Lines made by walking—On the aesthetic experience of landscape

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Accepted: 15 April 2022 / Published online: 7 July 2022
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Abstract
Landscape is often seen as a predominantly visual aesthetic phenomenon, which is closely connected to painting. Georg Simmel calls landscape “a work of art in statu nascendi.” Yet from a phenomenological point of view, landscape can also be seen as something we do not only view but also experience bodily, as something we walk through and live in. In this respect, there are many connections between landscape and the experience of space and place. For Edward Casey, it is important to recognize that a landscape consists of places, which thus function as “its main modules, its prime numbers.” Consequently, the aesthetic experience of landscapes will have to take its located and situated character into account. In my contribution, I will draw on this line of thought and try to point out some key aspects of a phenomenological critique of reductive accounts of landscape and consider its relevance for the arts. As landscape and nature have become a prominent theme in artistic practices since the 1960s and 1970s, this paper will relate the philosophical discussion to artistic projects such as Richard Long’s art of walking. In his practice, the status of the work of art as well as a solely pictorial idea of landscape is questioned.

Keywords Landscape · Place · Land art · Walking · Richard Long

1 Introduction

Landscape is often seen as a predominantly visual aesthetic phenomenon, which is closely connected to painting. Georg Simmel calls landscape “a work of art in statu nascendi.” Yet from a phenomenological point of view, landscape can also be seen as something we not only view but also experience bodily, as something we walk through and live in. In this respect, there are many connections between landscape

1 Simmel (2007, p. 25).
and the experience of space and place. As a consequence, the aesthetic experience of landscapes will have to take its located and situated character into account. In my contribution, I will draw on this line of thought and try to point out some key aspects of a phenomenological critique of a reductive account of landscape and consider its relevance for recent artistic practices.

The text starts with a brief sketch of philosophical positions which understand the aesthetic interest in landscape as an expression of a specifically modern relation to nature. After that, the exposition turns to a possible critique of this view (2). The next section locates Jeff Malpas’ critique of a reductive understanding of landscape within the context of a phenomenology of place, as proposed prominently by Edward Casey (3). The remaining sections explore the extent to which a different understanding of landscape is reflected in the arts. After describing how landscape and nature have become a relevant theme in contemporary artistic practices since the 1960s and 1970s (4), the paper will relate the philosophical discussion to artistic projects such as Richard Long’s art of walking (5). It will be shown that in his practice, both the status of the work of art as well as the pictorial idea of landscape is questioned.

2 A philosophy of landscape and its critique

The term landscape has a complex history. In Old High German, lantscaf was a political and legal term for a region and its population. The English form landscape was derived from Dutch landschap, which was used for a representation of a natural scenery in painting during the sixteenth century, and the expression was imported into the English language in this sense. Today, the English term refers to either natural scenery or its representation, especially in painting. The close relation between landscape and view, which is striking not only in English, but in European heritage in general, has gradually become a subject of philosophical reflection.2

One of the first systematic philosophical engagements with landscape in European philosophy can be found in the works of Georg Simmel, whose small piece called Philosophy of Landscape appeared in 1913. Simmel, who spent almost his whole life in the metropolis Berlin and is often associated with the modern city, was nevertheless sensitive to the beauty of nature and enjoyed travelling to the Swiss Alps and to Italy regularly. Still, his fascination with landscape is deeply embedded in his reflections on modern society and culture, as we will see.

According to Georg Simmel, landscape encompasses more than just the sum of various natural objects. Instead, Landscape is a bounded unity within the unbounded nature that confronts us in perception. Nature is thereby understood in two ways, both as an inner quality of entities opposed to the being of artefacts and as the “wholeness of Being” manifesting itself as a permanent flux.3 The “mental process” that generates landscape consists of excluding a segment from nature as this fluent

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2 In the following, I will focus on landscape as it is addressed in philosophical aesthetics. Beyond that, landscape is obviously also a technical term in geography and ecology.

