

PHILOSOPHY OF LANDSCAPE

Think, Walk, Act

Edited by

Adriana Veríssimo Serrão

Moirika Reker



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WALKING THROUGH LANDSCAPES?

Luca Vargiu

According to Francesco Careri, since the dawn of mankind walking has been the first “symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world”, the “first aesthetic act, penetrating the territories of chaos, constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of situated objects”¹. The charm of this idea raises some questions which can be summarized as:

How is the experience of walking an aesthetic act? Is walking an experience of space or an experience in space? Is it an experience of landscapes or an experience in landscapes?

In order to try and understand the meaning of these questions, we can start by introducing John Brinckerhoff Jackson’s concept of ‘odology’. Jackson, basing his etymology on the Greek *hodós*, ‘road or journey’,² intended to use this word to describe the study of roads and ways. He proposed the following definition:

Odology is the science or study of roads or journeys and, by extension, the study of streets and superhighways and trails and paths, how they are used, where they lead, and how they come into existence.³

Hence, odology, as a category of study, is “part geography, part planning, and part engineering” without neglecting sociopolitical aspects.⁴ Such a kind of

¹ Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes. El andar como práctica estética / Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*, Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002, p. 20.

² John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 21.

³ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994, p. 191. Although Jackson writes ‘odology’, there exists also the version ‘hodology’, which has been used, for instance, in a title of an article published in *Landscape*, the magazine that Jackson founded and edited. See Derk de Jonge, “Applied Hodology”, *Landscape* 17, no. 2 (1967-68): 10-11.

⁴ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, p. 191. See Id., *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, pp. 21-27.

inquiry focused mainly on the communication routes and on the destination, without taking into consideration the specific features of walking. In fact, ways, roads, motorways and paths can be crossed by whatsoever means of locomotion: coherently, Jackson referred mostly to the contemporary North American roadway system and its organization. He followed the conviction that roads are not just crossings: rather, they create new space forms and with them new forms of sociality and ways of inhabiting these spaces. Quoting a famous statement of his, “Roads no longer merely lead to places, they *are* places”⁵.

Aside from Jackson’s definition, it is worth noting that the term already had its own history which refers us as far back as at least Kurt Lewin. It is in fact to Lewin that we owe the elaboration of the concept of ‘hodological space’ (*hodologischer Raum*) in the framework of a human behavioral theory which takes individuals not in isolation, but instead situates them in their environment. Given these premises, such a notion seems to be *prima facie* more attentive in considering the specific features of walking. In this light, hodological spaces, considered as lived spaces, take the shape of discrete and qualitative spaces, organized in ‘regions’ whose meaning and value depend on the degree of psychic investment in terms of “interpretation, emotions, expectations, aspirations”, as observed by Jean-Marc Besse.⁶ The sum of these regions constitutes the ‘life space’, defined by Lewin as the “totality of facts which determine the behavior of an individual at a certain moment”⁷.

Thus, this space is distinguished from the ‘Euclidean’ space, which is continuous, homogenous, and measurable. Not only because it is generated by an embodied subject, but also because the subject’s field of forces varies continuously.⁸ In this sense, as pointed out by Gilles A. Tiberghien, “odology favors [...] walking over the path, the ‘sense of geography’ over metric calculation”⁹.

⁵ John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, p. 190. See Gilles A. Tiberghien, “Hodologique”, *Les Carnets du Paysage* 11 (2004): 7-25: 7-9; Id., “Nomad City”, in Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, pp. 10-17: 14-15.

⁶ Jean-Marc Besse, “Quatre notes conjointes sur l’introduction de l’hodologie dans la pensée contemporaine”, *Les Carnets du Paysage* 11 (2004): 26-33: 27.

⁷ Kurt Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1936, p. 216.

⁸ See Adrian Mirvish, “Sartre, Hodological Space, and the Existence of Others”, *Research in Phenomenology* 14 (1984): 149-173: 157.

⁹ Gilles A. Tiberghien, “La città nomade”, in Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes. Camminare come pratica estetica*, Turin: Einaudi, 2006, pp. VII-XIII: X (this passage is absent in the

However, at closer sight, Lewin, too, is not concerned with walking and its peculiar features, but rather, more generally, with moving from a place to another with the help of any means: what he considers under the term “locomotion”¹⁰. Hence, Tiberghien’s observation should be re-formulated this way: “odology favors moving over the path, the ‘sense of geography’ over metric calculation”.

