

PHILOSOPHY OF LANDSCAPE

A broadly understood reflection on the category of landscape conducted from the philosophical perspective, including also related concepts (e.g. place, neighbourhood, space). The philosophy of landscape should not be understood as a clearly defined field of philosophy or as a specific perspective, but as the use of various philosophical concepts and tools to understand what landscape is, what role it plays in human life and how the relationship between man and landscape is shaped.

Georg Simmel was probably the first to use the term "the philosophy of landscape" in an essay under this title published in 1913. The term is still in use today, but it is not widespread (d'Angelo, Le Dantec, Verrissimo and Serrao), due to the fact that philosophical reflections on the landscape are dominated by aesthetic issues (which is already apparent in Simmel's text). As a result, the philosophy of landscape is identified with landscape aesthetics. Although it is legitimate to consider landscape as a primarily aesthetic phenomenon, reducing the philosophy of landscape to aesthetics is wrong because it can lead to too narrow a view of landscape, focusing on artistic and literary representations of landscapes, on analysing people's aesthetic preferences with regard to landscapes, and on theoretical and practical issues related to landscape architecture. In addition, such an approach ignores ethical issues: the issue of landscape ethics, i.e. the issue of action (design, management, conduct) respecting the nature of a particular landscape and the issue of people's right to the landscape.

The history of the term "landscape" is long and complex, due to the fact that the notion has functioned in a variety of disciplines, with each of them enriching its meaning. As a consequence, it is impossible to define landscape unequivocally. Philosophical reflection refers primarily to the history of art (landscape is a picturesque view), which helps to identify the philosophy of landscape with aesthetics, but in recent years it more and more often reaches for the understanding of this concept developed on the basis of humanistic geography (landscape as an experienced place).

In the contemporary philosophical reflection on landscape, a number of the most important groups of issues (d'Angelo) can be identified. First of all, the adequacy of landscape categories has been reflected upon. *Environmental aesthetics* challenged the use of the term "landscape". (Carlson, Berleant). Using the category of landscape, whose paradigmatic incarnation was landscape painting, was considered inappropriate, because it causes the human environment to be separated from it and reduced to the visual side, while man is understood as an uninvolved observer of the world. Secondly, it has been pointed out that landscape is born at the moment when people experience their surroundings, so it is difficult to separate objective and subjective elements (Simmel). In this sense, landscape is closely related to the mood and atmosphere category (Böhme). Thirdly, the relationship between landscape and history has begun to be considered. Landscape itself is the product of history and human and/or natural interaction. At the same time, landscape is always experienced

and conceptualised in a historical way – the very idea of landscape is a certain concept with a specific history. The question therefore arises as to whether landscape can be regarded as a universal category, or whether we should rather speak of its birth and specific scope (for many researchers, the reference to the environment as landscape is characteristic of modern European culture and Chinese and Japanese culture). (Berque). Fourthly, the relationship between landscape and modern culture (Ritter) has been pointed out. It was not until the full liberation from the rule of nature, which took place with the scientific and industrial revolution, that it was possible to adopt an attitude in which the environment was appreciated for its non-utilitarian values. At the same time, it was the modern era that led to the degradation of landscapes, although the same era gave rise to the idea of their protection. Fifthly, attention is drawn to the relationship between landscape and identity. Landscapes themselves have an identity that distinguishes them from other landscapes (*ethos, genius loci*), which is the result of human and/or natural interactions and is at the same time an essential component of the identity of the people living there. Some landscapes are even treated as an expression of the identity of a specific group (e.g. national landscapes). In this context, more and more attention is being paid to the right of people to enjoy a landscape that provides them with physical and mental well-being. In this context, landscape is understood as a living area, existing in so far as there are people who experience and conceptualise it, and thus it takes shape and/or meaning.

The issues mentioned above are basically various manifestations of the basic issue that the philosophy of landscape wants to address and which is the question: "What is landscape?"

Although the philosophy of landscape cannot do without the achievements of other disciplines, at the same time it is able to answer this question to the fullest, indicating that the specificity of landscape is evidenced by its basic duality: landscape is both a fragment of reality, as well as the way in which it appears to man. The cultural dimension of landscape has a twofold character (resulting from its immanent duality): on the one hand, it is a reality experienced through the prism of categories provided by culture, and on the other hand, it is nature transformed by culture. Culture should be understood as a dynamic factor that produces or transforms the landscape in a historical process, which makes it possible to distinguish (which does not mean: to separate) landscape understood as a reality experienced – individually and collectively – through the prism of cultural categories from landscape presented as a fragment of reality transformed by culture. At the same time, however, it must be recognised that landscape can be equally causative, both in terms of shaping cultural tradition and the individual way of experiencing the world through the senses.

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