SWU 252 - Aesthetics for Life
W10: Nature Aesthetics II: Environmental Approaches

Nature holds the key to our aesthetic, intellectual, cognitive and even spiritual satisfaction. - E. O. Wilson

1 Introduction

• This Week: Nature and Aesthetics II

• Main Question:
  Q: What do/should we appreciate, when we appreciate nature?

• We’ll look at three Environmental Approaches to this question:

  H1. The Immersion Approach
  → Wander through it, take in constantly shifting views/impressions

  Stecker 2010

  H2. The Order Appreciation Approach
  → In terms of the order/patterns it creates

  H3. The Ecological Approach
  → as an Ecological System with balanced relationships of dependence/sustenance/conflict

2 Environmental Approaches to Nature Aesthetics

Environmental Models:
Natural objects must be appreciated in their natural environment!

2.1 H1: The Immersion Approach

Q: How should we appreciate NATURE?

Recall the Landscape Model?
  i.e., you don’t appreciate an entire object/set of objects
  but a particular VIEW of an object/set of objects

eg., Hokusai’s series of landscape prints “Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji”

Recall the Impressionist Model?
  i.e., you don’t appreciate a view,
  but a view at a particular TIME (an “IMPRESSION”)

eg., Four different IMPRESSIONS of a single view at DIFFERENT POINTS IN TIME
• According to the Impressionist Model, each different impression of Horse-shoe Falls is aesthetically distinct

• The immersion approach is, again, different:

**The Immersion Approach:**
You don’t appreciate a single impression or viewpoint, but a SEQUENCE of changing impressions & views

→ The sort of experience you would get by wandering through nature
e.g., The sort of thing you’d shoot with a Go Pro
  - [https://youtu.be/WTAHzO1i6Mw](https://youtu.be/WTAHzO1i6Mw)
    (“The Beauty of the [sic] Nature” - balatarinn)
  - [https://youtu.be/FL8sagor3ZM](https://youtu.be/FL8sagor3ZM)
    (“This is Our Home” - Tim Janssens)

2.2 H2: The Order Appreciation Approach

Q: How should we appreciate NATURE?

**The Order Appreciation Approach:**
Nature should be appreciated in terms of

(i) the order/patterns it creates, and

(ii) knowledge of what causes these patterns

• Natural Process behind Sedimentary Rock Layers

  1. Erosion
  2. Deposition
  3. Compaction
  4. Cementation

→ Knowledge of what underlies the patterns heightens our appreciation

• We know that the DNA of a snake determines the pattern of scales

• This knowledge heightens (or may be necessary for) proper appreciation

• Q: Is this compatible Kant’s subjectivity criterion?
  i.e., an aesthetic judgement is felt and not calculated

• Q: Kant’s disinterestedness criterion?

• Q: What about Kant’s 4th criterion?
  - that an aesthetic judgement triggers the imagination and intellect?
Q: Is ORDER APPRECIATION an example of a prescriptive approach, or a descriptive approach?

2.3 H3: The Ecological Approach

Q: How should we appreciate NATURE?

**The Ecological Approach:**
Nature should be appreciated as an Ecological System, i.e., in terms of the balance/harmony of the relationships of dependence, sustenance and conflict in a natural landscape.


https://sites.google.com/site/trevorharrisonedges/textbook-content-overview
European Bee-Eater: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:European_bee_eater.jpg

- Casas-Crivillé & Valera 2005: Bee Eater’s as “Ecosystem Engineers”
  - They dig burrows to nest, and thus are part of the natural erosion process
  - Other animals like snakes and beetles use old bee-eater nests, thus bee-eaters supply habitats to other organisms

- H3: The Ecological Approach:
  Nature should be appreciated in terms of
  (i) its balanced relationships, and
  (ii) Knowledge of these relationships is key to aesthetic appreciation
  → The ecological relationships can be viewed as a subtype of the PATTERNS that the Order Appreciation Approach requires

2.4 Class Exercise: Nature-Inspired Artwork and Analysis

- ART Inspired by nature
  1 http://isanayamasamsara.strikingly.com/
  2 http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/01/kiva-ford-glass/
  5 ...

- Find some ART inspired by nature...
  Is it compatible with the aesthetic approaches discussed today? Why or why not?

Instagram Homework: OPTION ONE

1 Find/create an image/video capturing some aspect of nature, post it (CREDIT SOURCE!!!)
2 Analyze your post according to one of the three environmental approaches - explain your analysis in your comment!

Instagram Homework: OPTION TWO

1 Find/create a work of art inspired by nature; post it (CREDIT SOURCE!!!)
2 Does the work of art reflect any of the environmental approaches to nature aesthetics? Explain how in your comment!

References