Lewin’s first formulation of the notion of life space can be traced back to his 1917 essay “The Landscape of War”, aimed at analyzing the transformation of a front-line soldier’s perception of landscapes.¹¹ Upon closer inspection, the words ‘life space’ and ‘hodological space’ are not found in this brief essay: they surfaced later. However, even in the absence of its ‘name’, the ‘thing’ is already present in all its essential features. It is also of significance that in this essay Lewin talks about landscapes, whereas in his subsequent writings the recurring terms are ‘environment’ and ‘space’. For example, in the 1936 *Principles of Topological Psychology* the word ‘landscape’ only appears once.¹²

As Lewin notes, in soldiers’ perceptual experience landscapes are transformed in relation to their experience and needs, particularly to those involving their personal safety. So a normal ‘peacetime landscape’ appears “to extend out to infinity on all sides almost uniformly” and is characterized as “round, without front or behind”; on the contrary, a ‘landscape of war’ “appears only to be *directed*; it has a front and behind, and a front and behind that do not relate to those marching, but firmly pertain to the area itself”¹³.

The landscape/space, to Lewin, is always perceptively and emotionally oriented: the regions in which it is organized are more or less attractive according to the values and meanings they convey. In virtue of these values and meanings the subject will follow a ‘distinguished space’ (*ausgezeichneter Raum*), surely chosen on the basis of the objective that they are pursuing, but also depending on the specific situation (which is never finalized), and on their psychophysical state. Urgency, the will or the unwillingness to encounter people, health-related issues, their tiredness or freshness, all play a role in what Lewin defines as ‘principle of

Spanish-English edition); see Id., “Hodologique”, p. 9.

¹⁰ Kurt Lewin, “Der Richtungs begriff in der Psychologie. Der spezielle und allgemeine Hodologische Raum”, *Psychologische Forschung* 19, no. 1 (1934): 249-299: 252 footnote 1.

¹¹ See Kurt Lewin, “The Landscape of War”, *Art in Translation* 1, no. 2 (2009): 199-209.

¹² See Kurt Lewin, *Principles of Topological Psychology*, p. 19.

¹³ Kurt Lewin, “The Landscape of War”, pp. 201-202.

choice' (*Auswahlprinzip*).¹⁴ As we can gather from these examples, a path is chosen regardless of whether it is the shortest or most direct one from a 'Euclidean' point of view. The 'distinguished spaces' followed by the people will thus show their concrete experience of the world, of which they embody the unfolding.

With explicit reference to Lewin, later Jean-Paul Sartre also used the notion of hodological space, although under a different perspective – first in 1939's *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, and more profusely in his *Being and Nothingness* of 1943.¹⁵ It is in the latter that Sartre elaborates in depth his famous theory according to which "man and the world are relative beings and the principle of their beings is the relation"¹⁶. This way, he thematizes a world as a 'world-for-me' whose relational implication between world and me is such that "the world refers to me that univocal relation which is my being and by which I cause it to be revealed"¹⁷. The essence and meaning of the world, therefore, opens up in the relation between the Self and the world; to the Self, being signifies its engagement in the world, temporally and spatially:

For human reality, to be is to-be-there; that is, 'there in that chair', 'there at that table', 'there at the top of that mountain, with these dimensions, this orientation, etc.' It is an ontological necessity.¹⁸

In this context Sartre reminds us that "the real space of the world", which is that of our engagement with the world, "is the space which Lewin calls 'hodological'"¹⁹. Aside from what has already been discussed, this space is also tied to the significance which places and paths have acquired to other people: the hodological space is the space of the encounter with the Other. On this matter, he refers to a passage, inspired by Proust's *Recherche*:

A being is not situated in relation to locations by means of degrees of longitude and latitude. He is situated in a human space between 'the Guermantes way' and 'Swann's way', and it is the immediate presence of Swann and of the Duchesse de

¹⁴ See Kurt Lewin, "Der Richtungsbegriff in der Psychologie", pp. 283-286.

¹⁵ See Jean-Paul Sartre, *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, London: Routledge, 2002; and Id., *Being and Nothingness*, New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 407.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 411 and 407.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 407.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

Guermantes which allows the unfolding of the 'hodological' space in which he is situated.²⁰

On the other hand, there is a strict relation between hodological space and the body. The body, according to Sartre, is primarily "*lived* and not *known*": it is revealed to me within my original relation to the world, it "*is given concretely* and fully as the very arrangement of things"²¹. As 'me' or as 'mine' the body is thus not separated from the world, but instead, according to what we have discussed so far, it is intertwined or even coincides with it:

It would be impossible for me to realize a world in which I was not and which would be for me a pure object of a surveying contemplation. But on the contrary it is necessary that I lose myself in the world in order for the world to exist and for me to be able to transcend it. Thus to say that I have entered into the world, 'come to the world', or that there is a world, or that I have a body is one and the same thing. In this sense my body is everywhere-in-the world.²²

