

Agenda: Class No. 8

Doing Imaginative intentional work

Week 4: Vivid Presence

- So what needs doing? Into-→ So what do you intend to do?
 - You continue building your project narrative...
 - Trying to turn your narrative evaluation of the situation into a beginning – but explicit - intentional program...
 - (Note the mental shift of your attention from evaluation to more directed action)
 - A program for your work that is both qualitative and quantitative...
 - Still scoping, saying what you are going to do and what you aren't...
 - And clarifying your point-of-view, along with...
 - Considering project priorities, emphasis, and what is Sine Qua Non.
- **Some theory about where this all fits: A Standard Model of Designing?**
- Some examples of Vivid Presence...

{ Designing }



"Standard Model" by Richard Thompson, NY Times, 7-4-06

A Standard Model of Designing?

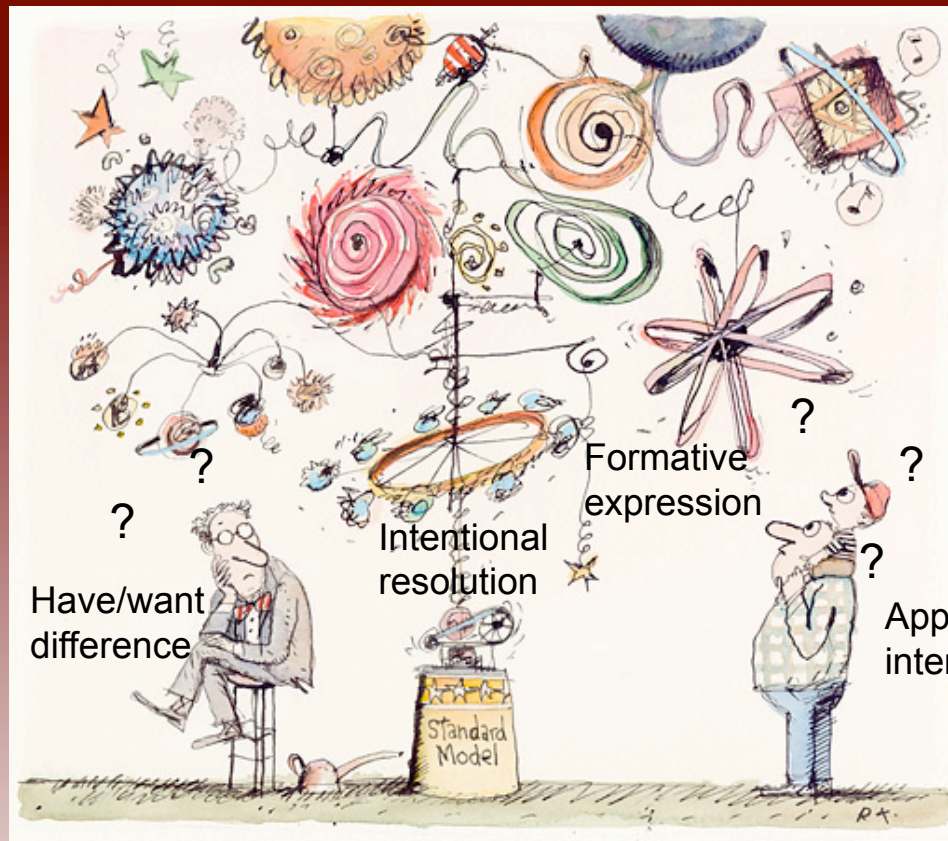
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"Standard Model" by Richard Thompson, NY Times, 7-4-06

A Standard Model of Designing?

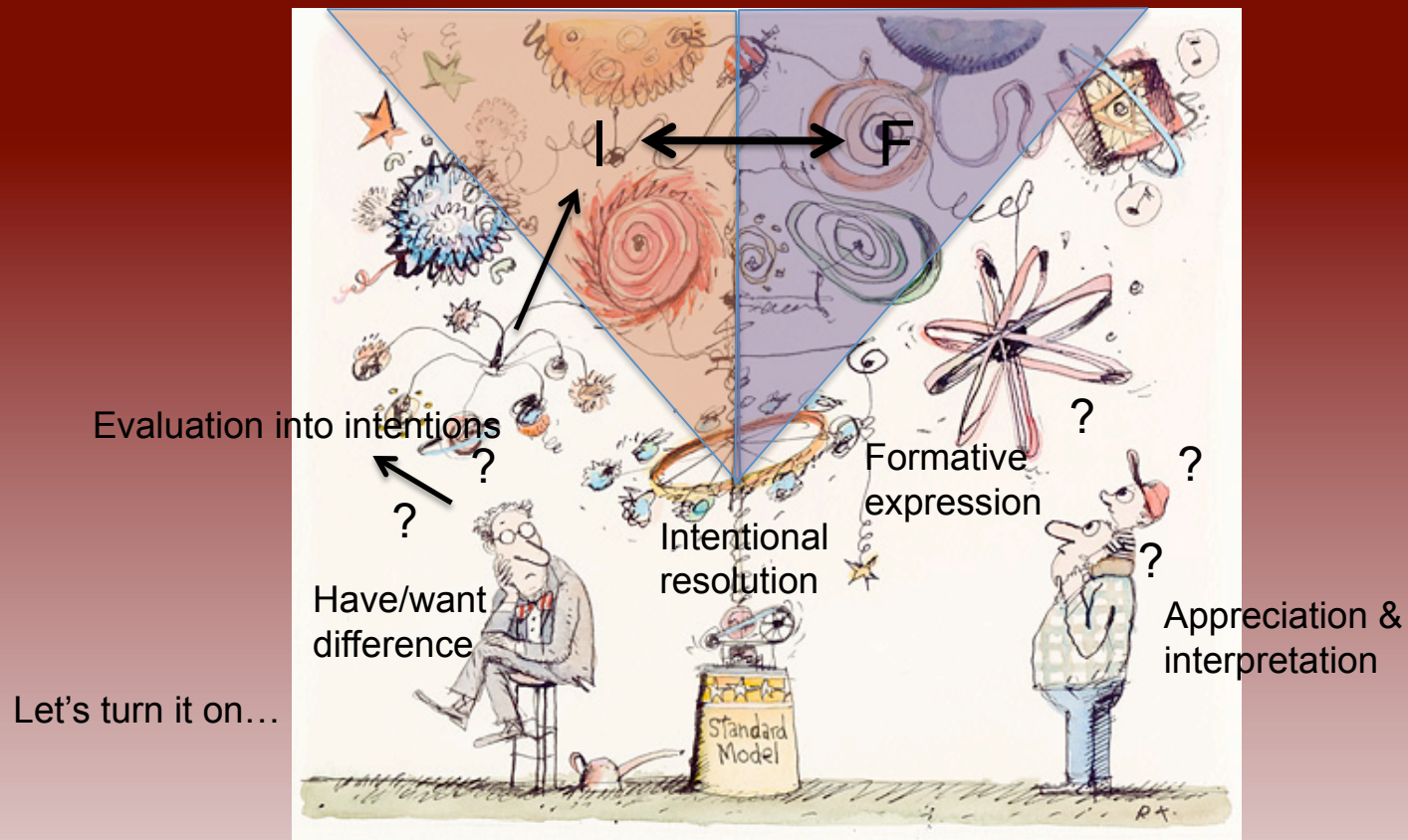
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It might look like this:

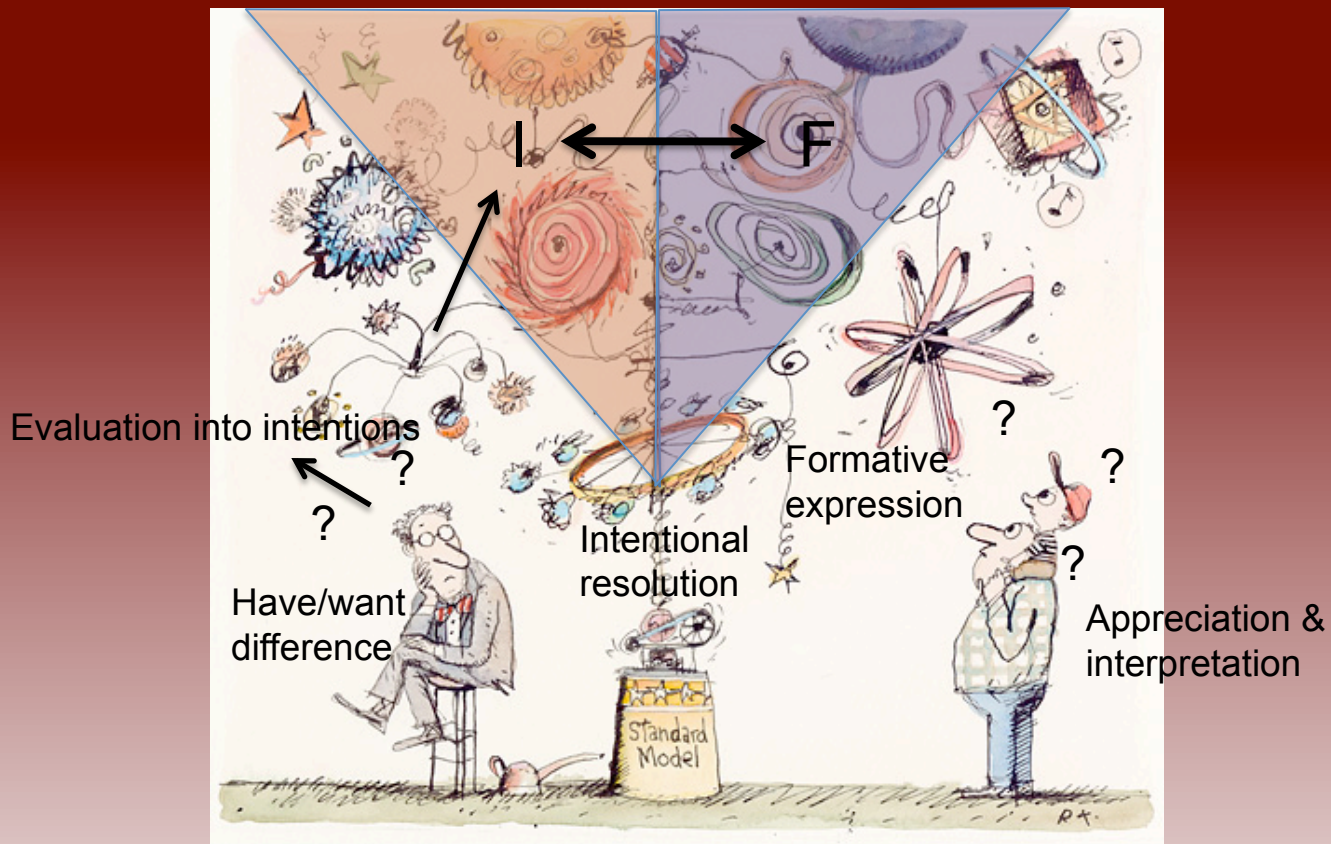
If there were a Standard Model of designing...

