

# **Philosophy of Information Technology**

## **Lecture 4**

Mario Verdicchio

Università degli Studi di Bergamo

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**Sperrbereich  
Kein Zutritt  
Vorsicht Strahlung**

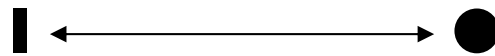
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Datum:	13.08.2009
Name:	Boella



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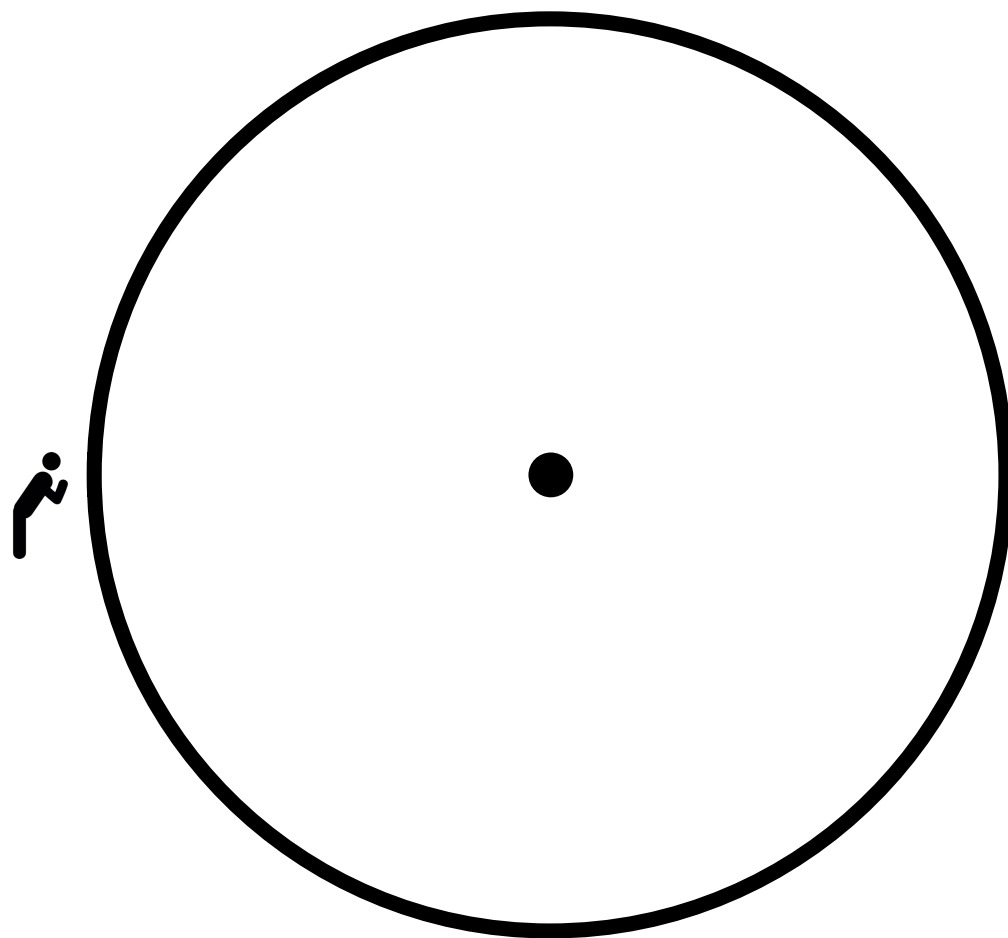


