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Situatedness in Landscape Sustainability. A Hermeneutical Approach

Abstract

In this paper, I claim that some hermeneutical concepts developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer might help us elaborate a philosophical understanding of landscape's sustainability. In particular, the notion of "situatedness" as the intrinsic finitude of human beings located in a spatial-temporal context is conceived as a productive element by Gadamer. After having recalled the meaning of this notion in Gadamer's thought, I will show how it can provide a valuable contribution, firstly, to the critique of an idea of sustainability as a mere "musealization" of exceptional places, whose counterpart is the exploitation of places considered aesthetically insignificant. Secondly, I will highlight the potentialities of situatedness for the formulation of an approach that takes into account, on the one hand, the relationality that characterizes the relationship between humans and landscape in a way that contrasts a dualistic conception, and, on the other hand, the radical historicity of every specific landscape as well as our approach to landscape that evolves throughout history. Against mere appropriation and, on the opposite, contemplation, the concept of situatedness may enable us to highlight an immersive and participatory approach to landscapes, recalling the responsibility towards the places that we inhabit and visit.

Keywords

Situatedness, Hermeneutics, Sustainability, Landscape Aesthetics

Introduction

Sustainability is a crucial issue to be investigated to address the growing concerns related to ecology and increasingly violent climatic changes; however, it has only recently been examined from the point of view of aesthetics

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as a philosophical discipline. I will refer to “aesthetic sustainability” as an intrinsically relational concept concerning the interaction between human beings and their environment, as underlined recently by Parker Krieg and Reetta Toivanen (2021) and by Sanna Lehtinen (2020, 2021).¹ According to their approaches, the philosophical conceivability of sustainability is predicated on our understanding of the intrinsic *interaction* between humans and nature, requiring us to go beyond the subject-object dualism and embrace an immersive and participatory point of view.

I aim to show how, despite having enjoyed little consideration in the field thus far, philosophical hermeneutics, as developed by Hans-Georg Gadamer, can provide a valuable contribution *first* to the critique of an idea of aesthetic sustainability as the mere “musealization” of exceptional places (separating them from ordinary experiences) whose counterpart is the exploitation of places considered aesthetically insignificant or “banal,” and *second* to the formulation of an approach, which by departing from the concept of “situatedness,” takes into account the relationality and historicity not only of places but also of human praxis.

I will elucidate this point following the strand of studies represented by authors such as Arnold Berleant (1993, 1997) and Paolo D’Angelo (2014),² who focus on the concept of landscape conceived in an immersive and relational way.³ This tradition sets itself apart from the cognitivist reading in environmental aesthetics, emblematically represented by Allen Carlson (1981), who focuses on the notion of environment,⁴ the appreciation of which is based on scientific knowledge.⁵ Carlson criticizes landscape as “it were a static essentially ‘two-dimensional’ representation, reducing it to

¹ From a cultural point of view see Nassauer (1997), and, with a specific focus on architecture see, among others, Benson, Roe (2008).

² For a broader perspective on these studies see also Doherty, Waldheim (2016) as well as Howard, Thompson, Waterton, Atha (2019).

³ For a recognition of studies on landscape aesthetics, see Siani (2022, also 2023), who particularly stressed the “pluralistic-holistic-participatory” strand and for whom landscape is not reducible to a single concept and perspective, thus emphasizing the need to deal rather with a plurality of landscapes.

⁴ For objections to this strand, see Brady (2003, 86-119) and D’Angelo (2014, 131-149).

