

# Finnish Aesthetics in Academic Databases

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## **ABSTRACT**

The major academic databases such as Web of Science and Scopus are dominated by publications written in English, often by scholars affiliated to American and British universities. As such databases are repeatedly used as basis for assessing and analyzing activities and impact of universities and even individual scholars, there is a risk that everything published in other, especially minor languages, will be sidetracked. Standard data-mining procedures do not notice them. Yet, especially in humanities, other languages and cultures have an important role and scholars publish in various languages.

The aim of this research project is to critically look into how Finnish aesthetics is represented in scientific databases. What kind of picture of Finnish aesthetics can we draw if we rely on the metadata from commonly used databases?

We will address this general issue through comparing metadata from overall five different databases, in two different languages, English and Finnish, and form a picture of several different interpretations of an academic field, aesthetics - or "estetiikka" in Finnish. To achieve this target we will employ citation analysis, as well as text summarization techniques, in order to understand the differences between the largest scientific databases in the world and the largest Finnish ones. We will employ data from Scopus, Google Scholar, Elektra, Arto, Helka, and some internal university databases - Tuhat, Acris, and CRIS. But most of the emphasis will be put on Scopus and Elektra databases that will be used in several parts of analysis. These databases were chosen for an extensive analysis due to availability of needed metadata (references) and because they belong among the largest in their own areas: Scopus - international, Elektra - Finnish. Additionally Scopus has convincing API for gathering data.

Moreover, we chose and will present some of the most influential Finnish aestheticians and analyze their publications record in order to understand to what extent the scientific databases can represent Finnish aesthetics. These Finnish aestheticians were chosen by the second author of this paper, Professor Ossi Naukkarinen, based on his extensive experience and knowledge of the field.

We will present:

- A world map based on Scopus that shows how scholars from various countries cite other scholars from other countries. The map is based on the most cited references as indexed in Scopus. It shows how geographically and culturally biased Scopus is as regards fields such as aesthetics. For example, non-English references are practically missing.
- A selection of Finnish aestheticians and the distribution of their works across different databases. This comparison shows how different pictures different databases offer and hence none of them can be trusted as a single source of information.
- A social network map that is created by bibliographic coupling of data from Scopus and Elektra as well as from open sources that include estheticians' works, for example, publications in journals where Finnish aestheticians tend to publish, such as the Finnish journal *Synteesi* and the US-based e-journal *Contemporary Aesthetics*. The map is based on references and text summarization.

Through this, we will present 1) two different maps containing actors and works recognized in the field, and 2) an overview of the main Finnish aestheticians and their works indexed in different databases.

For these goals, we will collect metadata from both Scopus and Elektra databases with references from each relevant article. Relevant articles will be located by using keyword “aeshetics” or the Finnish equivalent “estetiikka”, as well as identifying scientific journals focusing on aesthetics. We will perform citation analysis to explore in which countries which publications are cited, based on Scopus data. This comparison will allow us to understand what are the most prominent works for different countries, as well as to find the countries in which those works are developed, e.g., works that are acknowledged by Finnish aestheticians according to international databases.

Later, we will perform a citation analysis with the data gathered from the Finnish scientific database Elektra. Results will allow us to compare most cited works from both databases, as well similarity of references used. Moreover, it will indicate distribution between the cited Anglo-American texts and the ones written in Finland and/or in Finnish. Thus we could understand which language-family sources Finnish aestheticians rely on in their works, and what works in particular form the basis of their work. Further, we will apply text summary techniques to see the differences in the topics both databases are discussing. Here, we will face the question which databases are good sources for these kinds of analyses, if any? Do we have reliable databases and if we have, who has access to them? Neither Scopus, nor Elektra, for example, seem to cover everything that is relevant.

Furthermore, we will present a list of names of some of the most influential Finnish aestheticians, and their works (as provided by the databases). We will perform searches within five databases to understand how much of their works are covered.

As an additional contribution we developed an interactive web-based tool, which is accessible on <http://dhoa.aalto.fi/dhn/> to represent results of this research. Such tool will give an opportunity for aesthetics researchers to explore Finnish aesthetics field through our established lenses and also comment on possible gaps in the pictures offered by the databases. It is possible that databases only give a very partial picture of the field and in this case new tools should be developed in co-operation with researchers. The similar situation might be true also in other sub-fields of humanities where activities in other languages than English are usual.