and rising sea levels can be seen as an expression of the dissemination of what lives in the polar ice regions across the whole world – that is, the nerve-sense element of clarity, coolness, sharpness, intellectuality, and, indeed, death [again, think of the minimal regenerative capacity of the cells of the nervous system]. Death is being spread out across the world, which is also the effect of rising sea levels upon plant, animal and human life. In another sense, this process is also created through a warming of the head – a kind of hotheadedness, whereby light and warmth from the sun is trapped by pollution that we ourselves make. That is, we are trapping our own light and warmth as human beings under the blanket of the pollution of our own activity – including thinking, feeling and actions – and this is in turn spreading a nervous, intellectual death throughout our entire organism, individually, ecologically and socially.) Salinity thereby increases at the shorelines of the world, where life decays. Salinity also increases inland in places such as Australia where the plant life of the region – the more watery element – has been removed in place of monoculture grain plants.

These areas have also become much more nerve-sense in an already nerve-sense environment – the only logical end point for this is salt and death (see the various salt lake and salinity issues throughout this part of Australia and beyond). (From these considerations, as well as the above, we may be tempted to wonder if, in the sense we have been talking about it here, we can look upon the material world – the earthly element – as a world which is crumbling and dying away. We may then also ask, What will eventually remain? Without the earth element, we are left with the elements of water, air, light and warmth – of life, consciousness and self-consciousness – and, in a certain sense, with what, essentially, human beings are able to do with and make of this earthly element and material world in order to bring it into the realm of life, consciousness and self-consciousness). Meanwhile, climatic processes are tending to go their own ways in unpredictable and extreme events. That which has, to an extent, held together the nerve-sense, metabolic-digestive and rhythmic activity of the landscapes of the world – the individuality of landscapes, linked as they are to the human cultures of the world and the individual creativity thereof – has deteriorated as global culture has become increasingly 'monocultured' and one-sidedly materialistic in outlook. Without the organising individuality of landscapes being consciously worked with and tended by the self-conscious, creative, organising individuality of human beings, then we find nerve-sense, metabolic and rhythmic weather and landscape events related to all the kingdoms of nature, and all the elements, going in all sorts of chaotic directions. This, if we are honest, we also see take place within the soul life of the human being, where thinking, feeling and willing begin to go their own separate ways, as if a kind of threshold had been crossed and they now no longer function in relation to one another with any kind of 'given' guiding individuality or 'held' order.

The consequence of this is a thinking life which is prone to making judgments before an adequate amount of phenomena have been sufficiently observed in such a way that a 'judgement' of sorts proceeds from the phenomena themselves. The end result of this kind of activity is necessarily a doubt in the power of thinking activity to reveal anything objective and true in the realm of ideas. The feeling life, on the other hand, can become beset with a kind of cynicism towards the truth and reality of anything in the world around it, and in its own activity, leading necessarily to a kind of anger or hate towards an ideal world which can only reveal itself upon the stage of a feeling life which has become capable of objective perception. And, finally, the will can become paralysed through the above processes, including doubt, leading to a fear of what it might perceive in any objective way, as well as what function it might actually perform in the world; alternatively, it becomes a plaything of the kind of cynicism and hate (including self-hate) that we find stemming from the feeling life. All of this then becomes symptomatic on the level of (further) psychological illnesses but also physiological illnesses (in the same way that physiological imbalances of the nerve-sense system, the rhythmic system and the metabolic-limb system can lead to psychological imbalances and illnesses.) This can be observed in the increase in physical violence towards other human beings, but also in self harm and suicide, which is thought to occur at the rate of around 18 million suicide attempts globally

every year – more than two thirds the population of Australia.[44] It also leads to the destruction of the environment in the many and varied ways we are confronted with today, wherever we are in the world. We are all too familiar with these symptoms.

The purpose of this book has been to come to a deeper level of experiencing the world around us in order that we can begin to shift from illness towards health – from attempts to fix illness symptoms with the same kind of thinking and experiencing of the world which created these problems in the first place. The attempt has also been made to come to a deeper level of experiencing ourselves as human beings in relation to and through the world around us, and to see in what ways we may be intimately connected with nature. The shift from illness to health has also been touched upon in this direction – in relation to the human being. What remains, however, is how this way of understanding the natural world in relation to the human being can also be useful for us in finding the right kind of thoughts – based on the necessary processes of social observations – for the much needed renewal of social life – of how we relate with and to one another – to our fellow human beings, wherever we might be in the world. We all live as part of the global nature organism, and we all live as part of a global social organism, both of which become individualised in particular places, as we have already begun to observe in relation to the natural world. How this process relates to social life – to the global social organism in relation to its individualisation in different parts of the world – and, indeed, to the mission – even the ideal mission – the ideal contribution of different countries and cultures to the global social organism (and even how this social process relates back to nature) – awaits further exploration.