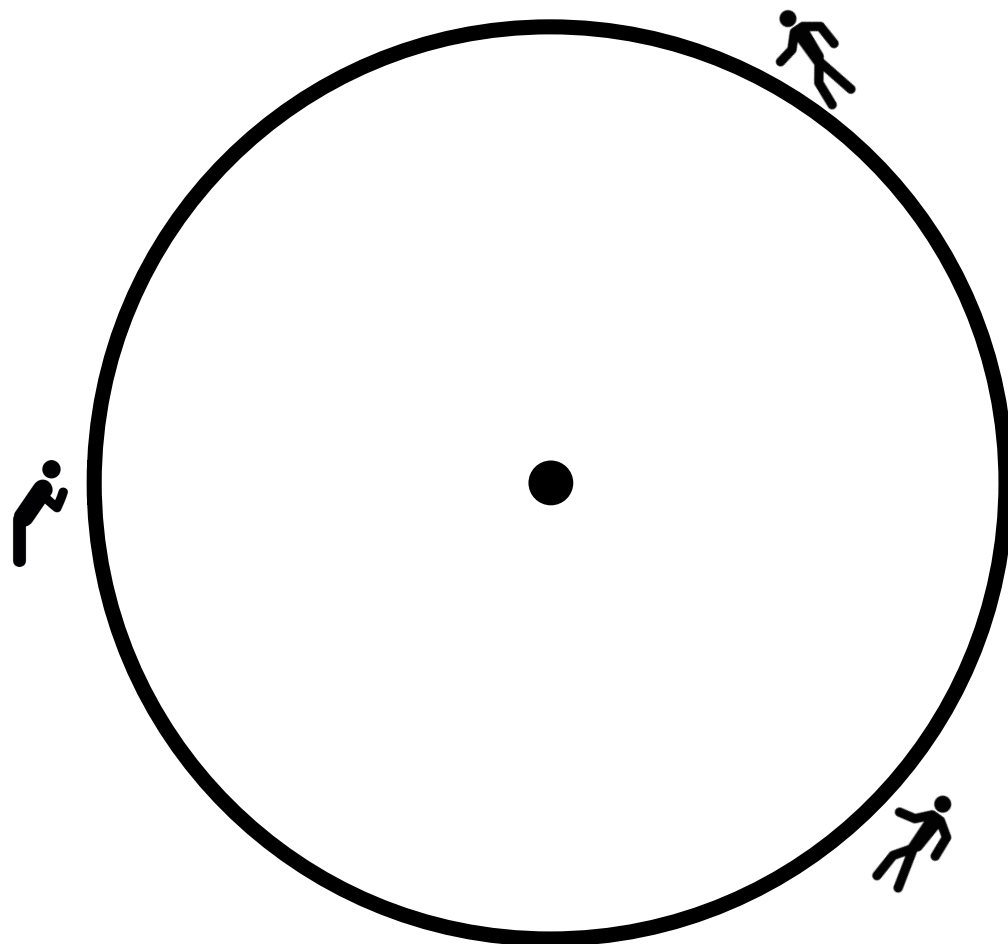






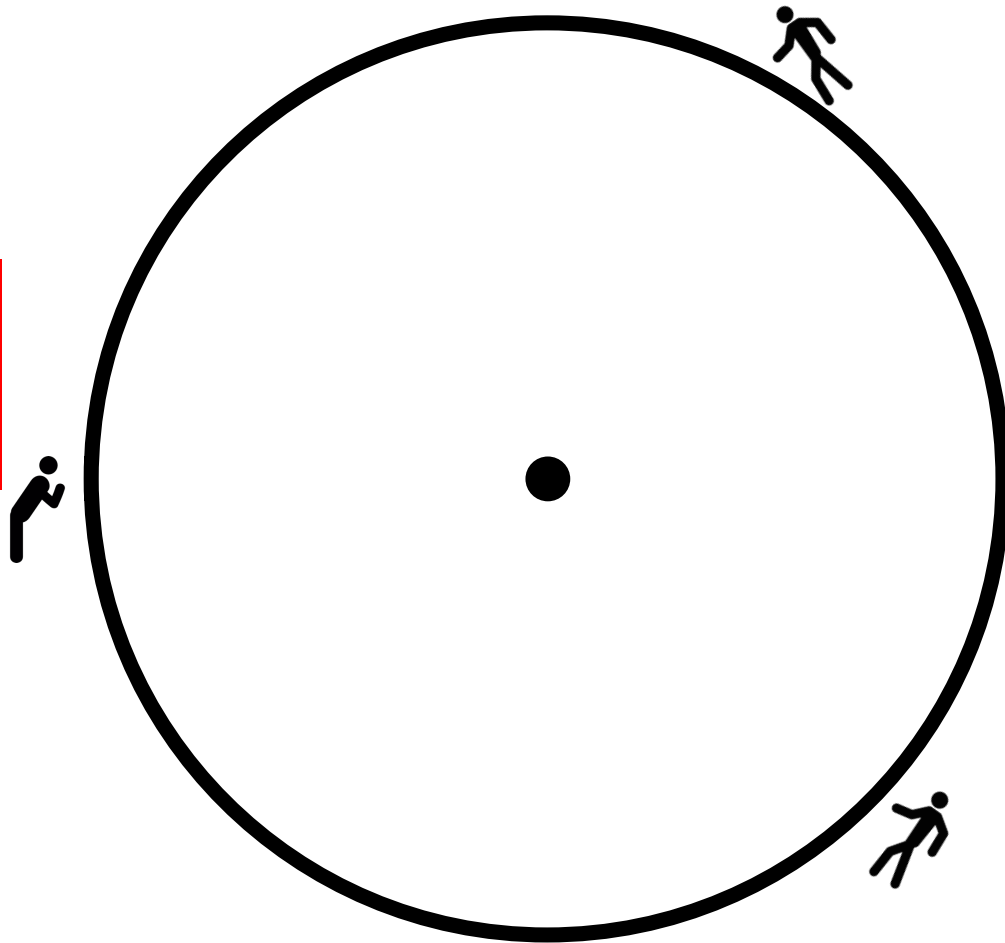








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# SEMIOTICS

General science of signs, of their production, transmission, and interpretation, or of the ways in which something is communicated and signified, or in which a symbolic object is produced.

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INDEXES  
SYMBOLS  
ICONS

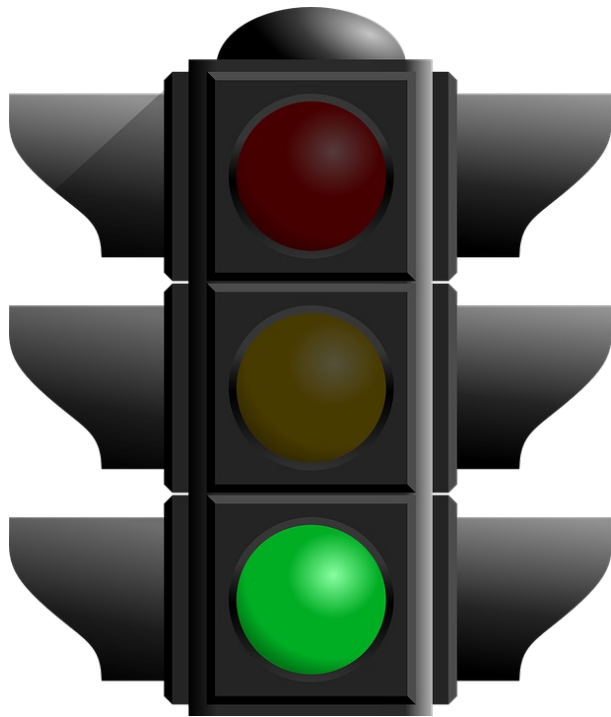
Charles S. Peirce (19th century)

**INDEXES**  
**SYMBOLS**  
**ICONS**



# INDEXES

An index has a correlation in time and space with the meaning it expresses.  
For example, smoke can be an index of a fire.



# SYMBOLS

A symbol is connected to its referent through convention.  
For example, a green traffic light means 'go'.



# ICONS

An icon shows a physical resemblance between the sign and the meaning the sign expresses.

For example, the falling rocks warning sign displays drawings that resemble rocks falling from the side of a mountain.



**INDEXES**



**SYMBOLS**



**ICONS**



INDEXES



SYMBOLS



ICONS



INDEXES

SYMBOLS



ICONS

In the case of the sign indicating radioactivity, we are unable to classify it within any of the semiotic categories.

If it were an index, it would be like the smoke from a fire—that is, in the case of radioactive material, the person seeing the sign would already be absorbing radiation, which goes against the very purpose of the sign.



INDEXES



SYMBOLS



ICONS

If it were a symbol, it would mean that the people who see the sign share the convention used by those who created it.

This shared understanding holds and works in 2025, but considering that radioactive material will remain dangerous for the next 10,000 years, can we guarantee that this convention will still be used by people 500 generations from now?



INDEXES



SYMBOLS



ICONS

Even as an icon, the sign does not work well. It is easy to create a stylized drawing of falling rocks because they are macroscopic objects, clearly visible and familiar to everyone. Radiation, on the other hand, is a microscopic—indeed, subatomic—phenomenon invisible to the human eye, yet extremely harmful to the body. Therefore, the sign is not a visual representation, but rather a convention, whose durability over thousands of years is highly questionable.