⁵ The position labelled as “scientific cognitivism” argues that “just as the serious, appropriate aesthetic appreciation of art requires knowledge of art history and art criticism, the aesthetic appreciation of nature requires knowledge of natural history—that provided by the natural sciences, especially geology, biology and ecology” (Carlson 2009, 11).

a scene or view” (Carlson 2009, 28).⁶ Differently, the basis of “landscape aesthetics”⁷ is the conviction that the notion of landscape is better suited to explaining an immersive and participatory relationship between humans and nature, overcoming a two-dimensional conception.⁸

This reading fits well with the characteristics of Gadamer’s aesthetics, whose conception of aesthetic experience is continuistic and integrative (see Romagnoli 2023). The issues developed by landscape aesthetics also open up critical political and social perspectives concerning the sustainability of the landscape. It becomes easier to implement respectful attitudes towards the landscape if we conceive of it as something in which we are all situated and which influences our way of being (as Berleant’s aesthetics of engagement has underlined), as opposed to an abstract object of contemplation that we perceive as distant and separate, and perhaps as the preserve of a few holders of specialized scientific knowledge.⁹

In this paper, I will first specify what I mean when referring to the Gadamerian notion of situatedness. Secondly, I will show how the Gadamerian concept of situatedness can contribute to landscape aesthetics and its sustainable declination. In particular, there are three fundamental aspects that I will focus on: how the Gadamerian conception can highlight an unfruitful way of thinking about sustainability that results in the musealization of specific places, which become *de facto* inaccessible; how the concept of situat-

⁶ According to this reading, the “landscape model” is a projection of landscape painting on nature, inheriting the notion of picturesque as “picture-like”: “In this way, the idea of the picturesque relates to earlier conceptions of the natural world as composed of what were called the works of nature, which, although considered proper and important objects of aesthetic experience, were thought to be more appealing when they resemble works of art” (Carlson 2009, 4).

⁷ “While environment may be ‘just’ nature, i.e. an independent object, landscape is always nature mediated through culture, i.e. a structurally relational term of our experience. Thus, landscape aesthetics is both broader and more restricted in scope than environmental aesthetics: it does not thematize everything that is thought of as natural, but it also thematizes things that are not nature” (Siani 2022).

⁸ As D’Angelo has well pointed out, landscape aesthetics aims to recall that “landscape [...] always has to do with a subject’s perception, it can only be constituted in the relationship between a perceiving, feeling and imagining subject and an object; the environment is a physical-biological concept” (D’Angelo 2014, 28, my trans.).

⁹ According to Berleant, “one contribution that the aesthetic makes to the cognition of landscape lies in recognizing the human contribution to the experience as well as to the knowledge of it. [...] Furthermore, apprehending the aesthetic value of landscape in this way not only offers cognitive gratification; it also provides a means of recognizing that value in experience and may arouse and incentive to promote it” (Berleant 1997, 18).

edness can highlight the relational nature of every aesthetic experience of landscape against merely predatory attitudes; how hermeneutics teaches us the historical roots of such aesthetic experiences, thus contrasting the naïve idea of reconstructing unattainable past conditions. This is particularly true of the landscape which would not exist without its interaction with humans giving sense to it.

1. A Methodological Premise

In this regard, a preliminary and fundamental clarification is needed. My intention here is *not* to claim that Gadamer can be considered a “philosopher of landscape” on par with authors such as Georg Simmel (1913) or Joachim Ritter (1963). Instead, I aim to apply some fundamental concepts of his reflection, sometimes also going *beyond* Gadamer himself, to urgent aesthetic issues of the contemporary world. Indeed, especially in his masterpiece *Truth and Method* (1960), Gadamer appears to be bound to a “classical” and narrow view of aesthetics as a philosophy of fine arts, falling into that strand that considers the landscape merely a mirror of the works of art (see D’Angelo 2014, 21ff.). It is common knowledge that Gadamer attributes a primacy to artistic beauty at the expense of natural beauty, a perspective which came about with the transition from Kant’s philosophy to the aesthetics of idealism (see Gadamer 2013, 43-45).¹⁰ The landscape would only derive its reality from pictorial representation, acquiring meaning as a manifestation of the human state of mind. Although Gadamer recalls the historicity of the landscape (especially when it comes to the evolution of appreciation of the landscape of the Alps),¹¹ he loses sight of the other pole of the relations, namely the landscape itself as nature, as otherness and not as a mere reflection of the human (see Gadamer 2013, 45).

