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Pond Secrets: Reflections for Thought and Virtue

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POND SECRETS: REFLECTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND VIRTUE

A Thesis Presented

by

Franco Carnelli

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies,
University of Massachusetts Boston in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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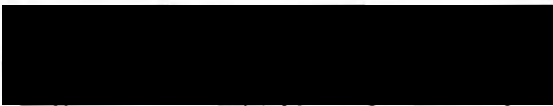
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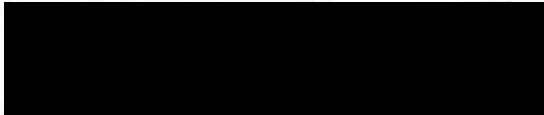
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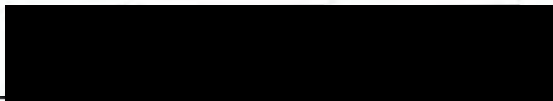
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ABSTRACT

POND SECRETS: REFLECTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND VIRTUE

September, 1997

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Directed by Professor John R. Murray

Pond Secrets is an original play designed to create a context for motivating children to learn and practice critical thinking in its strongest sense through reflective dialogue and improvisational drama. The story's design, content, and suggested methodology are theoretically consistent with Brain-based learning theory, which asserts that memorable learning occurs when children can integrate concepts, emotions, and values in a meaningful context and environment. Using a mythical setting and features of classical literature, *Pond Secrets* invites children to join the animals of Pond as they gather to examine their thinking and affirm the meaning of friendship, citizenship, and justice.

Not settling on any one definition of critical thinking, *Pond Secrets* reflects a synthesis of expert descriptions that advances the following modified definition: Critical thinking is used to make decisions, form beliefs, solve problems, and learn new concepts. It is a dialogical questioning process that uses reasonable and imaginative reflection. Additionally, it is a purposive and disciplined process that relies on criteria, is self-correcting, and is sensitive to context. In its strongest sense, critical thinking is fair-minded and caring. Moreover, *Pond Secrets* targets the following critical thinking skills

for development: making a reliable observation, evaluating a source of information, forming a reliable framework for perspectives, and examining cause and effect relationships. The target skills are infused and interwoven in the story to enable children to develop skill using them individually and together as a process transferable through subject domains.

Pond Secrets models a community of inquiry that provokes integrative learning while promoting the application of critical and creative thinking to the moral domain of reasoning. As a framework for deliberation and dialogue, *Pond Secrets* develops a model of justice that balances the principle of fairness with the ethic of caring. Validated by Frankena's justice model, which balances the principles of equal treatment and beneficence; *Pond Secrets* replaces beneficence with the ethic of caring as a more accurate description of the orientation of empathic experience underscoring the promotion of goodness.

Pond Secrets is accompanied by a theoretical guide that discusses the main ideas relevant to its implementation. The guide reviews cognitive development, issues of indoctrination, the psychological and philosophical underpinnings of the justice model, and critical and creative thinking as relevant to *Pond Secret's* content and methodology. *Pond Secrets* offers the educator free imaginative reign to design lesson plans that suit the needs of the learning environment, provided that the criteria of critical thinking and the justice model are adhered to in methodology that is neutral and in accordance with Brain-based learning theory.

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Dr. Delores Gallo's brilliant passion for creativity has inspired me like so many others.

Dr. Steven Schwartz has always demonstrated to me that expert thinking generates the disposition that makes the most intimidating problem-space seem less daunting and more approachable.

Dr. John Murray always encouraged the creation of *Pond Secrets*. From the beginning, he watched the evolvment of the story in its various stages, shared wonderment and conveyed sound advice regarding key issues. His generous support of humor, goodwill and wisdom helped bring *Pond Secrets* to its completion.

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Finally, my Love to Veneranda for being such a wonderful sister.

POND SECRETS IS DEDICATED TO CHILDREN EVERYWHERE AND TO ALL
THOSE WHO HAVE RETAINED THEIR CHILDHOOD SPIRIT.

PREFACE

If God had all truth locked up in his right hand and in his left, the unique ever-live striving for truth, albeit with the addition that I should always and eternally err and said to me, "choose!" -I would humbly clasp his left hand saying: "Father give! Pure truth is after all for thee alone!"

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing

Pond Secrets is an original play written to develop children's understanding of thought and virtue. The principal motivation for the creation of *Pond Secrets* is to help better prepare children for the problems that their future may hold. The problems our society currently faces are of unprecedented size and complexity. Indeed, they have become cause for great concern and controversy. So much, actually, that there has been a societal proclivity to invoke extreme or charged language when addressing them. The theoretical guide that follows will attempt to avoid this tendency. Rather, it just assumes that social problems are severe. Also attached to this assumption, is the awareness of the real possibility that many of them may get worse before they get better.

Thus, it seems more than likely that today's children will inherit tough choices in difficult circumstances. In what will be a relatively short period of time, they will become tomorrow's problem-solvers, and it may be the case that the moral domain of those problems will be the most challenging. Indeed, society's future problem-solvers/decision-makers will need to be most skillful and resourceful in their thinking. They will need to accommodate a procedural understanding of how to form judgments and learn new knowledge. They will also need to accommodate a conceptual framework to organize, process, and prioritize moral concepts.

In terms of education, this evinces the importance of enhancing children's ability to solve problems. To achieve this, children's understanding of the kinds of thinking that are available to them as problem-solvers must be developed. These are the categories of thinking that constitute the process of making decisions, forming judgments/beliefs, and learning new knowledge. These categories are referred to collectively as critical and creative thinking.

It is presumed that critical and creative thinking is the process by which the moral domain of a problem space is apprehended. Through the critical and creative thinking process, moral issues are subject to reasonable questioning. Without it, moral reasoning, or any other kind of reasoning, could not be possible. This is why critical and creative thinking instruction is an essential requisite to moral education. Thus, it is assumed that critical and creative thinking is part and parcel to responsible moral education.

The question must be asked whether a social milieu is forming that makes it easier for children to grow up not thinking about the moral implications and ramifications of what they do? *Pond Secrets* answers this question affirmatively, without reservations, and so argues that there is a genuine and urgent need for effective moral education in the curriculum. This entails, it would seem, that the development and implementation of intervention involve what cognitive science has discovered about human learning. *Pond Secrets*, therefore, engages Brain-based learning theory (Caine and Caine 1991), which is founded upon the following 12 principles (80-87):

- 1) The brain is a parallel processor.
- 2) Learning engages the entire physiology.

- 3) The search for meaning is innate.
- 4) The search for meaning occurs through “patterning.”
- 5) Emotions are critical to patterning.
- 6) The brain processes parts and wholes simultaneously.
- 7) Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception.
- 8) Learning involves conscious and unconscious processes.
- 9) We have at least two different types of memory: A spatial memory system and a set of systems for rote learning.
- 10) We understand and remember best when facts and skills are imbedded in natural, spatial memory.
- 11) Learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.
- 12) Each brain is unique.

The principals above are now well established by cognitive science. Thus, they are valuable concepts in the field of education. Keeping them in mind when using *Pond Secrets* can help manifest productive learning experiences. *Enjoy.*

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THEORETICAL GUIDE

Introduction

Pond Secrets: Reflections for Thought and Virtue is an original play written for children aged 12 and above. Moreover, *Pond Secrets* is conceived to be a curriculum module that develops critical and creative thinking, and promotes the application of critical and creative thinking in the moral domain of reasoning. Designed to be the instrument of intervention that initiates and pursues these objectives, *Pond Secrets* provides ample opportunity to teach critical and creative thinking, and engage its transfer to standard subject content, moral philosophy notwithstanding. The degree to which this opportunity is fulfilled depends very much on how *Pond Secrets* is utilized. A review of the salient ideas considered during the creation of *Pond Secrets*, will assist the educator to realize its potential. To this end, therefore, this guide describes the main ideas from which *Pond Secrets* was designed and written.

First, cognitive development is reviewed. The main point of describing children's theory of mind is to show why 12 is *Pond Secret's* target age. Arising from this description, is the notion that meaningful learning involves conceptual change. The reorganization of the cognitive structure is clearly relevant and significant to the development of thinking skills and character.

After briefly addressing the target age, issues of indoctrination are scrutinized. It is contended that *Pond Secret's* aim and content are non-doctrinaire. It is also argued that

Pond Secret's neutral implementation is possible through a critical and creative thinking approach.

Next, the justice model used in *Pond Secrets* is examined. Justice is viewed as the integrated balance between the principle of fairness and the ethic of caring. During this discussion, the ethic of caring is distinguished as the proper description of empathic experience. Also emerging from this discussion, is the importance of critical and creative thinking to developing children's procedural understanding of the moral reasoning process. Moral reasoning, of course, is the process by which moral balance is interpreted. Critical and creative thinking instruction helps children learn how to form sound reasons and reasoning to substantiate moral points of view, and advance balanced perspectives of justice.

Thus, the question of what is critical and creative thinking is investigated. Critical thinking is defined to describe the kind of thinking modeled in *Pond Secrets*. The aim is to substantiate and compliment the critical thinking concepts contained in *Pond Secret's* content with formal theory. Creative thinking is considered in context to *Pond Secret's* implementation. The objective is to outline concepts relevant to creative teaching that can be used to take advantage of *Pond Secret's* content and design.

Cognitive Development

Research in cognitive science has shed some insight into why the old adage regarding children, “they grow up so fast”, seems so true. Perhaps more so, than previously believed. There are studies, for example, that have gathered evidence to show that concept formation begins in infancy (Baillargeon, Spelke, and Wasserman 1985; Gopnik 1988; Mandler 1988; and others). Note how this hypothesis is incompatible with traditional Piagetian stage theory, which describes infants as only capable of instinctual behaviors and sensori-motor schemas (Piaget 1963).

A notable expert, Henry Wellman, asserts that young children actually begin theorizing at an earlier age than what most current research would suggest (1988). Wellman argues that by the age of 3, and as early as 2.5, children can exhibit a “folk-psychological” behavior in their interactions with adults that indicate a naive understanding of theory formation (ibid. 86). By age 10, children's ability to theorize resembles the reasoning of a novice scientist (Carey 1985, 8, 186-90). Children, it seems, certainly do grow up quickly.

Of course, extensive conceptual development occurs during this time period. At age 3, children gather knowledge, but do not yet know how it is gathered, and thus fail to attribute a similar knowledge to others. At age 4, children begin to understand the casual properties of the informational conditions of perception, particularly visual access

(Wimmer, Hogreffe, and Sodian 1988). Concomitantly, they become able to understand the semantic properties of mental representations and begin to cross-reference them back to reality. Cause and effect is soon realized, and a connection is “forged” between causality and children's developing conceptual framework (Leslie 1988, 36-9).

Wellman refers to this conceptual framework as children's “theory of mind”. Theory of mind is the set of conceptual constructs that children use to interpret existence. It is the framework that builds new knowledge and develops specific theories, theory fragments, and rules of thumb (Wellman 1990, 297). Of significance, is that children aged 4 are able to make inferences. Children's theory of mind now has the capacity to process knowledge as well as gather it.

Still, children aged 4 do not generally attribute inferential knowledge to others. The capacity for this activation normally occurs at age 6, when children begin to acquire an understanding of how inferential knowledge is accessed (Wimmer, Hogreffe, and Sodian 1988). Understanding inference as a source of knowledge, children become quite skilled in making inferences. By age 7, theory of mind begins to accommodate the rudiments of scientific thinking, as children demonstrate the ability to distinguish between the concepts “hypothesis” and “evidence” (Sodian, Zaitchik, and Carey 1991). Theory of mind undergoes significant development, as children refine their old theories and develop new ones.

Wellman (1990) delineates the development of three specific theories; theories of self, memory and intelligence. The theory of mind framework makes self-conception possible by providing the conceptual structure necessary to process items of language,

ontology and causality. This amounts to the autobiographical history of thoughts, perceptions and emotions constituting the essence of being. Wellman demarcates 6 as the age when self is realized as an interpretative agent, although the relativity of truths is not yet understood.

At age 6, the use of various memory enhancement strategies, such as rehearsal, categorical clustering and elaboration begin to appear. Wellman characterizes such mnemonic techniques as “theory fragments”, which show evidence of early childhood theorizing. Before the age of 6, Wellman describes children as passive “copy-containers” (1990, 308).

The years after age 6, children develop their capacity to theorize. All the while, they acquire knowledge. But not just in the linear sense of accrued knowledge. Susan Carey, an expert in cognitive development, characterizes children as restructuring knowledge as its acquired (1985, 3). In Wellman's terms, children reorganize concepts with new and more elaborate relationships within their initial theory of mind, as well as construct other kinds of theories. Meaningful learning, then, is an experience of conceptual change.

Carey distinguishes two kinds of conceptual change: weak sense and strong sense (ibid. 5-6). In the weak sense, new relations between concepts are added and restructured. In the strong sense, relationships between concepts may change, but also, the core concepts themselves change. Thus, the conceptual framework from which children view themselves and the world is subject to gradual, yet profound conceptual change.

According to Carey, the most significant change occurs as children acquire biological knowledge. She points out that children between the ages of 4 and 7, possess very little biological knowledge. Theory of mind at this age still consists chiefly of psychological explanations of existential questions. This changes in the following years as biological knowledge is accommodated within developing theory of mind.

Carey sees the strong sense conceptual change in children's theory of mind as the movement from psychological theories to biological theories. Carey argues that this conceptual reconstruction establishes the unifying structure that enables children to work through a variety of developmental issues. Such issues include personal identity, gender and growth. Carey explains that this conceptual change in the strong sense can be mapped out in children's conception of what is "alive". She specifically identifies the replacement of the concept "animal" with the concept "living thing" as the core (strong sense) concept change linked to the concept "alive" (ibid. 182).

This is not just indicative of a strong sense conceptual change of a theory; but also, the entire reconstruction of the conceptual framework from which children view their existence. According to Carey, the shift to biological theories, represents the strong sense conceptual change of children's initial theory of mind. This process, which occurs during the acquisition of other kinds of knowledge, scientific or otherwise, is fairly well established by age 10 (ibid. 186-90). As such, this is essentially the conceptual framework that accommodates learning into adulthood.

This accords with Wellman's description of children beyond 6 replacing much of their belief/desire psychology with biological explanations for basic existential questions

(1990, 113). Incorporating Carey's analysis, it becomes a theory grounded in scientific interpretations of the physical world. Coupling this with children's developing skill in theoretical thinking, theory of mind develops significantly during the next several years.

By age 12, children's theory of mind is quite developed. It has accommodated through strong sense conceptual change, a scientifically based framework grounded in biological knowledge. Theory of mind is now more of a framework that bears likeness to an adult understanding of life's fundamental questions. It is also a time, when children are quite impressionable to attitudes and dispositions. Indeed, it is an age in children's development when attitudes and dispositions of virtue, as well as thinking skills, can be imparted so that they endure into adulthood.

Target Age

Outlining children's conceptual development illustrates why 12 is an ideal age to develop thinking skills and cultivate virtues. Children are now skilled thinkers and can tolerate complexity given the opportunity. Their ability to approach problems from a broader, more encompassing framework, enables them to view thinking skills interacting together as a process and not just as isolated “theory fragments”. Children's thinking is more fluid and problem-solving demonstrates a purposiveness that can actively employ multiple strategies and perspectives. When children bring this kind of thinking to bear on moral problems, they can begin to understand moral concepts operating together within systems (Kholberg 1976).

As shown, children develop specific theories within their theory of mind framework. In this context, this module can be regarded as a vehicle to facilitate the development of two related kinds of theories: theories of thinking and theories of morality. At age 12, children possess the requisite conceptual framework and processing capacity to structure and restructure these theories in skillful and meaningful ways.

