



AESTHETICS CS-E5600
Sanna Lehtinen, PhD

What is Aesthetics 3: Environment

28 Jan 2019

Timothy Morton's Interview

- What is the Anthropocene?
- What is humanity in relation to nature according to Morton?
- Give an example of a 'hyperobject'?
- Did you enjoy reading the interview?





Aesthetic Preferences?

Kahoot.it

Environmental Aesthetics

- Background
 - Philosophy > Aesthetics > Environmental aesthetics
 - Part of humanistic environmental research
- *What* is studied?
- *How* is it studied?



Environmental Aesthetics: Background

- Tradition since antiquity to think about **natural beauty** and the **relation with nature** that human beings have
 - Articulated in different ways during different times
- Aesthetic qualities e.g. beautiful, sublime, picturesque
- Environmental aesthetics in its present form since 1960s (Ronald Hepburn)
 - Descriptive: "How *do* we appreciate nature?"
 - Normative: "How *should* we appreciate nature?"





VISIBLE EARTH

A catalog of NASA images and animations of our home planet

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THE BLUE MARBLE FROM APOLLO 17

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Credit: Image courtesy NASA Johnson Space Center
[Gateway to Astronaut Photography of Earth](#)

Metadata

Data Date: December 7, 1972

Visualization Date: January 31, 2001

Sensor(s): Photograph

Categories

[Blue Marble](#)

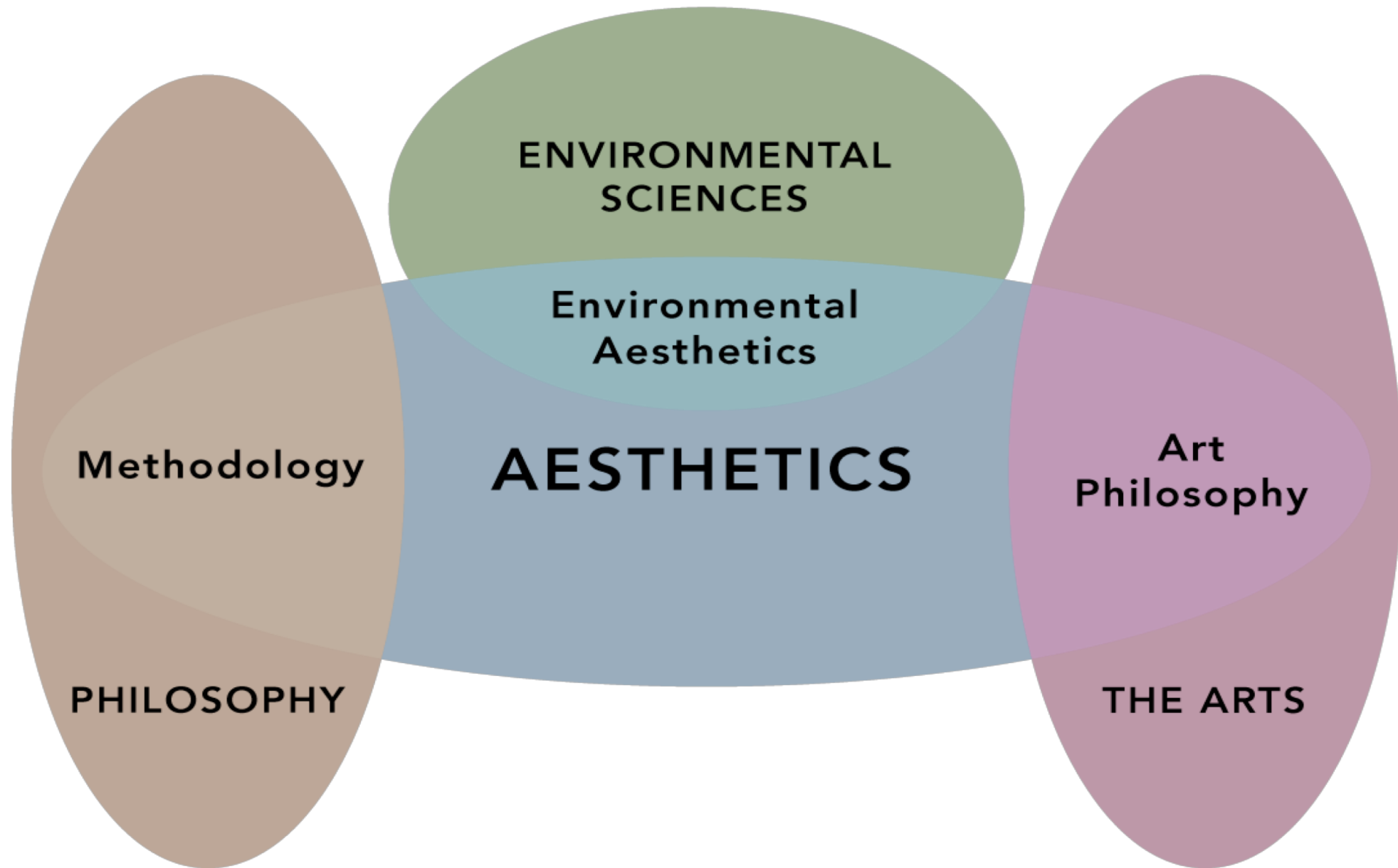
[Visible Imagery](#)