Well aware of this, it must be repeated: I intend to employ certain tools developed by Gadamer’s philosophy and show their fruitful application to landscape aesthetics. My approach takes place in a recent process of reas-

¹⁰ This subordination of natural beauty to artistic beauty in twenty century philosophical tradition was denounced in Anglo-American circles by Ronald W. Hepburn (1966, 9-35).

¹¹ Gadamer emphasized the historicity of the judgement of taste on landscape: “For judgments on the beauty of a landscape undoubtedly depend on the artistic taste of the time. One has only to think of the Alpine landscape being described as ugly, which we still find in the eighteenth century—the effect, as we know, of the spirit of artificial symmetry that dominates the century of absolutism” (Gadamer 2013, 54).

sessing Gadamer's philosophy in the direction of a "performative" and anti-exceptionalist reading (see George, Van der Heiden 2021; Nielsen 2022; Romagnoli 2023). This approach makes it possible to bring out how hermeneutics distances itself from an aesthetic conception centered on the "Great Art" of the past, focused on the figure of the creative genius and the relationship between a work of art and the public (conceived dualistically as a subject-object relationship), highlighting a participatory dynamic. It is, therefore, possible to extend hermeneutics in the direction of landscape and everyday phenomena that show a relevant value of aesthetic experience (see Friberg 2021; Romagnoli 2022). Not only does this imply an extension of the potentialities of aesthetics as a discipline, but it also and primarily implies a rethinking of the social role of such aesthetic phenomena, which touch the lives of individuals in a "horizontal" sense and can therefore lead to ethical and political elaboration, for example, by calling for responsibility for the places around us and for our communities (see Berleant 1991; Saito 2007, 2022).

2. Gadamer's Contribution to Situatedness

The concept of situatedness is at the center of multiple contemporary studies: the hermeneutical category of situatedness has been explored in environmental and landscape aesthetics.¹² However, both these lines of inquiry mainly refer to Martin Heidegger's works, as remarked by Jeff Malpas (2015, 354-366), who emphasized the topographical basis of the concept of the *Faktizität* related to the experience of *Dasein* already in Heidegger's early reflections.¹³ Differently from this strand of studies, I will refer to the Gadamerian declination of situatedness, which emphasizes the *historical* rather than *ontological-existential* dimension, as in Heidegger. The historicity of situatedness helps us more adequately account for the concept of landscape, understood as a relational notion reconciling human action and nature. Despite it being true that Gadamer's "hermeneutic situation (*hermeneutische Situation*)" has a primarily historical significance, it nonetheless also indicates being *spatially* situated, as "*here and now*," *hic et nunc*.

¹² For an enquiry on the role of situatedness in art see Wilder (2020). More generally, the relation between space and situatedness has been recently investigated by Hünefeldt & Schlitte (2018) and by Janz (2018).

¹³ For a reflection on the role of Ricoeur's hermeneutics and its potentialities for landscape aesthetics, see Furia (2019).

The concept of situatedness relates to that of finitude, a foundational point the hermeneutic tradition inherits from Heidegger, and particularly from the elaboration of three main concepts presented in *Being and Time*: the finitude of *Dasein*, namely of human beings, the *Geworfenheit*, and that of *Befindlichkeit*, which indicates that every human experience is inserted and developed in a specific context, or in a “world” in Heideggerian terms (see Heidegger 2010, §28-29). Finitude entails necessarily being situated in a specific spatial-temporal dimension; this determinacy is not a limitation but a productive element. The relationship with the other is only possible based on our finitude.