As Besse puts it, hodological space appears to be an "intermediate reality, which is neither the subject nor the object in terms of classic dualism, it's simply the real world or the concrete world", it is the "concrete space of human existence"²³. It is a space which presents four distinguishing traits or characteristics:

1) It is a space which is actively lived: it is not a space of abstract spatial coordinates, but a space which is defined by "axes of practical reference".²⁴ As seen in the 'Proustian' example, the localization of a person or thing, or the direction taken to reach people, things, or locations acquire their own meaning and their existence (which as we said is the same thing) in relation to the concrete movement of an existing being. As Sartre specifies: "Perception is in no way to be distinguished from the practical organization of existents into a world."²⁵

2) Insofar as it goes beyond classic dualism, hodological space is not just subjective, but it also possesses a certain degree of objectivity: it is in space that one can find, as Besse points out, "the thickness of things, their texture, their

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 419. See *ibid.*, pp. 428-429.

²³ Jean-Marc Besse, "Quatre notes conjointes", pp. 29 e 30.

²⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 424.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

light, their orientation, their way of opposing my movement or not”²⁶.

3) In its objectivity, the world appears to Sartre as “objectively articulated”: the world, in fact, “never refers to a creative subjectivity but to an infinity of instrumental complexes”.²⁷ Besse considers this trait “decisive”: with it, the matter of odology becomes that of the “use of the world”.²⁸ Sartre, drawing on Heidegger’s studies – but also on Lewin himself, and from Uexküll before him²⁹ – considers the lived world as the world in which “each instrument refers to other instruments, to those which are its *keys* and to those for which it is the *key*”³⁰. Hence the lived world emerges as a system of relations and actions, as an “indication of acts to be performed”³¹, which in turn refer back to other acts and so on. Sartre summarizes it as: “The space which is originally revealed to me is hodological space; it is furrowed with paths and highways; it is instrumental and it is the location of tools.”³²

4) All of that implies that paths, roads, and that which is perceived and acted present themselves as bearers of possibilities, promises, as openings towards the future. In fact, things always refer us back to a project horizon in virtue of which the future already seeps into the present. The world, as it is “the correlate of the possibilities which I *am*”, appears “as the enormous skeletal outline of all my possible actions”; it manifests itself as “an ‘always future hollow’, for we are always future to ourselves”³³.

²⁶ Jean-Marc Besse, “Quatre notes conjointes”, p. 29.

²⁷ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 425.

²⁸ Jean-Marc Besse, “Quatre notes conjointes”, p. 29.

²⁹ Sartre’s reference to Heidegger on this point is recurrent within Sartrean studies. It is asserted by, among others, Jean-Marc Besse, “Quatre notes conjointes”, p. 29. However, Lewin himself, with an explicit mention to Uexküll’s notion of operative world (as complementary to the perceptive world), considers the primary significance of objects in terms of “functional possibilities”. See Adrian Mirvish, “Sartre, Hodological Space, and the Existence of Others”, p. 155; with reference to Kurt Lewin, “Environmental Forces in Child Behavior and Development”, in Id., *A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1935, pp. 66-113: 76-77. An affinity between Sartre and Uexküll on this point is seen by Tiberghien, without recognizing a direct link (or so it seems). See Gilles A. Tiberghien “Hodologique”, pp. 12-13.

³⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 424.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

Otto Friedrich Bollnow carries out a further analysis of the hodological space in his 1963 *Human Space*, in the framework of a thematization of life space or, as he prefers to name it, 'experienced space' (*erfahrter Raum*). Such a space is defined as "the general form of human living behaviour"³⁴. Bollnow's intent is to assign the "problem of the spatial element of human existence [...] its place with a weight and question of its own beside that of temporality"³⁵, whereas 20th century philosophy placed the issue of space in the background and focus on temporality. On the topic, Bollnow himself reminds us of Bergson, Simmel, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Minkowski.³⁶

In this light, Bollnow essentially takes the same stance as Lewin. In so doing, he moves away from Sartre, claiming that the latter's theory is an illegitimate broadening of the former's which ends up confusing its traits and minimizing its innovative aspects.³⁷ Bollnow would rather consider Sartre's vision within "an entirely different aspect of spatial construction", which he designates as 'space of action' (*Handlungsraum*) and defines, at first, as "the space occupied by man when engaged in meaningful activity, working or resting, dwelling in it in the widest sense"³⁸. He agrees with several aspects of Sartre's reasoning but refutes their overall framework. In his view, it is more appropriate to separate the original idea of hodological space, as conceived by Lewin, in order "to distinguish it as a special aspect from the more general concept of experienced space and to look out for other aspects that may make visible the greater wealth of this concept"³⁹. Thus, hodological space, even though it renders "transparent a certain inner structure of experienced space, [...] cannot simply be equated with experienced space itself"⁴⁰. In order to avoid a unilateral observation, it is necessary to take