This classic photograph of the Earth was taken on December 7, 1972. The original caption is reprinted below:

View of the Earth as seen by the Apollo 17 crew traveling toward the moon. This translunar coast photograph extends from the Mediterranean Sea area to the Antarctica south polar ice cap. This is the first time the Apollo trajectory made it possible to photograph the south polar ice cap. Note the heavy cloud cover in the Southern Hemisphere. Almost the entire coastline of Africa is clearly visible. The Arabian Peninsula can be seen at the northeastern edge of Africa. The large island off the coast of Africa is the Malagasy Republic. The Asian mainland is on the horizon toward the northeast.

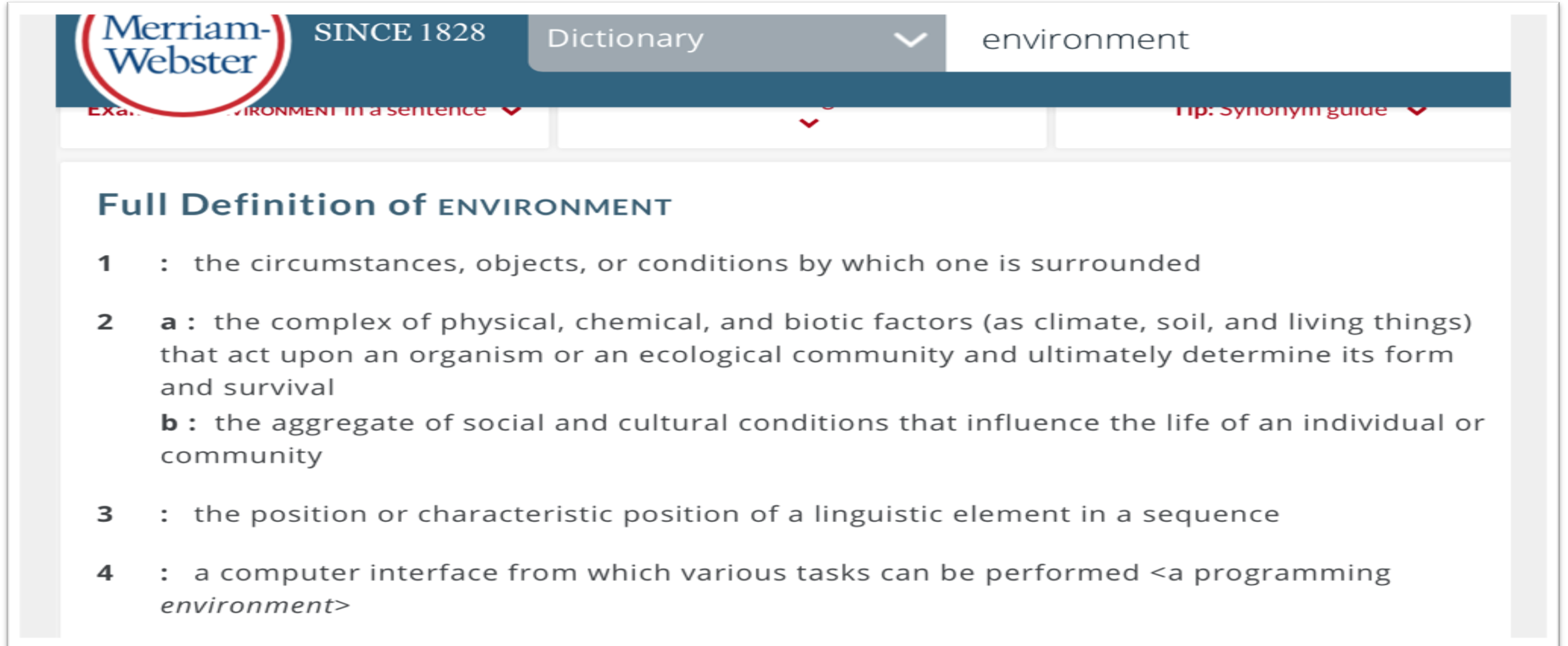
One of the most widely known photographs of Earth, this image was taken by the crew of the final Apollo mission as the crew made its way to the Moon. Dubbed the “Blue Marble,” Earth is revealed as both a vast planet home to billions of creatures and a beautiful orb capable of fitting into the pocket of the universe.