Gadamer further elaborates on the concept inherited from Heidegger, developing it in contrast with nineteenth-century historicism, accused of being a failed attempt at reconstructing the past, trying to go beyond the present perspective (see Gadamer 2013, 278ff.). The impossibility of abstracting oneself from one’s specific situation is at the basis of Gadamerian philosophy, already in the first part of *Truth and Method* devoted to art, and then developed primarily in the second part against the historicist claim that it would be possible to place oneself in the same point of view of an author of past work: “According to Schleiermacher, historical knowledge opens the possibility of replacing what is lost and reconstructing tradition, inasmuch as it restores the original occasion and circumstances” (Gadamer 2013, 166). Gadamer continues:

[U]ltimately, this view of hermeneutics is as nonsensical as all restitution and restoration of past life. Reconstructing the original circumstances, like all restoration, is a futile undertaking in view of the historicity of our being. What is reconstructed, a life brought back from the lost past, is not the original. In its continuance in an estranged state, it acquires only a derivative, cultural existence (Gadamer 2013, 166).

This process is what Gadamer conceived as the famous “consciousness of being affected by history,” namely the awareness of one’s limitation as well as of the relation between the present and the past tradition, a concept strictly connected with that of situatedness: “Consciousness of being affected by history [*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*] is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*” (Gadamer 2013, 312). Gadamer also explains that situatedness does not imply pure relativism and the impossibility of communicating with those situated elsewhere. Instead, it is a matter of considering one’s situatedness (and pre-understandings) to think of a possible exchange with otherness. Situatedness is indeed a *dynamic condition* of movement that leads to openness to and encounter with the other. Herme-

neutics, as developed by Gadamer, is an intrinsic relational theory: situatedness implies interaction with the world in a way that can overcome a dualistic conception.

Anyone can reach an ever-greater comprehension of the world, or rather, of their situation or context: “The multiplicity of these worldviews does not involve any relativization of the ‘world.’ Rather, the world is not different from the views in which it presents itself” (Gadamer 2013, 464). According to Gadamer, temporal distance and historical situatedness do not set a limit for comprehension. On the contrary, they make it possible. They entail an awareness of one’s limitation, positively conceived as the possibility of opening to the dialogue with the other (be it a text, a civilization, a place, etc.).

To sum up, the previously said in a few words, the heart of Gadamer’s conception of situatedness is based on the idea that every human experience can only happen in a specific historical context. Situatedness is the obvious consequence of our finitude, and only from our specific perspective we can approach the world. More importantly, this limitation is conceived as a *productive* element, not a restriction.

3. Sustainability as Musealization of Exceptional Landscapes

In relation to what I mentioned, the concept of situatedness can make an essential contribution to approaching sustainability in multiple ways: by emphasizing the limitation of conceiving of sustainability as a musealization of exceptional places, by recalling the relational and immersive nature of the experience of human beings in the world instead; by highlighting the historical roots of every experience, its spatial-temporal embeddedness, namely the focus on the particularity of every single experience.

Starting with the first remarked contribution, Gadamer’s critique of the process of musealization, developed against 19th-century aesthetics, provides us with an essential cue for highlighting a way forward in landscape protection. Gadamer defined this process as “aesthetic differentiation”:

[W]hereas a definite taste differentiates—i.e., selects and rejects—on the basis of some content, aesthetic differentiation is an *abstraction* that selects only on the basis of aesthetic quality as such. It is performed in the self-consciousness of ‘aesthetic experiences.’ Aesthetic experience [*Erlebnis*] is directed towards what is supposed to be the work proper—what it ignores are the *extra-aesthetic* elements that cling to it, such as purpose, function, the significance of its content (Gadamer 2013, 78, my emphasis).

For Gadamer, the attempt to go beyond the specific situation resulted in the isolation of artistic experience from ordinary life, abstracting every social element and creating an ahistorical enclosure. In this direction, following Gadamer's critique, the preservation of exceptionally beautiful and endangered landscapes is often understood as a musealization of those places, which then become inaccessible to an actual exchange with human beings. We can call this approach as merely "contemplative."

