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## Aesthetic constructions of landscape between society, individual and objects A neopragmatic approach

### Abstract

*The famous definition of landscape by Joachim Ritter unmistakably names the aesthetic act of construction that makes landscape vision possible: "Landscape is nature that is aesthetically present in the sight for a feeling and sensing observer". Landscape is an aesthetic construct, in whose act of construction, however, social, cultural, individual and other constitutional factors flow. Following Karl Popper's 3-world theory, a physical landscape (world 1), an individual landscape (world 2) and a social landscape (world 3) can be distinguished. In each case, aesthetic and other constitutional factors are interconnected in a complex and complicated way. In addition, this situation is aggravated by the fact that different scientific basic positions (essentialism, positivism, constructivism) find their way into corresponding analyses (partly unreflected) and make scientific understanding difficult. Finally, this scientific starting position produces different paradigms, theories and terminology, which are often played off against each other and can lead to unfruitful dissent in science. The lecture counters this with a "neopragmatic" approach that can show that and how different paradigms, theories and conceptualisations can be related to each other in such a way that unfruitful dissent can be avoided and instead the advantages of the scientific plurality of theories, concepts and paradigms can be used and made fruitful for concrete research goals.*

### Keywords

*Theory of three landscapes, neopragmatic approach, Karl Popper*

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## 1. Introduction

The famous definition of landscape by Joachim Ritter unmistakably names the aesthetic act of construction that makes landscape seeing possible: "Landscape is nature that is aesthetically present in the sight for a feeling and sensing observer" (Ritter 1974: 150). Landscape is an aesthetic construct in whose act of construction; however, social, cultural, individual, and other constitutional factors are involved. Following Karl Popper's 3-world theory, a physical landscape (world 1), an individual landscape (world 2), and a social landscape (world 3) can be distinguished. In each case, aesthetic and other constitutional factors are interconnected in complex and complicated ways. This complexity of landscape constitution and also landscape reception is scientifically reflected in the interdisciplinary variety of possible perspectives of analysis, some of which seem to be incommensurable. In addition, this situation is aggravated by the fact that different scientific-theoretical basic positions find their way into corresponding analyses (partly unreflected) and complicate a scientific understanding. Finally, this scientific starting position produces different paradigms, theories and terminologies, which are often played off against each other and can lead to unfruitful dissent in science.

The article counters this with a "neopragmatic" approach that can show that and how different paradigms, theories and conceptualizations can be related to each other in such a way that unfruitful dissent can be avoided and instead the advantages of the scientific plurality of theories, concepts and paradigms can be used and made fruitful for concrete research goals. This is associated with a form of scientific self-reflection that should also be taken into account in the social sciences. Thus, the task of sociology and science in general can be defined with a quote from Ralf Dahrendorf: "Criticism, critical distance to the self-evident facts of one's own society" (Dahrendorf 1968: 63). The challenge facing landscape theories can be defined with a quote from Jones: "The landscape concept embodies several unresolved conflicts: between collective belonging and individual control, between the subjective and the objective, and between the mental and the material" (Jones 1991: 234).

The aim of our article is on the one hand to outline the variety of approaches to landscape in current research, and on the other hand to illustrate the potential of multi-perspective landscape research.

In the following, we first introduce Karl Popper's three-world theory, from which a theory of three landscapes can be derived and conceptualized as an analytical framework (Sect. 0). Subsequently, some main lines of landscape aesthetics (Sect. 0) and an outline of the historical development of landscape 3 are presented (Sect. 0). After an overview of the landscape theories currently under discussion (Sect. 0), the neopragmatic approach to "landscape" is presented (Sect. 0), followed by a conclusion (Sect. 0).

## *2. Propaedeutics to the neopragmatic landscape theory: The three worlds theory of Karl Popper as an analytical framework*

In his late work Karl Popper develops the theory of three worlds by formulating an alternative to monistic (e.g. to consider only the material world as "true") and dualistic perspectives (e.g. to consider only the world of consciousness and the material world as "real") on world. As "world 1" he describes the material world, under "world 2" he grasps the world of individual consciousness, and under "world 3" the world of socially shared knowledge, of cultural contents (Popper 1979, 1996; Popper, Eccles 1977). In this context, the worlds are not sharply separated from each other, but form hybrids, for example in the form of buildings, which are part of world 1, but also represent materialized world 3. Humans also have a share in all three worlds; they have a body (world 1), a consciousness (world 2), and with their consciousness they have a share in world 3. World 2 occupies a central position in the worlds, because without individual consciousness, social knowledge stocks cannot be used to transform world 1, and observations of world 1 only become effective if they are fed into the social world by individual consciousness (Kühne 2020a; Kühne *et al.* 2021; Kühne 2021b, 2023c) (Figure 1).