[44] WHO reports that around 703,000 suicides are reported each year: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide Accessed April 21, 2022. The American Association of Suicidology reports that the 'conclusion' to attempt ration is 1:25 (USA Suicide 2006 Final Data: https://web.ccsu.edu/counselingandwellnesscenter/information/files/suicide_2006datapgsv2.pdf accessed April 21, 2022; add to that the potential number of unreported cases each year.

Epilogue

In the middle of what is now called North Fremantle – between the oceanic and river shorelines we have been observing, and somewhere in the direction of the lake shoreline – is a very small park. Within it are planted a handful of trees. They consist, primarily, of she-oaks and oaks (as well as some paperbarks). They have been intentionally planted. In some ways, we can experience this small park as a coming together of the wisdoms of this place – in the form of the she-oaks – with old Western wisdoms – in the form of the oak. What has been attempted in this work, however, is not an expression of Aboriginal, or more explicitly, Noongar (or Whadjuk) cultural wisdom. Nor, however, is it an attempt to re-create any kind of ancient Celtic or other ancient Western wisdom traditions. Rather, it takes as its start the Western orientation of our time, based as it is on a reliance on observation, and attempts to extend this observation beyond the purely material phenomena perceived with our physical senses to what can be perceived with thinking and with consciousness more broadly (to this can also be added observations enhanced with technical equipment such as microscopes etc., especially by subject specialists, though always to be understood in relation to the context in which phenomena occur – similar patterns can be observed also on these more micro levels). As such, this work belongs to a much larger attempt of expanding the Western methodology of our time towards the comprehension of, in addition to material realities, essential immaterial/spiritual realities, through the individual faculties and capacities of the free human being (by using the methodically-trained and honed capacities of thinking, feeling and willing as organs of perception [as a kind of Macroscope, if you like], which we can add to all of our other material observations, including those of a more microscopic nature]). As such, this overall attempt can be seen as a renewal of spiritual activity in the Western world, but in a completely new way – a way which does not throw out or disregard the great advances of modern, Western science but, rather, seeks to start with them (and the processes of observation they are founded on), and then build further or, rather, pass *through* them. In so doing it is hoped that bridges of understanding can not only be made to natural science and to the world around us more broadly, but also to one another as human beings, wherever we may come from in the world, and whatever spiritual traditions or other lines of thinking we may relate to. As such, we can picture this overall attempt – this new element – of which this present work is a mere part, as belonging to the inner activity of the individual human being. Thus, in this light, we should rightly picture the small park in North Fremantle not only with she-oaks and oak trees, but also with the human being who sits under them, who observes them, who relates to and with them.

Afterword

After finishing a draft of this book I travelled to Europe for seven weeks. I knew that I had to finish the draft before I left because I would find it very difficult to 'look back over my shoulder' onto these landscapes while travelling. It was the first trip I had taken outside of Western Australia in two-and-a-half years – since the COVID pandemic began. I left with my wife in late May 2022, and we returned early to mid July. Visiting other places – other shorelines – can also help us understand those we are more familiar with. In travelling through parts of southern England, Belgium, the Netherlands, northern France, southern Wales, northern Germany and north-eastern Spain I, of course, encountered many different landscapes and many different shorelines. As an overall gesture, I was struck by the experience of encountering a landscape much more related to the qualities of the rhythmic system of the human being, and to the feeling life. Of course, there were polarities within this experience related to different places and different phenomena, but it nonetheless existed as an overall contrast to the more nerve-sense qualities of Southwest Australia. I remember clearly, for example, comfortably spending whole days in the sunshine north of Amsterdam, and feeling the sun land more upon my chest. Upon returning to Perth I felt again the sun land much more upon my head, with my face getting sunburnt after a very short amount of time (and feeling somewhat 'light-headed'), despite the fact that it was the middle of winter.

In looking back over my journal, I notice a couple of other observations: In flying over Gulf countries with flatter dry lands of a more nerve-sense quality, I considered the once more metabolic plant life of old which has become oil in the layers below. At midday on the solstice I was sitting with others outside near a beach in southern England where we saw a halo around the sun; it ran a full circle and extended about a third of the way to the horizon, with red on the interior, violet on the exterior; it was south of us with some cirrus clouds between us and the sun; whereas rainbows require us as viewers to be between the sun and the rainbow as it appears on some form of moisture in the air, a halo appears around the sun itself, with us looking at it – in some ways halos seem to belong more to the sun itself, while rainbows are what the sun seems to paints upon the skies around the earth, pointing our attention towards them. Another observation had to do with two different ducks seen at the Wetlands Centre in London, where one duck with a long, shovel bill and short tail appeared next to another with a long tail and short, spear-like bill; it was as if I was looking at a kind of metamorphosis in process – the tail extending as the bill grew shorter and thinner, with the bill growing and widening as the tail shrunk. One final observation I'll mention here is one I seemed to have made it the Netherlands: the rhythmic system of Europe has plant life but flowers also in a kind of balance; Australia has reduced life but many flowers; the tropics have much life but reduced flowers; here we observe something of the interaction of water and air/light, life and consciousness; in the sense that we have been discussing it above – Europe is a river; Australia is a beach; the tropics are a lake; heart, head, hands.

