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### 1.

Martin Heidegger's diagnosis was clear: the expansive sweep of modern culture paradoxically leads to a narrowed understanding of the world, reduces the latter to an image. As he wrote, "The fundamental event of modernity is the conquest of the world as picture". In turn, the latter results from the open possibility—continually expanded by advancing technology—of almost limitless adjunction of ever new elements, as "by adding them, the human fight for a position in which they may be the being that endows all being with measure and decrees the direction it is to follow" (1997, 81). In applying the concept to everyday situations, Andrzej Falkiewicz would say that the worldPICTURE consists in "the fact that everyone erects a building without a broad scrutiny of the surroundings, and it is for the needs of that single building that a new city is designed from scratch" (2009, 135). The worldPICTURE comes into being when, without the "scrutiny of the surroundings", we generate sequences of new objects created in their own image and likeness, and therefore unlike anything but themselves. A world—(transitions) into—picture.

LANDscape would thus be the opposite of worldPICTURE. If we were to answer the question what it means, we would say that LANDscape happens when everything that so far has been "human" in the world—in other words created in the likeness and image of the human mode of organizing reality—is now *liberated*. It is even detached from its own past, which formerly has usually been subordinated to human interests (as the once popular song put it—this stubble field is a San Francisco of tomorrow). The world of LANDscape is a world glimpsed from the outskirts of what is well known, a world seen from the edge, the verge, or the fringe, whence a different form of the world arises (albeit most likely in a vague and mysterious fashion). Kenneth White, an outstanding representative of geopoetics, speaks of the shore-like, littoral nature of LANDscape.

So, LANDscape belongs to the realm of suburbs, the eternally growing borderline places, in which the energy of escape from the centre accumulates. In contrast to worldPICTURE, LANDscape is always regional and peripheral. When Shakespeare situates one of the scenes in *A Winter's Tale* on the sea coast of Bohemia, he does not do this out of ignorance. This is not about geographical accuracy, but about presenting

the world which has suddenly been released from the shackles of PICTURE, an astonishing world where human will has only a negligible impact on events. Such a world is always peripheral, a “fringe”—it is a LANDscape or OUT-OF-LANDscape.

Quite likely, it was Georg Simmel who came close to defining LANDscape as he underscored in his attempt that singular confluence of the human and the non-human as the prime trait of LANDscape (or perhaps “Land-sight” would be a more pertinent designation here?): “a landscape arises when a range of natural phenomena spread over the surface of the earth is comprehended by a particular kind of unity, one that is distinct from the way this same visual field is encompassed by the causally thinking scholar, the religious sentiments of a worshipper of nature, the teleologically oriented tiller of the soil, or a strategist of war” (2006, 301). This unity potential must by no means be comprehended as a centralising aggregation which subordinates and incapacitates all of the component elements. The union taking place in the LANDscape allows for sudden, dazzling glimpses of detail, engendering changes in the quality of that which is gathered in that LANDscape. “The whole is one landscape, and yet each part can be distinguished from its neighbour.” (Lynch 2011, 109)

## 2.

Reflection of the humanities should above all be less anthropocentric than that of the natural sciences, paradoxical though this may sound. The latter strive to accomplish set research goals and their maximally effective application in production, and in economic and technological practice. This tendency intensifies, being elevated even further to the role of a principal virtue crowning the scientific endeavour. This is no longer a holocene but an *anthropocene* which serves as the name denoting the epoch, a reality that is almost utterly *human*: created by the human, for the human and accordingly adjusted for size. It is a secular version of Genesis, in which the human *is* the world. Humanistic reflection should thus follow up with a crucial amendment which stipulates (although various disciplines of the humanities do so in their own characteristic fashion) that **we are in the world, but we are not the world**. In the LANDscape (if this designation is to remain valid, it must be emphasized that it is employed as a notion different from Heideggerian “worldpicture”) this distinction gains greater prominence. When looking at our surroundings, when collecting, amassing everything which takes part therein into a whole, we realize that our being, especially our being together, is distorted. The premise of the *polis* was to ensure persistence to human undertakings which outside the institutions and modes of being that were particular to *polis* would have faded into obscurity, as well as solicitude for what was in-between people, i.e. the surroundings, or to put it in a nutshell—the world. **It is not the human**

**individual who is at the core of the political of our being together, not even human society—but the world.** This caveat taken from the writings of Hannah Arendt is a momentous one, since it enables one to perceive the significant political nature of our existence, and therefore another element should be added to our definition of landscape: LANDscape is a reflection of our being together, of our co-being not only with the human, but above all with all that is non-human.