{ Designing }



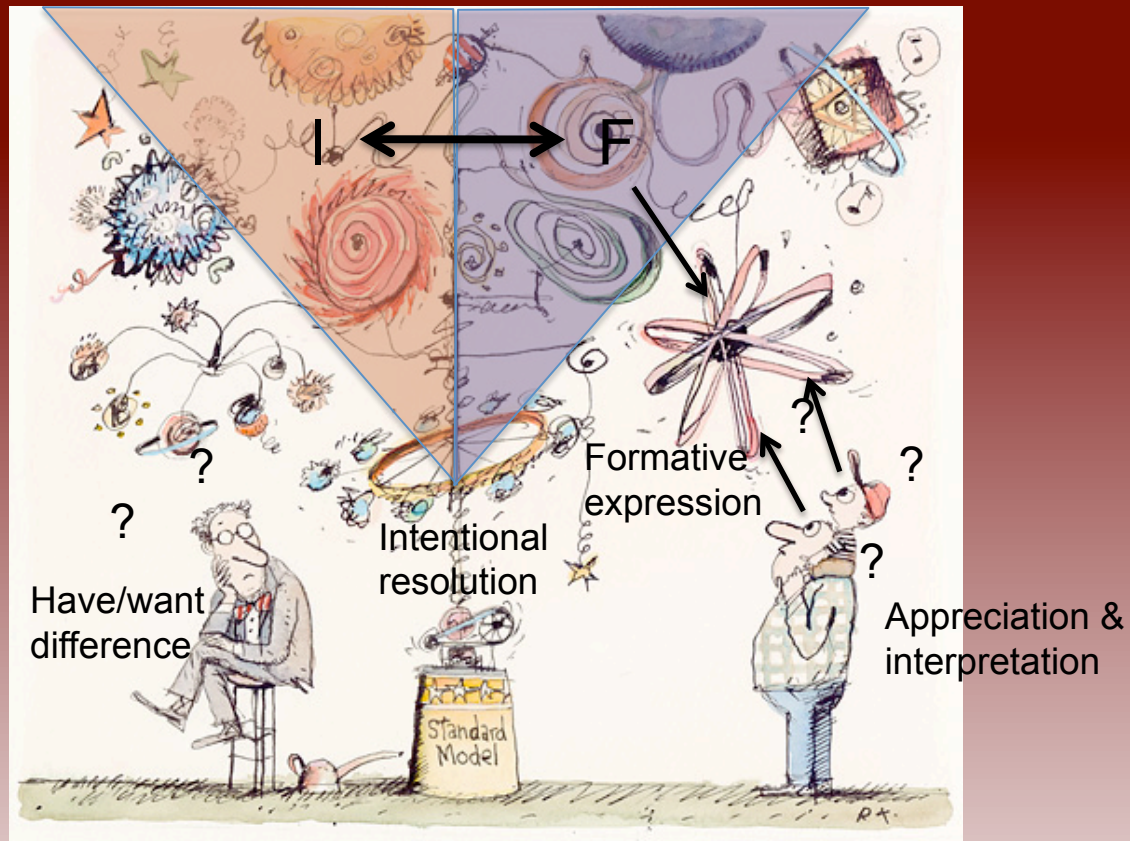
We'd evaluate situations to determine what needs doing...

{ Designing }



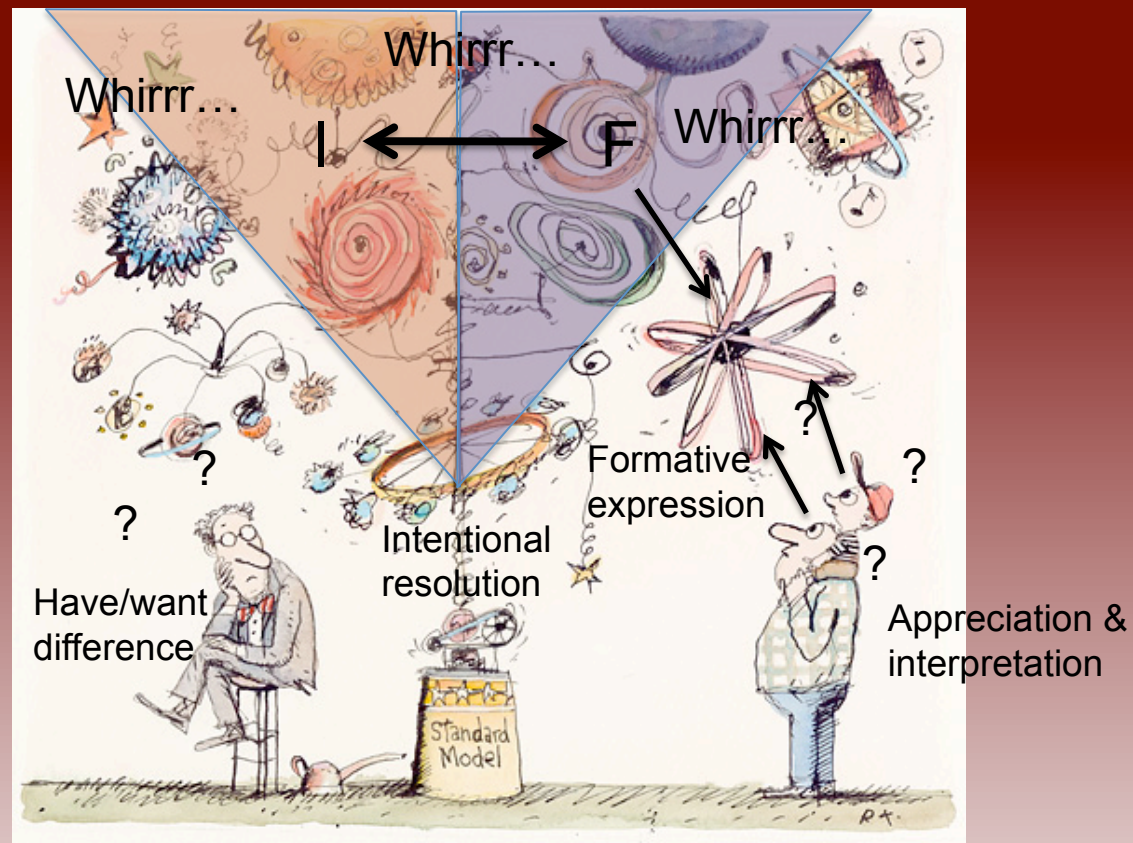
We'd throw our intentions into the hopper of designing...