This is not intended to preclude other age groups. Each brain is different, and so then, is development (Caine and Caine 1991). *Pond Secrets* may be, for example, quite suitable for the gifted 10-year-old. But for the most part, the vocabulary and concepts contained in *Pond Secrets* is aimed at age 12 and above.

Indoctrination

The prevailing concern about moral education is indoctrination. It occurs when an authority figure teaches a particular view, belief system or theory as if it were absolute truth, and with the expectancy that it be accepted without critical examination. Surely, then, indoctrination is an issue in the teaching of any subject. Social Studies, history, even science can fall prey to special pleading. But because morality is so close to our subjective opinions and deepest feelings, there is a natural tendency toward suspicion.

It seems, by and large, that moral education slips by suspicion when it occurs in literature. But, once it's called "moral education", an unspoken caginess often arises. And understandably so, children must be protected from indoctrination, especially with regards to morality.

In light of prevailing cynicism, it seems that the only honest thing to do when going about the business of moral education is to identify it as such, in the first instance, and not call it something else. This is the case with this module, because it comes in the form of literature appreciation and the dramatic experience. This is why *Pond Secrets* comes forward openly stating an emphasis in moral education and avails itself as such to critical scrutiny.

Alleviating any perceived threat of indoctrination is a main hurdle in providing moral education that is sound philosophically and safe psychologically. But the

distinction between indoctrination and education is not always clear. So it is useful to have a framework of analysis that distinguishes one from the other. This module proposes the framework that there are three areas of teaching where indoctrination can occur: intention, method and content (White 1972, 120-27). Accordingly, *Pond Secrets* is examined within the context of these three categories to address potential concerns relevant to indoctrination.

Pond Secrets does not advance any political or religious view. Nor is there any intention to do so, whatsoever. The module's intention previously stated, is to develop critical and creative thinking, and promote its application to the moral domain of reasoning. The module's aim is to help children assemble as part of developing theory of mind, a critical and creative thinking framework from which they can approach problems and process information. With the application and practice of critical and creative thinking on moral issues, the intention is to develop a moral framework to theory of mind in conjunction with a critical and creative thinking perspective.

With regards to method, the ongoing debate is whether teachers should be neutral or partisan when discussing moral issues. Mary Warnock, for example, believes that teachers who attempt to adopt neutral methodology will fail (1975, 112). Children, she argues, need a “leader in argument”, not possible she claims, through neutral chairmanship (ibid. 108). Warnock warns of the sense of helplessness children can experience when looking to the teacher for the “right answer”, and none is forthcoming. Likening neutral methodology to the “nightmare of the knitters at the guillotine”, she concludes that it is a teacher's obligation to express moral points of view as opinions

(ibid. 110, 112). She points out that this kind of sincerity earns children's respect, forming more positive learning experiences.

Despite loaded language, Warnock's caveat appears to be psychologically valid. In their book, *Making Connections: Teaching and the Human Brain*, Renate Nummela Cain and Geoffrey Caine (1991) describe a theoretical approach to teaching based upon the study of the brain and how it learns. "Brain-based learning", as it is called, is derived from an expansive synthesis of cognitive science research that furthers Leslie Hart's pioneering work investigating the human brain. One principle of Brain-based learning is that learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat. Matching Warnock's words precisely, a threat is defined as "anything that triggers a sense of helplessness" (Caine and Caine 1991, 72). Thus, if neutral methodology is to be successful, it must remedy in some way the threat inherent within the methodology itself. Otherwise, Warnock is quite right, neutral teachers will set themselves up for failure.

But not if this threat is somehow converted into challenge (ibid. 86). Dorothy Heathcote is a master teacher who achieves this conversion in particular, and neutral methodology in general, very successfully using improvisational drama. Over the years, she has taught her "Mantle of the Expert" system of teaching to many different kinds of educators (1985). Heathcote creates a learning environment in which children can assume the skills, dispositions and responsibilities of the expert by inventing their own problem space through improvisational drama. She facilitates very powerful learning this way. Neutral teachers, therefore, are not necessarily destined for failure. If neutral

methodology can be successful, and Heathcote shows that it can, then neutralism merits serious consideration.

Children can appreciate the challenge of forming their own judgments. Naturally compelled by matters of right and wrong, children can demonstrate unbridled enthusiasm when arguing their opinions. Though they may turn to the teacher for answers, it is not unreasonable to suppose that children can be taught to realize the significance of learning to make their own judgments.

By directing the learning focus from “right answers” to process issues of thinking, children can learn how to arrive at their own judgments. *Pond Secrets* assumes that children can be taught how to develop sound reasons and reasoning for their opinions by learning and acquiring skill using procedural standards of critical thinking within a creative thinking motivational context. By still being honest and sincere, the critical and creative thinking approach to neutral methodology relieves the degree of hedging a teacher must undergo, and at the same time, remedies the psychological threat described by Warnock.

Philosophically, the case for neutral methodology becomes even more compelling because it is sensitive to varying views and values. It is particularly well-suited to accommodate a multi-ethnic, multi-national and multi-regional society. Neutral methodology allows children to discover their similarities and differences on their own. Children can learn common cultural elements from each other by appreciating their differences. By using critical and creative thinking as the principal mechanism of neutral methodology, classroom activities can be designed to yield open-minded and independent

thinking. In the words of John Wilson we need to educate “competent moralists, not moralists who think as we do” (1975, 117).

With regards to the third category, content, there are two main points that require brief review. The first is that *Pond Secret's* subject content as a whole is not doctrinaire, nor is it conducive to non-neutral methodology. The story teaches and promotes the use of critical and creative thinking. Fostering the disposition to question and use imagination are clearly not things achieved through either dogma or didacticism.

Further, *Pond Secrets* conveys a framework for approaching moral problems that is open to multiple-perspectives and deliberation. Moreover, the story creates the context for children to explore their thinking in depth. Giving children the opportunity to question and practice thinking about moral problems can hardly be considered the product of doctrinaire subject content.

The second main point requires attention because it involves the gray areas between education and indoctrination as affected by the nuances of language. As clear as it is that *Pond Secrets* is not doctrinaire, there are parts that could be misinterpreted as being, or at least sounding doctrinaire. This seems unavoidable because *Pond Secrets* expresses a variety of views, some rather poignantly.

As it is with any point of view, these views contain value judgments; and certainly, value judgments were made determining what views were finally presented, and how. This is an area of literature that is wide open to criticism because of the subjective nature of value judgments. Explaining the origins of the more salient views

included in *Pond Secrets* should help correct any misconceptions that may arise and distinguish *Pond Secrets* as a valuable tool for meaningful education.

Pond Secrets was created around the principal value judgment that assumes there are two neglected areas of the curriculum very much in need of rejuvenation. The first area, evident by now, is thinking skills development. If children are to become the kind of problem-solvers they will need to be in the twenty-first century, then they must learn to understand reasonable inquiry as a process, and appreciate imagination as a resource. This does not occur as often as it should in today's classrooms. Teachers are under pressure to “cover” increasing amounts of information. Too often, quantitative standards take priority over the qualitative standards of processing information in meaningful ways.

Critical and creative thinking is the means in which ideas are explored. Although teaching critical and creative thinking has its areas of difficulty, the issue of indoctrination should not be one of them. Developing children's ability to engage reasonable inquiry and imagination, if anything, empowers children by helping them recognize and question information that actually is doctrinaire.

However, difficulties can arise when the second area of education is examined. The module assumes that children need to better understand their roles as individuals within relationships with each other, their communities and environment. *Pond Secrets*, therefore, transmits views that promote friendship, citizenship and environmental awareness. Intertwined with each other, these themes appear throughout the story. This seems harmless enough and even desirable. But the problem is that they may appear to support a political bias favoring a particular brand of education.

For example, the story strongly emphasizes principles of friendship. The spirit of friendship is the touchstone of human productivity and enterprise. It is people believing in each other, trusting one another, and working together to solve problems. To convey this, *Pond Secrets* uses a multi-cultural framework (*Kid's Bridge*) to illustrate the meaning of friendship and to model how friendships are formed (Rizzi, Jeness, and Chiu 1990). So it could be argued that *Pond Secret's* view of friendship is just a veiled and doctrinaire version of a particular kind of education; in this instance, multi-culturalism.

But, the ideas conveyed in the *Kid's Bridge*, an exhibit that ran at the Boston Children's Museum for 6 years, model friendship rather nicely. As the name suggests the *Kid's Bridge* was an exhibit about making connections. Children learned about their own cultures and those of others. It was a celebration of traditions, languages, stories and music from all over the world. As children learned about themselves and each other, they discovered the diversity of their cultural heritage and the meaning of friendship. They learned to respect cultural differences, and to communicate thoughts and feelings openly. This promoted goodwill and discouraged discrimination. All of this is reflected in *Pond Secrets*.

The views and underscoring values in *Pond Secrets* were carefully considered with the realization that prioritizing what values ought to be transmitted, and with what emphasis, is yet another value judgment. The main criterion of this consideration was derived from the following question: What kind of ideas will prepare children for the challenges that await them? It is in context to this question that the message of friendship is so important. It is truly unfortunate that the world has in it, so much hatred, bigotry

and violence. But it does. The way people treat each other is as important to problem-solving as problem-solving skill. Children from all walks of life will need to rely on each other, when as adults, they confront the problems of the twenty-first century. This is why friendship, as modeled by the *Kid's Bridge* exhibit, is a central and fundamental theme in *Pond Secrets*.

It is clear that the multi-cultural perspective is part of the framework of ideas transmitted in *Pond Secrets*. This is not denied. Developing children's life skills to get along with each other, and in many cases just survive, has sadly become a priority. To argue that the module is focused on promoting multi-culturalism would be unfounded. There are simply too many other kinds of ideas in *Pond Secrets* for that to be true. As it turns out, *Pond Secret's* message of friendship with its multi-cultural basis, is ultimately subsumed theoretically by a larger system of ideas. This system is the model of justice transmitted in *Pond Secrets*.

The analysis thus far, should allay apprehension relevant to issues of indoctrination. It has shown that the intention, suggested methodology and content of this module are educationally sound according to relevant theory and conventional wisdom. The aim is not to determine what children should believe; but rather, it is to teach them the standards of thought and virtue they will need to better understand how to form sound judgments and beliefs, themselves.

Addressing the issue of indoctrination adequately is vitally important. This is why indoctrination has been reviewed, here, somewhat extensively. Having done so allows the analysis to proceed to describe the model of justice used in *Pond Secrets*.

Justice Model

Pond Secrets uses a model of justice that synthesizes two main conceptual moral systems: the fairness principle and the caring ethic. The fairness principle is the traditional Socratic approach to justice. Based upon reason and the objective adherence to universal principles, it contains the standards that Kohlberg used to chart moral development in children (1975). These standards consist essentially of the developmental changes that occur in the reasoning used to explain why, for examples referenced to *Pond Secrets*, the truth should be told and promises kept.

For historical reasons beyond the scope of this discussion, the caring ethic is a moral system not yet fully developed. Originating from criticism of Kohlberg's research, there are scholars who have been formalizing the main ideas of the caring ethic in a rational and cogent moral system (Noddings 1984; Gilligan 1982; Gilligan, Lyons and Hanmer 1990; and others). Caring is an ethic that is grounded in empathic experience. It is a moral system that rests on the quality of interpersonal relationships, but also includes the relationships with environment, community, things and ideas. All of this is underscored in *Pond Secrets*.

William Fankena, one of today's leading experts in moral philosophy, describes a similar model using different nomenclature. His framework basically substantiates the

justice model utilized in *Pond Secrets*. Frankena distinguishes two principles as being necessary and sufficient to make a moral judgment: equal treatment and beneficence (1973, 52).

Some initial clarification is necessary regarding the language Frankena uses developing the principle of equal treatment. Before narrowing it down, Frankena refers to equal treatment as the justice principle. In the history of philosophy, the principles of fairness (equal treatment) and justice, as descriptive terms, have been used interchangeably. Lisa Lahey, an expert in moral education, poignantly distinguishes the two terms (1990). She argues, and this module concurs, that justice is the ideal that is striven toward, and fairness is a method used to approach it.

Equality, then, is the defining concept of fairness. Principles such as equal distribution, equal representation, equal opportunity and the like, are examples of equal treatment. Not only does it denote, for lack of better words, the state of being identical, but it also conveys universality, ipso facto. Universality is what makes principles compelling, so that adherence to them becomes a matter of duty. This becomes logically apparent with principles based in fairness through the core definition of equal treatment.

But equal treatment, as the basis of fairness, is not sufficient for the moral development of justice. For example, there is the story of the emperor Caligula posting his laws, to the extent that they could be called laws, on pillars throughout Rome at exactly the same height. Such decrees were exhibited equitably in the technical sense of equal treatment. Caligula took gleeful pride in the fairness of this. The problem, aside

from the laws themselves, was that they were nailed so far up that nobody could read them.

The above example illustrates that an adequate justice model needs more than equal treatment or fairness. At least one other defining system of moral concepts is necessary to fulfill moral thinking. Frankena identifies that system as the principle of beneficence, which joins with fairness to structure the basic conceptual framework needed to form a moral judgment or theory (1973, 52).

In his description, Frankena distinguishes beneficence from benevolence (ibid. 45). For Frankena, benevolence is the desire or will to do good and not harm. Benevolence is why one would consider the moral context of a situation in the first place. Beneficence, Frankena explains, calls for the actual promotion of good. He argues that beneficence requires more from the individual. Synopsizing in his terms, Frankena contends that beneficence insists that good is actually promoted; and, that harm is actually prevented, removed and not inflicted (ibid., 43-48). Frankena, then, draws a description of beneficence as if it were a principle of duty. This is somewhat misleading because it is neither a principle nor a duty. What Frankena does, is use the prevailing terms inherent in one system (equal treatment) to describe another (beneficence). The two systems are fundamentally different, since one manifests mainly in reason and the other in empathy. Although Frankena conveys what he means, there is more accurate language to describe the orientation and framework of beneficence.

Beneficence is more of an awareness than it is a principle. It exists in a cognizance based on feelings. People commonly refer to this state of knowing, for

example, when they describe a “feel” for a situation, or a “gut feeling”. This, it seems, is the realm of personal consciousness where beneficence, or lack thereof, is experienced.

Beneficence emerges with a sensitivity to feelings. Applying Nodding’s terminology, sensitivity to feelings enhances receptivity, responsiveness and reciprocity in relationships (1984). These traits underscore how feelings within relationships connecting self and the external world are perceived. This orientation emphasizing sensitivity to feelings and the connectivity of relationships nurtures empathy. Describing empathy as receiving another’s situation as one’s own, Noddings distinguishes the empathic response from the sympathetic projection of self onto the situation of another (ibid. 30). The receptive quality of the empathic perspective generates deep insights into the moral context of a situation. Noddings calls this empathic process, “engrossment” (ibid. 17).

Beneficence flows through the empathic response not only in how the moral context of a situation is perceived; but also, in the relationships between self and acts of goodness. The empathic view of relationships connects the emotional pathways through which the intrinsic rewards of beneficence can be fully appreciated. In the relationship between self and an act of goodness, it is well known that satisfaction comes from promoting good for the sake of goodness alone. Thus, beneficence promotes goodness without ulterior motive, self-righteousness or hubris.

It is also inspirational, certainly, when beneficence is witnessed. Others can form their own empathic relationships to a beneficent act, and receive to some degree, its feeling of virtue vicariously through example. Beneficence, then, is something that is

shared and better modeled than taught directly. This underscores the value of dialogue and drama.