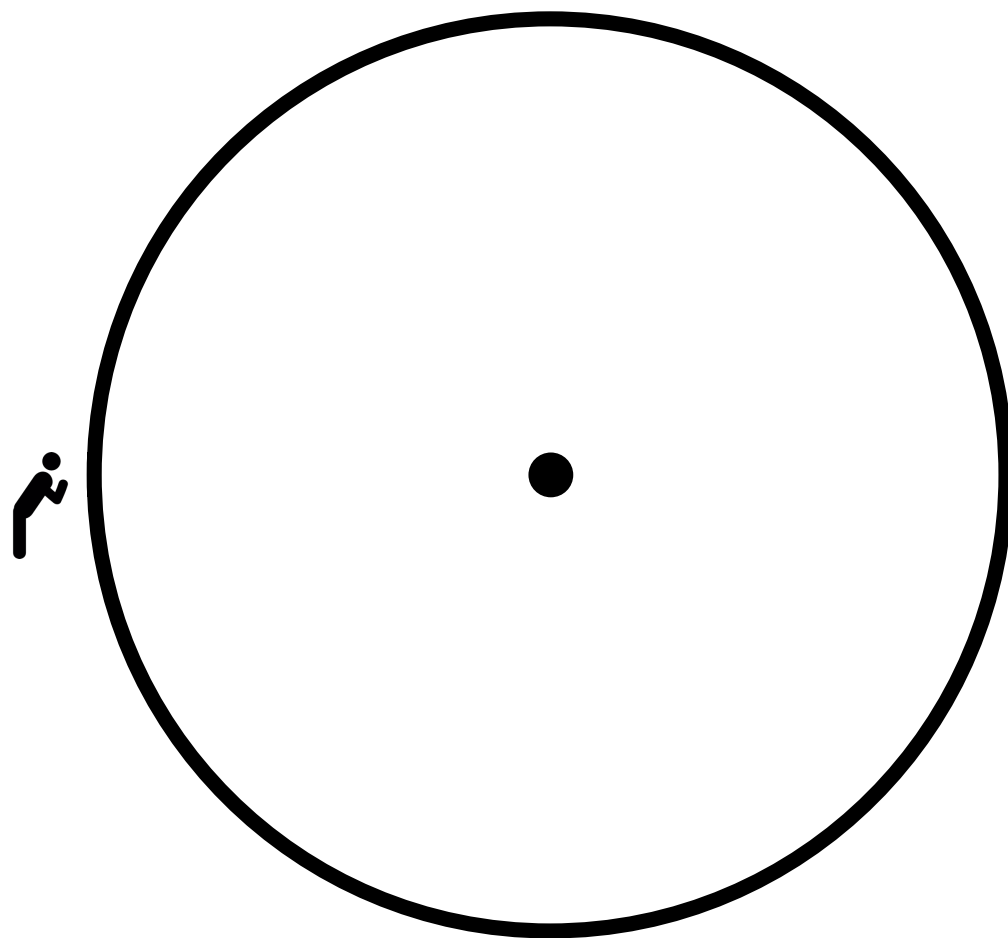
Nazca lines (Peru, 300-500 A.D., that is, less than 2000 years ago)