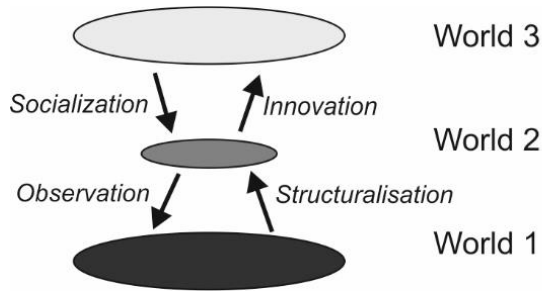


Figure 1: Karl Popper's three theory (after: Kühne 2020a).

The theory of three worlds can be specified into a theory of three spaces or a theory of three landscapes (Figure 2). Space 3 comprises the social conceptions of and about space, space 2 the individual actualization of it, space 1 the material objects in relational arrangement (Kühne, Berr 2021).

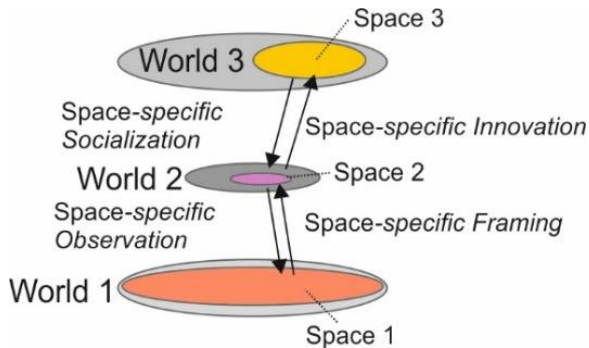


Figure 2: The derivation of the three spaces from Popper's three worlds. Spaces represented on the different levels in each case a subset of the respective worlds (after Kühne, Berr 2021).

Landscape can be understood as a special case of space (Figure 3), it is – in comparison to the more general space – understood more aesthetically or ecologically and more on a medium scale level and often normatively charged. In addition to a more ontological orientation of space, there are aesthetic and moral components of access, which makes “landscape” a “thick concept” (Müller-Salo 2020) compared to “space”, which in turn makes the critical engagement with it and its complexity scientifically appealing. Due to its aesthetic and moral charge, the constitutive level of landscape is found on level 3, i.e. landscape is projected into space 1 by the individual (landscape 2) on the basis of social conventions (landscape 3) as landscape 1.

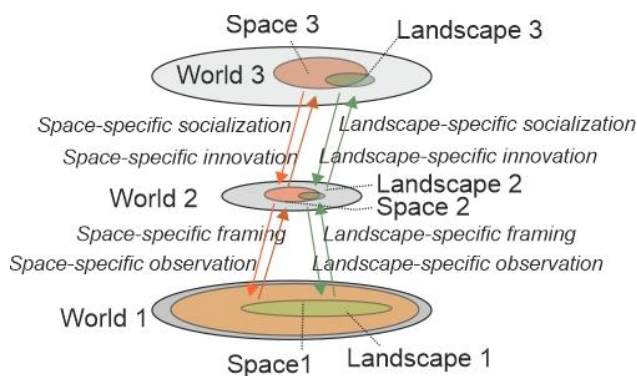


Figure 3: Karl Popper's Three Worlds Theory and its derivations to three spaces and three landscapes. On the one hand, it becomes clear that space and landscape are not congruent; on the one hand, landscape is a normatively and aesthetically charged special case.