Of course, now that I'm back in Perth I continue to make observations that could continue to be entered into this book at one place or another indefinitely. Now

that I am ‘outside’ of the process of writing the book, however, and also while I’m in the process of ‘re-arriving’ onto this land in the middle of winter, I am finding that the attention I am able to give to these observations is somewhat different than what it was while actually writing the book. My attention, in a way, is ‘elsewhere,’ and I have to make more of an effort, I find, to enter into these observations now. Nonetheless, it is still possible. But to avoid continuing this book forever, at one point we must call it a snapshot of a larger whole.

I will however, mention a couple of observations that feel important to note. Black swans (one seen also in a fenced-off farm area in northern France) seem mostly to swim by paddling with one foot then the other, unlike their white English counterparts which often swim by kicking both feet at the same time then gliding. I have now seen crows chasing magpies among the fig trees at the lake. I have seen the New Holland honeyeater chasing a singing honeyeater at the river. I have seen the river at higher levels that I have ever seen it, with water coming up through the drain to completely cross Johanna St, as well as flood the first jetty upstream from the sports oval, submerge Harvey Beach, and cover the path between the two inlets which have joined into one horseshoe inlet. After rains the river rushes out fast and brown. I have now seen wood ducks (seen also at the Wetlands Centre in London) and an egret in front of the Moorings apartments. I saw on July 22, 2022, what I believe was a peregrine falcon attacked in a cypress pine near the river cliffs by magpies – it shed many small white feathers which continued to fall like snow even after it had settled, more protected, in another tree. With the cold weather and high water at the lake, the number and variety of birds has again decreased, with the swamphen and reed warbler on the water line itself, together with a couple of Pacific black ducks and pink-eared ducks, with only really the Eurasian coot (seen also in Europe, though slightly larger), the blue-billed duck, the musk duck and the swan able to dive or submerge far enough underwater to reach the depths below – one coot I observed jumping clear into the air before diving down. On August 5, 2022, I observed, for the first time at the lake, a possum: he was in the big eucalypt to the south of the viewing area with the statue, and was being harassed by a crow who was pulling back dry bark in order to peck at it – occasionally the crow would emerge with fur on the end of its beak; the possum was making a noise similar to the constant screech of the lorikeets; I decided to ‘intervene’ by shooing the crow and informing the ‘friends of’ group who were able to stay until wildlife rescue arrived; the next day the possum was no longer there and had presumably been moved to a more sheltered spot in eucalypts nearby. However, a week later, the possum was back in the same tree; after I shooed the crow harassing it at the time, the possum relocated to the eucalypts closer to the golf course to the east. The day after first seeing the possum I also saw, for the first time, a Pacific black duck shooing a white ibis. At the beginning of September, 2022, I saw, for the first time, a purple swamphen swim very slowly across the width of the southern end of the lake. On September 7, 2022, I saw a red wattlebird removing something from beneath the layers of the paperbark near the eastern viewing area, and flying off to what seemed to be a nest in the nearby eucalyptus tree. That same day I saw a crow land by the