Beneficence also compels the pursuit of justice. But not in a way that the notion of duty suggests. Its driving nature does not come from a principle when invoked. Rather, it comes from a frame of mind that perceives experience on a moment to moment, day to day basis. Its motivation is better described in terms of commitment, which can be distinguished from feeling bound to the call of duty. But commitment to what?

As an empathic experience, caring nurtures beneficence. The ethic of providing and receiving care is learned through relationships. This yields insight into ethical concepts relevant to relationships, and the treatment of ourselves and others. In this sense, caring is the impetus of the normative question, and beneficence its wisdom.

Noddings describes this distinction (caring and beneficence) as the shift from “natural caring” to “ethical caring” (ibid. 79). Ethical caring, she argues, arises from natural caring (ibid. 44-5); and moreover, is dependent on it (ibid. 80). Caring, in and of itself, is a natural process of affect that elicits empathic experience. This shapes an orientation toward ethical caring.

Now, there is more to ethical caring than emotion. To describe ethical caring solely in terms of emotion would be remiss and misleading. Although it involves feelings, Noddings distinguishes the term “affect” (ibid. 32). Besides emotion, this word’s meaning also conveys “relatedness”. This is the proper focus according to Noddings, and the key to understanding the construction of the ethical system of caring.

Insights gathered from relationships form moral concepts about caring and how we relate with one another. This is the conceptual basis of human engrossment. These moral concepts, assimilated through a caring perspective, form a moral theory called the ethic of caring. Indeed, the ethic of caring seems to be a fitting description of beneficence.

An ethical ideal is constructed as theory of mind accommodates the conceptual organization of ethical caring. Due to engrossment, the caring perspective ultimately strives to preserve relationships and maintain caring. This becomes the ideal to ethical caring. As such, the commitment to maintain caring provides still another, more precise, description of beneficence. It also answers the earlier question about commitment:

Beneficence is committed to maintain caring.

Still, to be accurate, beneficence and ethical caring are not necessarily one of the same. For example, the beneficence that characterizes theological voluntarism can not be equated with ethical caring as postulated by Noddings. There are circumstances, usually extreme, in which ethical caring could justify actions that would be unequivocally rejected by Divine Command theory.

Euthanasia is a case in point. In the context of such an extreme moral scenario where solutions are difficult to decide, never mind implement, the beneficence of ethical caring and the beneficence of theological voluntarism go their separate ways. Again, such situations are of a drastic nature. For the purpose of outlining a basic moral framework for children, the principle of beneficence described by Frankena is certainly compatible to Nodding's ethic of caring.

Now, the astute reader may, and should raise criticism that the attention given to beneficence and the ethic of caring has not been fairly balanced with the attention given to the principle of fairness. This would be a point well taken. Clearly, the two have not been given equal treatment. This raises, legitimately, the question of objectivity.

But what may be perceived as apparent bias, must be considered in the context of how history has shaped western (American) education. Since the days of Socrates, fairness doctrine has dominated western moral philosophy. This is true even to the extent that fairness and justice have evolved (incorrectly) as interchangeable terms. As a consequence, this has effectively suppressed the theoretical development of a caring ethic, and prevented therefore, its proper enjoinder with fairness to form a complete philosophical model of justice.

It seems evident that this has impacted our current school environment on all levels. Generally speaking, notions of fairness are impressed upon the minds of children. There is, of course, nothing wrong with this. Children need to learn and value the principle of fairness. It is important that they do so. But, they also need to learn about caring. Caring has not been given equal emphasis as a system of moral thought. Nor have children received, again generally speaking, the caring that they are entitled to and most definitely deserve.

The main reason why greater attention has been given to beneficence than fairness in this analysis is to distinguish them from each other using the context of ethical caring. Approaching beneficence as a principle does not properly reflect the orientation of empathic experience as does the perspective of ethical caring. Even with experts,

language creates misconceptions. The intention has been to correct them. It has not been to argue that one perspective should be valued over the other. They are both vital to justice and equally important. The Caligula example shows that clearly. But because of our historical past, educators are generally well acquainted with time-honored concepts of fairness and less familiar with the recent development of theories of ethical caring.

The duty to adhere to the principle of fairness, and the empathic commitment to maintain caring, are necessary and sufficient criteria of the justice framework. Both are equally important conceptual sub-systems that constitute the fundamental framework for moral deliberation. It should be emphasized that this framework is only the point of view of this module. It is not handed down by divinity or cast in stone. It is, however, substantiated by available philosophic theory. The pertinent question now becomes how *Pond Secrets* articulates this framework.

Pond Secrets affirms the development of the just perspective as one of the most important aspects of individual growth. For *Pond Secrets*, justice is a process of self-reorganization and becoming, not just something sought after. As a learning maturation that continues throughout the life span, the story expresses the idea that through a just perspective, the individual becomes just. It is what makes individuals "Pond Worthy", or meritable community citizens. Citizenship, therefore, is a main theme of *Pond Secrets* that is described as friendship with community.

The message of helping others and valuing friendship is written so it comes through strongly as a central theme of the caring ethic. Part of this message is the accompanying theme that telling the truth and keeping promises is imperative, and in the

prima facie instance, absolute. In the most general terms, this guideline maintains the integrity of relationships (and therefore caring), and also society's common good. It does so through equal treatment. Otherwise, honesty as a virtue becomes meaningless if truth is told only some of the time; and as Kant argued, the institution of promise-keeping would simply collapse (1959).

However, *Pond Secrets* points out that life sometimes presents problems that are not so easily solved. Often times moral problems are distinctly ill-defined. It is evident, certainly, that there are moral situations in which fairness conflicts with caring in the determination of what to do or believe. The essence of the secular dilemma is the discordance between fairness and caring. This being so, *Pond Secrets* allows for exceptions to principles based in fairness, despite their deontic quality. This follows in the tradition of D.W. Ross, who believed in a prima facie duty that allows for the consideration of other aspects of a moral situation when determining a proscription of actual duty (1951).

But note here that the story does not advocate spurious moral action (emphasis added). In fact, it reinforces resolutely the obligatory nature of truth-telling and promise-keeping. But because *Pond Secrets* proffers a moral framework that is intended to be usable, it allows for reasonable exceptions to accommodate the ill-defined nature of moral circumstances.

Pond Secrets identifies two specific criteria that substantiate cause for exceptions: life and liberty. The universal principles of life and liberty are revered in *The Declaration of Independence* and entrusted in our *Constitution*. They are so well-

founded that their reliability as standards for moral argument can hardly be called to question. Most people would certainly agree that they are standards to be preserved and protected.

Note that the “pursuit of happiness” is not included as a standard for two specific reasons. First happiness is contingent to a great extent, upon life and liberty. Second, it is the view of this module that the concept of happiness is too ambiguous philosophically for children to consider productively within the proposed justice framework. It would, however, be interesting for older children or adults working with *Pond Secrets* to incorporate the concept of happiness into a theory of obligation that stems from the justice framework as currently described.

Backtracking a bit, it becomes readily apparent when operating within this justice framework that the caring perspective can substantiate cause for exceptions to principles based in fairness. Likewise, the same is true in reverse when reasons of fairness substantiate cause for exceptions to empathic interpretations based in ethical caring. The two components, therefore, inter-work with each other within the process of moral reasoning. Balance is achieved through the development of sound reasons and reasoning.

There is a concinnous quality with regards to using fairness and caring as a foundation for making moral decisions or judgments. However, the just perspective presented in *Pond Secrets* necessitates balancing fairness and caring when the two components are in contrariety. The story states this outright. This entails the ability to develop sound reasons and sound reasoning when examining moral dilemmas and validating moral points of view. This highlights the importance of critical and creative

thinking to moral reasoning. Thus, the analysis turns to examine critical and creative thinking more closely.

Critical and Creative Thinking

What does it mean to think critically and creatively? The initial difficulty with the term “critical and creative” is that it can convey the impression that there are two kinds of thinking mutually exclusive of each other. The tendency exists, therefore, to approach the critical and creative thinking distinction with stereotypical preconceptions.

Critical thinking is generally conceived as thinking that is logical, analytical or evaluative. It conjures images of fixed rules, Venn diagrams, and desks lined neatly in a row. Similarly, creative thinking is frequently thought of as being imaginative, inventive or inspirational. Certainly, it is more likely to bring to mind, unassumingly, the painter before the physicist upon hearing the word “creative”.

Consider then, DaVinci’s technical and anatomical drawings. Contemplate also, Einstein's use of the “railway embankment” as an example of the analogical thinking that helped him to flush out his theories of relativity. Who then, was the critical thinker, and who was the creative thinker? Examples such as these, demonstrate that there is no fixed boundary between critical and creative thinking, should one exist at all.

Interestingly, stereotyping leads unsuspectingly to the fallacy of bifurcation, even when the subject matter is about thinking. By inhibiting the formation of multiple perspectives and their integration, stereotypes induce what Richard Paul refers to as

monological thinking (1990, 205-6). This kind of thinking, epitomized by the singular perspective, can ripen into what is commonly known as “black and white” thinking.

The monological view invites a one or the other approach. Cognition is neither just critical thinking, nor just creative thinking. It is both. It is a fluid and dynamic process that integrates critical and creative thinking. One of the main goals of critical and creative thinking is to better understand human learning. There is an unfortunate irony, considering the subject matter, in the inclination to begin with a flawed approach. But it is understandable when stereotypes about thinking remain so persistent.

Some sources, for example, present critical thinking as formula thinking. Although this is hardly the case, it is easy to see how an educator becoming more familiar with critical thinking could conceive it to be akin to some kind of algorithmic thinking, while identifying creative thinking as an entirely separate activity with its own time and place. This misconception must be dismantled and corrected. Skilled thinkers integrate critical and creative thinking because inquiry is directed by the thinker, not the formula.

The basic reason why the “critical and creative” dichotomy exists is because categorizing thinking makes it possible to study. The brain is a natural categorizer (Caine and Caine 1991, 81). Identifying, grouping and classifying kinds of thinking into categories permits analysis and evaluation of the thinking process. Critical thinking and creative thinking are the two main categories that subsume all the other categories.

Suspending kinds of thinking in categories allows close and thorough examination from different perspectives. It also enhances the capability to inspect the relationships between them. Scrutinizing categories of thinking, and the relationships between them,

yields theories about the thinking process. More exhaustive scrutiny results in more insightful and useful theories. This is directly relevant to the reliability of what is learned about thinking. Categorizing, therefore, is a necessary theoretical prerequisite to learning about thinking.

When accessed, these categories manifest themselves as thinking skills.

Categories of critical and creative thinking skills can be found classified in thinking skills taxonomies or mapped out in decision-making/problem solving models. For a clear example, see Thinking Skills in Science, in *Biology: The Study of Life*, (Schraer and Stolze 1995, TG 26-33). These categories of thinking process any cognitive task of purposive significance. This alone is sufficient reason to assign critical and creative thinking instruction as a national priority in education.

The categories of critical and creative thinking and the adjunct procedural standards contained within, are the same regardless of subject domain. Engaging these standards in classical philosophy is called the Socratic method, in science it is empirical method, history has historical thinking, law its legal reasoning, and so on. Admittedly, different subject domains have different nomenclatures and varying systems of knowledge organization. But the categorical procedures of knowledge acquisition and belief formation remain constant throughout subject domains. Thus, transferring thinking skills and dispositions throughout subject domains is a key aspect of critical and creative thinking instruction.

By categorizing thinking, the intention is not to separate kinds of thinking, but to bring them together by better understanding the relationships between them. This

includes the main thinking categories, “critical” and “creative”, which are interdependent processes. Any wholesale distinction between the two must be properly interpreted as solely artificial in nature for analytical purposes.

Bearing this in mind, theorists commonly describe critical thinking as thinking that converges to form a judgment, and creative thinking as thinking that diverges to generate ideas. For purposes of analytical practicality, the module extends this distinction to examine the two categories separately. Each has its specific focus. Critical thinking is reviewed to build a description of the kind of thinking reflected in the story's content. Its intention is to supplement what *Pond Secrets* aims to teach children about critical thinking with formal theory. The review of creative thinking outlines concepts relevant to the educator considering how *Pond Secrets* can be used to optimize its educational utility. Its aim is to draft the main ideas *Pond Secrets* was designed around to achieve meaningful learning through a creative teaching context consistent with Brain-based learning theory.

Critical Thinking

Robert Ennis defines critical thinking as: “Reasonable reflective thought focused in deciding what to believe or do” (Ennis, 1985). This is widely recognized among contemporary theorists as a standard definition of critical thinking. But not without criticism.

Matthew Lipman, for example, charges that this definition is too vague (1988, 38). Ennis seems to admit this himself, when describing an earlier definition that was “narrower” than the one cited here (1985, 11). The older definition, which he abandoned, excluded creative thinking. The more recent definition does not exclude creative thinking. But it does not include creative thinking either. Ennis does, however, note immediately after his definition:

Formulating hypotheses, alternative ways of viewing a problem, questions, possible solutions, and plans for investigating something are creative acts that come under this definition (ibid.10).

Problems can occur, however, if this notation is not conveyed along with the definition when cited by other authors. This can lead to slanted or incomplete interpretations of critical thinking. With potential for misconceptions, there should not be room for unnecessary ambiguity in critical thinking's definition. Ennis's definition need not be so general. It can be augmented into a more descriptive definition. For this

purpose, the module adopts Ennis's definition as a springboard for an expanded and more distinct description of critical thinking.

The module begins by including the concept “imaginative” to the definition. This word is chosen because it characterizes Ennis's notation about creative thinking without distracting or detracting too much from the principal notion of reasonableness. The footnote here is that educators need to know at what points imaginative thinking fits into the reasoning process and for what purposes.

The involvement of creative thinking in the critical thinking process is not the only aspect of Ennis's definition that can be improved. Returning back to Lipman, he argues convincingly that critical thinking “Relies upon criteria, is self-correcting, and is sensitive to context” (Lipman 1983, 39). These are important and useful principles (criteria) of critical thinking that bring added meaning to its definition. They are essential tenets (criteria) of reason, which without, moral reasoning could not occur.

The module also has specific interest in Robert Sternberg's conception of critical thinking. He defines critical thinking as: “the mental processes, strategies and representations people use to solve problems, make decisions, and learn new concepts” (1985, 46). Since it is so general, Ennis's definition neglects to pinpoint the critical thinking used in learning new ideas. The critical thinking involved in theorizing and developing learning strategies is too significant to let go unmentioned. The skilled thinker is a skilled learner. Learning must be specified as a focus of critical thinking, along with decision-making, belief formation and problem-solving.

Richard Paul has written extensively about critical thinking. Three of his observations, in particular, contribute significantly to the module's definition of critical thinking. They are: critical thinking as a questioning process, critical thinking as a dialogical process, and critical thinking's strong/weak sense distinction (1990, 269-98, 204-23, 191-203). These ideas help to organize a more insightful understanding of critical thinking.

Critical thinking is purposive inquiry disciplined to form reliable decisions/judgments and secure certainty in knowledge. Throughout the critical thinking process, the skilled thinker is formulating questions. Regardless at what point of the process, questions are quite literally, the criteria of any given category of critical thinking. For instance, questions determine the reliability of an observation, the probability of a cause, or the soundness of an argument. Developing critical thinking skills means developing skill forming, using and answering criteria questions within critical thinking categories.

Moreover, questions not only derive the criteria of critical thinking, but also of the subject context that it applies to in the form of standards, principles, rules, and so forth. Still further, questions evaluate ideas in context to, and in accordance with, criteria generated by critical thinking. Indeed, questions are questioned with regard to procedural, strategic or ethical use. Critical thinking could perhaps be more appropriately referred to as critical questioning.