³⁴ Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Human Space*, London: Hyphen Press, 2011, p. 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15. As Andrea Pinotti points out, maybe Bollnow's diagnosis is too pessimistic. After all, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty – to name just two examples – "dedicated fundamental analysis to spatial constitution". In addition, also Husserl and Cassirer (cited by Pinotti himself) and, of course, Sartre's reflections on hodological space, should be considered. See Andrea Pinotti, "Introduzione", in Erwin Straus and Henri Maldiney, *L'estetico e l'estetica. Un dialogo nello spazio della fenomenologia*, Milan: Mimesis, 2005, pp. 7-33: 8.

³⁷ Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Human Space*, p. 191.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

into account the other dimensions of experienced space such as the space of action and the mood space.⁴¹

So as to “make visible the greater wealth” inherent in the concept of hodological space, and with the intent of providing some examples to make it less abstract, Bollnow refers to what he calls “the hodological structure of landscape”⁴². Consistently with his assumptions, his starting point is Lewin’s essay on the landscape of war. He attributes a foundational role to it, but also an exemplary value. This essay, in fact, reveals some general traits of landscapes by presenting an “extreme” and “borderline” case.⁴³ Numerous examples follow, especially concerning the borders and obstacles that can be found along our paths and which influence the accessibility of locations (mountain ranges, the ocean, the great rivers which split cities in half, etc.). Relying on examples is a distinguishing attribute of Bollnow’s method. In it, examples are not to be considered as external empirical data, but rather it is only through the concrete phenomenological analysis of the experienced space that we can come to ontological conclusions on the structure of human spatiality.⁴⁴

It is in this context that Bollnow focuses on distinguishing the abstract concept of mathematical space, which is measurable and homogenous, from experienced space.⁴⁵ For his part, Besse also sees this difference establish itself between 1880 and 1940 in different fields of knowledge – geography, biology, psychology, philosophy, and others still – thereby bringing about a reformulation of the relations between man and space. This reformulation is based on the juxtaposition of a space that can generically be referred to as ‘Euclidean’, that is “scientific, abstract, geometric, homogenous, uniform, isotropic, and quantitative”, and a space of life intended as ‘vital space’ (*espace vital*) or ‘lived space’ (*espace vécu*), that is “not scientific because it is felt or imaginary, and nonetheless concrete because it is intensely lived, heterogeneous, oriented, anisotropic by nature, and qualitative”⁴⁶.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 191-201 and 215-228.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 188-191.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁴⁴ See Salvatore Giammusso, *La forma aperta. L'ermeneutica della vita nell'opera di O. F. Bollnow*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2008, pp. 113-114 footnote 211.

⁴⁵ See Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Human Space*, pp. 17-19.

⁴⁶ Jean-Marc Besse, “Quatre notes conjointes”, p. 31. The authors that can be mentioned in this context are countless (Uexküll, Husserl, Jaspers, Cassirer, Heidegger, Minkowski, Straus,

Based on what has been observed so far, we can say that life space is not unique and given once and for all. Besse insists on considering as the “decisive point” of the matter the relation between lived space and the general context of meaning which space itself is made of.⁴⁷ Likewise, he stresses the plurality of worlds in which existence takes place, both on the primary experiential plane, and on that of symbolic systems through which man takes possession, so to speak, of the external world.

Besse’s interest in the notion of odology has not exclusively to do with a purely abstract theoretical point of view nor with a reconstructive one. Rather, it can be placed in the line of thought pursued by the journal *Les Carnets du Paysage*, whose editors in chief are, precisely, Besse and Tiberghien. Within the variety of interests that distinguishes it, this periodical has always sought to keep its distance from a scientific-naturalistic and quantitative approach to space; which is to say from the *landscape sciences*. Instead, it has attempted to be closer to human sciences, or to the *landscape studies*.⁴⁸ In line with this intention, the journal’s collaborators create a “phenomenological paradigm”⁴⁹ which, on top of opening up new avenues on a more exclusively theoretical plane, allows the current of landscape planning to propose a valid alternative to the rationalistic methods of Anglo-American origin.⁵⁰