{ Designing }



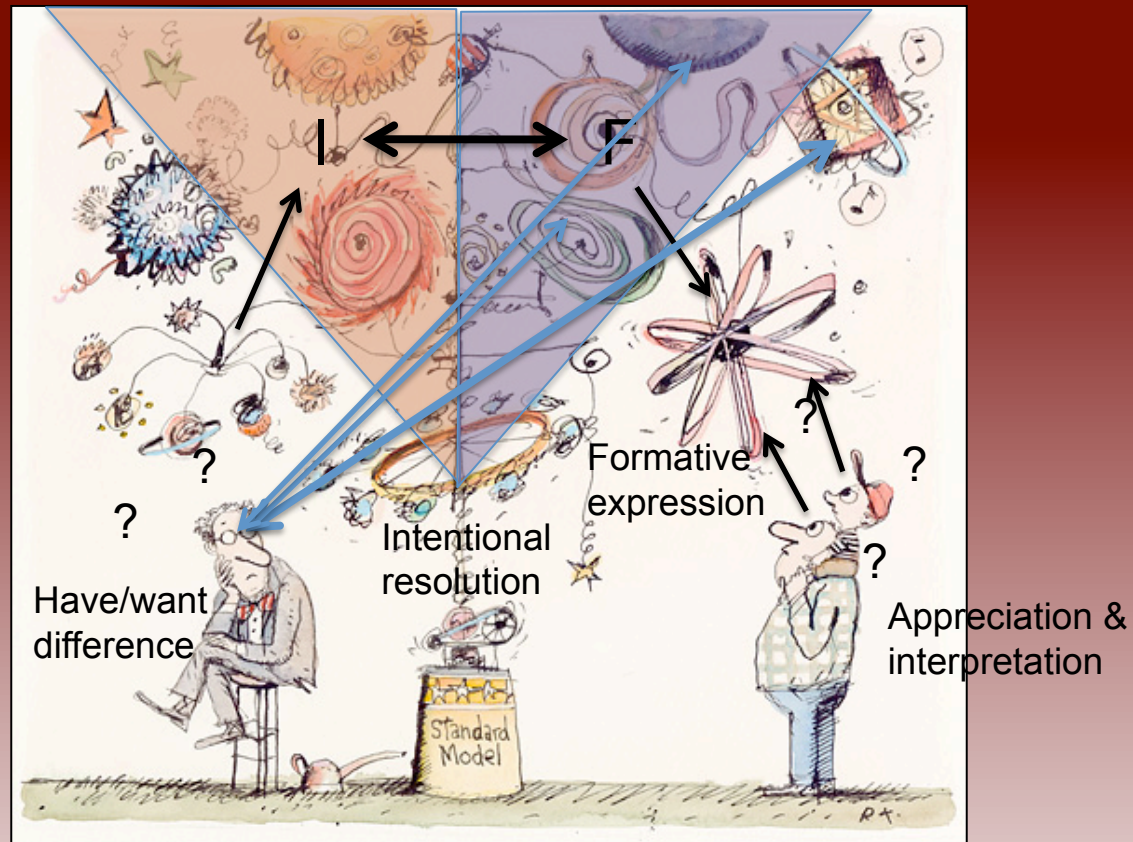
Where it would do a lot of: Intending toward... → ←...forming out of...

{ Designing }



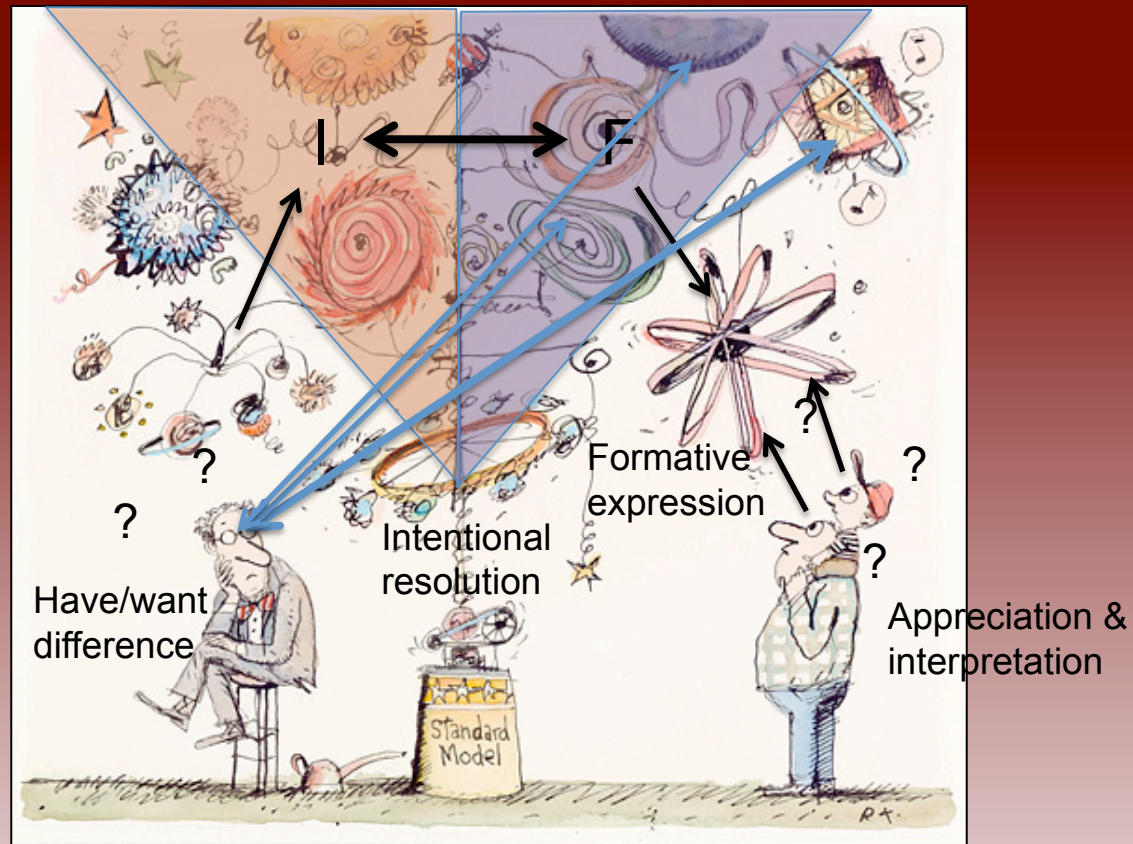
Where it would do a lot of: Intending toward... → ←...forming out of...