Ancient Greek philosophers understood this. They examined ideas in groups using dialogue as the principal means of questioning. The significant feature of the

dialogue, or dialogical questioning, was that it permitted different points of view. The Greeks understood that in order for an idea to have merit with respect to reasonableness or truthfulness, it had to withstand scrutiny from opposing points of view. This strategy evolved the rudiments of thesis, antithesis, synthesis questioning. Eventually, dialectical inquiry epitomized what has become known as Socratic method. The development of the dialogue was important for many reasons. One that is particularly salient here, is that the synthesis component of the dialectic integrates the criteria of thinking, information and ideas.

Socratic method seeks reasonable explanations. But it can not work if opposing points of view are not questioned fairly. Even when ideas are questioned objectively, special pleading can go unnoticed, particularly in complex or expansive problem spaces. Until such explanations are found unreasonable, they resume with immunity in the realm of reason. Some people take advantage of this to advance fallacious ideas as if they were perfectly reasonable. This is where Paul's strong sense/weak sense distinction of critical thinking is particularly relevant.

Paul distinguishes two forms of critical thinking. He defines strong sense critical thinking as "fair-minded" and weak sense critical thinking as "selfish" or "sophistic". The module challenges this distinction because it does not view sophistic thinking as critical thinking at all. This is clearly shown by Paul's description of weak sense critical thinking, which violates the most basic principles, standards and dispositions (criteria) of critical thinking. Weak sense critical thinking, as described by Paul, is just weak thinking. It is not critical thinking, not even in form.

From the module's point of view, Paul's distinction is a false dichotomy. It would reject it in its entirety, if it did not share Paul's concern about those who intentionally misuse or exploit critical thinking to compromise, or worse, undermine reasonable inquiry for personal advantage. Despite itself, Paul's distinction serves a valuable purpose as a vivid reminder of a practice that can range anywhere from the superficial to the abysmal.

The danger with sophism is that it can be subtle and resemble critical thinking. It can yield very persuasive arguments, but not without ultimately usurping reasonable reflection. The whole point of reasonable reflection is to ascertain the most reasonable justification for a judgment or belief. Ignoring this standard (criterion) defeats the purpose of critical thinking. Doing so deliberately, defies the entire process.

If critical thinking is to remain critical thinking, it must uphold the integrity of reasonable inquiry. To ensure this, ideas have to be considered with equal treatment in context to, and consistent with, the general criteria of critical thinking. This evokes the responsibility of using critical thinking honorably and with an overall sense of fair play. In terms of obligation, critical thinking is grounded in fairness. This is why it is essential to include the concept of "fair-mindedness" in its definition.

From the module's point of view, critical thinking in its strongest sense, is when moral concepts (criteria) become relevant to the integrity of the process itself. If relevant moral concepts are knowingly abrogated, critical thinking ends, and sophism begins. The concept of fair-mindedness is one basic example. By virtue of empathy, caring is another. Although he does not highlight empathy in his strong sense/weak sense

distinction as he does fair-mindedness, Paul does identify “intellectual empathy” as a strong sense critical thinking trait (ibid. 197).

Focusing on empathic reasoning, Paul approaches empathy as a function of fair-mindedness. To his credit, Paul identifies a specific point in the reasoning process where empathy is distinctly relevant. But to more fully appreciate its general significance to critical thinking, empathy must be also recognized in its own terms as the basis of ethical caring. But how can caring be relevant enough to distinguish when critical thinking is widely known as a dispassionate process?

Critical thinking is certainly principled thinking. The accommodation of principles develops the acquisition of what Paul refers to as “intellectual virtues” (ibid. 192). Paul includes humility, courage, perseverance and integrity as intellectual virtues or strong sense critical thinking traits. He reviews each of them, acknowledges their inter-dependence and marshals them, along with empathy, under the general heading of fair-mindedness. But as Paul argues, critical thinking looks at ideas from different perspectives. It should be relatively clear, from earlier discussion, how these virtues can also be reasonably interpreted as fundamental qualities of ethical caring.

Recall that natural caring is the basis for ethical caring. To accommodate virtues, the thinker must care about the thinking process and its outcomes. This is especially so when judgments or beliefs affect the lives of others or life in general. Not caring, promotes selfishness, fallacy and outright nonsense.

Critical thinking seeks out reasonable solutions that take into account others and community. Thinking critically, indeed, means caring about people. A reverence for the

process develops with this understanding of critical thinking, manifesting the commitment to use critical thinking to help others and not to take advantage of them. Sophism, then, is also not a critical thinking option from a perspective of empathic commitment.

Critical thinking in the service of others is ethical caring. As established earlier, ethical caring is another description of beneficence. Both ethical caring and beneficence are conspicuously absent from Paul's list of virtues and general nomenclature. Paul's approach assumes ethical caring or beneficence with the accommodation of the other virtues.

The module has the concern that this may be an unwarranted expectation. It argues that identifying caring as an important disposition of critical thinking enhances the appreciation of beneficence as a virtue, as well as other inter-dependent virtues. Moreover, the module argues that advancing the status of caring as a main perspective of the virtues, along with fair-mindedness, presents a more balanced critical thinking framework. Even Kant, a champion of fairness, qualified his categorical imperative with the "pursuit of the goodwill" (1964, 61-71).

Having considered the ideas of Ennis, Lipman, Sternberg and Paul, the module submits the following definition of critical thinking: Critical thinking is used to make decisions, form beliefs, solve problems and learn new concepts. It is a dialogical questioning process that uses reasonable and imaginative reflection. Additionally, it is a purposive and disciplined process that relies on criteria, is self-correcting and is sensitive to context. In its strongest sense, critical thinking is fair-minded and caring.

This is a reliable definition of critical thinking. All the experts mentioned above are leading critical thinking theorists. Having synthesized their ideas, this definition is largely attributable to them. Note however, that the inclusion of the concepts “imaginative” and “caring” is done on the module's own initiative.

Critical thinking is the study of criteria. Besides principles and virtues, the main criteria of critical thinking are the categories of thought described earlier. Each category contains its own respective criteria in the form of questions. In turn, each criterion may have its own set of criteria questions. The questions contained in critical thinking categories are the "nut and bolts" of critical thinking.

Accessing the criteria questions of given critical thinking categories manifests skill using particular kinds of critical thinking; hence the term, critical thinking skills. Children need to know what the criteria questions are to initiate critical thinking. Teaching them to pose and address criteria question begins the process. Providing children the opportunity to practice asking criteria questions develops critical thinking skills. Allowing them to practice using the skills together in combination develops skill in critical thinking as a process. *Pond Secrets* is designed to accomplish this through the story's content and structure using reflective dialogue, improvisational drama, and other activities the educator deems relevant or useful.

Pond Secrets focuses on developing skill in four categories of critical thinking. These critical thinking skills are: making a reliable observation, evaluating a source of information, forming a reliable framework of perspectives, and examining cause and

effect relationships. These are the module's target skills of reasoning, which are viewed as basic skills of theorizing and making predictions.

The target skills listed above are infused into *Pond Secret's* content. The story has two main parts. The target skills are illustrated as integral themes of the first part. The criteria questions attached to each target skill are then identified (by Tree at Solitary Pt.) in the segue connecting the first and second parts. The target skills are then highlighted again as major themes of the second part of the story. Reinforcing the target skills in this way exploits skill acquisition theory (Anderson 1995). Practice develops skill. This is the rationale underscoring the story structure. *Pond Secrets* is specifically designed to facilitate the acquisition of the target skills.

The first part introduces the target skills indirectly. The segue then directly delineates the target skill's respective criteria questions. This permits the learning of procedural knowledge in declarative knowledge form, a prerequisite for developing cognitive skill. Applying the criteria questions back to the first part of the story develops procedural insight into how the target skills apply. With this insight, children can delve into the second part of the story with a procedural knowledge of the target skills.

The criteria questions of the categories of critical thinking targeted for skill development in *Pond Secrets* are substantiated by experts in cognitive studies. The criteria questions relevant to making a reliable observation are validated by W. Ward Fearnside (1980), and Elizabeth Loftus (1979), respectively. The criteria questions relevant to evaluating a source of information are validated by Kevin O'Reilly (1983). (For the educator who is unsure, note here that a private source of information is usually

more reliable than a public source.) The standards relevant to forming a reliable framework of perspectives are derived from criteria questions described by David Perkins (1987), and Richard Paul (1990), respectively. Finally, the criteria questions relevant to cause and effect relationships, and the post hoc ergo propter hoc (after it therefore because of it) fallacy are validated by Perry Weddle (1978).

The critical thinking concepts contained in *Pond Secrets* are technically sound. But to be taught in accordance with its design, several key points relevant to its implementation require brief review. Thus, the module now moves to sketch out how *Pond Secrets* can lend itself to creative teaching from a Brain-based learning perspective. This will help the educator use *Pond Secrets* more effectively

Creative Teaching

Pond Secrets is a creative enterprise that provides the context to explore critical thinking in its strongest sense. It can be read in a classroom or even performed on stage. These rather straight forward approaches to *Pond Secrets* can certainly yield valuable results. However, *Pond Secrets* is intended to offer two other inter-related opportunities to engage activities that facilitate the acquisition of critical thinking skill and the strong sense conceptual change accommodation of critical thinking concepts (principles and virtues).

First, *Pond Secrets* models a community of inquiry. This provides the opportunity to create a similar environment in the classroom. By creating a setting for dialogue, children can learn and practice critical thinking in its classical context.

Second, *Pond Secrets* creates the opportunity to engage improvisational drama. Through role-taking, children can portray characters from *Pond Secrets*, or create their own to assume the "mantle" of expert thinking. Indeed, children can create their own situations, themes, metaphors, motifs, and the like, to invent problems or dilemmas that call for them to act as problem-solvers. A form of natural learning, this is very much how younger children work out concepts during play. Consistent with Brain-based learning theory, meaningful learning is indicated when children create their own stories through role-taking (1991, 113).

With these opportunities, the educator can make Pond come alive. But the educator must be willing to relinquish some control and allow children to learn from each other. Cooperative learning is a main feature of brain-based learning (ibid. 121).

The educator must also feel comfortable facilitating reflective dialogue and directing improvisational drama. According to Brain-based learning theory their interaction is a powerful teaching combination (ibid. 153). A good example is developing children's ability to reason empathically. Alone, dialogue does not require children to receive alternative or opposing views as their own. But with drama, children can experience competing points of view as if they were their own through role-taking. Transferring perspectives, oriented through role-taking, to dialogue cultivates open-minded and empathic discussion that integrates varying points of view.

Another powerful feature of *Pond Secrets* is its potential to provoke a wide array of individual and group projects. For instance, the class as a group can study pond habitats by having individual students report factual information about different types of animal, insect and plant species in imaginative role. Attaching a target skill or virtue to the role, would challenge children further to make meaningful connections that are important to them. Giving children the opportunity to pattern themes (thematic teaching) is an other important feature of Brain-based learning theory that enables children to integrate knowledge in more meaningful ways (ibid. 81).

Integrative learning, then, is another feature of Brain-based learning theory incorporated into *Pond Secret's* design (ibid. 119). The imaginative context that *Pond Secrets* provides is powerful because it expands the potential number of possibilities to

form meaningful connections. It is important for the educator to realize the extent to which integrative learning is possible with *Pond Secrets*.

For example, the very first words of the chorus (Pond Reeds), “Every four years, when the calendar catches up with time”, poses questions that can be used to introduce a basic science lesson. This, in turn, can elicit mathematical thinking regarding the relationship between the calendar and the time that it takes for the earth to revolve around the sun. The target skill of making a reliable observation can be used to underscore the lesson which can then lead to individual homework assignments ranging anywhere from writing a report about telescopes to a poem about Galileo.

There are many more opportunities for integrative learning in *Pond Secrets*. Some are more apparent than others. For instance, Ghostcrab's obvious insight into the weather can spark an interest in Earth Science. A more subtle example is found in Citizen Owl's ability to calculate the distance between Citizen Yellow Warbler and Wrigley, which can be used to introduce children to the study of triangles.

Although the module emphasizes the application of critical thinking (in its strongest sense) to moral issues, *Pond Secrets* provides diverse opportunities to apply critical thinking to other subjects. The Citizens of Pond foster a social milieu for valuable integrative learning and questioning. In order to cultivate a community of inquiry, *Pond Secrets* promotes a community of ideas. The educator is assigned the task of orchestrating inquiry. Although this module has provided general guidelines and suggestions, it does not contain specific lesson plans. This task is the educator's responsibility. The rationale for this is quite reasonable.

As director of experience, it is the educator who is sensitive to the degree of creative risk students are prepared to take. Activities entailing the overt imaginative response involve a greater degree of risk than those that use imaginative thought more indirectly. The educator's objective is to encourage the greatest degree of risk-taking without causing stress. Only the educator can make that assessment and plan accordingly.

Moreover, the educator knows the needs and abilities of the students. The educator may determine that the students may benefit from a particular aspect of *Pond Secrets* and cluster activities around that part or theme. By conveying that flexibility, the module benefits from the educator's knowledge of the students.

Also, the educator is directly familiar with the learning environment. *Pond Secrets* requires a safe and positive space that reinforces an atmosphere for relaxed alertness (ibid. 143). Relaxed alertness enhances imaginative thinking by reducing the stress associated with risk-taking.

The educator is in the position to determine what degree of risk-taking the learning environment will support. Additionally, the educator may discover meaningful ways, peculiar to a particular learning environment, in which *Pond Secrets* can affect a more affirming and inspiring atmosphere. The module does not intend to restrict such opportunities.

However, the freedom to customize lesson plans comes with a challenge. As a partner in its implementation, *Pond Secrets* draws on the imagination of the educator. The module, thus calls for the educator to be resourceful and enterprising when using

Pond Secrets. As Caine and Caine state succinctly: “In brain-based learning, the emphasis is on the teacher's creativity, and not on the ability to implement what others have created” (ibid. 178).

Conclusion

Theory of mind at age 12 is at an ideal point in development for children to imaginatively explore a mythical Pond through its reflective folklore as a critical and creative thinking experience. *Pond Secrets* is an intervention designed to initiate this experience in reasonable accordance with available theory. It provides the opportunity to change children's view of thinking skills and virtues, as ethereal abstracts, to concrete tools essential for learning, problem-solving and personal growth.

Synthesizing the main elements of *Pond Secrets*, the educator's principal task in its implementation, is to create a learning environment that integrates a balance between the following criteria: critical thinking and creative thinking, dialogue and drama, reason and empathy, principles and commitments, and fairness and caring. In doing so, the educator is granted the freedom to customize lesson plans to the needs of the learning environment as long as the criteria of critical thinking and the justice model are upheld as they have been described, in a methodology that is neutral and consistent with Brain-based learning theory.

Pond Secrets can be best summed up as a philosophic drama. It follows next. The opening line is a tribute to French film-maker Jean Cocteau, who in the prologue of his masterpiece, *The Beauty and the Beast* (1946), reminds us that every magical children's story begins with the words: "Once upon a time..."

POND SECRETS:

REFLECTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND VIRTUE

Il 'etait une fois...

a timeless chorus sings when
the wind shifts through *Pond's Reeds*
in just the right way...

Pond Reeds

Every four years
when the calendar
catches up with time
a leaf floats by
the most northern point of Pond.

Not an ordinary leaf
but one of distinguished shape
and vibrant color
always sparkling
shimmering sun
for all to plainly see.

And with aroma
quite distinct
a spicy apple
pumpkin scent
Citizens of Pond
can easily sense this
as the sign to meet
and reflect
about the affairs
of their lives
and interests

of mind
at a place known
through the ages of time

as the Point at Solitary Leaf.