The other side of the coin is the mass exploitation of places considered "ordinary." These are conceived as less beautiful and therefore not worthy of preservation, thus left to the exploitation of large crowds of people and the organization of events based on an "appropriative" attitude—a fact that results in the often irreversible deterioration of those places. The contemplative and the appropriative attitudes manifest a common way of proceeding when approaching landscapes. Also, from a social and political perspective, some decisions made to protect the "special" landscape have a counterpart in the mass exploitation of more "banal" places. This attitude reflects a dualistic approach based on the methodological criterion of exceptionality. As Yuriko Saito stressed, "the general public tends to be more attracted to the unfamiliar and the spectacular, typified by the crown jewels of our national parks, such as Yellowstone and Yosemite, with their dramatic elevation, waterfalls, unusual geological formation, and thermal phenomena" (Saito 2007, 61).¹⁴ This creates a polarization between interest in exceptional places and disinterest in everyday, common or ordinary environments. Rightly, Saito claims that the dominance of the aesthetics of exceptional places (which look like paintings) "has consequences not only regarding the fate of unscenic lands but also regarding our protection and management of scenic lands" (Saito 2007, 62).

A concrete example of this way of conceiving sustainability as musealization can be found in mass tourism (see Giombini, Benenti 2021) and the attempts at making it sustainable, for example, the case of the *Spiaggia Rosa* situated in the south-east of Budelli island, in the Maddalena Archipelago in Sardinia. This area, characterized by its pink-colored beach, has undergone progressive erosion to the point of disappearing, mainly due to the behavior of tourists who used to take sand away as a souvenir. This "appropriative" attitude has to do with the attempt to take a part of the experience of that

¹⁴ These places risk also of being assimilated to the "theme parks" (paradigmatically exemplified by Disney Park) as analyzed and deconstructed by Berleant (1997, 42-57)—let us think about the destiny of Venice where the administration is planning to introduce a paid ticket to enter the city.

place with oneself: precisely a *souvenir* of that landscape. Starting from 1992, and especially since the establishment of the Maddalena Archipelago National Park (1996), the introduction of protective measures to safeguard the beach (prohibition of anchoring and landing) enabled it to regain its coloration in full. It is no longer possible to walk along the beach, which is now only visible from afar during organized and authorized excursions—the visit to the beach has been replaced by virtual tours provided by the park authorities.¹⁵ The appropriative attitude towards the beach has thus been replaced with a contemplative attitude, which presupposes a mere two-dimensional perspective (tourists observing the beach at a distance from organized boats).

Both models, the appropriative and the contemplative, the unsustainable and the apparently more sustainable, are consequences of the same dualistic conception of the landscape. Moreover, the apparently sustainable attitude entails an additional dualism because some places become only accessible for contemplation. In contrast, others, considered unworthy of aesthetic attention, remain subject to exploitation (as, for example, in the case of the Italian beaches of Rimini and Riccione offering the venue of choice for large concerts). This behavior exemplifies a form of methodical exceptionalism. Such exceptional places are thus treated similarly to works of art in museums, separated from ordinary life. Their appreciation is, in fact, possible only from a distance or through images—something similar to what happens to animals in reserves, for which a custom-made habitat is reconstructed, or to the “musealization of ruins” that leads to the paradox of denying the very nature of ruins by locking them in museums (see Somhegyi 2023, 49-51).

Therefore, as I said, another dualism is produced, based on a vision of sustainable landscape as abstract “wilderness” or “pristine nature” (see Carlson 2009, 6) untouched by human actions. This way of conceiving sustainability could be defined as the “abstract reconstruction of a past life,” using Gadamer’s words. If the critique of what is “mere nature” is central to Berleant’s and Emily Brady’s works, Gadamer’s contribution could help focus on the historical elements that are intrinsically connected to every landscape. Thinking of “pristine nature” as achievable is an abstraction connected to musealization. It is to believe in the possibility of abstracting a landscape from human interactions and actions—something we have instead experienced as impossible given recent developments related to climate change, whereby even an uninhabited area of Antarctica receives the effects of hu-

¹⁵ See https://lamaddalenapark.iswebcloud.it/pagina13158_norme-attuative.html.

man action. From this perspective, it is a matter of keeping in mind the historical development that a landscape has undergone, as opposed to reconstructing past conditions that are now unachievable.