3 Simmel (2007, p. 21).
whole; this segment is in turn regarded as a unity itself. The perception of landscape thus requires a detachment from nature, since nature itself has no parts or segments. It is rather the human view or gaze which then constitutes landscape. Nature, Simmel concludes, “is transfigured into an individual ‘landscape’ by the human gaze that divides things up and forms the separated parts into specific unities.” A feeling of wholeness arises from the unity of the landscape, which is only a part of nature but perceived as an autonomous whole. Simmel wonders how this specific landscape impression is created, and he draws the conclusion that perceiving a landscape presupposes an artistic view:

…An artist delineates one part within the chaotic stream and infiniteness of the immediately given world, and conceives of and forms it as a unitary phenomenon. This now derives its meaning from within itself, having severed all threads connecting it to the world around it and having retied them into its own centre. We follow the same procedure – only in a less developed, less fundamental degree, and in a fragmentary way unsure of its boundaries – as soon as we perceive a ‘landscape’ in place of a meadow, a house, a brook and passing clouds.

The diverse impressions of nature become a landscape through the organizing activity of the artist, which is manifest in a primitive form when we are simply looking at a landscape. The view of a landscape is a preliminary stage on the way to a work of art. It is, as it were, a “work of art in statu nascendi.” The unity implied in the idea of landscape is essentially shaped by the mood (Stimmung) inherent in it. For Simmel, the mood or the emotional atmosphere of a landscape is nearly congruent with its unified character. There is no cause-and-effect relationship between unity and mood in the impression of the landscape, to differentiate between both aspects is more a matter of “a subsequent dismantling of one and the same psychic act.” In this act, the landscape itself is already an “ideational formation” and not a given fact.

For Simmel, as for many others, the aesthetic experience of landscape is characterized by a certain distance towards the things perceived, which corresponds with the position of the subject as a non-involved spectator of the scene. In art history, this attitude became apparent in the “figure from the back” as a central element of Romantic landscape painting. In Caspar David Friedrich’s well-known paintings, such as the Wanderer above the Sea of Fog (1818), we see an individual who turns his or her back to the viewer and invites us to take the figure’s perspective on the landscape.

4 Simmel (2007, p. 21, p. 22).
5 Simmel (2007, p. 22).
6 Simmel (2007, p. 23).
7 Simmel (2007, p. 25).
8 Simmel (2007, p. 27).
9 Simmel (2007, p. 28).
As a lover of modern art, Simmel also discusses whether an aesthetic sense of nature is a specifically modern phenomenon, and he comes to the conclusion that this is true only for the sense of landscape. Since, first, perceiving a piece of nature as landscape presupposes a certain distance from nature, which is made possible by the modern technical and economical domination of nature, and, second, the mood-based unity of landscape fits very well with the modern fragmented individual’s longing for wholeness, the interest in landscape can be regarded as a predominantly modern phenomenon. In this respect, Simmel’s argumentation already anticipates the result of Joachim Ritter’s famous reflections on the aesthetics of nature as a counterpart to the modern alienation from nature. According to Ritter, the promise of wholeness inherent in the aesthetic appreciation of landscape becomes necessary with the advent of modern science and its reification of nature. Freed from a direct dependence from nature, the modern subject longs for a different relationship to nature offered in the field of aesthetics. In this respect, the aesthetic experience of landscape preserves the tradition of the ancient *theoria* as a contemplation of nature as a whole.\(^\text{10}\)

Understood as the flip side of the modern domination of nature, the aesthetics of landscape became suspect in later debates, since it seems to maintain and support the subject-object dualism with all its unwanted consequences. For Theodor W. Adorno, the time of natural beauty and the unreflecting admiration of beautiful landscapes is over, and every attempt to represent it with artistic means is doomed to fail. Instead, nature has been turned into a consumable good, preserved and hedged in national parks, marked by a false sense of authenticity and purity. Although it reminds us of a true and unalienated life, the turn to natural beauty cannot liberate us from the dialectics of the Enlightenment, since it “seeks freedom in the old unfreedom.”\(^\text{11}\)

Thus, the very idea of landscape itself can be seen as part of the problem, but only if it is understood in a narrow sense that reduces landscape to a merely visual phenomenon (1) and considers humans not as a part of the landscape but detached from it (2). Then the preference for landscape in eighteenth and nineteenth century literature and painting can be seen as a symptom of the modern alienation from nature for which it serves as cheap compensation.