Here

the water meets land

at medium depth

as rocks at edge

slope sharply downward

providing comfort of space

for Citizens of water

to join the proceedings.

Above the Water

the rocks climb

gradually higher

layer by layer

as steps in a staircase

curl unevenly around

like a beckoning finger

old and wise

these rocks cincture

a natural rest

for Citizens of Land

to inspect the day.

Above these rocks

beyond the final step

is fertile soil

from which grows

a tree.

Just above ground
its trunk
divides into four branches.

While three of the four
branch out in varied directions
with irregular forms
the fourth swings down
in a graceful curve
just over the rocks
and above the water
an elegant perch
for Citizens of Air
to view and review
the course of events.

Also quite distinct
are the roots of this tree
sometimes visible
meandering down
between the rocks
enjoying curious routes
into the water
and the bottom below
connecting together
all that is Pond

Water
Land
and Air.

When
and only when
Solitary Leaf arrives at Pond
does this union truly celebrate.

Chords are struck
and song is heard
as branches rustle
melodic whispers
calling for Citizens to assemble
and welcome this arrival.

Moreover
when Citizens gather next
four main speakers
compose the meeting
as a formal event
that questions through dialogue
what elements of thought
are worthy of Pond
to help Citizens
fulfill their endeavors.

In a hollow log
that juts out over the water
lives the first speaker.

From this balcony
Bullfrog does his speaking
as Governor of Pond
statesman

and keeper of promises
with firm voice
strong-willed and untiring
though at times
danger lurks
his Courage
leads the way.

Just next to this rostrum
sways Owl's favorite spot
on the tip
of the fourth branch
contoured with grace.

As a scientist
Owl considers
multiple perspectives
with a turn of her head
she sees
a completeness of views
through very large eyes
her Objectivity prevails.

In the water below
Rainbow Trout surfaces
from time to time
nudging water lilies aside
to take her turn to speak.
As resident artist of Pond
she revels

in the connection of things
arranging
re-arranging
forever changing
offering imaginative responses
playing and discovering
struggling and overcoming
her Passion and Unity
are felt.

On the shore
between the log and the branch
a large rock serves
as a platform
for Turtle to speak
as philosopher of Pond.

Born a snapper
untold years ago
his life span
extends through generations
as caretaker of history
learned reason
has replaced his bite.

Exploring
seeking justice
searching for truth
his Integrity
is well pronounced.

So these four thinkers
form a Council of experts
whose collective experience
much respected
provides diverse background
to consider even
the most challenging questions.

Wait!

Is it so?

Indeed

Solitary Leaf is sighted
as a sudden rush of wind
surges through
branches normal sway
as if the whole of Pond
including all the hinterland
had taken one refreshing breath
to carry Tree's inviting whisper
as this arrival
is announced.

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Gather together Citizens
Yellow Perch and Johnny Darters
Tadpoles and Redfin Shiners
Yellow Warblers and Red-winged Blackbirds
to think about thinking.
Join together
Ducks and Geese
Muskrats and Watershrews
Raccoons and Rabbits
to think of thinking.
Come together
Beetles and Waterstriders
Flatworms and Phantom Gnats
Damselies and Spiders
to think for thinking.
Gather everyone
while Solitary Leaf is here
and discover this pattern
as it becomes clear
think about thinking
to learn about thinking
and think about learning
to learn about learning
as secrets of Pond
eventually emerge.

Governor Bullfrog

On behalf of this Council...I welcome everyone to the Point at Solitary Leaf. As you are all quite aware...there is only so much time in a day...so I suggest we begin as soon as we can.

Citizen Butterfly

Governor...with all due respect...may I ask the Council a question?

Governor Bullfrog

By all means. Questioning is why we are here.

Citizen Butterfly

I am Monarch...Citizen Butterfly. I was wondering why it's necessary to think about thinking? We all think. Why can't we just think and be done with it? I'd much rather be roaming in meadows today. It's going to be a beautiful day...and there may be others who feel the same way.

Pond Reeds

With these words
came uneasy stirring
but Governor Bullfrog
managed well.

Governor Bullfrog

I agree with you Citizen...it will be a beautiful day. And I believe that you have asked a most excellent question. Why should we be so concerned about our thinking? Tell me Citizen...you seem to enjoy the good life here at Pond...you dance with flowers and you have many friends...the rules are fair and your fellow Citizens care...is this not so?

Citizen Butterfly

Why yes...this is so.

Governor Bullfrog

Did you know Citizen...that Pond was not always as it is today? There was a time when things were altogether different...a time of rumors and innuendoes...false assumptions and misconceptions ...before we came together as Citizens to make Pond a better place to live.

Pond Reeds

Desperate times
they were indeed
when Pond was a place
without a home
foreign to itself
where creatures lived
with little caring
or knowledge
shared between them
fending for themselves
strangers from each other
without trust
or accountability.

Governor Bullfrog

Perhaps it would be helpful if we recount the legendary Ghostcrab. What say you Citizen Turtle?

Citizen Turtle

Telling the tale of Ghostcrab is a good idea. It would certainly remind us of the time before the good life we enjoy today...showing how important our thinking is to what we do.

Governor Bullfrog

Quite right...and doing so will also provide insight into the tradition of Solitary Leaf. Why don't you begin Citizen Turtle since you were actually there.

Citizen Turtle

I suppose I could Governor...but I was with Jeremiah...who for the benefit of those who don't know...was the Governor's great grandfather's great grandfather. So in his honor it may be more appropriate if you began the story.

Pond Reeds

Governor paused
considering this suggestion
lineaments furling
into stoic profile
first pointing upward
then down to the water

graciously beckoning
Citizen Rainbow Trout.

Governor Bullfrog

Citizen Trout...your words are most eloquent... wouldn't you help us begin?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

I would be delighted. Now let's see...it happened a very long time ago...on a late summer afternoon. The day was overcast...gradually turning yellow green...and if that wasn't odd enough...a noticeable calm had descended upon all of Pond...making its most southern point very strange indeed. This is the place we have come to know as Muddy Bottom... where circling mists spin an air of mystery and the waters run deep in want of knowledge. It was there on the outskirts that Citizen Turtle...just a young snapper back then...was exploring the foreland. He was a slender fellow...not with the awesome shell that he resides in now.

Citizen Turtle

May I continue Rainbow?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

But of course.

Citizen Turtle

Ah...to be young again! I recall that day very well. I had wandered into the foot of a fairly steep ridge so I stopped to take some rest. That was when I felt a soft thump on my shell. I remembered how odd that felt...and how odd that it had become so quiet so suddenly. I reassured myself that it was only the loud silence that had made me jittery and there was no need to be frightened. So as I began to make my way up the ridge...a very unusual creature came tumbling off my shell...right smack into a giant bur-reed.

Jeremiah

Oho...goodness gracious...oh no...what's happening!

Pond Reeds

It could be said
Jeremiah wasn't enchanted
by this excursion
dazed and confused
he plucked himself off
one particular bur
that truly got his attention.

Jeremiah

Ouch! Goodness these things hurt...ouch! Say...you're not a rock. What are you...some kind of monster?

Snapper

Hardly. I'm Snapper...and I'm a turtle.

Jeremiah

What's a turtle?

Snapper

I'm a turtle.

Jeremiah

Well I've never seen a turtle before.

Snapper

Now you have. What about you...a frog aren't you?

Jeremiah

That's right. I'm a bullfrog...Jeremiah Bullfrog...though I haven't been one very long. I was most recently a tadpole.

Snapper

A tadpole is like a fish right?

Jeremiah

That's right.

Snapper

So you mean that you were once one kind of animal...and now you're another?

Jeremiah

That's correct.

Snapper

Now that's hard to believe.

Jeremiah

Its true! I should know...it happened to me.

Snapper That must have been terribly confusing for you.

Jeremiah It was...but I'm adapting.

Snapper That's good. Well at least now you know the difference between a rock and a turtle shell.

Jeremiah How peculiar it is.

Snapper Hold on! Have you looked at yourself recently...all crouched up like that?

Jeremiah That's *only* so I can spring into a leap...watch!

Pond Reeds Saying this
Jeremiah jettisoned
into the air
most impressively
but quite unfortunately
not known to him
a lingering bur
remained undetected
and when he landed
it was with a distinctive...

Jeremiah Ouch! Darn these burs sting!

Snapper Can you show me how you jump again?

Jeremiah Very amusing!

Snapper Well if you had my shell you wouldn't have to worry about bur-reeds.

Jeremiah I suppose...but I'd have to lug it around everywhere I went.

Snapper

True...but you'd have the comforts of home wherever you went. I don't have the freedom to jump wherever I choose...but I'm home wherever I am. See...I'll show you.

Pond Reeds

Jeremiah looked on
and watched in surprise
as Snapper had vanished
into his home.

Jeremiah

Where did you go? Are you going to come back out?

Pond Reeds

A playful moment
of repose.

Jeremiah

Well are you...or are you just going to stay in there?

Pond Reeds

Just then
a raven
shiny and slick
landed abruptly
onto a limb
sporting jocular eyes
and mischievous grin
not to mention
an arrogant manner.

Mr. Popinjay

Say you...are you daft? Are you some kind of loony bird!
What are you doing talking to that rock?

Jeremiah

Actually...I'm a bullfrog.

Pond Reeds

Curious to see
the source
of this voice
trumpeting so much disdain
Snapper popped out

into the open
surprising its composer.

Snapper

And he's speaking to me. I'm a turtle...not a rock.

Mr. Popinjay

Well how beguiling you are. A thousand pardons...merely a figure of speech...no offense taken I hope.

Snapper

Just who are you anyway?

Mr. Popinjay

Mr. Popinjay at your service.

Snapper

Isn't this an interesting coincidence. I've seen a popinjay once before passing through on migration. He had such beautiful feathers with many bright colors. So I'm curious...where would your exquisite plumage be?

Mr. Popinjay

I lost it in my travels. Besides who needs a plumage when you are as important as I am?

Jeremiah

And why are you so important?

Mr. Popinjay

It just so happens that I am civilized and cultured ...refined and sophisticated...not that you would understand these things.

Snapper

What might you be suggesting?

Mr. Popinjay

Why nothing at all. I'm merely describing facts as they are.

Jeremiah

That may very well be...according to you. But tell us...what do you do that makes you so important?

Mr. Popinjay

I'm a messenger. I fly around this region and report on what is happening. And I must say...this is quite a peculiar place with this Ghostcrab fellow wandering about.

Snapper

Who's Ghostcrab?

Mr. Popinjay

Isn't that interesting...you seem to know about popinjays but nothing about Ghostcrab.

Snapper

What does that have to do with my question? I've already told you that was just a coincidence.

Mr. Popinjay

Nothing then I suppose. You're quite clever... different from the others...so you should have no trouble heeding my warning. Beyond this ridge and beyond the raspberry fields dwells a phantom. Every once in a while he comes out to strike fear into the heart of Pond. He is known as Ghostcrab and everyone is quite terrified of him.

Jeremiah

What does he do that frightens everyone so much?

Mr. Popinjay

He is one who causes the storms. Every time he appears a storm follows...storms so terrible that everyone fears him.

Jeremiah

Have you ever seen Ghostcrab?

Mr. Popinjay

No not yet...but others have.

Snapper

Up close...or from a distance?

Mr. Popinjay

From a distance. Those who have tried to get closer haven't lived to tell about it. That's why I'm warning everybody. He's roaming as we speak. So beware...I've now warned you about this wandering wraith...the path you're on is less traveled.

Pond Reeds

With a flap
Mr. Popinjay
was gliding in air
cawing and circling
and cawing again

over and over
Ghostcrab has risen
Ghostcrab has risen
leaving behind caution
and a trembling bough.

Jeremiah

What do you think Snapper?

Snapper

He's an odd bird.

Jeremiah

I mean what do you think about Ghostcrab?

Snapper

I'm not sure. Mr. Popinjay never said he saw Ghostcrab.

Jeremiah

That's true...but he did say others have seen him.

Snapper

Sure...but only from a distance. Who knows what they saw...if anything.

Jeremiah

What we need to do is check for ourselves.

Snapper

I think so.

Jeremiah

Are you scared?

Snapper

I don't know...maybe I am. It's hard for me to be scared of something that may not exist.

Jeremiah

What if he does? Don't you think it's better to turn back now and not take any chances?

Snapper

Perhaps...but all we know is what Mr. Popinjay told us. I'm not convinced that we can rely on what he says...or what others have told him.

Jeremiah You may be right...but I still have an uneasy feeling about this.

Snapper Oh so do I...I've never seen Pond quite like this before. But I think we'll be okay if we look out for one another...even if things get dangerous.

Jeremiah I don't like the sound of dangerous.

Snapper Whoever does? But sooner or late someone's going to have to get closer to the truth.

Jeremiah Then let it be later...and somebody else.

Snapper Who then...and when? Everyone's listening to Popinjay and running away...not even knowing what they're afraid of.

Jeremiah Oh yes they do...Ghostcrab!

Snapper But we've been through all that already. That's what they think they're afraid of...but they don't really know. Do you want to be like them?

Jeremiah No...I suppose not.

Snapper So what do you say?

Jeremiah Can I trust you...especially if things get dangerous?

Snapper Absolutely! How about yourself...do you share that confidence with me?

Jeremiah I suppose I do. But I'll tell you...I'm not as courageous as you.

Snapper How do you know? Maybe you are...

Jeremiah

...or perhaps as foolish.

Snapper

Would you make a promise with a fool?

Jeremiah

Of course not!

Snapper

Well I'm no one's fool!

Jeremiah

Okay let's go then...you...me...and my reluctance.

Pond Reeds

On the way
silence was broken
with sounds of panic
and chaotic echoes
of running away.

What had Ghostcrab caused?!

Rippling and splashing
of ducking and darting
diving for safety
and treading in fear.

Beware Ghostcrab has risen!!

Rustling and scattering
in different directions
biting and clawing
getting ahead of the next.

What had Ghostcrab caused?!

Ruffling and fluttering
of entangled feathers

fighting each other
desperate for flight.

Beware Ghostcrab has risen!!

Despite pandemonium
Jeremiah and Snapper
ventured boldly ahead
through raspberry fields
and stretches of marsh
until they had reached
a crescent of trees
clustered with ferns
providing advantage
to peer unnoticed
onto the shoreline below.

Beware Ghostcrab is coming!!

Shuffling strangely
an opaque shadow
in circling mists
scuffling side to side
a spurtling scuttle
then a scuttling stop
occasionally bursting
specters of light
uncanny perceptions
of silver and white.

Beware Ghostcrab is near!!

Snapper

Look there he is!

Jeremiah

That must be him!

Snapper An elusive being...

Jeremiah Goodness! Did you see that glow?

Snapper ...and quite the luminary.

Jeremiah Maybe he really is a ghost!

Snapper There's no way of telling from here. We're still too far away with the light and mist as it is.

Jeremiah We would have to get closer. I can't say that I'm looking forward to that.

Snapper Hmm...if only there was a way.

Jeremiah Maybe there is. What if you crawled down the slope slowly...inch by inch...you could get closer posed as a rock. You've already fooled me...and Mr. Popinjay...who would notice?

Snapper And what will you do?

Jeremiah I'll look out from here and warn you at the first sign of trouble.

Snapper You know...that actually might be a good idea ...except I think I have a slightly better one.

Jeremiah Oh...what's that?

Snapper Why don't we go down the slope together...posed as a bump on a rock?

Jeremiah Wouldn't that be a little obvious?

Snapper If it worked for me...it could work for both of us.

Jeremiah Not necessarily.

Snapper But it might...it just might.