4. Applications of Situatedness

In addition to the critique of sustainability as a musealization of exceptional places, the Gadamerian conception of situatedness also provides some insights in the direction of a possible rethinking of sustainability in a relational and immersive sense. Every experience departs from the situation we find ourselves in, that is, from the “center [*Mitte*],” as Gadamer stated in *Truth and Method*. Situatedness indeed implies an intrinsic relation between human beings and their world. In this sense, landscape is a relational reality, where humans and nature interact. In the case of landscape, this means that when we are experiencing a determinate landscape, we are inserted in it.¹⁶ We are not like a spectator sitting in front of a screen. On the contrary, our being is influenced by being born and raised in a specific landscape. For example, a sense of collectiveness may be produced by a landscape of small spaces, with narrow streets and houses near each other, like in a little medieval hamlet in Italy.

This is particularly evident in the case of tourism: when taking the role of a tourist, we can flirt with unfamiliarity by perceiving ourselves as spectators who will leave the place. Against this attitude, situatedness reminds us that we create a relation to a certain place even by visiting it as tourists (see Haapala 2005), for example, by hiking on a mountain or trekking a natural park. In contrast to an appropriative view, where tourists only look for exotic places to observe from afar by taking photos or carrying away souvenirs, situatedness helps to highlight how each place visited, even for a short time, is a part of the tourists themselves (fostering, for example, more intimate bonding between tourists and local people). Overcoming the isolation of the tourist, as disconnected from the life of those places, may help produce a sense of responsibility towards the place—an aspect developed by Berleant’s (1991) aesthetics of engagement. Therefore, the concept of situatedness can help draw attention to the mutual dynamics of influence between individuals and the landscape, emphasizing that we are bound to the places we find ourselves.

¹⁶ “We are beginning to realize that the natural world is no independent sphere but is itself a cultural artifact. Not only is nature affected pervasively by human action; our very conception of nature has emerged historically, differing widely from one cultural tradition to another” (Berleant 1993, 234).

Moreover, situatedness involves a *hic et nunc*, a dimension of historical grounding that resonates with a conception of landscape as the interaction of nature and culture. In this sense, the concept of situatedness reminds us not only that a specific landscape has its own history, but also that our own approach to landscape evolves throughout history.¹⁷ For example, our view of the famous *Sassi di Matera* in Italy differs from that of those who inhabited those places a hundred years ago: today, we attribute aesthetic characteristics to a landscape that was harsh and hostile to life for the inhabitants of the previous century. This aspect can help draw attention to the positivity of being a foreigner or visitor to a particular place, taking into account not only the habits of those who live there but also the differences in perspectives of visitors who may be distant, geographically or temporally. Gadamer teaches that situatedness is the very condition at the basis of our experience of any determinate place. For example, Japanese and Italian visitors experience the same landscape differently. This consideration could help promote sustainability by highlighting that we need to consider the different backgrounds of the possible visitors, rendering a more multifaceted and integral experience in line with the reflections of Brady's "critical pluralism" (see Brady 2003). For example, a German tourist may notice with amazement how, in other European countries, stores and supermarkets are open on holidays. In Germany, closing shopping malls on holidays encourages the enjoyment of experiences in nature or city parks, resulting in greater attention to those places at the expense of potentially polluting shopping malls. Fostering an exchange with the local population and considering themselves immersed in that place, the tourists can put forward a different point of view.