Jeff Malpas has already addressed the two aspects of this reductive understanding of landscape in an article on landscape and place from 2011, in which he advocates for a new account of landscape within a framework of a philosophy of place.\(^\text{12}\) Due to the affinity between landscape as a natural scene and as an artistic genre representing such a scene, the text begins with the subject of landscape painting and proceeds to more general reflections. First, Malpas challenges the idea that landscape implies a specific view that represents the world as an object. Furthermore, he rejects a common misunderstanding that landscape is something we primarily perceive with our eyes, for in fact our whole body is involved in that process. As he

\(^{10}\) Cf. Ritter (2003).
\(^{11}\) Adorno (2013, p. 91).
\(^{12}\) Malpas (2011).
states: “The experience of landscape is as much of the sound, smell, and feel of a place as of anything purely visual.”\textsuperscript{13}

With this, he also casts doubt on the assumption that in landscape paintings both the artist and the recipient are separated from the landscape depicted in the painting. In a traditional interpretation of landscape like Simmel’s, we remain mere viewers of the scene and are no longer involved in our environment. This sense of alienation and detachment appears as a precondition of modern aesthetic pleasure in terms of a “disinterested appreciation.” Landscape painting understood in this limited manner thus runs the risk of fitting all too well with the logic of domination and the “classical” distribution of roles between humans and nature, subject and object, active and passive.\textsuperscript{14}

Malpas points out, however, that this reductionist view does not do justice to landscape painting. The view of the landscape still requires the painter to establish a standpoint in the physical landscape in order to paint it. He argues that a landscape painting, therefore, not only presents a given landscape, but also the artist’s integration into a landscape as a presupposition of the work itself. If we look at landscape paintings in this way, we can avoid those reductions and pay more attention to the several threads which connect us with our surroundings. Referring to Tim Ingold, Jeff Malpas emphasizes that landscape is formed by the interactions between humans and nature, whereby the two are no strict opposites.\textsuperscript{15} This “dynamic and involved character of landscape” becomes evident even in the artistic representation of landscape\textsuperscript{16}:

…In fact, what is properly represented in the artistic representing of landscape is not a mere representing of a scene or a mere ‘view,’ but rather a representing of the particular influence and involvement […] of the landscape (and of the place) in the life and modes of life that arise within and in relation to it.\textsuperscript{17}

The shift in the theory of landscape Malpas proposes here becomes possible by a theoretical framework that understands landscape in terms of place, as will be shown in the following.

\section{3 Landscape and place}

Jeff Malpas points out that, beyond his own considerations, the idea of landscape plays an important part in Edward Casey’s phenomenology of place. Its basic claim is that our access to the world does not begin with the idea of abstract space, with a neutral point in a coordinate system, but with places having a specific quality, and

\textsuperscript{13} Malpas (2011, p. 10).
\textsuperscript{14} On possible relations between landscape and power cf. Malpas (2011, p. 6).
\textsuperscript{15} Malpas (2011, p. 17).
\textsuperscript{16} Malpas (2011, p. 11).
\textsuperscript{17} Malpas (2011, p. 14).
we should regard those as indispensable ingredients of our human existence. This view, which cannot be discussed in detail here, has implications for the problem of landscape.