water's edge with what seemed to be half a dozen small objects that resembled dried cat food – he dropped them in the water, and they floated; he took up a couple in his mouth before being shooed away by a coot. The crow seemed to take them to an apparent nest at the top of the eucalyptus tree nearby; the coot tried one or two of the biscuits but left a couple behind. Earlier, the same coot was eating a dead frog floating on the water's surface. On September 14, two shelducks appeared near the jetty with four brown and white chicks who were continually duck diving below the surface – the male positioned himself between a crow and the chicks; the next day they were walking under the fence and onto the southern part of the golf course, but now with only three chicks, and with the male chasing away other ducks. On December 14, 2022 I also saw a female musk duck sit on what appeared to be a deserted purple swamp hen or coot nest near the eastern viewing area. Also on the 14th I saw a musk duck in the south west corner kicking its back feet to the sides and splashing water in a spray behind it, while letting out a high pitch 'poing' call. The following day I also saw a coot shooing wood ducks, with the lake at the highest level I have ever seen it after several more cold fronts – 1.985 metres. In December, 2022 with water levels still around 1.6 metres, I have seen many chicks – including coots, blue-bills, Pacific black ducks – beyond the usual birthing season. On December 20, 2022 a darter circles high above the lake, while an egret flies east towards the viewing area on the eastern shore before being swooped by what seems to be a hobby, which then swoops corellas which scatter from figs on southern shore; two ospreys then appear on the Western edge of the lake, circling, looking down, never putting a shadow on the water, flying all the way to the trees on the northern end of the lake – no water birds scatter; a young swan is seen with a beak not yet as red as that of an adult, with wings not yet as black. On December 24, an osprey scatters corellas, with a hobby flying around later. On January 5, while further south on the Warren River near Pemberton, I wonder if most rivers in Australia are more like lakes – and that Southwest Australia is comprised of many wetland lakes. On January 9, 2023 I find the lowest tide have seen at North Fremantle, occurring about a day or so after full moon, and about two hours after the low tide of less than 0.2m – I am able to walk in toe-deep water about 10-15 metres from the high tide in the river near Pier 21 hotel in the direction of downriver. On January 10, the swamp hen scatters yet near the eastern edge of the lake, while the coot scatters the swamphen on the south end. On January 12 I fly to Sydney and see the linked up phenomena of salt lakes in the Wheatbelt – lakes of salt. On January 27, I see a corella almost land on a Pacific black duck at the lake, before two coots slap the water with their feet in standoff, and two swans shoo two other swans that fly into their area at the south of the lake; the lake is full of many birds now, as the water levels drop and the birds can access the bottom of the lake as well as dry ground at its edges, where green grass, (complete with small floating [seed?] pods with fibrous clumps within), is starting to appear from beneath the water, turned into nests by Australiasian grebes. I read Suchantke and wonder if lakes are akin to the quality of 'rift valleys'. On Monday January 30, 2023 I see around five small schools of blowfish swimming south along Leighton Beach (with whitebait on the land side of them), not far above a trench that runs beneath

the wave zone of the beach, lined with shells and shell fragments, giving a somewhat cloudy aspect to the water. In February, 2023 I see an increase of sunsets which reveal a clear magenta area on the Western horizon where light meets dark later in the sunset process. On Wednesday February 1, I see a school of large mullet in the river near Pier 21 chasing whitebait, as well as a black cormorant corralling and picking off a school of whitebait near the limestone wall near the walkway by Pier 21. On February 8, at the jetty on the south end of the lake, the swan shoos the Pacific black duck and a wood duck, while a bandicoot scurries along the waterline, causing a launch into jump into the water. On February 14, 2023, I see what appears to be an albino Pacific black duck on the south east corner of Lake Claremont – it is mostly a creamy white colour, with some browner areas on the end of its wings and tail feathers; on the western edge of the lake there is a sign saying that glyphosate is being applied; and the night before I receive an email that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) has found Polyphagous Shothole Borers in some of the trees at Lake Claremont (where they apparently bore into the tree and grow and harvest fungus within) – and because there is no poison that will kill them, the solution is to cut all their host trees down – many Moreton Bay Figs were cut down in the north west corner of the lake in early March 2023. On May 1 and then again on May 23, 2023 I saw again, for the first time in a long time, the seagull with the broken wing at Leighton beach. On May 4, 2023 three pied butcherbirds were spotted in the plan trees at the eastern entrance to the lake's parkland; later that morning, a pink eared duck moved from a protruding log for a landing corella keen for a drink. On May 28, my wife and I see, a seal (presumably a sea lion) heading downstream in the river near the sports oval – the first seal we have seen in the river. On June 18, 2023 a long neck turtle around 10cm long crosses from the western playing fields back into the lake, a small raptor harasses welcome swallows which fly up like clouds in the northern part of the lake, and a magpie chases at the tail feathers of red-tailed black cockatoos by the golf course in front of the cafes (similar magpie and black cockatoo relations were seen on May 4, 2023). On June 30, 2023, a crow with twig in his beak shooed a flock of corellas from the eucalypt tree by the eastern edge of the lake…

Again, these observations could continue indefinitely.

Addendum: An Introduction at the End

The current climate crisis (and every other crisis) is an expression of our greatest challenge *and* opportunity: to own the way that human beings are shaping and creating the future of the Earth and everything on it, including ourselves. This includes not only environmental practices but also economic, rights-political and cultural – the continuation or transformation of which rests squarely upon the spiritual capacities of the human being.

This work outlines part of a pathway and some fruits of a Western method of inquiry into our relationship with the natural world, and also, in small part, offers seeds for a wider consideration of our relationship with the social world. In both cases, a pathway of extended inquiry seeks to search for archetypal or primary, objective imaginations within the phenomena under observation. This book is thereby an attempt at an extended Western path of inquiry into the relationship of the human being with all that surrounds us.