In the same phenomenological perspective, and making particular reference to Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, but also to Jackson and Tim Ingold, Besse came to formulate a “geography of the sensitive body” which leads him to speak of an *‘être au monde’ paysager*⁵¹. Starting from Husserl’s distinction between *Körper* and

Binswanger, Weizsäcker, Buytendijk, Merleau-Ponty, Bachelard, Dardel, Bollnow, Schrag, de Certeau, Deleuze and Guattari...).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ See Pierre Donadieu, “Éléments pour une histoire de la recherche à l’École nationale supérieure du paysage de Versailles (ENSP)”, *Projets de Paysage* 2 (2009), online, http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/elements_pour_une_histoire_de_la_recherche_a_l_ecole_nationale_superieure_du_paysage_de_versailles_ensp_ (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁴⁹ Pierre Donadieu, “Retour sur la recherche à l’École nationale supérieure de paysage de Versailles-Marseille (1995-2011). Projet paysagiste, projets sociétal et politique de paysage”, *Projets de Paysage* 7 (2012), online, http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/retour_sur_la_recherche_a_l_ecole_nationale_superieure_de_paysage_de_versailles_marseille_1995_2011_ (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, with reference to Frédéric Pousin (ed.), “Autour du projet”, *Les Carnets du Paysage* 7 (2011): 58-147.

⁵¹ Jean-Marc Besse, “Tra la geografia e l’etica. Il paesaggio e la questione del benessere”, in

Leib – that is, between the body as a “neutral physical object” and a body that is “living, perceived, lived, experienced from within, our body” – he highlights that the latter is the “sensitive body of landscape experiences [...], the centre and receptacle of its affective spatialities”⁵². In this perspective, for Besse as well as for Bollnow and Ingold, the notion of ‘dwelling’ acquires an “ontological and phenomenological charge that is entirely decisive. It is through our own body that we inhabit the world”⁵³. Hence, the sensitive body occupies “a central place in atmospheres and in landscape experiences”. Or better still, in a more basic manner, “the sensitive body is the core and the condition of possibility of landscape experiences”⁵⁴.

From a point of view similar to that of the theoreticians of “hodological space” – and this time with an exclusive focus on walking – we could consider the way so-called ‘walking artists’ use their bodies under the same light. The reference goes to those artists who placed walking at the centre of their practice such as Richard Long, Hamish Fulton and Michael Höpfner – often categorized as land artists despite their desires to the contrary.⁵⁵ In this sense Long is explicit:

Land Art is an American expression. It means bulldozers and big projects. To me it seems like a typical American movement; it is the construction of works on lands purchased by the artists with the aim of making a large, permanent monument. All this absolutely does not interest me.⁵⁶

Silvia Aru *et al.* (eds.), *Sguardi sul paesaggio, sguardi sul mondo. Mediterranei a confronto*, Milan: Franco Angeli, 2012, pp. 47-62: 54-55.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁵³ *Ibid.* Such a perspective has been further developed by the author in Jean-Marc Besse, *Habiter. Un monde à mon image*, Paris: Flammarion, 2013. One of the most recent writings Ingold dedicates to his ‘dwelling perspective’ is: Tim Ingold, “Epilogue: Towards a Politics of Dwelling”, *Conservation and Society* 3, no. 2 (2015): 501-508. As an introduction on this topic, see Andrea Franceschini, “La dwelling perspective di Tim Ingold come critica dell’architettura moderna nel pensiero di Tim Ingold”, *I castelli di Yale* 4, no. 1 (2016): 101-128.

⁵⁴ Jean-Marc Besse, “Tra la geografia e l’etica”, p. 56.

⁵⁵ On this misunderstanding see, among others, Andrew Wilson, “‘The Blue Mountains Are Constantly Walking’. On the Art of Hamish Fulton”, in Ben Tufnell and Id. (eds.), *Hamish Fulton. Walking Journey* (exhibition catalogue, London 2002), London: Tate Publishing, 2002, pp. 20-31: 25; Gilles A. Tiberghien, *Land Art*, Paris: Carré, 2012, p. 32; and Fernando Castro Flórez, *Mierda y catástrofe. Síndromes culturales del arte contemporáneo*, Madrid: Fórcola, 2015, p. 130.

⁵⁶ Richard Long in Claude Gintz, “Richard Long, la vision, le paysage, le temps”, *Art Press* 104 (1986): 4-8: 8 (this passage is translated in Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, p. 146).

