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1.

There is an essay by Rainer Maria Rilke entitled *An Experience* (2010), which conveys a certain peculiar mood engendered by the encounter of the human and nature. The desire to lean against a tree, which arose quite suddenly, was fulfilled thus occasioning a “hitherto unknown sensation: it was as if almost imperceptible vibrations were passing from the interior of the tree into him” (Ibidem, 139). This continuing experience of penetration was indescribably subtle. At no time before had he been “filled with more delicate resonances” (Ibidem, 140). The experience Rilke describes was so exquisite that it could not even be determined which senses were engaged in receiving those slight movements, while the person experiencing them was at a loss as to whether the sensation was one of pleasure or pain. The body seemed fixed on persevering in that utter immersion in nature. The surroundings appeared to have become remote, and yet simultaneously “more true” (Ibidem, 141). The eye did not venture far into the distance, as usual, but looked “back at things, as it were over his shoulder, and a daring, sweet flavour was added to their existence” (Ibidem). The state did not last long, but the singularity of the experience activated memory, which kept record of other such moments of communion with nature.

In the experience described above, the boundaries of the inner and the outer become blurred, while the experience of communion with nature “did not break on the barrier of his body” (Ibidem, 142). It offers an insight into an experience of landscape which defies traditional notions. Here, landscape does not derive from a philosophical concept, in which the human is always situated outside a landscape and experiences it via distanced observation, so that ultimately it emerges as “unity in multiplicity” or “manifestation of entire nature” (Ritter 1996, 55-56). In the approach I find interesting, human being is always a part of landscape; human beings do not experience from the outside but are situated within. In landscape studies, I am interested in the issue of a primordial or “source experience” of landscape. The experience of being a part of landscape is inextricably associated with the agitation or emotion that a direct presence of nature engenders. The source experience of nature assumes the form of total absorption into Nature, as Rilke (2010, 139) would have it, or “vesania, or ‘systematic’ madness” (Lyotard 2014, 507), referred to by Jean-Francois Lyotard. The latter has nothing to do with a sensation

of the unity of nature; on the contrary, it consists in an estrangement in landscape—which Lyotard compares to a foreigner getting lost (Ibidem, 508)—which becomes its precondition. At this level of sensing the surrounding world and one's presence in it nothing can be placed within a frame, therefore landscape cannot be described if one is positioned extraneously.

When analysing that source experience, one should rather seek to describe the interaction between ourselves and the world. I am interested in the conditions whereby this experience appears. I am also interested in how the non-discursive sensation of being moved/estranged transitions into a discursive form filled with the meaning-laden atmosphere we experience.

2.

Aesthetics plays a paramount role in landscape studies. Phenomenology, especially its contemporary varieties is a theoretical tool which enables description of the experience of landscape, its effect on us. Radical phenomenology, with its sensitivity to otherness, affords a view on landscape from an altogether new perspective—the “source experience” already mentioned. Obviously, all versions of philosophical hermeneutics and semiotics offer means to study landscape in the light of its significations and the layers of meaning which accumulate in culture.

3.

I am convinced that interdisciplinary landscape studies may yield interesting outcomes in terms of knowledge. The category of landscape is encountered in diverse theoretical contexts. Some theoretical domains naturally overlap and interlock due to a kinship of disciplines. Others, however, are quite remote, for instance biology and aesthetics. Interdisciplinary research combining the theory of evolution and aesthetics, addressing biological/evolutionary conditions of the aesthetic perception of landscape could prove highly significant. An interdisciplinary element in landscape studies is also indispensable in landscape architecture and ecology, so landscape architecture and ecology can undertake action to shape space while simultaneously allowing for conservation of the existing ecosystems in a given area and creation of new ones. The need for interdisciplinary inquiry is also reflected in the establishment of new faculties at a number of higher schools of art, where some artistic practices involve living plants and earth—thereby becoming so-called faculties of “wet materials”. The requirement for interdisciplinary studies of landscape arises directly from landscape theory which draws on the early medieval provenance of *landscape* as a notion referring to agricultural practices in a given area of land (Ingold 2014, 395-396). In this case, landscape theory should consider the fact of direct intervention into landscape whose “purpose was not to render the material

world in appearance rather than substance, but to wrest a living from the earth” (Ibidem, 396).

4.

Landscape education should be pursued not only to the extent of protecting what exists now, in other words the conservation of landscape assets. Its fundamental goal should include developing a sensitivity to what transcends cultural norms or even contradicts them. We often tend to forget that landscape is constituted by living organisms as well, and our experience of landscape should not overlook this fact. Landscape education should thus foster that kind of awareness. Landscape is not limited to the range of our vision; it is also the invisible atmosphere of the place, its dynamics and all that we experience by means of other senses. Consequently, becoming sensitive to landscape means that sensory facilities other than vision should be cultivated as well. Furthermore, landscape education should incorporate knowledge of the material aspects of landscape and develop sensibility to the diversity of matter.

In this section of the survey, I would like to recreate an “image” which affords me immense pleasure. Where human activity consisting in intervention into natural surroundings declines, plants promptly reclaim the space. Moss grows out between the cracks in the asphalt, plants grow over buildings. Following this colonization, the erstwhile character of the place is almost utterly eradicated. This picture of the expansion of plants and other living organisms is a source of happiness, as it seems they can still deliver the world. So all human actions which had destroyed the landscape will be redeemed.

Bibliography:

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Questionnaire—Answers

Ritter, Joachim. "Krajobraz. O postawie estetycznej w nowoczesnym społeczeństwie" ["Landscape. On the Aesthetic Attitude in Modern Society"]. In: *Studia z filozofii Niemieckiej*, edited by Stanisław Czerniak, Jarosław Rolewski, 45-66. Toruń: Uniwersytet Mikołaja [German original: Ritter, Joachim. 1963. „Landschaft. Zur Funktion des Ästhetischen in der modernen Gesellschaft.” In: Ritter, Joachim. 1974. Subjektivität. Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp: 141-163.