Through such an inquiry, based on specific natural locations and phenomena – in this case the shorelines of an ocean, a river and a lake in Southwest Australia – my hope is that it will become clear to just what extent the world around us can be seen as the human being spread out, and the human being can be seen as the world condensed.

Fundamentally, this work is one fruit of the greater attempt of investigating the connections between the spiritual nature of the human being, and the spiritual nature of the world around us. In order to make such an inquiry, however, the spiritual nature of the observer must be tended and become increasingly active. While the fruits of such a process are for everyone, in order to make such an investigation oneself the observer can no longer attempt to stand seemingly objectively outside phenomena, but must increasingly own their relationship to it.

The spiritual capacity known as imagination must therefore become not only increasingly active in such a process, but also increasingly objective. This belongs to a lifelong path of development.

In what is contained above, therefore, we have imaginations and concepts of the natural world taken from various perspectives. Looked at from other perspectives the phenomena under observation will reveal different, even potentially contradictory, imaginations and concepts – but this points to nothing other than the inner flexibility required to observe the wholeness of reality from many different sides, and to perceive the various archetypes as they appear in a multitude of forms. The fullness of reality is not grasped from one perspective alone, and all we can do is characterise from as many different directions as possible.

This line of inquiry belongs to a Western path of knowledge that has been expressed in the work of various individuals at different times, perhaps most noticeably in the work of the German poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, as well as those who have grasped the fullness of his methodology more than others, none more so than the individual tasked with editing and introducing all of Goethe's scientific works, Rudolf Steiner. This line of inquiry also connects to earlier individuals and ways of working but does not attempt to replicate their

methods. Based as it is on a phenomenological methodology, it finds its most obvious initial form, therefore, in Goethe, and then its development in those who followed after him. Therefore, any wisdom in terms of methodology or process belongs most fully to these individuals, and the line of thinking that they belong to and express. Any shortcomings in understanding and application of method, or conclusions deduced therefrom, are my own.

Addendum: Why ‘Poetics'?

Poiesis means, literally, to make, to create. Shorelines are constantly being made and remade by the various forces active within them. Likewise, when encountering them in the ways outlined in this book, the human being is also constantly remaking these same shorelines in consciousness, through the navigation of that central, shifting, 'shoreline' that exists between the human being and the world.

Addendum: Acknowledgement

All phenomena and investigations thereof take place *in place*. I was born in and live on Whadjuk Noongar country in Southwest Australia. Needless to say this is a place that has retained imaginations of nature and social life in which the spiritual aspect of the human being is not separated from the spiritual aspect of the world; the human being has a place in a natural and social world shaped and inhabited by creative spiritual beings. This place is full of objective spiritual imaginations.

However, I am not an Aboriginal person, and these are not my imaginations to share. So while anything I might offer here may seem (necessarily) incomplete when compared to the world-tableau of Australian Aboriginal wisdom – the oldest continuous civilisation on the planet – these observations are at least the fruit of my own inquiry, and therefore the sharing of them belongs to a more appropriate (rather than appropriated) process in which I attempt to offer a contribution from an extended Western path of inquiry and knowledge.

While I have had the good fortune to be exposed to a small part of the vast wisdom of Australian Aboriginal culture, I will attempt as much as possible not to rely on these imaginations for verification of my own inquiry, or to reflect on any similarities or otherwise that may exist. I will, again, attempt as much as possible a Western line of inquiry with findings emerging from that perspective. Readers are directed to the work of Aboriginal Australians if they would like to familiarise themselves with what Aboriginal culture wishes to make public.

I, of course, pay my respects to the traditional custodians of this place, and acknowledge all Elders, past and present, and all leaders genuinely working together to better care for the world and everything in it.

In line with the above I will therefore only use Aboriginal names for phenomena if these are also used as the common English name or as common place names (or in dual naming). For comprehensive Noongar language relating to the phenomena mentioned above, I direct the reader to the many books and other resources available, especially those written or published by Noongar people themselves.

Addendum: Nature – The Process

I have been fortunate to live close to various shorelines my whole life. After being born near Kings Park in Subiaco, I lived my first year close to the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River not far from Matilda Bay. The next 15 years I grew up on the edge of Jane Brook near Mundaring. From then I have lived mostly by the Indian Ocean near Cottesloe and, in more recent years, close to Lake Claremont, and also the lower areas of the Swan River in North Fremantle.

These have been the atmospheres in which I have grown up. But only in recent years do I feel I have even slightly begun to consciously observe the place(s) in which I live/have lived. This, therefore, brings to the surface the issue of what observation actually involves.