Jeremiah I'm not so sure...remember what Mr. Popinjay said.

Pond Reeds A path less traveled
and a wandering wraith!

Snapper I remember...and I also remember that we agreed to check things out for ourselves.

Jeremiah Fine...but only to the edge of the bluff. Its a pretty steep drop from there.

Pond Reeds Down they started
slowly and quietly
as they possibly could
for silence returned
as ruckus was over
with seeking of hiding
Pond had become
a desolate place
utterly silent
save sounds of wind
and that of scuttle
Clickety-tick.

Beware Ghostcrab is near!!

Closer and closer
fourteen yards inch-meal
they crawled
from crescent of ferns

to edge of the bluff
pretending to be
a bump on a rock
they waited.
From this position
they observed
a cove-shaped ridge
of rocks and earth
steeply sloped
about thirty yards
restrained at bottom
by web of roots
frayed and blackened
and knotted together
of weeping willows
draping Muddy Bottom.

Beware Ghostcrab is here!!!

Now began
hypnotic drizzle
as Ghostcrab reigned
within their view
eyes floating
tangerine glare
above tattered shell
loomed an oversized claw
twice as large
as the other
with hind-legs moving
up and down
like skeletal fingers
tapping nervous rhythm.
Clickety-tick...Clickety-tick!

Ghostcrab

I do enjoy the freedom that the rain brings. It's so refreshing...having to burrow during the dry season gets tedious. Indeed I'm very content occupying my time protecting Pond from storms...making sure that paths and tunnels are clear...and that homes remain secure. I could use some help but nobody's ever here when I come out.

Pond Reeds

Faintly then
a muffled whisper
from a clamshell
of all things...

Kismet

Hey there...who are you calling a nobody?

Ghostcrab

Hmmm...what was that? I could've sworn I heard something.

Pond Reeds

Meanwhile
more whispering
faded down
from above...

Jeremiah

Ghostcrab sure looks menacing. It seems as if he's talking to himself.

Snapper

So it appears. Its too bad we can't make out what he's saying.

Jeremiah

Which doesn't mean he can't hear us...we'd better hush.

Pond Reeds

But Ghostcrab noticed
only raindrops
pattering louder
with increased force.

Ghostcrab

Ahh...it's starting to rain much harder now...and with the clouds...the light...the peculiar way the wind makes the mist

flow...I'm most certain there's going to be a storm. I can sense it in the wind...I feel it in the calm.

Pond Reeds

Clickety-tick!

Ghostcrab

Coming out early was a good idea. I need to make sure that things don't get scattered and broken. Indeed I will see to it that all remains in its proper place.

Pond Reeds

Clickety-tick!

Ghostcrab

Now isn't that interesting...this shell shouldn't be here. In fact I've never seen it before. If only you could speak old shell...to tell me what you think. But there you are...shut so tight.

Pond Reeds

To Ghostcrab's amazement
clamshell opened
a forgotten chest
filled with hope
precious wisdom
and riddles of future things
revealing although quizzical
bearing insight and
a sense of peace
even Ghostcrab's tapping ceased.

Kismet

You must excuse me...it's been a long time since anyone has asked me what I think...a very long time indeed. So abide with me for just a moment...ah yes...here we are...Kismet is my name...and you shall have one soon. Hear these words because I can say this only once. We are all in this life together...and although we are all different...we all have an equal membership to it...even the lowliest clamshell. Together...we must use whatever talents we possess to help each other sustain it...to make Pond a better place to live for ourselves and each other.

Pond Reeds

Ghostcrab listened closely.

Kismet

You have the ability to predict the coming of a storm. And when you do...you set out to protect our homes. You understand the importance of helping others. Unfortunately most who live at Pond do not. But soon all this will change...for a bump on a rock will fall across your path...and an appreciation for sound thinking will bring to light the value of knowledge...courage and kindness...as essential qualities of good will.

Pond Reeds

Ghostcrab seemed perplexed.

Kismet

This discovery will usher a new era of friendship and cooperation...to pursue the meaning of our lives...to be fair and committed to promises...yet understanding that rules of exception are found in compassion...tolerance and forgiveness...the graces of caring. This is the basis of what will be called Citizenship...that which makes us Pond worthy. It begins with a better understanding of our thinking... and how we form beliefs. All this will be passed onto future generations with each coming of a solitary leaf always shining free of rain.

Ghostcrab

A bump on a rock...a solitary leaf? What do you mean by these things?

Kismet

You will find out. Yes...you will find out.

Ghostcrab

I will? How do you know? You must tell me more!

Kismet

I can not.

Ghostcrab

But you must!

Kismet

I've said enough.

Pond Reeds

Sudden closure
for Kismet
just clammed up.

Ghostcrab

No doubt he meant it. How mysterious his talk about a bump on a rock was...and a solitary leaf...even though a lot of what Kismet said made sense. What if everyone sought to be Pond worthy? Would there be betrayal...theft and deception...or would we have the poise to honor truth? And what if there was goodwill at Pond...as Kismet described ...would we get to know each other...with respect and encouragement ...patience and concern? Would the welfare of others come before overfilling the belly? And would there be laughter...I wonder?

Pond Reeds

Would there be laughter?

Ghostcrab

And what if we better understood our thinking ...how beliefs are formed? Would we be reasonable and reflective ...rejecting what misleads us? Would we indeed form more reliable judgments about what to believe...or what to do...the accountability of our Citizenship?

Pond Reeds

Back on the bluff
loosened earth
imbued by mist
turned to mud
with added rain
so Snapper
began to slide
Jeremiah on another ride
both would never forget.
Obeying gravity
and gathering speed
quiet demeanors
turned to hollers

and shrieks
bump on a rock
who needs to pretend
up in the air
they tumbled.
Jeremiah landed in water
while Snapper up-ended
cushioned by fern
teetered helplessly
much to
Ghostcrab's concern.

Jeremiah Good gracious not again...at least this time I didn't land on a bur-reed.

Snapper Jeremiah over here!

Jeremiah What's the matter?

Snapper I'm stuck upside down on my shell!

Jeremiah Then turn yourself over.

Snapper I can't by myself. I need help!

Jeremiah What do you expect me to do?

Snapper Come and flip me over!

Jeremiah Not a chance...Ghostcrab is right behind you! I could try but I don't think it would work...then he'd capture us both!

Snapper But we made a promise!

Ghostcrab You really should honor your promises when you can.

Pond Reeds

With a flick
of his powerful claw
Ghostcrab flipped
Snapper back over.

Ghostcrab

You know Jeremiah...if that is your name...you should be more positive. Say I will do...not try. Say yes to life...connect with it from the inside to the outside...and you will do...achieve and create many things.

Pond Reeds

Seeing Ghostcrab's assistance
and hearing his words
Jeremiah jumped
back onto shore
surprised and curious
and somewhat relieved
though still quite wary
of tangerine eyes
and flickering glow.

Jeremiah

How did you know my name?

Ghostcrab

Your friend called it out a moment ago when he asked for your help. By the way...what is your name? Are you okay?

Pond Reeds

These questions
directed to Snapper
skittishly grateful
naturally spellbound
obviously thankful
though never intending
to be this close
to Ghostcrab.

Snapper

I'm Snapper...and I'm fine thank you...a little light-headed...but really I'm okay...thank you.

“Kismet is my name
and you shall have one soon”
realizing just what
he had meant.

Ghostcrab But please do call me Ghostcrab...I shall receive this name as
my own and answer gladly to it.

Pond Reeds Such sudden approval
Jeremiah and Snapper
exchanged puzzled glances.

Jeremiah Ghostcrab...if its acceptable to call you that...

Ghostcrab I said that it was.

Jeremiah ...well you mentioned there were others who visited you
before us. Did you attack them or bring them harm?

Ghostcrab Certainly not! They perished in previous storms.

Snapper It's been suggested that you're responsible.

Ghostcrab How could that be true? I actually helped them but they
panicked...and then it was too late. I'm sorry. I was quite
serious when I said how important it is not to panic. Heed
that advice...remember...the life you save could very well be
your own.

Jeremiah But don't you summon the storms?

Ghostcrab What do you mean?

Snapper It's believed that you are the cause of these storms.

Ghostcrab I am?

Snapper You see...whenever you are sighted...a storm always seems to follow.

Ghostcrab If I understand what you're saying...not only am I considered to be a Ghost...whatever that may be...but I'm also a rogue who causes thunder and lightening to haunt you.

Jeremiah In so many words...

Snapper ...you could say.

Ghostcrab No wonder everyone ran away. All this time I thought it was because they just didn't care.

Snapper Probably that too.

Ghostcrab And it usually took them at least a couple days to return...that's why they never noticed.

Jeremiah Noticed what?

Ghostcrab The few instances I came out when there was no storm that followed.

Jeremiah Maybe it just didn't reach us...

Snapper ...or passed us by.

Ghostcrab Perhaps...but I think there are other factors which can account for the storms.

Snapper Other factors?

Ghostcrab Yes...other factors like wind...moisture ...temperature and pressure...things like that.

Ghostcrab

You must realize by now that I wouldn't try to fool you...I simply would.

Snapper

Just how do you make your predictions?

Ghostcrab

By observing the factors I mentioned and learning their connections...what causes what. Oftentimes my legs tap when a storm is coming. I suppose the storms still get me a little nervous. I'm not always right but for the most part my predictions are quite accurate indeed.

Jeremiah

But you're legs aren't tapping now. Could it be that this time your prediction is a false alarm?

Ghostcrab

No...I don't think so...there may be another reason for that. Right now just worry about taking cover...the storm will be here in full force any moment now.

Pond Reeds

As Ghostcrab
uttered these words
wind picked up
snapping foliage back.

Snapper

You may be right Ghostcrab...Jeremiah jump onto my shell to weigh me down so that the wind doesn't flip me over.

Jeremiah

Good idea...that should work.

Pond Reeds

Still intimidated
by his appearance
Jeremiah cautiously
jumped past Ghostcrab
onto Snapper's shell.
But Ghostcrab
wasn't paying attention
looking instead

at a shimmering leaf
making its way
toward the shore.

Ghostcrab That must be it.

Jeremiah Must be what?

Ghostcrab Solitary Leaf.

Jeremiah Solitary Leaf...what's that?

Pond Reeds Ghostcrab turned
to answer
staring at them
a peculiar way.

Jeremiah What's the matter?

Ghostcrab Nothing really...it's just for a moment you looked
familiar sitting there on Snapper's shell.

Pond Reeds Jeremiah and Snapper
certainly resembled
the "bump on a rock"
mentioned by Kismet.

Ghostcrab Now I think I understand completely.

Snapper Understand what?

Pond Reeds Diamonds splintered
then ripped the sky
quenched in rumble
a piercing cry.

Ghostcrab No time to explain everything...the storm is upon us now. What's important is that leaf in the water. Do you see it?

Jeremiah I do...it's most distinctive.

Snapper Yes...there's something about it...

Jeremiah ...something quite unusual.

Snapper Now I see...it's not raining anywhere around it...

Jeremiah ...or on it.

Ghostcrab Yes...that's the one! Go and follow it...no matter what...wherever it goes...and after the storm gather everyone there.

Jeremiah Whatever for?

Ghostcrab Let them know about what happened here. Tell them about the false beliefs that we discovered. Our experience will show the importance of understanding how we form beliefs in the first place. This is more important than you realize.

Jeremiah Why is that?

Ghostcrab Because there will always be a Muddy Bottom... where truths are obscured...evasive...or difficult to find...and maybe not apparent at all. So we need to know how to make better judgments to avoid false beliefs in the future. And to do that means we must issue forth our very best thinking... examining our thinking critically and creatively.

Snapper How should we go about this examination?

Ghostcrab Ask questions about your thinking...how it is you come to believe something. Reveal the kind of judgments that you make and learn how to use them correctly...skillfully...and with good will. All the while exchange ideas respectfully...this will foster trust among yourselves. Listen to each other carefully. Ask questions...get to know each other...as well as yourselves...as you become friends.

Jeremiah Friends?

Ghostcrab Yes that's right...the trust between us Pond dwellers to help and not harm each other...such as yourselves. Aren't you two friends?

Snapper We did make such a promise but Jeremiah didn't keep it.

Jeremiah I'm sorry! I was scared. I know I made a mistake.

Ghostcrab This is another aspect of friendship...realizing mistakes and apologizing to those who have been injured...with the intention of correcting...to remedy injuries as best one can. This is a very important part of what it means to be Pond worthy.

Jeremiah I'll try to be more helpful next time Snapper.

Ghostcrab Couldn't you say that differently...you do remember?

Jeremiah Definitely...I will be more helpful!

Ghostcrab Now...don't you both feel better?

Jeremiah Yes...

Snapper ...perhaps I do.

Ghostcrab

Good...how can you be positive if you have negative feelings? Being positive is essential to sound thinking.

Snapper

Ghostcrab...it seems that we owe you an apology.

Ghostcrab

When you gather everyone as Citizens...to examine your thinking...and your actions...that will be enough.

Snapper

Citizens?

Ghostcrab

Together as Citizens we will form a Citizenship...our friendship with Pond. It will be our responsibility to protect the quality of our lives here...our land...our water...and our air...to actually care about what we do here as Citizens.

Pond Reeds

Behind the trio
heavy mud
began to burgeon
the web of roots
containing embankment.
Quite aware
of impending slide
Ghostcrab scuttled over
extending his claw
buttressing up
this retaining wall.

Ghostcrab

Go on...get away while you still can!

Snapper

But what about you?

Ghostcrab

It's okay...I've been through mud-slides before...go on...no time for long good-byes.

Pond Reeds

Heeding this call
Jeremiah hurried ahead

leaving his friend
buoyant in wind
as Snapper
could only crawl.
Realizing his haste
Jeremiah thumped
to a halt
turning around
to see Snapper
flip over again.

Jeremiah

Oh no...I forgot about the wind!

Snapper

Help me Ghostcrab!

Ghostcrab

I can't this time...I'm holding up the wall!

Snapper

Jeremiah...help!

Pond Reeds

Cast in crisis
Jeremiah paused
presented with choice
escape unscathed
or take a risk
to help his friend.

Jeremiah

Hold on Snapper!

Pond Reeds

Though certain safety
seemed quite appealing.

Snapper

Somebody help me!

Pond Reeds

Resounding urgency
reminded Jeremiah
of his recent pledge.

Jeremiah

Don't panic...I'll be right there!

Ghostcrab

Hurry Jeremiah...I can't hold back this mud forever!

Pond Reeds

Fledgling valor
a leap is made
propelling Jeremiah
to Snapper's aid.

Jeremiah

Don't worry...I'll get you turned over!

Pond Reeds

Like a spring
Jeremiah squeezed
between sand and shell
pushing up
with inner strength
catapulting Snapper
back on his feet
while landing himself
on Snapper's shell
sounding quite like
a bump on a rock.

Ghostcrab

Go ahead you two...escape to the water! Prepare for the storms yourselves and teach others to help you when you gather to discuss your thinking ...and your actions. Let the others know they had nothing to fear from me. Always remember to treat each other with fairness and caring...a fine balance you will need to learn...this the essence of what is Pond.

Pond Reeds

Making way
to water's edge
they turned to see
the web collapse

oozing mud
covering over
all in wake.

Jeremiah

Look he's gone! Do you think he's alright?

Snapper

I don't know. There's nothing we can do now anyhow...so
let's do as he said and go follow Solitary Leaf.