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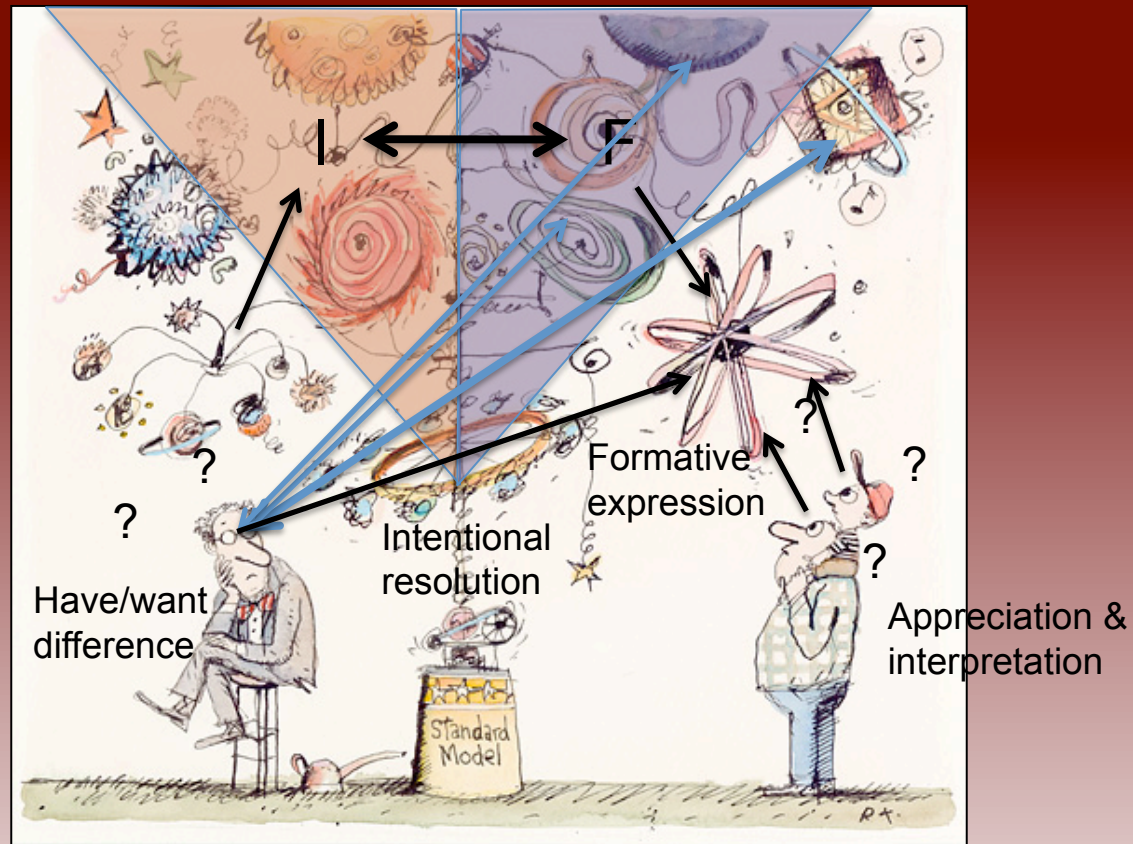
But of course, imagining what we want also feeds back into intentions...

{ Designing }



And the final products are altered by a growth in understanding...

{ Designing }



Appreciation and interpretation of which is also conditioned...



Alice in Wonderland (Carroll 1933). When Alice met the Cheshire-Cat in Lewis Carroll's story of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, she asked the Cheshire-Cat:

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

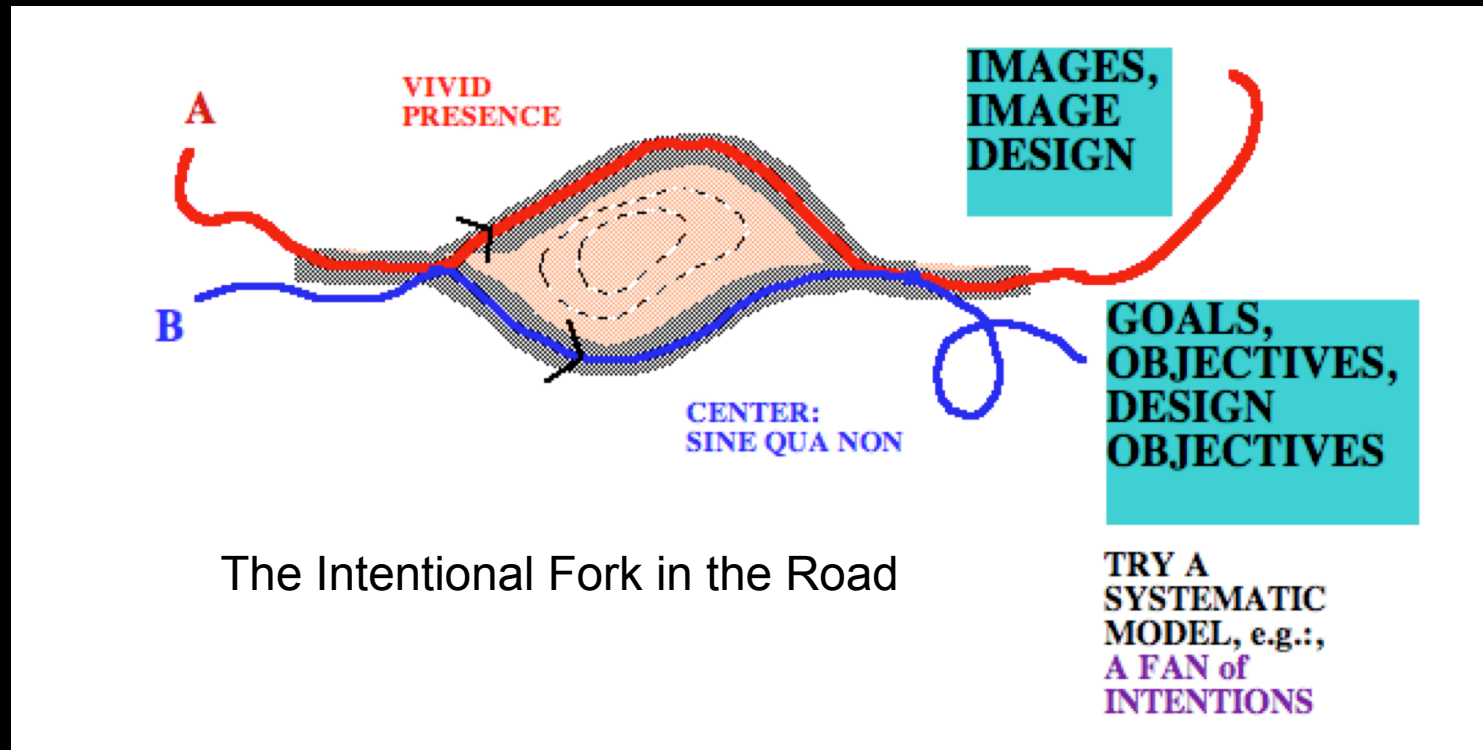
"I don't much care where—" said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.