I have been forced to ask myself, 'Why has it taken me so long to even begin to attempt to really see the natural world in which I live?' If I am honest, and I look back upon my experiences in nature, I am forced to admit that during childhood I felt somewhat *involved* in the annual rising and falling of the water levels in Jane Brook, for instance, or in the dew, the cold mornings, the annual movement of the sun, the activity of the marron in the brook, the stars above – but that this gradually shifted into an experience of the natural world as being *out there*, beyond myself. As a child, I did not reflect on why this or that happened in nature, only that it did, and somehow I felt caught up in it. When, as I got older, and as I felt less a part of nature, I did not take that as an opportunity to try to understand nature and my place in it from another perspective; I did not, initially at least, go the path of the scientist studying nature from outside of it (including within the laboratory), or even the path of the keen and astute – even methodical – observer. Rather, nature began to slip into a kind of background – a background to 'actual' life – a stage upon which the 'real' events of life played themselves out.

It has only been in recent years that I have begun to find my way back to nature in a participatory and methodical way that seeks to start from the place I now find myself in – that is, outside of nature – and to then build a bridge back to its living activity once more, albeit in a much more conscious way than in childhood.

What was it that prompted me to do this? I think it truly began for me during a time in my life when I began to question the premises upon which our world has been built, and began in earnest to seek for a more complete picture of life and of reality as a whole. These questions eventually led to a path that sought not to dismiss the materialistic science of our time, but attempted, based on the powers of observation and organs of perception available to all of us, to go *through* materialism and add to it an experience of the creative, formative processes in the world.

On the one hand this path sought/seeks to perceive through direct experience the creative, formative forces in the world around us – be it in natural life or in social life – and on the other hand seeks these same processes in the human being. In such a way, the creative inner processes of the human being strive to become the organ of perception for the creative processes at work in the world around us; and likewise, a perception of the creative processes at work in the world around us can reflect back something of our own essential nature.

Of course, much is to be overcome in such a process. One needs to ‘clean up’ not only one’s capacity to observe with the senses, but also one’s capacity to observe with one’s own thinking (as well as one’s own feeling and willing). This process is like a cleaning of the lenses which, I find, for myself at least, must take place anew every day.

So the initial impetus to understand nature (and social life) seems to have been a dissatisfaction with the world, or at least my experience of it. This experience, no doubt, also led to moments of turning away from the world, but I found that turning away usually achieved nothing more than illusory processes that did not connect with the reality I or others experienced on a day-to-day level. While this turning away remains ever a temptation, I now feel I know its siren song well enough to recognise it for what it is (to some degree at least) whenever I hear it.

This general dissatisfaction, when not met with turning away from reality, gradually grew into an increased interest in the world around me. The creative writing work of Horst and Jennifer Kornberger, for instance, opened up for me a phenomenological and artistic path of inquiry into the world that resisted a turning away from it, and instead offered a deeper immersion into it. The world began again, for me, to be filled with creativity, with living thoughts, and with imagination. Later, the cultural-scientific storytelling and observation work of Noel Nannup further revealed the imaginative forces at work in this place on a vast/large scale. If I was to now make note of one initial thing that both Horst’s and Noel’s approaches invited me to do, I would say it would be to have a certain *reverence*. Beyond just interest, reverence carries with it a kind of mood of gentle humility and heartfelt inquiry – and of care. It does not just happen by itself – it is something that one must actively choose to do from out of oneself. It carries the interest in nature beyond the realm of mere judgement or utility, and takes it into a path of gentle co-inquiry (or co-creativity) with and alongside the creative forces in the world.

So in more recent times – sometimes it feels like only months, weeks, days, hours...and such is the nature of this work as I experience it; nothing in the world, especially living knowledge or knowledge of life, is ever ‘set in stone,’ but must again and again be approached anew in creative dialogue based on the powers of observation – this has become the path that I have attempted to walk, approaching nature again and again with a deliberate reverence and openness to that which it might reveal. This requires, from me, not only sensory observation which is willfully called to action, but also attentive inner thinking activity and receptivity.

Put another way, the same inner effort required to keep one’s eyes and ears and other senses open is also required to keep open one’s mind, and even one’s heart, and also one’s will. That is, the will to pay attention on all these levels can become the substance through which the world can announce itself imaginatively, conceptually, creatively. The world thereby can become perceptibly creative, conceptually lawful and imaginative *in me* through the interested, reverent and will-filled attention I am able to give to it; I am able (potentially at least, as we all are) to perceive, in these moments, the creative forces at work in the world by perceiving

them in me – in the space I make for them within my own consciousness and awareness.