Fulton is equally determined: suffice it to recall his statement “This is not land art”, written in various wall paintings tied to the climb to the summit of Denali, Alaska (2004), which was also the title of an exhibition that took place in Oslo in 2005.⁵⁷ On this issue, it is true that, as Paolo D’Angelo points out, ‘Land Art’ has become “an umbrella-term comprising very various artistic experiences, from the American Earth Art to the Art in Nature tendencies of the last years”. Nonetheless, following his suggestion, it makes sense to adopt the expression ‘Outdoors Art’ as “perhaps the only term really capable to gather, giving an important indication, *all* the recent tendencies concerning art in nature”⁵⁸.

While Besse focuses on walking as the “fundamental or foundational moment” of the bodily experience of landscape, Tiberghien, referring to the same topic, points out that the artistic approach is a useful tool for understanding the “dimension of the sensitive and affective experience of walking”⁵⁹. From this perspective, Careri observes that, in walking artists’ practice, on the one hand the body can be interpreted as a mere “instrument of perception”, as in Fulton and Höpfner who do not intentionally leave any trace of their passing.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the body can act as a “tool for drawing”, as in Long, who, on the contrary, leaves traces of his passing, as fleeting and destined to disappear as they may be.⁶¹ This formative intent is recognized by Höpfner as well, who states that Long’s walking “gains the significance of a sculpture”⁶². In turn,

⁵⁷ See the presentation at the Galleri Riis, Oslo, website, <http://www.galleririis.com/exhibitions/60/> (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁵⁸ Paolo D’Angelo, *Filosofia del paesaggio*, Macerata: Quodlibet, 2010, pp. 70 footnote 1 and 71.

⁵⁹ Jean-Marc Besse, “Le paysage, espace sensible, espace public”, *META: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, and Practical Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (2015): 259-286: 270-271; Gilles A. Tiberghien, “La città nomade”, p. X (this passage is absent in the Spanish-English edition).

⁶⁰ In this perspective Fulton shows his debt to the ethical practice of “Leave No Trace”. See Hamish Fulton, “Foots Notes”, in Raimund Stecker (ed.), *Hamish Fulton und Peter Hutchinson* (exhibition catalogue, Düsseldorf 1998), Düsseldorf: Verlag des Kunstvereins für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, 1998, pp. 27-29: 28; and Id., *Mountain Time Human Time*, Milan: Charta, 2010, p. 41.

⁶¹ Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, p. 148.

⁶² Michael Höpfner, in Christian Kravagna and Christian Reder, “News from No-Man’s Land. Michael Höpfner Talking to Christian Kravagna and Christian Reder”, in Kunstraum Niederösterreich (ed.), *Micahel Höpfner. Unsettled Conditions* (exhibition catalogue, Vienna 2008), Vienna: Kunstraum Niederösterreich, 2008, online, <https://www.galeriewinter.at/en/artists/michael-hoepfner/unsettled-condition-dt/> (accessed January 25, 2019).

Höpfner himself specifies what kind of different experience – a perceptual, not a “sculptural” one – he intends to do when he goes on foot: “It’s clearly about achieving a different – heightened – state of perception: taking a trip, like taking drugs.”⁶³ Likewise, Fulton sometimes tries to push his physical, perceptual and mental limits, for example walking for days without talking or sleeping. For both artists, walking in perfect solitude “exorcises melancholy” and means that they acknowledge “the deep pleasure one encounters changing scenery”, as Fernando Cástro Flórez writes about Fulton.⁶⁴ In any case, beyond their reciprocal differences, every walking artist would agree with the following sentiments by Long: “All of my work is carried out entirely with my body, it is composed of the time of my walking, of the measurement of my steps.”⁶⁵

Paraphrasing the title of an article by Pierre Donadieu, at this point we could ask whether the act or practice of walking can be considered “sufficient to think up the landscape”⁶⁶. In this article, Donadieu reports an experiment his students were made to perform. It consisted of carrying out two-hour itineraries in the surroundings of Versailles, encompassing different spaces – countryside, city or town, woods – and writing a report on this experience. These reports showed a prevalence of language revolving around emotions, sensations, and the polysensory engagement of their own bodies.

While describing and commenting on this experience, Donadieu points out that, on the one hand, the sensations experienced while walking and the opinions stemming from these observations and sensations are inescapable and come to form a “veritable sensorial knowledge”. On the other hand, however, this knowledge proves to be void of various elements that help provide the understanding and explanation of what we experienced and lived. Much in the same way as there are various ways of walking and different locations in which to practice walking, walking itself is “nothing but a spatialized practice among others”

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Fernando Cástro Flórez, *Mierda y catástrofe*, pp. 130-131.

⁶⁵ Richard Long, quoted in Ester Coen, “Richard Long. Cerchio di fango”, *La Repubblica*, May 4, 1994, online, <http://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1994/05/04/richard-long-cerchio-di-fango.html> (accessed January 25, 2019).