### 3. *Landscape aesthetics – Some key lines*

In the course of centuries of social and cultural history (among many: Berr, Kühne 2020; Berr, Schenk 2019; Hard 1977; Kirchhoff 2017; Kühne 2018b; Müller 1977; Schenk 2017), people learn to see a “looked at section of nature” (Schenk 2017: 676) as a landscape (cf. Hammerschmidt, Wilke 1990; Hard 2002: 177). In addition, immense scientific efforts were required to abstract these historically mediated presuppositions in the

expression of the “landscape eye” (Riehl 1996) and to explicate and operationalize them theoretically for landscape theory and practice (for the English-speaking world, in particular Cosgrove 1984; Greider, Garkovich 1994; for the German-speaking world, in particular Kühne 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2008a, 2018a, 2018b; Kühne *et al.* 2019; Kühne 2019a, 2019b, 2020b; Weber *et al.* 2018).

In the tradition of landscape aesthetics, it is possible to reconstruct some typical main lines that fluctuate between object orientation and subject orientation. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, “beauty” was regarded as an otherworldly entity that was regarded as the objective reason and standard for everything earthly beautiful – in antiquity as an “idea”, in the Middle Ages as the “primordial splendor” of God (cf. e.g. Assunto 1963; Liessmann 2009b; Perpeet 1977, 1988; Plumpe 1993; Pochat 1986; Büttner S. 2006; Scheer 2015; Tatarkiewicz 2003; Zimmermann 1991). In the Renaissance, there was a gradual liberation from religious beliefs and constraints; art freed itself from sacred purposes, man discovered himself and a world and nature considered independent of religion (cf. e.g. Hauskeller 1995, 2005; Kristeller 1980; Perpeet 1987; Scheer 2015). Phenomena no longer have to be measured by the standard of metaphysical or religious ideas, but by the “regularity that is shown by *the* phenomena themselves” (Scheer 2015: 29). Since Kant, therefore, there has been an increasing “subjectivation of aesthetics” or “beauty” (Gadamer 2010: 48ff.) and the modern “view that beauty is an expression of subjective taste” (Liessmann 2009b: 13). For example, Vischer (1922: 438) defines beauty as the activity of the subject: “Beauty is not a thing, it is an act”. This act is linked to the question of “what objects awaken a feeling of pleasure inside us” (Lipps 1907: 350). Beauty becomes a “product of the subject and its intellectual abilities” (Hartmann 1924: 3).

As far as the question of the connection between aesthetics and taste is concerned, taste as part of habit is “based on social, spatial and temporal factors” (Illing 2006: 7); what is assessed as “good” or “bad” taste depends on “the defined point from which other tastes are assessed” (Illing 2006: 7); The judgment of “kitsch” refers to the stigmatization of “bad taste” by “good taste”. And the legitimate taste defines aesthetic standards, which the medium taste tries to imitate awkwardly (Bourdieu 1987).

With this discussion of the aesthetic concept of kitsch, it becomes clear that aesthetic judgments are by no means limited to the concept of beauty. The concept of sublimity is already found in Edward Burke’s (1989), the beautiful inspires love, while the sublime inspires admiration.

Accordingly, he ties the experience of the sublime to great, impressive, or terrible phenomena of the world 1, such as volcanoes, dark forests, or high mountains. For Kant, on the other hand, the beautiful is “grounded in the harmonious interplay of understanding and sensuous imagination (*Einbildungskraft*)” (Peres 2013: 38; see also Graham 2005; Lothian 1999), the “sublime” is “grounded in a disharmonious interplay of reason and sensual imagination” (Peres 2013: 38) attributed. The sublime eludes the understanding grasp of the intellect, for it belongs “to the feeling of the sublime the powerlessness and questioning of the subject in the face of the overpowering nature, of the invading ‘too much’” (Pries 1989: 10). On the other hand, through aesthetic distance from the objects of contemplation, reason experiences a sense of rational superiority and the certainty of a superiority of reason by relativizing the possible danger.

The picturesque establishes a link between the beautiful and the sublime; it combines objects and object constellations from World 1 that are considered “beautiful”, which are in the foreground (often: flowers) in the paintings of landscape painters or in individual outdoor contemplation, with objects and object constellations that are considered “sublime”, which are in the background (mountains or cumulonimbus; for example: Carlson 2009; Büttner N. 2006), to form a structure that is seen together.