"—so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough" (p. 75-76).

So, here are some **vivid** examples from people who took path A:



“When you come to the fork in the road, take it.” – Yogi Berra

- Assignment No. 3, **Vivid Presence**, Class R&D on Tuesday, Oct. 28

May 15, 2012

Alley-Park

Dear Catherine,

I was down in Eugene this week and was able to visit the alley reclamation project I did so many years ago. I couldn't believe how many people were there! It seemed like every family on the block was using the alley-park. Children were playing hide-and-go-seek in the rushes by the swale. People were walking side by side down the crunchy gravel path, stopping here and there to chat with their neighbors. People seemed so at ease without the interruption of cars. Yes, some neighbors told me they were reluctant, at first, to give up their utilitarian access to their yard chores. But now I see that they have gained a park with peace of mind. Parents can let their children run back and forth, across the alley-park, from yard to yard.

My favorite part of the park was where people had taken out their fences. What used to be cold chain link or six foot cedar is now a seamless planting. Each yard still contains a smaller private area. Some are delineated by a different paving; brick or flagstone, or sometimes by a shrub border; Abelia or Rhododendron. The rest of these back yards are now open and inviting. The green lawns are dotted with planting areas that have been personalized by each owner. This one is pruned and blooming heavily, that one is scraggly with native plants, and this one is lush with grasses and willows. I can tell that the park is really getting cared for.

Even where there are fences, people have made them friendlier. Openings have been cut, like windows between the alley-park and the yards. Many beautiful garden gates have become part of the alley's landscape. In some cases the fences are pushed back away from the edge of the alley. This wide variation results in a more natural feel to the alley. It's like a meandering edge as the fences weave in and out.

I can remember when the fences and backs of buildings defined this space. But all of the landscape pieces I just mentioned really play second to the people in this place. Now the alley serves as a backdrop for all the social goings on. It is better than I had envisioned it ten years ago. People were using it for many reasons. Some were on their way to the river, others were just sitting. I had placed a few benches in the original plan, but now neighbors were adding their own. Pieces of recycled furniture dotted the path and the various shrubs and flowers gave the alley-park a very eclectic feel. Eugene had come into this place, and it fit.

I hope that you'll be able to visit this place someday soon. It was you, after all, who lent me support during that last year of school and throughout this project.

Best regards and warmest wishes,
Arica

Fall 2001

South Bank 2020: Memory of an Electric Riverfront, Dreams of a City on the River

One of the greatest mistakes Urban Renewal Districts across the country have made is the erasure of history in favor of the modern fix. Eugene, Oregon experienced a bout of this type of urban planning in the 1970s and 80's that wiped much of character off the face of downtown. Half a century later, eyes are on Eugene as it tackles its industrial heritage at one of its most ecologically sensitive and culturally important places: the riverfront.

Since its inception in 1908, Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB) a municipally owned- public utility has provided the community with clean water and reliable electricity. EWEB made its home on the south bank of the Willamette so as to provide the immediate downtown and outlying urban area with steam from the Steam Plant, power from the dams, and water from the McKenzie. However, their industrial use of this property for storage and truck cleaning, poles and "hog fuel" has degraded the quality of the landscape and become a blight along the scenic Willamette Greenway trail.

Recently, EWEB has decided to revise its role on the river while laying the foundation for Eugene's long-desired downtown riverfront connection. They have provided a link between the past and the desired future. The result of steadfast planning, creative partnering and innovative ecological design; the new South Bank Promenade engages the issues of water, energy, environment and community at every step along the way.

Relocation of EWEB's storage and truck facilities and a new multistory, mixed-use parking garage on Fourth Avenue freed the riverbank site for an initial phase of remediation and restoration. The Stream Team, Northwest Youth Corps and Lane County's Youth Arts Program provided vital human energy towards artistic and participatory remediation along the Greenway trail.

As a regular riverfront bicycle commuter, I found both the physical developments and the interpretive pieces intriguing. Where clean-up of a DEQ site required restricted access for safety reasons (the intersection of Eighth/ Hilyard on the river), students forged images into the chain links that addressed the nature, history and culture of the petroleum-based contamination. When invasive exotics were removed along the riverbank, and young willows and ash were planted; salmon, heron, turtle, and beaver appeared in totems.

With much of EWEB's electrical supply now being met by hydrogen fuel cells and distributor generation, the asbestos-ridden walls of the steam plant have been deconstructed. Massive and colorful industrial artifacts remain, commemorating the site of Eugene's first power generation, and water filtration. A new live-work warehouse style housing complex now stands at this spot framing views of the river from Franklin Blvd and featuring doublewide balconies from which to watch the river and its promenade.

Connection to the site has been improved at key gateways; including 5th and 8th Avenues, Hilyard Street, and Franklin Blvd. And a vital living connection has been made by day-lighting the long-buried tale of the millrace. This new route completes a beloved passageway between the University and the river through downtown. The older section, well-shaded with mature Big Leaf maples, joins its offspring celebrating the gateway to the newly named- Millrace district.

The new Millrace reinterprets the role of this channel that is joined with storm water from the Hendrick's Park watershed. The design combines phytoremediation technology with an honest nostalgia for the days of the canoe craze. A 50ft wide gravel and sand based channel with sophisticated linings, the offspring is planted with a well-calculated mix of grasses, sedges, mustards and dwarf poplars that purify the water along its course to the river. Flanked by comfortably wide paths on either side, the millrace passes under the new railroad bridge, through a series of storm water gardens before cascading down to the river with enough head to power the new promenade street lamps.

The once steep rip-wrapped bank has been graded back into terraces planted with red osier dog wood, willow, spirea and wild rose along the new permeable and wheelchair-friendly promenade. The terraces add complexity, shade, shelter and protein to both neighboring aquatic and terrestrial habitat. The native vegetation will eventually also provide a sense of wildness in contrast to the smooth lawns of Alton Baker Park on the opposite bank. The industrial materials used in the riparian terraces, riverfront promenade and outlooks, reinforce the postindustrial character of the working gardens into which future development has already begun to settle.