This attempt, at least, signifies not a turning away from the world, but a turning toward, a turning with (and yes, in some ways, a turning into), and is able to move beyond the observer-from-outside consciousness that is the general norm for many of us today. It thereby also signifies a pathway, for those of us acting from a modern Western consciousness, to begin to experience what other cultures, including Indigenous cultures, are prepared to share of their own knowledge of the world, and, more broadly, to understand each other and our perceptions, and to work and walk together as human beings for the betterment of the Earth.

Addendum: Nature – General

What I hoped to begin to explore in the above observations is the relationship of the human being to the natural world, and vice versa, by focusing on three particular shorelines.

In this work, we have walked together the path of observation and discovery as I made it, including within the process of writing it, which is itself another process of observation and discovery.

After travelling to many corners of the world, it finally dawned on me that observing the place in which I live – in ways that also attempt to remain appropriate to the culture of this place – can be just as fruitful, if not more fruitful, than making observations in some other theoretically 'ideal' place. The living activity of nature reveals itself everywhere constantly and in all phenomena. And I am somewhat embarrassed that I have lived for most of my life, I feel, completely asleep to the workings of the world, even on a relatively superficial level.

Upon closing my eyes, what could I honestly say that I actually correctly recall of any landscape – natural or otherwise? Where has my observing – my senses and my thinking – where has my *attention* – actually been in these moments? What 'other things' have I instead been busy with? I find that I am as little able to recall these other things as I am the intricacies of the environment I have lived in. To say that I have been busy with other thoughts about life or work only displaces the problem, for when I am 'at work' or in the midst of 'life' I, on attempting to also recall these moments, find that I am just as little able to repaint a picture of that moment either, which suggests again that my observing attention was not fully there, or at least was there occasionally in the words and thoughts that others were expressing – that is, in the social environment – but less so in the physical environment and all that stands behind it. I now am forced to wonder how much my following along with the thoughts of others (and my own) could actually have been complemented by observations of the spatial context such thinking took place in (as well as reflections on my attentional process itself), from which any amount of extra data might have led to being better able to achieve the necessary outcomes of work or of life more broadly.

In this sense all places, especially nature places, and especially the places I visit again and again, have also been my real teachers. In recent times I have been fortunate to come again and again to the ocean at Leighton Beach, as well as to the north side of the Derbarl Yerrigan / Swan River in North Fremantle from the old traffic bridge to the limestone cliffs north of the water police, and also to Galbamaanup / Lake Claremont, especially the viewing area on the eastern edge.

Somehow a contemporary path first articulated in Germany and developed further there and in Switzerland has made its way to the land of the Whadjuk Noongar people, which is, essentially, as strange a situation as that of me and other non-Aboriginal people being on this land.

The above is an attempt to show in what way I have come to certain experiences regarding the relationship of the human being to nature.

(And in just what way such a process might become helpful for an understanding of social life will hopefully also emerge as initial seeds from this current exploration.)

Addendum: Nature – The Approach

I once met a nature photographer and his wife at a station outside of Exmouth (about halfway up the Western Australian coastline). He mostly photographed birds. He said that he would wait for days – weeks – to get the right picture. (In many cases he has been waiting months and even years for pictures of certain birds.) I asked how he approached his work. He replied that he and his wife had a twenty-minute rule. "What's that?" I asked. He said that he and his wife – also a photographer – would, on arriving at a spot in nature, sit and wait for at least twenty minutes before making any assessment of the situation. They said that in those twenty minutes it was like nature and its components became used to your being there. Likewise, they said you and your senses became used to being in that particular location. That is, in being consciously open for a relatively longer amount of time, more of life can expose or express itself, and more of your senses and attention can become attuned to the environment which becomes increasingly revealed.

I have not deliberately or consciously made a rule out of their approach. But, on looking back at the observations that I have made, I recognise that it is only after a certain period of time that what I am observing begins to 'make more sense,' or to be perceived as part of a larger pattern of sorts. This has to do with individual visits to places, but also to the regularity and rhythm with which I am able to return to these same places.

The lake is the one place I tend to remain most still, often for an hour or more, but I also walk the edge of the lake as a whole; on many occasions there are other people there with me (usually Katie, Shenali, Zoe or Pete). On the beach I am almost always walking and moving on my own; at the river I am often walking with Katie. At both these latter shorelines I tend to spend about 30 minutes observing, and try to keep my observations and thinking as open as possible.

The beach I have visited almost daily, the river about the same, and the lake at least weekly. And I have done this consciously as part of this process for several full cycles of seasons, but this adds on to many years of previous experiences outside of this more deliberate process.

Time, it seems, together with rhythm and (non-mechanical) repetition, plays a very intimate role alongside the kind of observing and thinking required in order to experience the kind of creative forces in the world we are here attempting to explore (creative forces which, in many ways, it would seem, come to expression in space through time).