Above, we learned that Jeff Malpas has rightly criticized a narrow account which understands landscape as a merely visual phenomenon and considers humans as detached from it. Related to these two problematic assumptions, there is a third one, which tends to identify landscape with pristine nature, completely free from human interventions. However, if landscape is seen from a phenomenological perspective, we obtain a quite different picture. First of all, the body plays a substantial role in our experience, which has the consequence for our being in place as well as our being in a landscape, that both cannot be reduced to mere visuality. For Edward Casey, our being in the world is decisively shaped by the places we inhabit. In his attempt to elaborate the different ways of experiencing places, he refers to the concept of landscape several times. At the beginning of his book on landscape painting and cartography, Casey writes that in the relationship between place and landscape, places are “the constituent units of every landscape, its main modules, its prime numbers, as it were.”

In his view, landscape forms a kind of framework for the experience of place, together with the body: The concrete places merge into the landscape as a comprehensive region, whereby the landscape forms one pole of a relationship, in which the human body forms the other. While landscape is the outer pole of a place, the body serves as the “inside” of the place, so to speak:

…Body and Landscape present themselves as coeval epicenters around which particular places pivot and radiate. They are, at the very least, the bounds of places. In my embodied being I am just at a place as its inner boundary; a surrounding landscape, on the other hand, is just beyond that place as its outer boundary. Between the two boundaries – and very much as a function of their differential interplay – implacement occurs. Place is what takes place between body and landscape.

For Casey, the relation between place and body is so important, that he even states that “place is where the body is.” It is with our bodies that we experience a specific place and that we orient ourselves in the world. We can perceive objects as located in regions and distributed to directions only because our bodies themselves are divided into two parts and aligned to the left and right. We would not have a notion of dimensions or directions if we did not know the basic orientation of our bodies. “Lived bodies put us in places, orient (and disorient) us there, and allow for egress into other places as well.”

18 Casey (2009).
19 Casey (2002, p. xv). Since the following considerations move away from the idea of representation, Casey’s interesting idea of a “re-implacement” in mapping and painting will be left aside.
20 Casey (2009, p. 29).
21 Casey (2009, p. 103).
22 Casey (2009, p. 103).
Together, places form regions, which manifest themselves phenomenally as landscapes and which are accessible for bodies as well. As bodily beings, who have the ability to move, we develop our sense of nearness and distance and orient ourselves in the world by walking around. We learn that things have more than one side, because we know that they can be seen from different standpoints, and we know that through the experience of walking around a thing and looking at it from the other side. Our experience of places is influenced by movement as well. We experience something as a place if we can leave it and come back to it again. Every place is part of a plurality of places, to which it relates and which form the surrounding landscape. In order to gain a feeling for a certain landscape, to sense its atmosphere and to have a view of the land, we have to take a standpoint in it, and we get acquainted with it by wandering around. Often the experience of landscape has to do with scale and the relations between the size of our bodies and the elements to be found around us. The idea of the sublime, for example, draws heavily on those spatial relations and standpoint. For instance, we might experience the sublime when standing at the edge of a precipice but feel terrified if we come too close. Seen from a distance, the same scenery might not make a great impression at all. Landscape is experienced essentially by our moving through it, whereby various forms of orientation play a role, which are related to our bodies.

By the way we move, we realize different attitudes towards the environment. It makes a difference if we plan our route on a map or if we navigate our way following significant landmarks or traces on the ground. Edward Casey discusses the contrast between technological forms of navigation following the idea of objective space and strategies of orientation used by Indigenous peoples, which may conflict with the abstract orientation on the map, but are based on bodily experience and local knowledge. For the people who live, move, and act in it, a landscape is not necessarily structured in terms of linear distances, and the shortest line between two points on a map is not always the easiest route to take in real life. To some extent, these different techniques of orientation resemble the psychologist Barbara Tversky’s distinction between a “survey perspective” and a “route perspective.” According to Tversky, when describing a large environmental space, we can either “take the imagined point of view of a traveler in an environment and describe the locations of landmarks relative to the changing position of the traveler in terms of left, right, front, and back,” which would be the “route perspective,” or we can “take a bird’s-eye view […] as if from a tree or mountaintop, and describe the locations of landmarks relative to one another in terms of north, south, east, and west”—this would correspond with the “survey perspective.” In both cases, orientation requires a relation between our bodies and the environment, since even in the case of the survey perspective, I have to hold the map the right way round and locate my position on it before it can be of any help for me. In classical literature on the spatial turn, we often find reflections

