

## **AESTHETICS OF LANDSCAPE**

An area of research and interest in aesthetics, which examines the notion of landscape, perceiving in it both a phenomenon and an aesthetic idea. Landscape aesthetics defines the categories that constitute the landscape, its quality and aesthetic values, and the type of experience that accompanies it.

Aesthetics of landscape is not a separate branch of philosophy, although it is located at the interface between the aesthetics of nature and the aesthetics of art: it considers the beauty of nature and its experience to be the aesthetics of nature, it borrows from the aesthetics of art the values that constitute the image and its perception. Aesthetics of landscape recognises that seeing the beauty of nature is a prerequisite for a more complex process, as a result of which vistas are perceived as landscapes. The experience of landscape is by its nature visual, belonging to the subject and not to nature as such, in the sense that it expresses itself directly in visual perception. The manner of this perception is reflected in landscape painting, which provides a model of separating the landscape from the perceived fragment of the external reality (e.g. natural landscape, urban landscape) and placing it in real or imagined frames. At present, when the field of aesthetics itself is expanded (expanded aesthetics), the aesthetics of landscape is approaching cultural research on the landscape and the concept of cultural landscape developed on their basis. This makes it possible to distinguish between the classic (traditional) concept of aesthetic landscape and the concept of cultural landscape defined within the expanded aesthetics. The concepts of Burke, Gilpin and Kant as well as Simmel and Ritter, which represent the classic (traditional) landscape approach, are key to the constitution of aesthetics of landscape. In the twentieth century, environmental aesthetics, and Berleant in particular, was a problem within the framework of expanded landscape aesthetics. Between them is Carlson's contemporary concept.

The historical approach allows to locate the sources of aesthetics of landscape in the Renaissance sensitivity to the world of nature, in the discovery of the beauty of nature and landscape as a beautiful view expressed in the natural scenery. The "discovery" of the landscape attributed to the Renaissance (Gombrich, Burckhardt) is connected with the picture and painting perception of the world. The first reflections on the aesthetics of the landscape were formulated by Bacon, Shaftsbury, 18th century English empirics (Hutcheson, Alison, Addison, Pope and Burke). It is also a moment of aesthetic reflection, when the beauty of nature (as an unsurpassed model for the artist) was given a higher value than the beauty of art, recognising that beauty is a feature of the whole reality and it fits into the order of nature (Shaftsbury). Shaftsbury's important contribution to landscape aesthetics is also to outline the concept of selfless contemplation accompanying the perception of natural phenomena. Addison and Pope wrote about the beauty of natural forms and unrestricted nature, the multiplicity of images generated by nature and its diversity and variability.

Burke, searching for quality and aesthetic values in nature, introduced to his reflections on nature and its phenomena a second category alongside with beauty: sublimity, which defines everything that the aesthetics of beauty does not include. In this approach, sublimity is expressed in the wild, unrestrained nature, arousing fear turned into aesthetic pleasure. Gilpin, on the other hand, showed that apart from beauty and sublimity, it is possible to distinguish a third aesthetic category: *the picturesque*, which was connected with the landscape, and then with landscape parks. *The picturesque* category referred to picturesque views, i.e. those worth painting, which attract the eye. Eventually, *the picturesque* linked the landscape with a painting for which landscape painting is a benchmark, and the expression is a perception shaped on the basis of the principles of perspective and the search for a way of perfect representation of the world. The theory and practice of creating landscape parks played a significant role in shaping an aesthetic view of the landscape.

From this perspective, the landscape constitutes itself in the face of two aesthetic categories: *the picturesque* and *the sublime*. Both have successfully shaped models of preferred landscapes, referring to both the essence and quality of aesthetic views. The importance of these categories consists in distinguishing two types of experience reviving in the face of nature and communing with it. While *the picturesque* means contemplation and a distanced, selfless experience of landscape as a painting that finds the best exemplification in painting and landscape parks, sublimity, expressed in such phenomena as storm, storm, majestic mountains, arouses fear and not a contemplative aesthetic experience. These two categories have not lost their relevance, and their vitality is evidenced by the fact that to this day we admire the landscapes that appear to us in the form of a perceived image. The sublime, despite its complicated history in the area of aesthetics and philosophy, has not lost its power of influence, still updating itself in the face of phenomena in which the natural element reveals its horror.

In Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Burke's division into the aesthetics of beauty and sublimity has been adopted, consolidating the dual-track aesthetics. In Kant's work, through the connection with the notion of beautiful nature, the same features that characterise beauty were attributed to landscape experience: selflessness, incomprehensibility, distancing, contemplative reflection. The idea of selfless viewing is to give the eye the role of the dominant sense in contact with nature and to introduce distance as a kind of relationship between the subject experiencing and the phenomenon or object of experience. Distance and selfless contemplation indicate that landscape experience is not about the directness of experience, but about the activity of imagination which, what is directly given, captures into its own frames. In Simmel's view, landscape is a "spiritual creation" and his experience requires a special spiritual process, similar to the creative act, which makes us no longer look at meadows, forests, mountains, but at landscapes. The viewer, like the artist, extracts from the chaotic, infinite stream of the world a fragment that forms into one: it gives it form, complements it with meaning and meaning. Berleant associates this type of experience with a panoramic view.

In the classical approach, landscape experience allows only the attitude of the viewer, the audience, which means that those who actively participate in it in the physical dimension, co-creating it through use, are excluded from its perception, experience and feeling. The recognition that aesthetics of landscape refers to two categories: the sublime and *the picturesque* makes it possible to distinguish two approaches to landscape, revealing its two senses. The division runs between *the picturesque* and sublime and puts at opposite poles the idea of timelessness and ahistoricity of beautiful nature, as well as the historical, process dimension of beauty, contemplation of what is perceived and the multi-sensual aesthetic experience. While *the picturesque* liberates aesthetic pleasure, the sublimity speaks of aesthetic stir.

In the optics of sublimity, the landscape takes on a processual character, inscribing itself into cultural and social phenomena and historical processes. As a process in which socio-cultural relations and the natural world overlap, the landscape acquires the sense of the surrounding reality, the current environment in which its fully sensual reception takes place.

*Environmental aesthetics* links the concept of landscape to the environment. This is the position represented by Berleant, who focuses on the idea of landscape as an element of the environment as a whole. In the proposed approach, the environment is not only a physical environment, but also a social, cultural, natural and artificial order going beyond the natural world; it is a geographical and climatic condition; it is a physical presence, a sensual perception, unity of time and place. Such a landscape requires a different type of experience, which Berleant defines in terms of engagement understood as "evaluating participation", assuming that aesthetic values are the basic factor in relations with the outside world. This type of experience is characteristic of the subject's relationship with nature. Here, aesthetic predilection means commitment, because nature, expressing itself directly through the environment, requires active reception on our part. In this respect, Berleant approaches the position represented by humanistic geography, referring to the cultural landscape as a space in which the work of nature and human work is expressed, and the landscape itself acquires a processual character, inscribing itself into cultural and social phenomena and historical processes. Such an approach makes it possible to unambiguously link the landscape with what is dynamic and to reject its static model, which is not without influence on the role of the subject. It should change from a viewer and user into a "critical" participant whose contribution to shaping reality takes place in three fields: perception, action and consciousness. Critical participation means co-creation and activity of the senses: instead of an uninvolved viewer, an active viewer enters. It also means that one can no longer speak of the landscape as such, but of a multitude of different, sensual landscapes, for which visibility is a form of complementing and integrating what is revealed in the richness of impressions.

[B. F.]

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