energy nature healthy environmental issues protection



”Environment”



The image is a screenshot of the Merriam-Webster dictionary website. At the top, the Merriam-Webster logo is on the left, followed by the text 'SINCE 1828'. To the right is a search bar containing the word 'environment'. Below the search bar, there are navigation links: 'EXAMPLE SENTENCES FOR ENVIRONMENT IN A SENTENCE', 'Tip: Synonym guide', and a 'Dictionary' dropdown menu. The main content area is titled 'Full Definition of ENVIRONMENT' and lists four numbered definitions.

Merriam-Webster SINCE 1828 Dictionary environment

EXAMPLE SENTENCES FOR ENVIRONMENT IN A SENTENCE Tip: Synonym guide

Full Definition of ENVIRONMENT

- 1 : the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded
- 2 **a** : the complex of physical, chemical, and biotic factors (as climate, soil, and living things) that act upon an organism or an ecological community and ultimately determine its form and survival
b : the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community
- 3 : the position or characteristic position of a linguistic element in a sequence
- 4 : a computer interface from which various tasks can be performed <a programming *environment*>

What is studied?

Concept of the Environment 1/2

- Natural environment
 - The beginning of EA as natural aesthetics
- Built environment (urban)
 - Urban aesthetics (1990s ->)
- Human environment (urban+rural+natural+?)
 - Human beings as part of the environment (*anthropocene*)
 - E.g. urban nature understood as a new hybrid form

What is studied?

Concept of the Environment 2/2

- Aesthetic values
 - Criteria for evaluation
 - Relation of aesthetic values to other values such as ethical, ecological etc.
- Different contexts
 - Specific environments, defined by e.g. objects, activity or users
- Environmental art
 - How does art reflect the relation between humans and their environment?

How is it studied? – Approaches

Analytic aesthetics, Phenomenology, Pragmatism

1. Cognitive theories
2. Non-cognitive theories
3. Aesthetic experience as interaction
4. New directions

Everyday Aesthetics, Evolutionary Aesthetics

How is it studied? – Approaches 1/3

Cognitive theories

- Aesthetic value is formed purely based on the properties of the object of appreciation: strives to be an OBJECTIVE theory
- Normative approach: what is the RIGHT way to judge/appreciate environment
- (Natural) science gives the right categories for aesthetic appreciation of nature
- Knowledge is needed in order to UNDERSTAND the aesthetic value (background in the philosophy of art)
- Attempts to “save nature” from random subjective judgment, to value nature “on its own terms”
- Extreme form: so-called *Positive Aesthetics*