Pond Reeds

Through choppy water
and pelting rain
they sailed
as friends
to a place
soon to be called
Point at Solitary Leaf.
Gathering Citizens
beginning tradition
of living together
Jeremiah's heroics
began a lineage
bold and upstanding
Governors of Pond
freely elected
with popular vote.
Snapper returned
with each coming
of Solitary Leaf
growing each time
Mind
Body
and Spirit
as Citizen Turtle.
Almost always
questions are asked
some of which

remain unanswered
in Muddy Bottom...

Citizen Butterfly

What happened to Ghostcrab?

Citizen Turtle

After the storm we went back to look for him. We searched all through the mud and surrounding areas. But we found nothing...no evidence of any kind. We didn't know what happened to him.

Citizen Butterfly

Has he been seen since?

Citizen Turtle

We're not sure. There are some who claim to have seen him in the early morning light. Others have said they've heard him. But their stories were scattered and never confirmed.

Pond Reeds

Caterpillar inquired
obvious interest
of shared features...

*Citizen
Caterpillar*

Did Ghostcrab ever provide the reason why his legs stopped tapping?

Citizen Turtle

No he never did. The storm was upon us by then... right after that there was the mud-slide.

Citizen Butterfly

An interesting question nephew...I wonder what his reason was or if he even had one.

Governor Bullfrog

Most interesting questions indeed...but returning to your original one...which was if I remember correctly...why is it necessary to think about thinking?

Citizen Owl

Yes...it was Citizen Butterfly's original question.

Citizen Turtle

Quite correct Governor.

Governor Bullfrog Well then...as Ghostcrab's story shows...there are many reasons to examine our thinking. So join us everyone...don't be spectators...take part in this examination!

Pond Reeds In no roundabout way
Flatworm asked...

Citizen Flatworm Where do we begin this examination?

Citizen Owl By examining how we make observations...that would seem a sensible place to begin.

Citizen Turtle Agreed...everything we experience is through some kind of observation.

Citizen Owl In science for instance...our theories depend on the observation of our experiments.

Citizen Rainbow Trout The observation of our experiments...how interesting. That sounds like the artistic experience...how we appreciate art.

Governor Bullfrog Most certainly. The skills of observation...like all thinking skills....are relevant and important to all our pursuits...including our personal ones...how we treat ourselves...each other...and our environment.

Citizen Turtle How true. All we need to do is look at our own history to see how our observations affect our actions. Look at what happened at Muddy Bottom.

Citizen Owl Yes...our observations need to be as reliable as possible.

Governor Bullfrog - Absolutely...we need reliable information.

Citizen Owl Otherwise we become vulnerable to misconceptions.

Citizen Turtle

And such false beliefs inevitably lead us astray.

Governor Bullfrog

Let's take a few moments then to seek out a better understanding what makes an observation reliable.

Pond Reeds

Join them Citizens
and discover
reliable observations
as branches sway
Tree's perceptive whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Have you
fellow Citizen
ever thought about
what makes
a reliable observation?
What senses
register perceptions?
Which factors
in the setting
and the mind
thought and emotions
make them reliable?
Are they remembered?
In what way
and when?
Can they be measured
and if so how?
What assumptions
true or false
are made
from that observed?
What we believe
depends on this
appearance or reality
sometimes hard to discern

what is real
and what is not.
Remember Ghostcrab
Clickety-tick.

Pond Reeds

Discussion followed
about reliable observations
and Ghostcrab's story
involving Citizens
within the audience
when Governor Bullfrog
finally noted...

Governor Bullfrog

And let's not forget...sometimes things may be so evident
that they can be easily missed. Remember my dear great
grandfather's great grandfather...wasn't he surprised when
he somehow missed that remaining bur-reed?

Pond Reeds

General laughter.

Governor Bullfrog

Actually...I was quite serious. We must be careful not to
overlook the obvious.

Citizen Turtle

A fine point Governor...

Citizen

...and quite a subtle observation.

Rainbow Trout

Citizen Owl

And since we've thought about reliable observations...we
should point out that quite often it isn't possible to make
any kind of observation. Obviously we can't be everywhere
to observe everything.

Governor Bullfrog -

Quite right...many times we must rely on information from
others...

Citizen Turtle

...which has great bearing on what information is provided...

Citizen

...and how it is presented.

Rainbow Trout

Governor Bullfrog

Agreed...so let's think about the kinds of questions we should ask to check the reliability of a source of information.

Pond Reeds

Discover Citizens
how to question
sources of information
as branches sway
Tree's earnest whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Have you
fellow Citizen
ever wondered
how to determine
the reliability
of information sources
for accuracy
and fair-mindedness?
Just consider
these critical questions.
Did the source
make the observation
or was it made
by yet another?
One is primary
the other secondary
which is more reliable?
Does the source
have reason to distort
or to lie?

Is there another
who can confirm
or deny?
Are statements made
private or public
which is more reliable?
And what of
the source's expertise
and general reputation?
Remembering always
that even experts
and noble ones
will makes mistakes
but look out for Popinjays
they're a breed apart
fashioning things
around themselves
is their only want.

Pond Reeds

Discussion followed
as Citizens evaluated
sources of information
when Citizen Owl
peered down remarking...

Citizen Owl

Our talk so far reveals yet another critical point. It's not just
our observations...but also how we interpret them that
matters very much.

Pond Reeds

Stilted awkwardly
in shallow water
a Common Egret
plainly asked...

Citizen Egret

Interpret?

Citizen Owl

That's right...our view of things. How we bring meaning to our observations...

Citizen Turtle

...organizing information into perspectives.

Citizen Egret

Perspectives? I'm still not sure I understand what those are.

Pond Reeds

Discover Citizens
the perspectives
framing your beliefs
as branches sway
Tree's guiding whispers...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Have you
fellow Citizen
ever thought about
forming perspectives
or exchanging them
with those of others?
Gain perspectives
organizing information
from observations
through frames of reference
building framework
structured fairly
finely balanced
avoiding bias
while guiding judgments
of your beliefs.

Pond Reeds

Discussion followed
among varied Citizens
sharing perspectives
quite distinct
from one another

when Citizen Turtle
quietly observed...

Citizen Turtle

Looking back at it now...I can see how it was believed that
Ghostcrab caused the storms.

Citizen Owl

Observations...or lack of them rather...had a lot to do with
that.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

Not to mention emotions.

Pond Reeds

Ah emotions
fear and panic
not quiet confidence
made a difference
what was believed
and what was done.

Citizen Turtle

We also thought that just because something occurs before
something else...that it causes it.

Citizen Owl

Which is not necessarily true.

Citizen Turtle

Yes...it's an easy trap to think into.

Pond Reeds

Masked and tail-ringed
Raccoon stood inquiring...

Citizen Raccoon

But doesn't something have to happen before it...in order to
cause it.

Citizen Turtle

Yes of course...but we must also check to see if there are
other possible causes to consider.

Governor Bullfrog

If this was realized sooner...Ghostcrab may not have been singled out for causing storms.

Citizen

They may have even gotten to know him better.

Rainbow Trout

Pond Reeds

Behold emotions
of positive sorts
distinguish trying
and trying
and doing 'til done.
Such the kind
Raccoon exuded
calmly pursuing
causal thought...

Citizen Raccoon

So how do we figure out if something causes another?

Pond Reeds

Discover Citizens
about revealing cause
as branches sway
Tree's instructive whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Have you
fellow Citizen
ever needed to know
if one thing
causes another?
First make sure
it happens before
then think about
other possible causes
no matter how absurd.
Then test to see
which are not
and rule them out.

And what is left
could be cause
always watching
for correlation
or mere coincidence
things which only
resemble cause.
Remember Ghostcrab
Clickety-tick.

Pond Reeds

Discussion followed
as Citizens examined
matters of cause
able to see
different perspectives
when Citizen Trout
surfaced to say...

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

Ghostcrab's perspective was certainly different
from the rest.

Citizen Owl

He undoubtedly had different observations.

Pond Reeds

More than Owl
or anyone else
knew of Kismet's role.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

Isn't it interesting how our observations can fool us?

Pond Reeds

That instant
sudden splashing
startled Rainbow back.
Her attendants
Darters and Shiners
encircled perimeter

in protective manner
shielding Rainbow
from Wrigley Cub
causing disturbance
as Largemouth Bass
was heard by all
reprimanding Wrigley...

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

Weren't you warned before? Why are you doing
it again?

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

Doing what?

Pond Reeds

Wrigley's gruff
and raspy tones
though well-mannered
were not yet grown.

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

As if you didn't know...stealing Rainbow's scales
...that's what!

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

What...stealing Rainbow's scales? I certainly
wasn't!

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

But Wrigley...we saw you!

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I can't believe this...after all that we talked about
today. Didn't you tell us in the beginning
Governor...how things are supposed to be different from
the times before Solitary Leaf... how our thinking is
supposed to be better. But look...it still happens.

Governor Bullfrog

What do you mean?

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I'm innocent...that's what I mean!

Governor Bullfrog

No need to be upset Wrigley.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

But I'm innocent Governor...I really am! And all of this is so wrong that it's upsetting.

Governor Bullfrog

I can see that...but your frustration isn't going to help. If you wish to remain here you must calm down...or I will have to cite you in contempt and have Marshall Otter find a quiet place for you until you compose yourself.

Pond Reeds

Marshall Otter
lived by rules
down by the river
enforcer of laws
by Council authority
within Pond's territory.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

Contempt? But I'm the one whose been treated with contempt. Sure I was greeted cordially...but it was always cold and mixed with suspicion. I felt terrible. Nobody really wanted to talk to me. I knew it and so did everyone else. Nobody should ever be made to feel the way I did...alienated as an outcast...and I never really understood why. All this time I thought it was me...until today when I learned more about thinking.

Governor Bullfrog

Please...go on.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I will always remember that time when I saw Rainbow...here at this very spot. She swam over and looked up at me with a knowing glance. I caught a glimpse of her eyes. There was love in them...laughing...sparkling different colors...they were absolutely beautiful. Taking

anything from her...or hurting her in any way...wasn't ever on my mind...

*Citizen
Largemouth Bass*

But I saw you reach for her.

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub*

I was just curious. I reached into the water to touch her reflection...to play with the colors as they moved.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

I never realized this incident would become such a problem. I remember I had just come back from exploring Muddy Bottom when I saw Wrigley. I recall him reaching into the water...but I wasn't really sure what his intentions were. I was more confused than anything else. Then my attendants whisked me away saying it was for my own good. I abided by their wishes although I didn't really share their concern. Still my feelings were hurt because my missing scales distorted my reflection. Later I went back to Muddy Bottom on an extended expedition to look for Ghostcrab. When I returned...I looked for Wrigley against the wishes of my attendants. I wanted to see if I could talk to him and find out what had happened. But the surface water was frozen and he was probably hibernating anyway. Eventually I forgot all about it. But clearly Wrigley never did. So I really do think we should look into this.

Governor Bullfrog

Marshal Otter...what do you know of this matter?

Marshal Otter

There had been a complaint lodged against Wrigley Cub...apparently he was seen swiping scales from Citizen Trout.

Governor Bullfrog

Who filed this complaint?

Marshal Otter

Citizen Darters and Shiners sir.

Citizen
Rainbow Trout

You made no mention of this to me.

Pond Reeds

Johnny Darter
spoke for all...

Citizen
Johnny Darter

We did it for your own protection Madame.

Citizen
Rainbow Trout

But you should have told me.

Citizen
Johnny Darter

We didn't want to frighten you.

Marshal Otter

And there were numerous witnesses.

Governor Bullfrog

How many?

Marshal Otter

Four...not including Darters and Shiners.

Governor Bullfrog

That many?

Marshal Otter

Yes...and there was also evidence of the misdeed.

Governor Bullfrog

Evidence...what kind of evidence?

Marshal Otter

Several scales were missing from Rainbow's side.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

Do you mean these?

Pond Reeds

Citizens gasped
at what they saw
Rainbow's scales
in Wrigley's paw...

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

Will you look at that!

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

What?

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

He had them all along!

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

But I was...

Marshal Otter

This certainly doesn't look good at all.

Pond Reeds

Rising murmurs
rippling in
a tide of fervor.

Governor Bullfrog

Quiet...quiet please! We can't hear ourselves think.

Pond Reeds

The Council conferred
among themselves
several moments
arriving at judgment
three votes against
to Rainbow's one.

Governor Bullfrog

Wrigley...with the report such as it is...so very
incriminating...I'm afraid we'll have to move on to matters
more pressing.

Pond Reeds

From the back
Solitary Sandpiper
musician elder
former resident artist
and member of Council

sauntered up front
swinging and swaying
playing his horn
like nobody else could
settling into
a familiar tune
as Damsel flies
danced around him.

Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper

If indeed we are a Citizenry committed to justice...why don't we listen to the lad? What could be more pressing than this...how we treat a fellow Citizen? Aren't we all entitled to an impartial hearing. Isn't this a promise beholden to us all equally? Shouldn't we...at the very least...hear from the witnesses?

Citizen Turtle

You play quite a convincing tune Citizen.

Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper

Many thanks...but it isn't praise I'm seeking.

Governor Bullfrog

What then?

Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper

Justice...that's all Governor...the just perspective... the balance of fairness and caring of which Ghostcrab spoke.

Governor Bullfrog

But don't you think we've done that? We've heard the report...and there is the rest of the Citizenry and their needs to consider...and you must realize that there isn't much daylight remaining.

Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper

I think we will be neither fair nor caring if we ignore this plea.

Governor Bullfrog

Have we entered into a hasty judgment...should we reconsider?

Citizen Turtle

Yes I think so. The record mustn't reflect a hasty judgment...or any violation of justice.

Governor Bullfrog

It shouldn't reflect even a hint of impropriety.

Citizen Turtle

Indeed not.

Citizen Owl

So let's investigate this matter further.

Governor Bullfrog

Very well then...do you wish to have someone represent you Wrigley?

Pond Reeds

Then a Sturgeon
from the depths
of Muddy Bottom
addressed as Citizen
in formality
though everyone knew him
as Brother John
rose to offer
his assistance.
Shrewd and savvy
sensitive feelers
stickling details
living by credo
eat to live
live not to eat
always aiding
those in need
trapped in muddied waters.

Citizen Sturgeon

Wrigley...I'm acquainted with ill-defined problems. Why don't you let me help you?

Citizen Turtle

Do you really think that's in Wrigley's best interest? I know your intention to help is genuine...I've known you for a long time...but your still a fish. Many of us know the unfortunate history between fish and bears during the times before Solitary Leaf. Wouldn't it be best...if Wrigley was to receive help...that it come from someone who couldn't hold such bias?

Citizen Owl

Yes...someone having a perspective framework without this possibility...Citizen Hare for instance.

Pond Reeds

But Citizen Hare
rushing to and fro
wasn't very thorough.

Citizen Sturgeon

The fact that I am a fish should have nothing to do with this. I am perfectly capable of suspending my personal judgment to receive the perspective of another. I don't think there's anyone present who seriously doubts this...or my abilities to represent Wrigley.

Governor Bullfrog

It's really Wrigley's decision. What do you want to do Wrigley?

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub*

I suppose I could use all the help I can get.

Citizen Sturgeon

Splendid...Governor is there a list of witnesses?

Governor Bullfrog

Marshal Otter?

Marshal Otter

Besides Citizen Trout's attendants...the following Citizens are listed as witnesses...Largemouth Bass...Yellow Warbler...Night Heron and Watershrew.

Citizen Sturgeon

May I approach them?

Governor Bullfrog

You may.

Citizen Sturgeon

Citizen Darters and Shiners...isn't it possible that from your frame of reference...our frame of reference actually...looking up through the water...that it only appeared that Wrigley was swiping Rainbow's scales...when in fact he was playing as he said. Especially when you are all so zealous in performing your duties that even Citizen Trout has told me how over-protective you can be?