**SEMIOTICS**

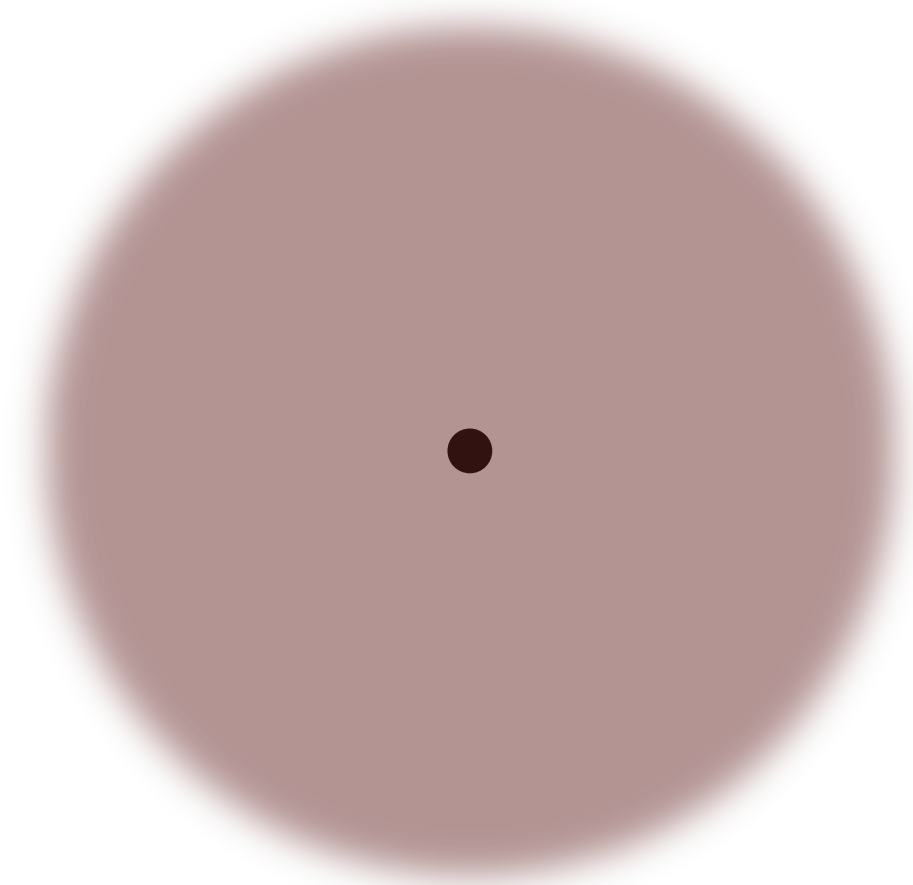
# AESTHETICS

A field of philosophical inquiry that aims to define and classify beauty and artistic phenomena.

The set of factors required and accepted by taste and the sense of form.





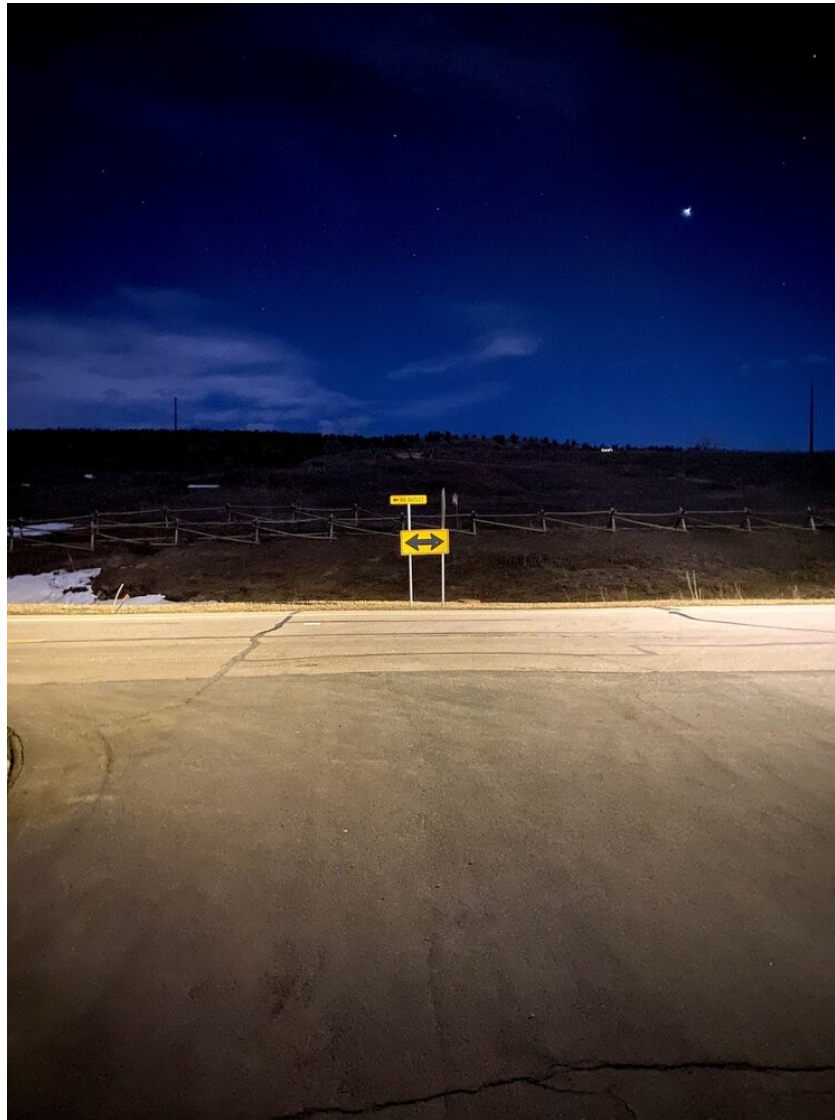




Proposal for a nuclear waste repository marker.  
("Into Eternity", by Micheal Madsen, 2010)







Landscapes so banal that they end up being ignored are called 'blandscapes' (bland + landscape).  
Porteous, "Environmental Aesthetics: Ideas, Politics and Planning", 2013.