While I am not searching for the perfect picture of a physical object (as a photographer might), I am trying to let a lawful image or concept reveal itself to my open awareness, attention and imagination. This may actually, I hypothesise, also belong to the experience of the keen bird photographer; an image (or concept) is not 'taken,' an image is 'received.'

How to continually reduce the amount of time required in order to have this kind of observation or experience with nature (or social life) belongs, perhaps, to further work for me.

Needless to say, we are attempting here to stay as much with the phenomena under inquiry as we possibly can in the context in which it exists. In this case we will use the ‘technology’ closest to hand – our senses, our thinking, and our immediate experience, and treat this as our ‘experimental’ ground. This will be our laboratory (and artistic studio) – the one we are surrounded by and immersed in every day. This is not to say that further experiments and laboratory investigations cannot be made, especially by subject experts – they most certainly should. In many ways, this particular work is also an invitation to the generally human part of each of us to dive more deeply into the world in which we live. It is an invitation to do this whether we are professional scientists or artists or otherwise. On the one hand we can add to Joseph Beuys’ maxim that ‘every human being is an artist,’[45] with the similar ‘every human being is a scientist.’ On the other hand, especially in our time, subject expertise allows for the understanding of details not usually available to immediate sense perception. So while we invite this increased attention to sense perception free from preconceived abstractions for everybody and everyone, we also invite it for the professional specialist scientist whose work requires them to dive down into microscopic and atomic phenomena, and who wish to again come up from this (or perhaps pass through this) to an increased relation to and relationship with the context – the rest of the world – that phenomena exist within. Likewise, the invitation to the professional artist, of whatever medium, is to increasingly draw more inspiration from the lawfulness of the phenomena under observations, and not only from out of ‘one’s own self.’

In this work we have omitted Latin names for phenomena and instead use their common English names and occasionally their Noongar names, as per the note on Noongar naming above. Using the common names in this way retains something of the invitation towards a common knowledge and understanding achievable by all individuals regardless of subject expertise. Subject experts will, no doubt, know what is meant when the common names are used, at least to a general or 'common' level, which aligns more to the level available to most human beings. An exception to this will be when we wish to speak more generally, e.g. genus etc., instead of species.

[45] Joseph Beuys, *Energy Plan for the Western Man*, Four Walls Eight Windows, USA,1991.

Addendum: Nature – A Final Word on Process

What may be clear from the above is that there is a kind of overall or archetypal process or gesture when it comes to this kind of approach. We may, broadly speaking, call the initial phase one of open-ness and attentiveness to phenomena (both external and internal); this is followed by a phase of reflection and contemplation in which new thoughts or imaginations may reveal themselves; this is then followed by a phase of seeing (and potentially acting) anew. Such a process can be likened to a kind of slowed-down and intentional 'breathing process' – but one which takes place in the realm of observation and thinking – in attention and awareness. One consciously attempts to 'inhale' from the world of phenomena; one then consciously pauses in the spaces 'between breaths,' allowing for new insights to emerge within this space, including a potential reorientation in one's relationship to phenomena; and finally an 'exhale' occurs as part of any new insights and relationships – any new ways of being and doing that may unfold, including any creative activities, or ways of interacting with phenomena that may now be different because of this overall breathing process. In my case, this 'acting' included note-taking in a journal, and in the writing up of these observations into this book; but it also had to do with my ongoing relationship with the world, how I interacted with it – this extended to my relationship with other human beings and the work we are engaged in together.

Upon reflection, this whole overall process also occurred, in part, within the observation phase – while I was observing; it also occurred in moments of reflection away from sense-perceptible phenomena when I would attempt in my thinking to recreate as mental images what I had seen, and also to link such images chronologically (forwards and backwards) with different seasons, as well as other phenomena at the other shorelines, then letting these mental images go to see if any new imaginations might announce themselves; and it also occurred during the writing process itself when I would have new insights and new observations in the act of describing phenomena and images – more images or thoughts would come; this might also happen when I was describing to someone what I had seen or how I had understood things, or what I was currently writing about – further images would appear as part of our dialogue. From these reflections it can be seen that a kind of 'mini breathing cycle' can therefore take place within the inhalation phase, within the phase of pause between breaths, and within the exhalation phase.

This is, at least, a very brief attempt at an articulation of the experience of the process slowed down. In such experiences it can, of course, be difficult to observe and discern different activity or phases – the further strengthening of such a capacity belongs also to the overall task of this work.

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About the Author

John Stubley lives on Whadjuk Noongar Country in North Fremantle, Western Australia. He is a poet, writer, author, essayist, journalist and narrative designer.