A foil to the smooth grassy fields of Alton Baker Park, the South Bank Promenade is energized by the dynamics of the city. Folks are drawn to the promenade year round for its savory snacks, its choice views, and its decisive urban character that is at once hungry for culture and humble before the river. Skeptics say its as simple as well lit shelter from which to listen to rain drops on the river. However, having seen this site on the quietest winter days, and at the sunniest summer festivals, I believe that the thoughtful layering of memories and dreams in an ecologically sensitive and technologically progressive design created an urban riverfront experience that is uniquely Eugene.

As development along Franklin is upgraded and redirected towards the river, the district grows in intensity and livelihood. With EWEB's fairly strict district building codes in place, which protect the health diversity and beauty of the riverfront biotic community, it is truly exciting to watch a new generation of development embrace the river.

JZ Eisenberg

Wickes Beal Studio: A Merging of Art and Ecological Communities

LA 490, Fall 2002 Vivid Presence (A conversation in my head)

I can't believe it's been nearly ten years since I first met Erica and David. I'm so glad they invited me to the ten-year anniversary open house for the Wickes Beal Studio. What a success it has become. It's a good thing they've gone to an interactive website format. It really gives the browser a unique opportunity to take a personal tour and have an intimate experience of this special place all of us have worked so hard to create over the years. Wow, this drive along Marcola Road is still as beautiful as the first time when I came out here on the motorcycle. I sure put a lot of miles on bike that year and a half. Mile marker fifteen, just one more mile to go. Ah, I'm finally here. Ha, I can't see any of the buildings at all or the wetland. The Doug Fir, Cedars, and Pines have filled in nicely along the roadway and swale. I always liked them being planted on the north side of the property, the low sun shining off them in the winter months makes their needles glow a fantastic almost iridescent green and caused their bark to take on an orangey tinge. I wonder how well they reduce the road noise now? I'll have to ask Erica, she was very concerned about that from the beginning. Marcola Loop right turn, drive right turn, I'm here.

Good, the drive and parking area looks like they've held up well to all the vehicle use. The combination of grass pavers and crushed gravel has made an excellent durable permeable surface. The Ash and Big Leaf Maple trees look very healthy as well. I always loved being out here in the early mornings like today. The mist above the pond and the wetland seems to gently hover over them, purposely insulating and blanketing them, keeping them protected and safe. I'm anxious to see the flow into the pond and through the wetland after the rain last night and earlier this morning. The weather doesn't change here in Oregon. It's a good thing I'm always prepared with a nice pair of waterproof boots in the truck. It looks like the sun will quickly burn off the mist since it's getting higher above the foothills to the east.

The grasses are high. Good, I can't see the path just as we had talked about. The three-foot cover is wonderful gently swaying in the breeze with drops of water clinging to the old seed heads. The air is so crisp and clean, so refreshing on my face. The Currant, Snowberry, Ninebark, and Salmonberry all look great pushing out their new growth of the season. I can't believe how much size the Cottonwoods have taken on and the Willows are huge. The improved hybrid varieties look like they lived up to their expectations. It looks like its time to implement another phase of the pruning and thinning program since it's getting a little to dense along the bank of the pond. Plenty of volunteers have become established, good, and the area has continued to take on a personality of its own. Erica and David have been good about letting it naturally evolve with little interference. Even Erica's beloved Dogwood "grove" is naturalizing itself well with the other plant material. The heavy green conifer backdrop enhances the large white bracts of the Dogwoods.

This peninsula is great and acts as a great viewing point to the foothills, pond, island, and wetland. The water in the pond is very clear and still this morning, with just the flickering of some cub frye barely visible below the surface between the golden rushes planted on the first terrace. It's great to see that geese and ducks are rafting on the north side between the bank and the island underneath the cover of the willows and between clumps of rushes. They just seem to be quietly floating in the thinning mist. It's a good thing that the island is still fairly open. The limbs of the Big Leaf Maple droop over the bank and cast deep long shadows across to the western bank while the California Willow cascades into the water offering sanctuary and food for numerous aquatic species. I like the view across the pond. From the northeast to northwest sides, the low-planted bank begins to rise and transition seamlessly into the riparian and upland material, while the wetland reaches out and fingers into the western perimeter of the pond mirroring the bank as it slopes gently away. The boardwalks meander and just seem to vanish into the distance.

Garrick Mishaga Jr.

LA 490
Vivid Presence

A Trip Through the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden To the Native Wetlands Garden in Early Spring

Dear Mom,

I took Emily to the Wetlands Garden today. I wanted to be there very early in the morning before the rest of the Rhododendron garden was full of visitors. Even this early in the spring before the rhodys are really in the prime of bloom people flock to the garden and I've noticed (but is it just my own prejudice?) that people always seem to be attracted to that back corner of wetlands tucked away in the southeast corner.

We arrived by bike in the pre-dawn light and entered the garden through the staff gate which is just to one side of the main entrance. I've always enjoyed the entrance to the garden; as I walk the easy downhill path, I feel as though the earth herself is welcoming me down into a safe haven. The path seemed padded because it was thick with bark dust; in planting beds that same bark dust which seems sterile here seemed to invite us to walk quietly in appreciation. As we approached the wetlands garden we were given plenty of introduction to the water. We crossed the bridge over the stream, with its slightly arching form and sturdy handrails. We of course had to stop in the middle of the bridge to lean over the east railing and look and listen to the waterfall, before continuing on to the walkway across the mouth of the lagoon to the island.

The lagoon was on our left and the lake on our right, and all around us the water was still and quiet except for the birds who were beginning to stir in the early morning light. Some of the ducks were sitting on the banks with their heads tucked under their wings, some were floating on the steel gray surface of the water occasionally making quiet quacks, almost chirping sounds, in morning conversation. But we didn't stop to talk to the ducks in the lagoon because we had a further destination which we knew would have ducks and other birds of its own.