Pond Reeds

Darter and Shiners
began to squirm.

Citizen Sturgeon

And what about you Largemouth Bass...your prejudice against bears is well known because of the bad blood between your families. Don't you think that because of this you made the assumption that Wrigley had ill intentions...slanting your perspective?

Pond Reeds

Motionless
Largemouth Bass
gaping speechlessly
suspended silence
eternal seconds
relieved and shortened
by branches sway
Tree's most serious whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Excuse bias
done unknowingly
watch out
when its not
for prejudice then
can root in fear.

Pond Reeds

Eyes protruding
above water's surface
Brother John looked up
spotting Yellow Warbler.

Citizen Sturgeon

Citizen Warbler...where were you when this incident occurred?

*Citizen
Yellow Warbler*

I was at home.

Citizen Sturgeon

And where do you nest?

*Citizen
Yellow Warbler*

Here...in Tree at Solitary Point.

Citizen Sturgeon

Where in Tree is your nest?

*Citizen
Yellow Warbler*

Near the top.

Citizen Sturgeon

A considerable distance away...wouldn't you say?

*Citizen
Yellow Warbler*

Yes...away a bit.

Citizen Sturgeon

Could you be just a little less vague? What would you say it would be...thirty-five...forty...forty-five meters from where Wrigley was?

*Citizen
Yellow Warbler*

I would say at least forty-five meters.

Citizen Sturgeon -

If it pleases the Council...may we establish the distance at forty-five meters?

<i>Governor Bullfrog</i>	Citizen Owl?
<i>Citizen Owl</i>	I have calculated the distance to be approximately forty-seven meters.
<i>Citizen Sturgeon</i>	Well then...I hardly think from that distance up in your nest...at that point of reference...you could have possibly seen what Wrigley was doing.
<i>Citizen Yellow Warbler</i>	I have excellent vision. I saw splashing and Wrigley's paw go into the water...several times.
<i>Citizen Sturgeon</i>	Granted...but could you actually tell what he was doing?
<i>Citizen Yellow Warbler</i>	No...I suppose not.
<i>Pond Reeds</i>	Yellow Warbler garbled testimony so Brother John shifted gaze Heron's way.
<i>Citizen Sturgeon</i>	And you Citizen...where were you?
<i>Citizen Night Heron</i>	I was down on the shore...several meters away.
<i>Citizen Sturgeon</i>	What were you doing?
<i>Citizen Night Heron</i>	Seeking refreshment...I was rather edgy that day.
<i>Citizen Sturgeon</i>	Why were you feeling so?

*Citizen
Night Heron* I was up all night. It's sometimes difficult to fall asleep afterwards.

Citizen Sturgeon Are you nocturnal? Is that why you're called Night Heron?

*Citizen
Night Heron* Yes...I'm active at night and rest during the day.

Citizen Sturgeon You must be tired now.

*Citizen
Night Heron* No...I napped earlier.

Citizen Sturgeon May I inquire to the Council as to the time this incident occurred?

Governor Bullfrog Marshal Otter?

Marshal Otter The report only says late in the morning Governor.

Citizen Sturgeon I see. Can we assume then that you were extremely tired?

*Citizen
Night Heron* I was.

Citizen Sturgeon So much so...that you were edgy?

*Citizen
Night Heron* Yes...I think I said that.

Citizen Sturgeon Would you say that you made a reliable observation being edgy and perhaps easily alarmed. Don't you think this affected your perspective. ...making you think the worst?

*Citizen
Night Heron*

I never really thought about it.

Ponds Reeds

Realization
dawned upon
Night Heron's
empty stare.
Treading away
along waters edge
Brother John
turned to Watershrew.

Citizen Sturgeon

Where were you when the splashing occurred?

Citizen Watershrew

Very close by.

Citizen Sturgeon

What were you doing?

Citizen Watershrew

I'd rather not say.

Governor Bullfrog

We need to resolve this matter Citizen...your cooperation is most important.

Pond Reeds

Citizen Watershrew
sipped some water
quivered then admitted
twitching pointed nose.

Citizen Watershrew

I was asleep.

Citizen Sturgeon

What?

Citizen Watershrew

But the commotion woke me up. I heard the splashing and the others told me that Wrigley had swiped Rainbow's scales. So that's what I thought happened.

Citizen Sturgeon I see...thank you for your candor Citizen. You may wish to reconsider your sources of information. Well there you are Governor...your witnesses...how many of them made reliable observations?

Governor Bullfrog Yes...but what about the missing scales?

Citizen Sturgeon Yes the missing scales...

Pond Reeds Brother John paused
reflecting several moments
then slowly asked...

Citizen Sturgeon Citizen Rainbow Trout... can you think of anything that happened before you saw Wrigley that morning which might explain how you lost your scales?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* No...I can't.

Citizen Sturgeon Anything at all?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* Not that I can remember.

Citizen Sturgeon I see. Well Wrigley...if you wish to pursue this...it would help if you told us how you acquired Rainbow's scales.

*Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper* Yes...how did you?

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub* I wanted to say earlier but I wasn't really given the chance...I was interrupted.

Governor Bullfrog Perhaps not...but now is certainly your opportunity.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I found them yesterday in an old clamshell.

Governor Bullfrog

In a clamshell?

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

Yes...a clamshell.

Governor Bullfrog

Where is this clamshell?

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I don't know. It disappeared as suddenly as it appeared.

Citizen
Largemouth Bass

Are we to believe a story about a vanishing clamshell?

Citizen Turtle

That's really interesting.

Governor Bullfrog

What's that Citizen?

Citizen Turtle

Now that I think back...the time when Jeremiah and I first saw Ghostcrab...I'm pretty sure I saw a clamshell too. I'm almost positive.

Citizen
Rainbow Trout

You know...now that you mention it...I think I remember bumping into a clamshell. I just didn't recognize it at the time...Muddy Bottom was very murky. But it must have been...and this was before I saw Wrigley that morning.

Pond Reeds

A clamshell
twice forgotten
or was it Kismet
twice remembered?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* I must have come as a surprise...or even a threat...
because the clamshell snapped shut as soon as I
swam by...vanishing in a cloud of sand.

Citizen Sturgeon Do you think you may have lost your scales during this
encounter?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* It's certainly possible.

Citizen Turtle Yes...I think it would be.

Citizen Owl Indeed...it is another possible cause.

Citizen Sturgeon It also provides another reasonable explanation how
Wrigley came upon the scales.

Citizen Turtle A most reasonable one at that.

Citizen Owl And quite probable.

Governor Bullfrog In light of this new information...establishing a reasonable
doubt of wrong-doing...I am hereby dismissing this case.
Please make a note of it Marshal Otter.

Marshal Otter So noted Governor.

*Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper* Sounds like we're singing in the right key now!

Governor Bullfrog Now I would like to believe that those responsible for
accusing Wrigley will apologize and make amends to him.

Pond Reeds Johnny Darter
speaking again
for all attendants...

*Citizen
Johnny Darter*

We will Governor.

Governor Bullfrog

That goes for the rest of you as well...especially you
Citizen Largemouth Bass.

Pond Reeds

Willy nilly
apologizing to Wrigley
was something really
Largemouth Bass
knew he should do
stubborn pride
and fearful distrust
holding him back
all incredibly silly.

Governor Bullfrog

Well then...perhaps you can find it within yourself to
follow my example. Wrigley on behalf of the Council...and
myself personally...I want to apologize. I'm sorry this
happened to you. We made a mistake not listening to your
case in the beginning. Just when you think you've made a
sound judgment...you discover you haven't.

Citizen Turtle

It is a humbling experience.

Governor Bullfrog

We must watch out for making hasty judgments.

Citizen Owl

Ever watchful.

Governor Bullfrog

Even when something seems obvious.

Citizen Owl

Again you're talking about the obvious...but you're right
Governor...the report certainly did make it appear obvious
that Wrigley's blame was well deserved.

Governor Bullfrog Why yes...and once we're certain we haven't overlooked it...we need to make sure the obvious is indeed as it appears.

Citizen Turtle And in Wrigley's case we didn't do that.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* No we didn't...although I urged otherwise.

Governor Bullfrog And unfortunately...that was our duty to Wrigley that we neglected. We're truly sorry.

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub* That's alright...I feel much better now that I understand what happened.

Citizen Owl I'd like to think that I'm far more open minded than I've shown...more objective...but it was just as the Governor said...so seemingly obvious.

Citizen Turtle And our intention was to devote the time in the remaining hours to matters that would most benefit everyone.

Governor Bullfrog As it turned out...this has proven to be a valuable learning experience for us all.

Citizen Turtle Yes...well worth the time.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* As I was saying before all this came to light...our perspectives can certainly fool us.

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub* But there's still one thing I still don't quite understand.

Governor Bullfrog What's that Citizen?

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub*

After his song...Citizen Piper mentioned
the just perspective...the balance of fairness and caring
Ghostcrab spoke of. What is that...what does it mean?

*Citizen Solitary
Sandpiper*

That's a difficult question.

Governor Bullfrog

I think it's difficult to describe in words because it's more
than something you acquire...the just perspective is
something you become.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

Yes most definitely...growing and changing.

Citizen Owl

And we all experience this differently...to one degree or
another...so it's hard to say that it's one exact thing.

Governor Bullfrog

But we can say...and should say...that the just perspective
means that you must always keep your promises and tell
the truth...except when you have sound reason not to.

Citizen Owl

A most compelling reason.

*Citizen
Wrigley Cub*

But that doesn't make any sense. How can you
always do something...and then sometimes not. What then
would be the point of making a promise...or believing
anybody?

Citizen Turtle

If there is anything that we must do...and not just try to
do...it is to keep our promises and tell the truth. Being
committed to do so always as a general principle is fair for
everyone and shows caring...you know...not hurting others
with lies or broken promises. Usually what is fair is also
caring. But life isn't always so manageable...and sometimes
keeping a promise or telling the truth can hurt someone
needlessly.

Governor Bullfrog

For instance...I remember the time when Farmer Rabbit broke a promise to help the lives of others.

Pond Reeds

Dr. Cabbagepatch Worm
had tended to
Farmer Rabbit's son
having fallen ill.
Cabbage bounty
for services rendered
promised Farmer Rabbit
but harvest fell short
and to prevent
Beetles from starving
a promise was broken
that winter.

Citizen Turtle

And what if Brother John had told the Squirrel Soldiers the truth when they came looking for Muskrat...he wouldn't have saved her life.

Pond Reeds

Squirrel Soldiers
lived in hills
came to Pond
led by tyrants
intending to take
Muskrat away
unusual punishment
just for trespassing
into their trees.

Governor Bullfrog

The discretion to recognize these instances as exceptions of caring to what is fair...with sound reasons of course...is the just perspective... balancing fairness with caring.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout*

Occasionally quite the dilemma.

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I think I'm beginning to understand. But how
do you know when your reasons can justify an exception?

Governor Bullfrog

Most certainly in situations when rules of fairness fail to
protect life or liberty.

Pond Reeds

Branches sway
Tree's enlightened whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

A lifetime
it takes
a just perspective
to become
sooner the better
to begin.

Citizen
Rainbow Trout

We should really talk more about dilemmas.

Citizen Turtle

I'm sure many of us can tell stories about dilemmas they've
experienced.

Citizen Owl

Sounds like a good idea...perhaps by sharing them...it might
help when we find ourselves in similar situations.

Governor Bullfrog

Yes perhaps. But we must always remember that what we
say we would do if confronted with a dilemma...is not
nearly as important as what we do when we actually have
one. Talking is one thing...doing is quite another. That is
the true merit of our being...our character...our pursuit to
balance fairness with caring...to become just individuals.

Pond Reeds

Sharing stories
Citizens learned
from one another
about sound reasons

balancing perspectives
preparing themselves
if fairness and caring
conflict together
resolving dilemmas
'til settling sun
tinted clouds
violet and peach.

Governor Bullfrog

It's getting late so I should start bringing this meeting to a close. I do think we've accomplished a great deal today. We've acquired insight into our thinking and also our relationships with each other...and our Pond...our Citizenship if you will.

Citizen Owl

Not only that...we've learned despite the improvement of our thinking that mistakes can still happen.

Governor Bullfrog

I'm sure this Council has learned just that...and the importance of correcting them.

Pond Reeds

Branches sway
Tree's final whisper...

Tree at Solitary Pt.

Citizens remember please
all that I've said
for better judgments
and sound beliefs.
Concerning relationships
among yourselves
think of consequences
of rules of fairness
and how you care
about what you do
is just becoming
worthy of Pond.

Citizen Owl Before we finish altogether...I want to say that I've been wondering about this mysterious clamshell. Why would this creature reveal Rainbow's scales to Wrigley? Was this done randomly...or was it an intentional act?

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* One would think that the scales would have been returned to me if it was intentional.

Citizen Owl But what if this clamshell somehow knew that Wrigley had been wronged.

Pond Reeds Or would be wronged.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* Maybe it was his way of letting the rest of us know.

Citizen Turtle Perhaps...had the scales been given to Rainbow...or anyone else for that matter...we may never have found out what Wrigley went through.

Citizen Owl It's a possibility this was more than just a coincidence.

Governor Bullfrog Intriguing...but the only way to confirm such a theory would be to find and ask this creature directly.

Citizen Owl I venture to say that we should be looking for this clamshell as well as Ghostcrab.

*Citizen
Rainbow Trout* I certainly will be.

Citizen Turtle As shall I.

Governor Bullfrog Be careful when you go and let us know if you find anything.

Citizen Turtle

Of course...we always do.

Governor Bullfrog

Well then...I would like to wish everyone the very best...and I hope to see everyone again the next time Solitary Leaf arrives...there is after all much more to think about...much more to learn.

Pond Reeds

The meeting over
Citizens began leaving
homeward bound
as unexplained currents
pulled away
Solitary Leaf
carrying on it
into the distance
quite attached
a new found friend
Monarch Butterfly.
As for Wrigley
he stood by
to thank Piper and Sturgeon
for all they had done
while one by one
Darters and Shiners
Yellow Warbler
Heron and Shrew
stopped to offer
sincere regrets
most surprising
was Largemouth Bass.

Citizen

Well...well...I'm sorry.

Largemouth Bass

Pond Reeds

Having said that
Largemouth Bass

dove away
leaving Wrigley
alone with Rainbow.

Citizen I didn't think he'd ever apologize.
Rainbow Trout

Citizen But did you hear him? He didn't sound very
Wrigley Cub sincere.

Citizen It was difficult for him...that's probably why. But
Rainbow Trout he did apologize and that's progress.

Citizen I suppose so.
Wrigley Cub

Citizen I should apologize to you as well.
Rainbow Trout

Citizen For what?
Wrigley Cub

Citizen I should have been a better thinker and not so
Rainbow Trout absorbed in my own world.

Citizen It wasn't your fault...listen...I was wondering
Wrigley Cub ...would you like your scales back?

Citizen Why don't you keep them to remember me?
Rainbow Trout

Citizen I don't need them...I shall never forget you...and
Wrigley Cub besides they'll return your original luster.

Citizen If you insist.
Rainbow Trout

Citizen
Wrigley Cub

I do...and I hope you realize that all I ever wanted was
a chance to talk to you?

Citizen
Rainbow Trout

Now you can...we can talk as long as you wish.

Pond Reeds

Her scales refitted
justly balanced
restoring clearly
a welcomed focus
confetti colors
trailing spray
arcs in air
jumping back-flips
leaps and tangents
contented Rainbow
felt anew
talking with Wrigley
into the night
thinking about
the secrets of Pond
Tree's now fabled whispers
blending within
medley of Crickets
hiding in harmony
was there the sound
of Clickety-tick?

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