23 Casey (2009, p. 73).
24 Casey (2009, pp. 25–26).
25 Tversky (2009).
26 Tversky (2009, p. 207).
on transport and travel and how the latest technical developments change the way in which we perceive space and place and thus the landscape. As Bernhard Waldenfels points out, seeing a landscape from a train window makes an impression very different from going hiking in the same landscape.27

To sum up, we can say that landscape, place, and body are closely tied together in Casey’s view; there are “no places without bodies” and there is “no landscape without place.”28 Within the scope of this philosophy, it is obvious that landscape cannot be reduced to the visual alone and that the involvement of humans in the landscape is important. A view that regards landscape as something completely apart from us does not fit with this approach either. In contrast to a dualism, in which subject and world oppose each other, the philosophy of place stresses that we are always already in the world, meaning in a specific place, in a concrete landscape. Thus, the view that landscape is something separate from us is deceptive. This leads us to the question of how the relation between humans and nature is conceptualized in this context. We as humans are, on the one hand, not completely detached from nature and, on the other hand, we cannot be reduced to natural processes either; this is the tenor of a phenomenology of the lived body. As Merleau-Ponty states in *Phenomenology of Perception*, we can experience nature in us only in its entanglement with culture and meaning: “Everything is both manufactured and natural in man.”29 Casey suggests that places are in a similar way neither reducible to their natural features nor their cultural elements.30 This is one of the reasons why the philosophy of place is attractive for an aesthetics of landscape which takes the complex interactions between humans and their non-human surroundings into account and does not explicitly focus on remote and allegedly culture-free areas.31

4 Land art: A new approach to landscape and nature

If these considerations are convincing, however, what consequences do they have for the possibility of an artistic exploration of landscape that seeks to avoid reproducing the objectifying gaze? Even if landscape painting can be viewed differently, i.e. as a representation of places and the human involvement in places, as both Casey and Malpas suggest, it is interesting to look for other ways to reflect upon landscape in contemporary art.

A promising field of study for questions of place, nature, and landscape can be found in the artistic movement of the 1960s and 1970s referred to as *land art* in Europe and *earthworks* in the United States, which both involves a bodily experience of nature and raises the question of the specific local conditions of such an experience. Although the artists usually categorized under this term (Robert

27 Waldenfels (1986).
28 Casey (2009), p. 103, Casey (2002), p. 271).
29 Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 189).
30 Casey (2009, p. 252).
31 Cf. Brady et al. (2018).
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Smithson, Walter de Maria, Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt, and others) were initially often interpreted as successors of the romantic heritage, the recourse to a nineteenth century concept of landscape cannot do justice to these artists, because the relation between art and nature proposed in the different works is as complex and varied as the works themselves and deserves closer inspection. Nevertheless, the works associated with this tradition share several features, which are highly relevant for a phenomenological reflection of landscape, as will be pointed out in the following.

The first characteristic concerns the relation between nature and art. That is to say that the famous earthworks like Michael Heizer’s Double Negative (1969–70) or Robert Smithson’s Spiral Jetty (1970) regard landscape not as the object of art, but as site, material, and even as co-creator thereof. The boundaries of the work of art dissolve into the surrounding landscape—a development which Rosalind Krauss described as the situation of “sculpture in the expanded field.” This approach resulted in works at the intersection of sculpture, architecture, and landscape gardening, which occur in specific places and are neither portable nor reproducible. Under these circumstances, the interaction between sculpture and place becomes especially interesting, which is why the idea of “site-specificity” arose within this context.

Not only do the boundaries between art and nature, between work of art and landscape dissolve in those works, but the validity of binary oppositions like culture versus nature also decreases. This tendency is especially significant in Robert Smithson’s dialectical concept of nature which is skeptical towards a veneration of a pure and pristine nature untouched by humans. Thus, land art shows an affinity to phenomenological approaches towards the relation between nature and culture as a correlation which takes place in our lived body.