How is it studied? – Approaches 2/3

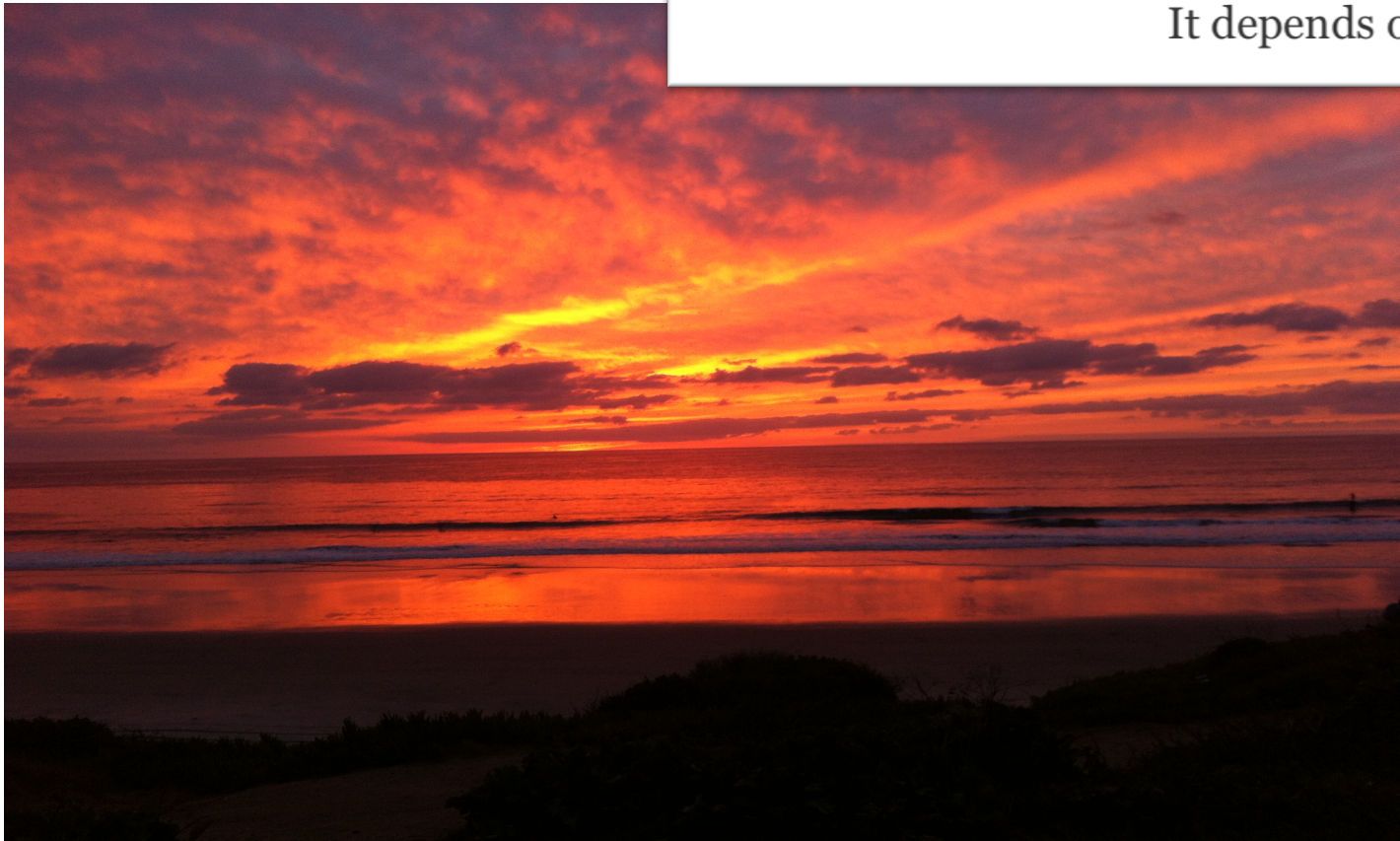
Non-cognitive theories

- Takes into consideration the subjective elements in appreciating environment
- Aesthetic judgment is based on human abilities, e.g. imagination, emotional arousal
- Attempts to balance cognitive approaches: aesthetic values as separate from ethical values (without disparaging them)
- “The mystery model”

SUSTAINABILITY

Fact or Fiction?: Smog Creates Beautiful Sunsets

It depends on what color you like.



Rio Tinto, Andalusia Spain

- Mining since 3000 BC
- High acid (pH 2)
- Mine closed in 2001
- Astrobiological & tourist interest

“there seems to be a way of explaining how damaged nature can be beautiful without disposing of the intuition that the awareness of its damaged condition penetrates our perception.”