⁶⁶ Pierre Donadieu, “Paysages sans horizons. Suffit-il de marcher pour penser le paysage?”, *Chroniques de Topia*, November 28, 2011, online, <http://topia.fr/archives/chroniques/archives-des-chroniques/chroniques-2011/> (accessed January 25, 2019, from which the following quotations are taken).

which does not exhaust the modalities of experiencing space. Donadieu, for example, reminds us that “the walker’s space is not the same as the inhabitant’s or the farmer’s,” and that the latter two organize space and carry out their activities in it according to their own modalities. An understanding of landscape limited to the experience of someone who walks can thus be partial and misleading.

Furthermore, an understanding of the social dynamics which preside over the transformation of landscapes is precluded to the walker and so are the potential contrasts implied by such dynamics. Hence, whoever walks across the landscape, in the absence of explicative elements, runs the risk of putting in place “their own explanatory models of landscapes and locations” resulting in a misrepresentation of the meaning of what they see and of its attributed value. To cite only a few examples, “they will not look for the fields belonging to farmer X, but for an idyllic section of countryside. They do not see Y’s house [...], but a composite fragment of a dormitory town, deserted and inhospitable.” Furthermore, they risk knowing nothing about the social and political decisions that were taken in planning, such as, for example, the implementation of development plans imposed from above or instead of the townspeople’s associative projects, of any conservation initiatives, or touristic promotion aspects, and so on.

In summary, according to Donadieu, the horizon of experienced space is limited to what he calls “the poetry of the *inhabited world*”. Without it, our relationship to landscapes would be devoid of “veritable sensorial knowledge”, but without the explanations and conceptualizations which have to complement this poetry, we would risk downplaying the meanings and the social and political forces which shape a landscape. With an affirmation that seems to suit both the common walker and the walking artist, Donadieu concludes by stating that “with or without mist, the landscapes of landscape walkers do not have common horizons of meaning, other than the *poetic ones*”.

According to what we have seen so far, wanting to circumscribe walking’s meaning horizon to the poetic dimension seems to be limiting in more than one respect. This approach, in fact, appears to minimize the ontological, existential, and phenomenological scope of the life space. Especially if we consider the “ontological necessity” that Sartre attributes to man’s engagement with the world or if, like Bollnow, we interpret the experienced space as “the general form of human living behaviour”. However, it also appears to minimize the value of poetry and art.

For example, we can find aspects of social and political criticism in the activities of walking artists. It is true that Fulton does not claim any kind of direct political activism and that, when he recreates the experiences he has lived, he does not wish to impose any kind of message in an authoritative manner. However, as pointed out by Muriel Enjalran, “he bears witness to a state of the world that is in many ways extremely worrying”⁶⁷. This is apparent in his profound environmentalist dedication which is explicitly influenced by Arne Næss, the father of ‘ecosophy’.⁶⁸ This is also apparent in his interest for Native American culture, and his firm stance in favour of Tibet. Another example would be his *Slowalk*, performed in 2011 at the Tate Modern art gallery of London, in support of the Chinese activist Ai Weiwei and in name of the freedom of artistic expression.⁶⁹

But, at its root, practising a leisurely and free activity such as walking to the point of making it “an art form in its own right”, as Fulton stated,⁷⁰ can be interpreted as a political stance against our technocratic contemporary society which is devoted to urgency, efficiency, to the rationalization of labor, and to maximum profit. Walking artists, therefore, not only pose “a kinetic counterpoint to the principle of speed” and create the basis of “a kinetic and kinaesthetic counterculture against the principle of acceleration”, as Ralph Fischer writes about Long.⁷¹ They also “move within the interstices and the downtimes of productivism”, to quote Nicolas Bourriaud.⁷² This is the common thread which connects Long, Fulton, and the other walking artists to the wanderings of dada and surrealist artists, and to the *dérives* of lettrists and situationists.⁷³

Such a thread is very familiar to Careri who has made it one of the pillars of the narrative he set out in *Walkscapes*.⁷⁴ The urban and suburban exploration

⁶⁷ Muriel Enjalran, “The Value of Experience”, in Lorenzo Giusti (ed.), *Hamish Fulton, Michael Höpfer: Canto di Strada* (exhibition catalogue, Nuoro 2015), Nuoro: Nero / MAN, 2015, vol. 1, pp. 17-23: 21.

⁶⁸ See Hamish Fulton, *Mountain Time Human Time*, pp. 47-49.