Finally, the earthworks require a specific mode of reception that involves the embodied subject and not exclusively the eye of the beholder. Those who travel to the remote iconic works of early land art, submit themselves to a kind of pilgrimage that demands the effort of the whole body. Additionally, visiting the work in situ evokes a sense of place (at least theoretically, since photographs and other media are of great importance for the presentation of the works and often replace first-hand experience). As we have already seen, the movement of our bodies makes an important contribution to our experience of landscape and place. It is, therefore, striking that to some artists considered part of the land art movement, walking has become an artistic practice itself and not only a way to gain access to earthworks in the landscape. It was primarily British artists who used walking as a medium. Consequently, many commentators and even the artists themselves have seen a decisive difference between the U.S. land artists with their monumental earthworks and the European artists, who performed less spectacular and less violent intrusions into the

32 For an overview on this point cf. Beardsley (2006, pp. 7–12).
33 Casey (2005).
34 Krauss (1979).
35 Kwon (2004).
36 Cf. Smithson (1996).
Although walking is also relevant in the work of others, such as Hamish Fulton or Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long is by far the most prominent walking artist in this field, to whom I turn in the final section.

5 Richard Long: Walking as an artistic practice

The practice of walking has attracted great attention in science and literature over the past twenty years. In her 2001 book *Wanderlust. A History of Walking*, Rebecca Solnit followed the cultural narratives and rituals growing around the phenomenon of walking on foot, and in 2011, Frédéric Gros sketched a *Philosophy of Walking*, replete with references to famous advocates of locomotion on foot in the history of philosophy like Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Henry-David Thoreau. The most famous philosophical reflection on walking is certainly Henry David Thoreau’s essay with the same title, in which he praises the wildness and freedom of nature in contrast to the necessities of civilization.

I will not summarize the aforementioned historic analyses, as it should be clear that wandering and the figure of the wanderer possess a rich reservoir of symbolic and allegoric meanings—from religious pilgrimage to the journey of life. With regard to the human relationship to place and landscape, I will stress the character of walking as a practice by commenting on some works by Richard Long, namely *A Line Made by Walking* and a few other works from the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Richard Long’s early work *A Line Made by Walking* (Fig. 1) demonstrates how very small interventions can make a difference in the environment around us. The work dates from the year 1967, when Long was still a student at St. Martin’s School of Art. Long later described how he took a train out of London and got off outside the city, where he found an appropriate field for his work. On this field, he created a discernable line on the grass by walking back and forth several times on the same track. The performative act in the landscape, his walk, is preserved in a black and white photograph that shows the line in the grass running straight from the viewer’s standpoint to the edge of a zone of bushes or trees in the background. Where the artist’s feet have touched the grass, the blades of grass were bent in a way that they caught the sunlight at a different angle, so that a trodden path appeared for some time. With his intervention, he left a human trace in nature without adding or removing any material, just by giving the grass a new order. Thus, on a minimal level, his work proposes a way to interact with nature in a very subtle and cautious manner.

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37 Wallis (2017, p. 12), on land art in the UK see Beardsley (2006, pp. 41–58).
38 Cf. Solnit (2001), Gros (2011).
39 The essay starts with the sentence, “I wish to speak a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness.” Thoreau (2013, p. 243).
40 Long (2017f).

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Long said in an interview that he learned a lot from that work about the possibility “to control the degrees of visibility or invisibility, and the permanence or impermanence, of any subsequent walking works.” As R. H. Fuchs wrote in the exhibition catalogue to Richard Long’s show at the Guggenheim Museum in New York 1986, the work paved the way for the wide range of projects that evolved around the activity of walking. On a theoretical level, it showed a way to integrate the natural environment in the sculpture and vice versa: “The sculpture became part of the world, an articulation of it – not an addition, not a stable object.”