(Alcaraz León 2011)





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Trump attacks 'awful' Scottish wind farms

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Mr Wigmore said: "He has got a bugbear - he doesn't like wind farms at all. He says 'when I look out of my window and I see these windmills, it offends me. You've got to do something about these windmills. Let's put them offshore, why spoil the beautiful countryside?'"

You've Been Trumped

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Not to be confused with [You Got Trumped](#).

You've Been Trumped is a 2011 documentary by British filmmaker Anthony Baxter. The film documents the construction of a luxury golf course on a beach in [Balmedie, Aberdeenshire, Scotland](#), by developer [Donald Trump](#), and the subsequent struggles between the locals and Donald Trump and Scottish legal and governmental authorities.

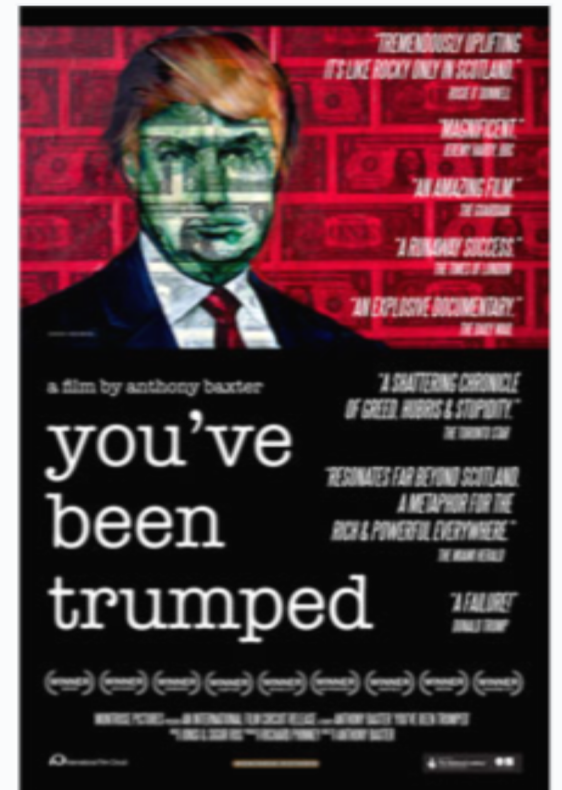
When it was announced that the documentary was to be given its British television premiere on [BBC Two](#) on 21 October 2012, Trump's lawyers contacted the corporation to demand that the film should not be shown, claiming that it is "defamatory" and "misleading". The screening went ahead. The [BBC](#) defended its decision, noting that Trump had repeatedly refused to be interviewed in conjunction with the film.^[2]

In October 2016, filmmaker Anthony Baxter announced the release of *You've Been Trumped Too*, a sequel to the film timed for release before the [United States presidential election, 2016](#).^[3]

