

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with landscape as a way of seeing, its critique and its defense. The thesis will initially focus on the presentation of the critical concept of ways of seeing by English art critic and writer John Berger. On the basis of this, the thesis will move to the exploration of the critical concepts of landscape and landscape painting by British humanistic cultural geographer Denis E. Cosgrove and American visual theorist and philosopher W. J. T. Mitchell. Subsequently, it will also deal with the relationship of these concepts to the concept of landscape by English historian and art historian Simon Schama. Cosgrove and Mitchell both deal in a similar way with the critical reflection of the idea of landscape in terms of postmodern and postcolonial criticism. Both authors are influenced by Berger's concept and claim that our aesthetic perception of landscape is not a natural vision, but an acquired, historically created way of seeing. This way of seeing then raises a number of questions in relation to the traditional conception of landscape aesthetics and can lead to a rethinking of traditional concepts such as aesthetic attitude, psychical distance or the idea of disinterested pleasure. Opposite to it, the thesis intends to present an optimistic concept of landscape by Schama. The aim of this diploma thesis is to show that the landscape and its aesthetic appreciation is not something self-evident and automatically positive, but at the same time it is not something already overcome and negative. The thesis intends to show that the concept of landscape has its dark, averted side, but at the same time it retains its light, beneficial side, more precisely, subversive side, inviting to reflection.

Keywords

landscape aesthetics * ways of seeing * landscape painting * aesthetic attitude * distanced gaze * John Berger * Denis E. Cosgrove * W. J. T. Mitchell * Simon Schama