The means he used were extremely simple: solely his own feet and the natural material provided by the specific place where he performed his work. The form of the line is as simple as it is meaningful. In recent years, the line became the subject of a comparative anthropology, in which Tim Ingold brings together at first sight quite heterogeneous phenomena like writing, weaving, and walking. Ingold combines his research on lines with a critical comment on modernity which also has consequences for an understanding of place. According to Ingold, in the modern world the line has been reduced to a linear connection between points. As a result, places appear as static points. By contrast, Ingold argues that such an understanding of place is insufficient:

…Yet how could there be places, I wondered, if people did not come and go? Life on the spot surely cannot yield an experience of place, of being somewhere. To be a place, every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movement to and from places elsewhere.

41 Long (2017a, p. 79).
42 Fuchs (2017, p. 114).
43 Ingold (2016).
44 Ingold (2016, pp. 2–3).
Together with this tendency, people have stopped “wayfaring” in the landscape and move from place to place only by “transport.” Transport is focused on the destination and the journey itself is worthless, whereas wayfaring never ends. It should be clear that both modes of travel leave entirely different traces in the landscape, which introduces an ecological aspect to our topic. Paths pervade the landscape, be they steep trails in the mountains or highways. It is interesting to see, though, how the boundaries between nature and culture become porous when one begins to reflect upon their status.

Let us turn to Richard Long again, who is highly aware of the numerous marks humans leave in the landscape (literally and metaphorically), as the following statement shows: “A walk is just one more layer, a mark, laid upon the thousands of other layers of human and geographic history on the surface of the land.” Coming back to *A Line Made by Walking*, it is fair to say that Long’s early work contains the whole range of his later works and a set of theoretical problems which have occupied his mind since then. In the following years, he performed different walks in very different landscapes near and far and documented his trips by photographs and indoor sculptures. They were composed of simple materials like stone and wood, which he collected on his walks. He also made sculptures during his walks, using simple forms like lines and circles.

Another work relevant to the present discussion is *A Ten Mile Walk England 1968*. The work consists of a 10-mile hike that led in a straight line through Exmoor. The path that Long travels forms an imaginary sculpture in the landscape which is only visible to the viewer through its representation on a map. The title *A Ten Mile Walk England 1968* belongs to the relevant section of a topographic map exhibited in the gallery, on which the straight line that Long walked in the landscape is drawn in with pencil and ruler. His performance, therefore, is located in an abstract, “scientific” way, and the work depends on the interplay between the abstract representation of space on a map and the embodied perspective of walking through a natural, irregular, and sometimes difficult terrain – one is reminded of Casey’s aforementioned account of different ways to orient oneself in the landscape. Indeed, in his book on earthworks, Casey touches upon Long’s walks and interprets them as “primal earth-maps,” which perform the act of mapping the world with the body.

In a way, this specific walk (among many other works also using maps) raises the question of a possible translation or mediation between the different types of orientation. Long has made projects which played out this translation or mediation in different constellations; in *A Hundred Mile Walk 1971–2* he followed a perfect circle as represented on the map that documented the work, accompanied by a kind of diary recording some sounds he heard and thoughts he had during the walk in a simplified

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45 Ingold (2016, pp. 77–85).
46 In his book *On Trails*, Robert Moor tells a story that reaches from the different strategies of path making by ants and cows to the globalized tourist industry, which shows that there is no sharp distinction between humans and other animals in this case; cf. Moor (2016).
47 Long (2017b, p. 296).
48 Casey (2005, p. 104).
and prosaic tone. Thus, the place-relatedness of thoughts and feelings is connected to a technical and geometrical approach to space.

However, the idea to walk a straight line or a perfect circle drawn on a map without paying attention to the character of the terrain tends to reduce the technical orientation via the survey perspective to absurdity. Nevertheless, it should be noted that political border conflicts often do go back to the action of drawing a straight line on a map, without considering any features of the landscape in question. In this respect, the act of drawing a line on a map relates to historical demonstrations of power. Nicholas Alfrey has challenged the impression suggested by the map, namely that the land Long walked through was chosen because of its vastness and openness. Looking more closely at Long’s route, he comes to the conclusion “that the ten-mile line would have meant crossing some sixty fences, hedges, banks or other obstacles.”