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You've Been Trumped



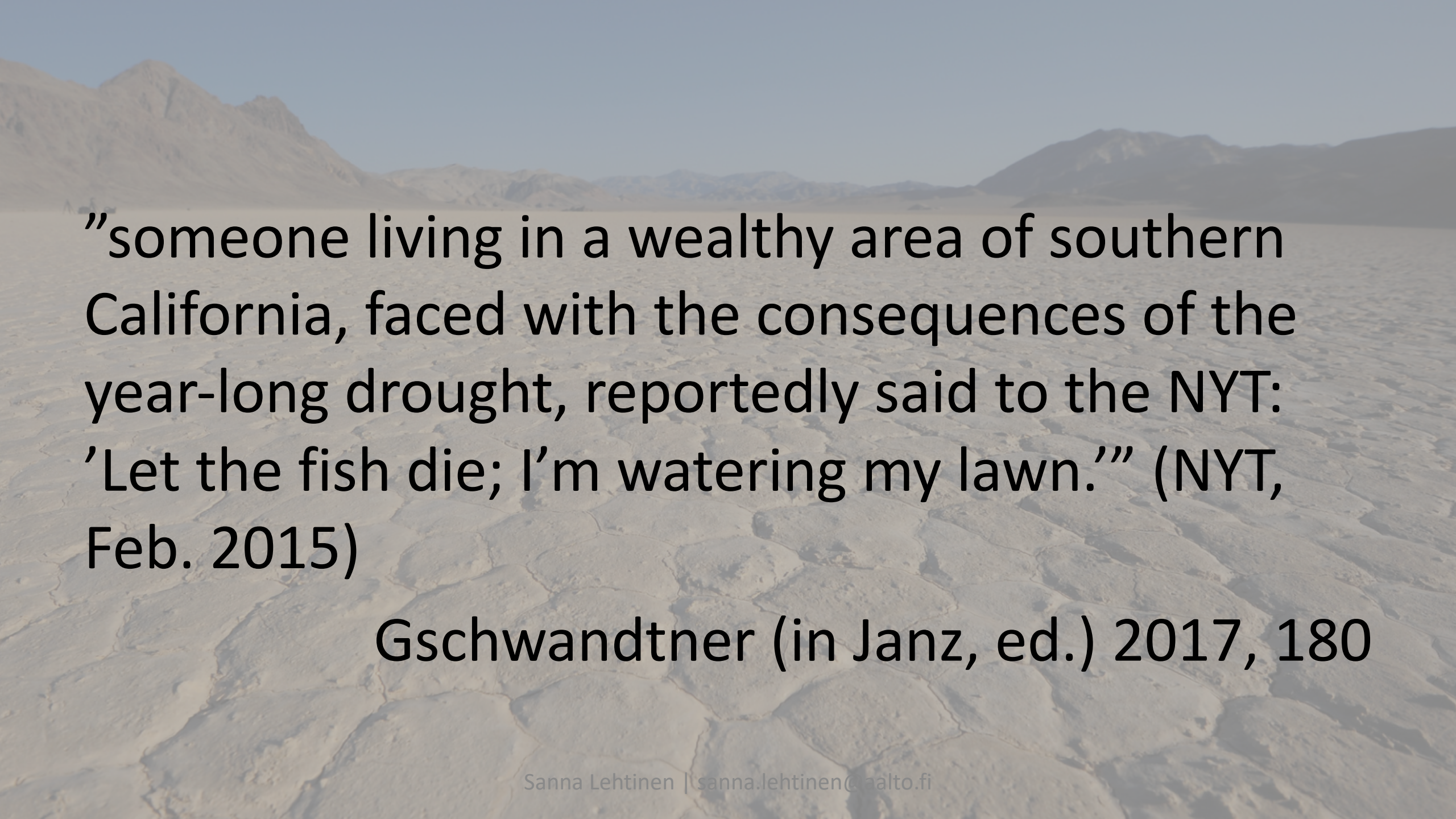
Film poster



”One prime illustration is the popular obsession with **green**, velvety-smooth, weeds-free **lawns**. The quintessential example of this **aesthetic** ideal is the conventional golf courses which suffer from the so-called “Augusta National **Syndrome**,” named after the Georgia golf course that hosts the Masters tournament each spring.” (Saito 2007)

Meadow with water saving plants





”someone living in a wealthy area of southern California, faced with the consequences of the year-long drought, reportedly said to the NYT: ‘Let the fish die; I’m watering my lawn.’” (NYT, Feb. 2015)

Gschwandtner (in Janz, ed.) 2017, 180



Sanna Lehtinen | sanna.lehtinen@aalto.fi

CHAPTER

The Aesthetics of Laundry

Yuriko Saito

in *Aesthetics of the Familiar*

Published in print July 2017 | ISBN: 9780199672103

Published online July 2017 | e-ISBN: 9780191838682 | DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199672103.003.0005>

PREVIEW

As one of the most mundane aspects of daily life, laundry rarely garners aesthetic attention. However, this practical chore turns out to contain numerous aesthetic considerations beyond ensuring hygiene and cleanliness. Furthermore, the aesthetics of laundry is not limited to the sensuous appearance of the laundered items. The activity of laundering also has aesthetic dimensions, including bodily engagement, imaginative camaraderie with women across cultural and historical boundaries, satisfaction with the tangible expression of love for the family, and appreciation of the outdoor environment when hanging laundry. Finally, the consequences of the aesthetics of laundry extend beyond personal experiences. Namely, the appearance of clothing is often regarded as a reflection of one's moral character, and the 'eyesore' effect of outdoor laundry hanging leads to its prohibition in some communities in the United States.