### 3.

If LANDscape is a build-up, a congregation (in contrast to straightforward addition) of what constitutes our surroundings, the reflection on it is a form of critical striving for the future. One could say that LANDscape, if it is to be propitious to our being and making the world more *human* (in the ethical sense), is a reflection on what is, and the relationships between that which is. The works of the human hand are not disdained, overlooked, invalidated; they do not vanish from view. However, they acquire a different meaning and a different weight. They are no longer utterly immersed in the iterative configuration of useful structures of civilisation but, increasingly, begin to take part in the singularity of world's existence. Thus, they became replete with multiple meanings as they establish a relationship with the reality of human goals as well as regain the erstwhile bonds with the non-human, without which the human, collapsing under the burden of their own achievements and capacities is unable to defend their own humanity. This transformation of the worldPICTURE into a LANDscape is the work of a particular perception which is capable of noticing the equivocal, which remains in the transitional zone between all definite designations and identities. In LANDscape, the world recovers its materiality, which is liberated from the materiality it has been attributed by the human.

Each discipline (not only within the humanities) should make its contribution to the act of creating LANDscape. Literature can do so by posing questions about the human relationship to a place and the kinds of ties which yield a place as a result; the history of art interprets the diverse modes of rendering the same location (Ruskin already demonstrated that regardless of the shared name and geographical coordinates, Canaletto's Venice is not the Venice of Turner). Philosophy may delve into space as a possibility for objects to be constituted (beginning with Plato, through Spinoza and Whitehead, to Benjamin, Deleuze and Derrida, as well as Robert Esposito and Giorgio Agamben), and into concepts associated with our perception of space such as "sublimity" or the "picturesque". Sociology may study the relation between cities and social movements, between aesthetics and the lifestyle of the inhabitants, or the quality of the public space. Architecture and urban development, as well as the art (let it be emphasized, ART) of managing a city should function as the outcome of the convergence of those disciplines, which together

form the discipline of particular, yet indispensable **civic utopistics**. Without such a trans-discipline and the corresponding fusion of skills, knowledge, art and above all **good will**, it may prove difficult to attain an optimistic vision of the world in which we live and which, even more importantly, will be inherited by our children and grandchildren.

#### 4.

“There are contents which cannot be captured by the signs of a language—the sensation and experience of a place should be counted among these contents” (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2006, 302). This view, asserted by Hanna Buczyńska-Garewicz is worthy of attention from all those interested in **civic utopistics** or **oikology**, as one would call an inquiry seeking to reinterpret **home**, a notion which is as important as it is abused by politicians and ideologists. As to the question concerning LANDscape education, the answer given at this point will be greatly—and most likely inappropriately—brief and general: this education should address two exceedingly vital issues, namely how to build (which as we know very well expands into questions such as “how to live” and “how to think”) and how to perceive the world. In fact, the matter at hand is a pedagogy of building/creating and pedagogy of perception. Together, they aspire to examine and study what the Greeks used to call *eu dzen*, or “good” and “wise” life.

While worldPICTURE aims to reflect reality as a repetitive entity, since it is constructed from pre-fabricated segments and subjected to a game of equivalence in which each of those segments is assigned a certain value, LANDscape belongs to the realm of single occurrences, which are not repeated. More concisely, LANDscape becomes one when we regain the singularity of the world, and hence the sense of the singularity of our existence. This awareness is a prerequisite of our responsibility and solidarity with that which is.

In its turn, this means a therapy of perception which, hitherto accustomed to the reality of sharp contours and distinctly separate segments, has to recover its ability of communing with what is vague and continuous—something which constitutes a spectrum of visibility rather than a constellation of separate elements. This does not mean that objects lose their materiality; on the contrary, it is enhanced as they are extricated from the dominion of unconditional usefulness and the unequivocal to which they are subjected in our everyday practice. The “unfocused perspectives” opening before our eyes at dawn or as night begins to fall, in the uncertain light which is so remote from the ostentation of the midday sun,

[...] the thought cannot break away from the slow transformation of the landscape, and every now and again one has to lean out, look at the rising brilliance which blends with the mist so dustily, so unreally, and from the semi-darkness releases shapes and

phantasmagorias which are neither one nor the other, so forgo sleep and waste no time, for in this configuration, in this play of gold, grey and half-blue, in this one-off miracle, it will never be again. (Stasiuk 2013, 102)

Landscape is therefore a place of “transformation”, but the latter differs substantially from the change occurring in the wake of human action. Not only because it happens at a different pace than one would expect in the urgency of civilisational haste (since it is “slow” to come); another reason is that it yields that which is “one-off”.

A modest oikological answer to the question “how to build” in the spirit of and for the spirit of LANDscape would be as follows: (1) any building endeavour changes the world, therefore none should be taken lightly as a mechanical iteration of the established patterns of building; (2) what we build is to articulate its materiality, not through an arrogant display of technological-material-structural prowess, but by engaging in dialogue with the forms of materiality adopted by the world; (3) our interventions into the matter of the world result from a particular oikological perception; consequently they should serve to make a place harbouring multiple meanings, in other words help restore the awareness and joy stemming from the sense of the singularity of our existence; (4) in order to make such a landscape-serving building endeavour possible, we need efforts in the field of the pedagogy of perception, “school” activities to promote the formation and restoration of the sensitivity to space and its diverse, ambiguous, material structures.

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