Against the monolithic vision of the landscape as a generic totality, we need to master situatedness to help us consider and respect the specificities of small-scale realities without, however, implying a form of relativism or a reactionary safeguard of the local traditions, with the result of excluding those who do not belong to certain places. Indeed, each landscape has uniqueness and irreducibility derived from being located in a certain context. For example, the categories elaborated to describe the landscapes of the United States are marked by the ideal of wilderness, as emblematically represented by the expanses of Texas, characterized by enormous plains that

¹⁷ As D'Angelo remarked, "landscape is not only linked to history because landscapes show the mark of the presence of [hu]man and his activity," but "landscape is also historical because it is always seen through the eyes of the observer, which are never innocent but always conditioned by a taste, a poetics, an idea of what the landscape should be" (D'Angelo 2014, 35, my trans.).

appear “infinite” to the human eye and uninhabited. The categories elaborated from such landscapes are undoubtedly inadequate to account for landscape realities such as those of Europe, characterized by more restricted spaces and often marked by the work of humans and history. In this sense, Gadamer’s aesthetics is particularly sensitive in responding to the historicity of the landscape, understood, however, not as a mere “historicist” reading but as the possibility of grasping an aesthetic experience while considering the peculiar situation in which one finds oneself.

Conclusions

Focusing on the situatedness and the historical roots of every experience, including the landscape experience, prevents naïve attempts at reconstructing past or “original” landscapes. Reconstruction is in fact another variant of some ways of enacting an unfruitful understanding of sustainability, such as rebuilding habitats for endangered animals or repopulating certain areas in view of the principle of biodiversity. In some cases, reconstructing landscapes can be likened to naïve reconstruction of some buildings in a changed context with a manner identic to their past form. This operation does not consider the passage of time and the historicity of landscapes nor that of the human gaze.

In contraposition, the notion of situatedness puts into question the idealized vision of an unspoiled landscape preceding the coming of humans and spoiled by subsequent historical changes. Indeed, the uniqueness of each place should be preserved while making it accessible at the same time. The preservation of landscape should not imply a contemplative vision, like that of a painting in a museum, which, in this understanding, would seem to give reason to Carlson’s criticism of the two-dimensional conception of the landscape as a scenery. In the specific case of the *Spiaggia Rosa*, the aim would certainly not be to reopen the beach, leaving it at the mercy of “predatory” attitudes, but rather to rethink our approach towards places—even perhaps by introducing a restricted number of accesses,¹⁸ but above all by encouraging collective paths of exchange with landscapes and raising awareness through aesthetic education of care toward nature. This path would call for a sense of responsibility and care on the part of visitors precisely because of the close relationship that unites them with the places.

¹⁸ Moreover, an additional help would be requiring mindfulness practices such as carrying a mat and washing sand off to avoid carrying it away; something that has been introduced in another particular beautiful beach the *Pelosa* in Stintino, in the North-Western part of Sardinia (see, <https://spiaggialapelosa.it/stintino/>).

Between mere exploitation and contemplation, situatedness draws attention to the relational and immersive aspect of aesthetic experience, which is not specific to certain extraordinary places, being rather common to every place that characterizes our lives. We ought to respect the unicity of every place while making it accessible. Even the tourist would not be a mere “consumer” vis-à-vis any landscape but rather one of those who *participate in constructing* the aesthetic experience of that determinate landscape.

I claim that we can acquire such a relational and immersive vision thanks to the category of situatedness understood in a productive sense, just like hermeneutics does. Places are not mere objects. Not only does any determinate place contain a specific history, but the visitor brings their history while experiencing such a place. A stranger may find new meanings in the places they visit, meanings so far undiscovered by the natives, or may bring home some new perspective. So, every relation to the landscape implies a form of situatedness that should be directed towards mutual enrichment. I would propose further developing the potentialities intrinsic to the concept of situatedness, as introduced by Gadamer, and applying them to improving a sustainable attitude towards the landscape.

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