The path continues along the water around the edge the island. To our right across the lake towards the west we watched the changing light on the water. The sun began to light up the trees and grass of the golf course on the other side and the bright dark green of the Douglas firs contrasted with the dark gray-blue clouds that lined the horizon just above the west hills. We followed the path as it curved left and we found ourselves walking uphill slightly. We noticed the lakeside on our right changing from open ground with a few rhodys and azaleas to a denser mix of vegetation, willows and red-osier dogwood. And then the path beckoned us with a slight sense of secret mystery. As the path continued around to the left we could no longer see exactly where it led. It seemed to disappear into a tangle of lakeside vegetation.

At this point Emily started running. I ran to catch up as she started up the slight ramp leading to the board walk. Here we had the choice to continue walking (or running) on the wooden walkway or to sit on the bench/railing on either side of the walkway. We stopped because from this vantage point we had a clear view of the lake to the south and the sun was beginning to shine and dance on the surface of the water. Because of the angle of the light we could see all the beautiful colors shining on the heads of the male wood ducks. If for that view alone our trip was well worth it.

But sitting slightly above the water we had a chance to feel close and look down on the willow buds which were showing their soft and fuzzy pussy willow fur. The new green shoots of the grasses, rushes and reeds looked like they were just bursting forth with early morning energy. And we could look down into the water, clear to the brown bottom, and wait for fish to swim by. We saw lots of little ones (“minny minno toes” Emily called them) and one big one. What we called big looked like about a foot long!

We couldn’t sit still for long since the boardwalk beckoned and we continued on to the fork where we had to decide whether to head right out into the water or stay close to shore. Until we actually walked a few steps around the corner we couldn’t see that we were indeed headed out across the lake for a short distance, out beyond the edge of the grasses and into waterfowl territory. We felt as though we were truly visiting the birds because by walking slowly and not talking we seemed to not disturb the coots and mallards and widgeons who were swimming about and we could listen to their conversations. When we reached the end of our walkway we could see the silhouette of a Great Blue Heron fishing for its breakfast across the lake to the east. Although we were just a little too far away and the angle of the light was wrong to see clearly, we thought we saw it swallow after dipping into the water. Emily thought she heard it burp with satisfaction. I wasn’t so sure.

By then the sun was really lighting up the sky and our surroundings. As we headed back to shore, we continued on the boardwalk into what is my favorite area in the wetlands garden. We entered a darker denser quieter place. The canopy overhead was the evergreen of tall firs and red cedars. The immediate surroundings were brushy and bushy even in this early part of spring when the ninebark and snowberry and dogwood were just beginning to leaf out. And the wooden walkway again led us out to emerge at the water’s edge and we were now in a small quiet cove. The ducks were dipping down into the water along the bank-side across the way and we caught sight of a family of mergansers, babies seeming to dive and fish with as much enthusiasm, skill and precision as mama. We were close enough to the opposite bank that we could see through the dense willows to the openings in the woods where wildflowers were just beginning to highlight the ground.

We stopped here and just stood without speaking. Even Emily felt the quiet power of the place. We could look up and see the sky through the evergreen branches and newly emergent leaves on bare brown branches. We could look down and see the light of the sun reflected and watch the patterns of ripples play among the patterns of the roots and branches and leaves in and under the water. We could look out in the four directions and see shades of green and shapes of plants, small and then large and then small again. We could feel the wind on our faces and we could feel our bodies in our feet. We could smell the damp earth and the warm bodies and feathers of the birds. We could smell the roots and the spores and the fungus and fishes. We could delight in ourselves and our place here in this earth. We could feel safe and full of life and love.

And as we stood there in that spot over the water, the sun shone on our faces. We felt the coolness of the air and the warmth of the sun. And we knew it was time to go, so we said our thank yous, and as the path beckoned us on to the rest of the day we walked down from the boardwalk and onto the soft springy earth. And with a little mud on our shoes we walked back and got on our bikes to ride home.

Hilary Dearborn

Sept. 16th, 2011

Dear Scott,

The surgery was successful and I'm feeling pretty good. My room is on the third floor and I have a great view of the garden. I slept really well last night. The window was left open all night and this morning my room was filled with the delightful fragrances from the garden below.

Tomorrow I start physical therapy. I met with my physical therapist, Muriel, earlier today. We wandered through the garden and talked about what I would like to do during my first therapy session. I'm so glad that I can do my physical therapy outside. You know how much I love to work in the garden.

After our meeting I stayed in the garden for awhile. The weather was so nice; warm but not too hot with vast sea of crystal blue sky above. I could not return to my room until I soaked up the beauty of the garden. I was able to lift myself out of my wheelchair and onto a low brick garden wall. It felt good to get out of my chair and the garden wall was cold and soothing. I was surrounded by flowers and herbs, mostly Lavender and Rosemary. I was wrapped in their herbal fragrance like a warm shawl blanketing me and comforting me. I felt so secure in this space. Although there are open areas in the garden, there are also quaint pockets of private space where one can be alone and reflect. From this quiet space I could see the terraced slope that wraps around the entire garden, embracing it with its vegetated arms. It is a patchwork of texture and color--some of which cascade and spill over the brick walls, others create upright vertical splashes of delicate color and form.

Within an arms reach from where I sat was a patch of Echinacea and Black-eyed Susans. My two favorites! You know how I love to poke at their centers--the small brown pillowy button of the Black-eyed Susan, and the Echinacea with its petals bending downward to accent its delicate prickly center. At their feet was a clump of Lamb's ear. Of course I was enticed to pet it. I could resist that soft, silken leaf. And I noticed how its gray green complexion compliments the herbs surrounding me and is juxtaposed next to the green foliage of the perennials.

As I sat, a light breeze had picked up. It caused the small cluster of Vine maples behind me to sway and dappled light danced on the concrete and brick walkway. It was enchanting. For a moment I forgot about my discomfort and pain. From that same bunch of maples a small group of Finches flew out to a nearby feeder. There weren't enough perches for all of them so there was some fussing about who was going to eat first. Their soft arguments were sweet music to my ears. Those that could not find a spot to eat flew off to the fountain on the other side of the garden. I could see their tiny silhouettes splashing about in the water.

It was getting late in the afternoon and I felt I needed to rest. But before returning to my room I toured the entire garden once again. In my wheelchair I am at an equal level with most of the plants and shrubs. I could easily reach out and touch and smell everything I passed. It's such a pleasant area; one can almost forget that they are at a hospital.

Love,

Megan