**Examples of blandscapes  
from around the world**

# The Nullarbor Plain, Australia



# The Canadian Prairies



# The Great Plains, USA



# Sahara Desert, North Africa



# Atacama Desert, Chile



# The Steppes of Mongolia



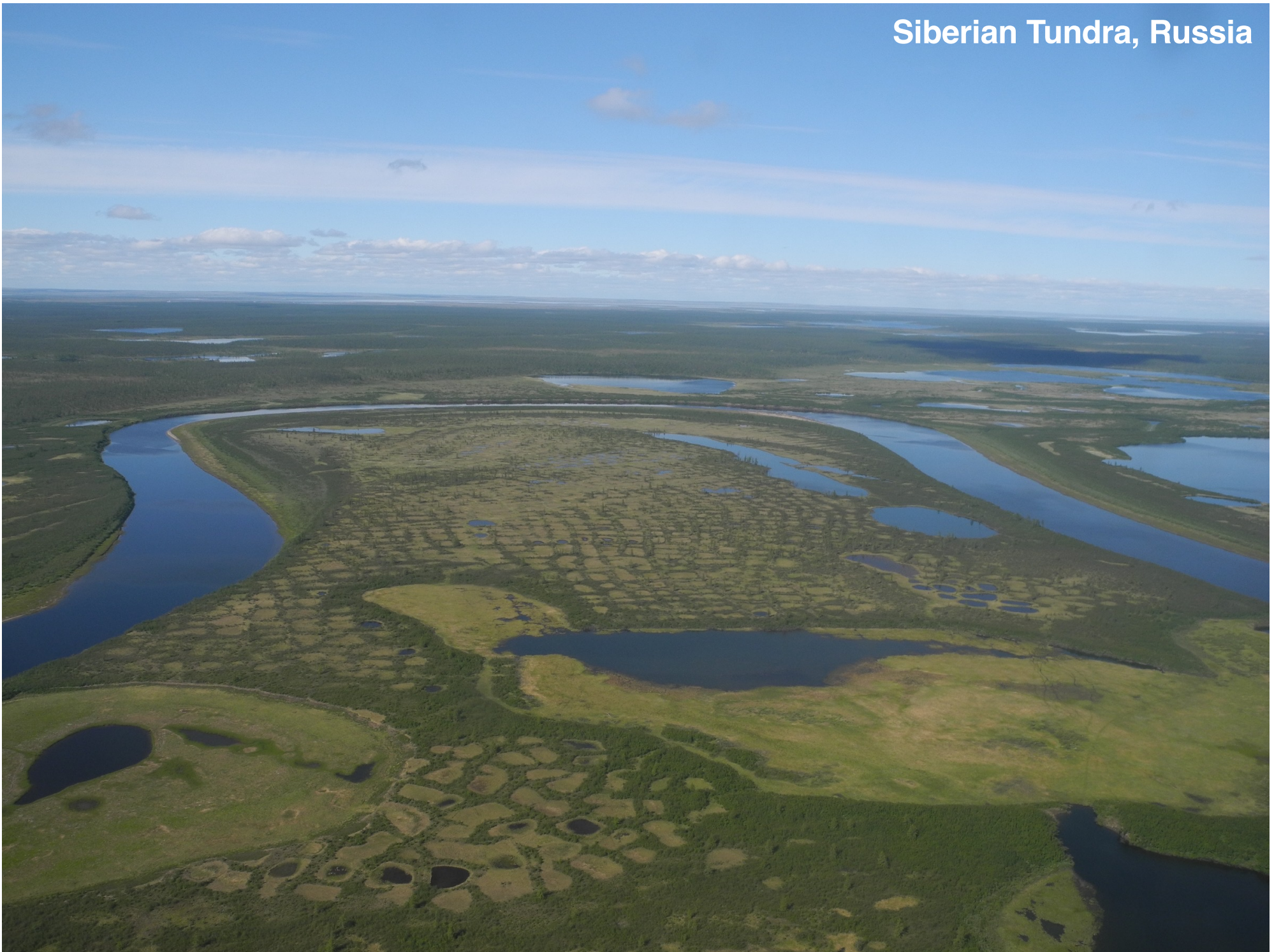
## Some parts of the Scottish Highlands



# The Pampas, Argentina



# Siberian Tundra, Russia



# Central Kazakhstan