Show Less ▲

Keywords: laundry; mundane chore; activity of laundering; personal appearance; laundry hanging

Chapter. 10861 words.

Subjects: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art



Sanna Lehtinen | sanna.lehtinen@aalto.fi

How to study? – Approaches 3/3

- Aesthetic experience as *interaction*
- Moving away from the "landscape model", in which nature is studied from a distance
- *Aesthetic engagement* (Arnold Berleant)
 - Participation, engagement, interaction with the environment
 - Sensory information & experience (e.g. Richard Shusterman's somaesthetics)
 - Lived relationship with the environment, formed through the body
 - Viewing the environment as a seamless unity of places, organisms, and perceptions (against dichotomies)



Töölönlahti, urban nature as a hybrid (Kummala 2016)



University of Helsinki main library, Kaisa House
by Anttinen Oiva Architects 2012

Sanna Lehtinen | sanna.lehtinen@aalto.fi



Nature–human relation, as in e.g. studying ecosystem services

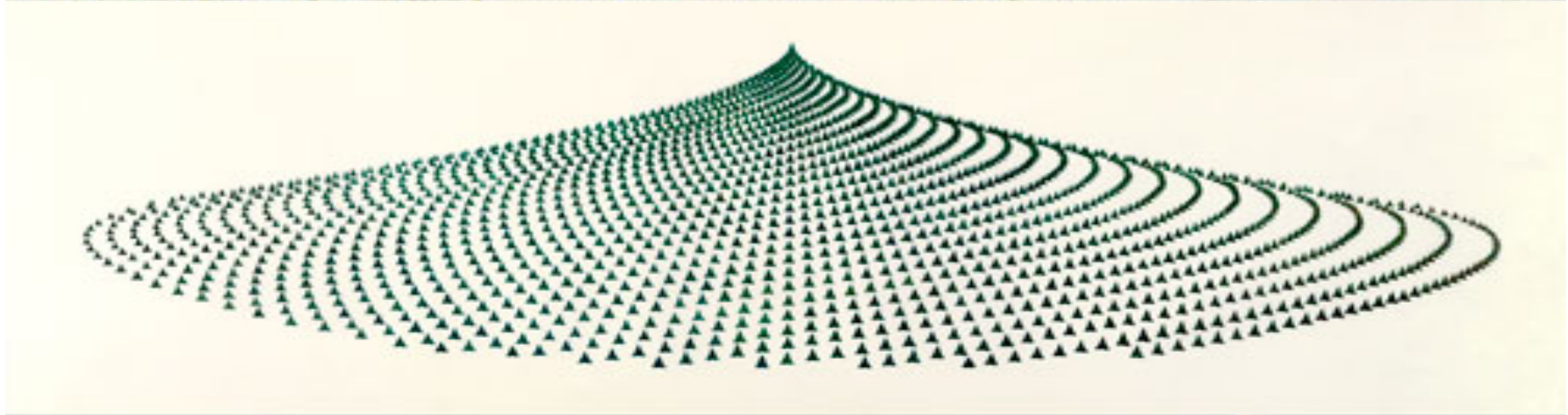


Environments of particular group's of people, e.g. environments of children

Sanna Lehtinen | sanna.lehtinen@aalto.fi

Environmental Art

- Case: Ecologically restorative art
 - Combines the perspectives of natural science and art in the restoration attempts of natural environments
- *Ecovention*: ecology+intervention (Amy Lipton & Sue Spaid 1999)
- Agnes Denes, Tree Mountain (1982/1992/1996)





Tree Mountain - A Living Time Capsule, Ylojarvi, Finland
Tree Mountain with layout of tree positioning, Cibachrome photograph
© Agnes Denes

References

- Alcaraz León, M.J. (2011) "Morally wrong beauty as a source of value"
- Carlson, A. (2016) "Environmental Aesthetics" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*
- Saito, Y. (2007) *Everyday Aesthetics*