



Mood making

Description

Iâ??m reviewing my post of 22 March 2014 [Moody atmospheres and electric auras](#) (#188). I stand by the account of mood that started with that post and later developed into a book length treatment ([Mood and Mobility: Navigating the Emotional Spaces of Digital Social Networks](#). MIT Press, 2016.). One point requires emphasis. **The creation of mood is a labour**. Itâ??s not that itâ??s hard work, or caught up in worker exploitation or class division (labour versus capital).

Mood is an active thing. You make moods. The quote from Zumthor suggests as much â??if you work a long time with these materials, a set of materials, all of a sudden you get it.â?• Working with materials is an entry point for mood. Admittedly, itâ??s the job of an architect to be interested in making things, but making is something we all do as a major component of the experience of place.

Poiesis is the key term in ancient Greek for *making* or *production* â?? as revived by Martin Heidegger. From *poiesis* we get the word *poetry*. I recall that I discussed that in the context of nature in a later post â?? [Poiesis](#).

Passive versus active mood

We can thank the Romantics for the passive view of mood, that it overtakes you as you contemplate, look out to a view, or waft â??as a cloud that floats on high oâ??er vale and hillsâ?• as Wordsworth put it.

I was reminded of the diminished labour content of the contemplative orientation in an episode of *That Other Bennet Sister*, an â??updateâ?• by contemporary author Janice Hadlow on Jane Austinsâ??s *Pride and Prejudice*. On an outling to the English Lake District, the party stands in awe looking down from the top of Scafell Pike. Itâ??s a setting for a drama, with the group scarcely contributing any labour (making) to the mood of the place in terms of rock, earth, weather, vegetation and wildlife.

Thatâ??s fiction, deployed to good effect. But itâ??s worth considering other media offerings that cross the BBC lifestyle and nature genres. In other programs people are doing stuff â?? gardening, tending, constructing, making, cooking. You could say that watching television is irredeemably passive, but it

signals action, and those of us with the time and resource can follow suit.

As further evidence of the centrality of *making* I can think of acquaintances whose enjoyment of their much-loved homely setting diminishes once they have ceased their physical investment in the place. Either it's too much of a burden, or they feel the job is complete. Sometimes people sell up (or end their lease) when they have run out of things to make or enhance on their flat, house or garden. We lose interest when we are left only to contemplate.

Restoration

I am currently maintaining a mood. It's a corner of our garden where the boundary burn (creek) turns a corner. It has those bottom-of-the-garden qualities. What lies beyond? I uncovered a fence and gate behind a cache of obsolete gardening paraphernalia tangled in ivy and honeysuckle.

At one stage I erected a small cairn out of respect for the water spirits (kelpies). To no avail. The bank of the burn is eroding and some nearby paving has collapsed. So, I am learning about gabion (rock cage) retaining walls. Here is a photograph of what my labours have accomplished so far.



I've consulted ChatGPT on materials and methods. On request, it even completed the job for me, virtually. Of course, there are websites explaining methods of construction, but as I show in the attached [PDF transcript](#), the AI is able to respond specifically to my prompts and photographs of the project as it developed.



Thatâ??s another way of looking at AI, not as a labour substitute, but as a mentor to my on-site apprenticeship. Iâ??m pleased to say that no robot was deployed in this restoration project!

Category

1. Artificial Intelligence
2. Nature
3. Podcast

Tags

1. garden
2. poiesis

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