Additionally, the landscape of the region Long chose is saturated with cultural meanings, a long literary tradition, and is known for its natural beauty. As is characteristic in his practice, Long did not want to represent these features in his work. In an interview, he described his approach as follows: “I have in general been interested in using the landscape in different ways from traditional representation and the fixed view. Walking, ideas, statements and maps are some means to this end.”

Whereas the artist realizes the bodily experience of a landscape, the recipient is left with sparse hints, which awake the imagination.

Long says that the use of walking as an artistic medium made it possible for him “to articulate ideas about time and space; space meaning distance.” The interaction between a map and the walk, which is very often part of his work, reflects this intellectual occupation. In A Line of 164 Stones, A Walk of 164 Miles. A Walk Across Ireland placing a nearby stone on the road at every mile along the way from 1974, the subtitle explains what Long did—by placing the stones on the ground every mile he translated an abstract measure into the landscape as experienced by the lived body. Husserl’s Crisis told the story that even geometry as a science of idealized forms has its origin in the lifeworld, in the ancient practice of measuring the land. In a way, some practices in the context of land art can be regarded as an artistic re-realization of the former connection between the experience of the life-world and the abstraction of space in geometry.

Richard Long’s works leave traces in the landscape, but no permanent changes. He uses only natural materials and no technical equipment, he works together with nature, as he sees himself. In Words after the Fact, he states: “I hope to make work for the land, not against it.” Nevertheless, he distances himself from a “romantic” view of nature and landscape, with which he is often associated. On his walking projects he says: “I see it as abstract art laid down in the real spaces of the world. It is not romantic; I use the world as I find it,” and: “My work is real, not illusory or conceptual.”

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49 Alfrey (2012).
50 Long (2017b, p. 297).
51 Long (2017e, p. 320).
52 Long (2017c, p. 299).
53 Long (2017d, p. 312; 2017b, p. 295).
6 Conclusion

If we look back to the philosophical positions outlined at the beginning of this text, one must admit that it is important to consider the different ways to analyze landscapes in their historical contexts. When Richard Long walked across England in the last third of the twentieth century, he was performing a different action than William Wordsworth or an anonymous farmer in the late middle ages, even if he followed their traces strictly. Thus, his practice must be understood within a different theoretical framework. A theory that regards (the aesthetics of) landscape, expressed in exaggerated terms, as a fig leaf of the domination of nature is no longer convincing today. Hence, if we do not want to abandon the concept completely, we must try to develop a broader picture of landscape, as Jeff Malpas and Edward Casey suggested with regard to its relation to place. My considerations in this text were dedicated to the idea that the phenomenological account of place implies the importance of walking for the interrelation between body and landscape, which is why philosophy can learn from the occupation with walking artists like Richard Long. Understood in this way, landscape can also be distinguished from the morally loaded idea of the wild we find in Thoreau’s essay on walking.

In Long’s works, we observe an expansion of perception which takes the lived body into account. Additionally, with the practice of walking, the focus shifts to the degrees of change within the landscape and the varied interactions between humans, other living beings, places, and landscapes. There is more than the supposedly modern alternative of either subjecting or beholding nature. In the arts, nature and human activity always interact in myriad ways. If we allow that the arts both reflect a certain relationship to nature as well as make an original contribution to the philosophical discussion, then Richard Long’s works can provide an impetus for rethinking our diverse interrelations with landscape and the ways in which we move through it. As Long states, not only does art change with the introduction of walking as a new medium, but walking appears in a new light as well: “my intention was to make a new art which was also a new way of walking; walking as art.”

Funding  Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

Declarations

Conflict of interest  The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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54 Long (2017d, p. 311).
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