⁶⁹ See the video *TateShots: Hamish Fulton’s Slowalk (In Support of Ai Weiwei)* on the Tate Modern YouTube channel, online, <https://youtu.be/oCc8Rs4sOVY> (accessed January 26, 2019).

⁷⁰ Hamish Fulton, *Mountain Time Human Time*, p. 39.

⁷¹ Ralph Fischer, *Walking Artists. Über die Entdeckung des Gehens in den performativen Künsten*, Bielefeld: Transcript, 2011, pp. 59 and 61.

⁷² Nicolas Bourriaud, *Forme di vita. L’arte moderna e l’invenzione del sé*, Milan: Postmedia, 2015, p. 10.

⁷³ See *ibid.*

⁷⁴ See Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, pp. 68-176.

activity performed by *Stalker*, the collective of artists and architects to which Careri belongs, can also be reconnected to that same leitmotiv. Drawing from the artistic movements mentioned above, this group conceives “the practice of path-journey” as “an evocative mode of expression and a useful instrument of knowledge of the ongoing transformations of the metropolitan territory”⁷⁵. Furthermore, they consider walking as a valuable tool for city planning:

The aim is to indicate walking as an aesthetic tool capable of describing and modifying those metropolitan spaces that often have a nature still demanding comprehension, to be *filled with meanings* rather than designed and *filled with things*.⁷⁶

Hence, given the way it is conducted and the aims it intends to achieve, that way of conceiving of planning is not prone to functionalism and rationalization. Rather, it is open to the meaningfulness, potentially inexhaustible, of the experienced places and spaces.

The idea of a ‘strollology’ or *Spaziergangswissenschaft* – a science of strolling – developed during the last decades by Lucius and Annemarie Burckhardt is in many ways analogous. The explorations made on foot they planned had, in these cases too, a knowledge and a didactic purpose, even when they assumed the aspect of an artistic performance with wit and distancing effects.⁷⁷ A paradigmatic case is James Cook’s “Voyage to Tahiti” they re-enacted walking along an area near Kassel – on “documenta 8”, 1987 – or in the outskirts of Milan – during the 1988 “Triennale”.⁷⁸ The Burckhardts’ “scientific walks” (*Wissenschaftsspaziergänge*) are aimed at the “didactic processing of knowledge”⁷⁹: they give birth to a reflection focused on what we perceive while we are walking, according to the conviction that “one sees that which one has learned to see”.⁸⁰ In their view, strollology is defined as a “minor subject” which “examines the sequences in which a person perceives his surroundings”; its research topic

⁷⁵ *Stalker*, “Transurbanza”, quoted in Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, p. 188.

⁷⁶ Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes*, p. 26.

⁷⁷ Thomas Fuchs, in Lucius Burckhardt, *Why Is Landscape Beautiful? The Science of Strollology*, Basel: Birkhäuser, 2015, p. 285; Lucius Burckhardt, *Why Is Landscape Beautiful?*, p. 275.

⁷⁸ See Lucius Burckhardt, *Landschaftstheoretische Aquarelle und Spaziergangswissenschaft*, Berlin: Martin Schmitz, 2017, pp. 297-331.

⁷⁹ Lucius Burckhardt, *Why Is Landscape Beautiful?*, p. 284.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

is individuated in the “aesthetics of space”⁸¹. Their interest lies in deconstructing the cultural preconceptions that are involved in our landscape experience, showing how such preconceptions play a role in our perception.⁸² Hence, strolology becomes the first step for understanding the urban and suburban space, as well as for planning in a conscious way.

Walking, thus, far from limiting itself to sensitive and ‘poetic’ aspects – or maybe in virtue of being founded on these aspects – “triggers thought about new forms of individual freedom, but also about the possible re-establishment of lost relationships between subject and surroundings, between places, time periods and cultures” as Heike Eipeldauer comments about Höpfner.⁸³ So, if, as stated by Careri, at the dawn of humanity walking was the first “symbolic form that has enabled man to dwell in the world”, and if with walking artists it has become “an art form in its own right”, all that remains for contemporary mankind is to keep walking and further experience themselves and/in the world. It is no accident, then, that George Santayana considered the peripatetic philosophy as the best one.⁸⁴

Translated from Italian by Giuliano Cataford (with some inserts by the author).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 225, 282.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 231-232.

⁸³ Heike Eipeldauer, “Off the Beaten Track: Walking and Failing”, in Lorenzo Giusti (ed.), *Canto di Strada*, vol. 2, pp. 12-15: 14.

⁸⁴ George Santayana, “Philosophy of Travel”, in Id., *The Birth of Reason and Other Essays*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 5-17: 9.

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