The ugly evokes, “not too strong emotions. One pleases, the other does not; one produces pleasure, the other aversion, which as a sensation is probably stronger than its positive counterpart, may also give rise to immediate reactions, but is rarely felt as dramatic” (Liessmann 2009a: 72). Karl Rosenkranz (1996) conceives of the ugly as the “negative beautiful”, thus assigning the ugly a “secondary existence” (Rosenkranz 1996: 14f.). The ugly, however, can experience an aesthetic revaluation through a transformation into the comic (whereby this transformation is also possible for the beautiful). The comic unites “the beautiful and the ugly by liberating both from their respective (pseudo-ideal) one-sidednesses” (Hauskeller 2005: 61). Caricature, characterized by exaggeration and disproportion, is considered the highest form of transformation of the ugly (as well as the sublime, beautiful, or picturesque) into the comic (Figure 4).

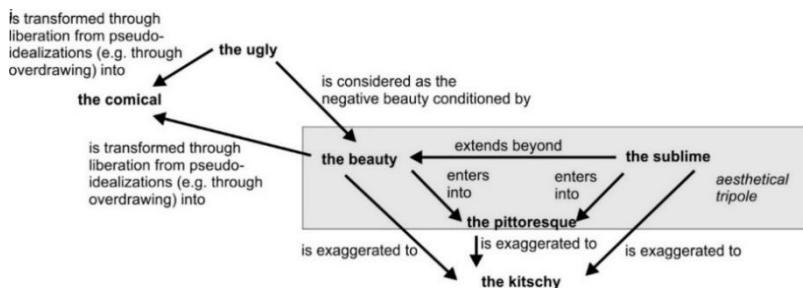


Figure 4: Beauty – picturesque – sublime – ugly – comical – kitschy (own illustration).

Other main lines of aesthetics move between the opposing conceptual savings of an aesthetics of art and aesthetics of nature, an emphasis on rationality as opposed to sensuality or emotion and between so-called high culture (art) and trivial culture (kitsch).

#### 4. The historical developments of landscape 3

Landscape 3 is not a state, but (like landscapes 1 and 2) is found in constant change. The change of Landscape 3 (like that of Landscape 2) and the designations of Landscape 1 is linguistically bound from different perspectives (Daniels, Cosgrove 1993; Denzer 2023; Duncan 1990; Faurest, Fetzer 2015; Spirn 1998, 2008; Weber 2019b).

With an established cultural-historical reconstruction of the genesis of the European concept of landscape, three main meanings of “landscape” can be distinguished diachronically: first, an original territorial-political one (landscape as *regio*), second, a later aesthetic-emotional one developed in landscape painting (landscape as “image” and “soul symbol”), and third, a physical-ontic one (landscape as “*physical space*”) (cf. among many: Berr 2018, 2020; Berr, Kühne 2020; Berr, Schenk 2019; Gruenter 1975; Haber 2001; Hard 1991; Jackson 2005; Jessel 2005; Kirchhoff 2017; Kühne 2018b; Leibenath, Gailing 2012; Olwig 1996; Schenk 2013, 2017). The sociologist Georg Simmel related the culturally and historically decisive constitutional achievement of landscape painting to landscape observation per se and described “landscape” as the product of a synopsis of “individual natural objects” (Simmel 1957: 147) to form a picture. In



this sense of a synthesis of individual things (“natural objects” or sections of the physical space) into a unity (“landscape”), the observation of nature as landscape is a *picture*. It owes itself to the “constructive” gaze of an observer, whose constitutional prerequisites were described by Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl with the well-known formulation of a “landscape eye” (Riehl 1996). However, the way of speaking about “nature” is problematic, since “nature” is, firstly, a philosophically elusive term (Berr, Jenal 2021; Gloy 2005) and secondly, in the view of social constructivism, “nature” – like landscape – is by no means a “final” foundation for theoretical work that cannot be questioned further, but a contingent construction among others (Kühne, Edler 2022).

It should also be noted that different dimensions refer to “Landscape” (Ipsen 2006; Kühne 2019b; Figure 5). Cognitively, it is about scientific knowledge, such as ecological knowledge about biotopes, plants, animals, geomorphology, forms of settlement and others. Functionally, the different social, economic, ecological or other functions of, for example, agriculture, industrial estates, tourism, nature conservation and others can be investigated. Individually, specific emotional approaches to “landscape” play a major role, i.e. emotions such as joy, disgust, enthusiasm, etc. Aesthetically, individually updated as well as socially established ways of looking at things such as “beautiful”, “ugly”, “picturesque”, “kitschy”, etc. can be distinguished.

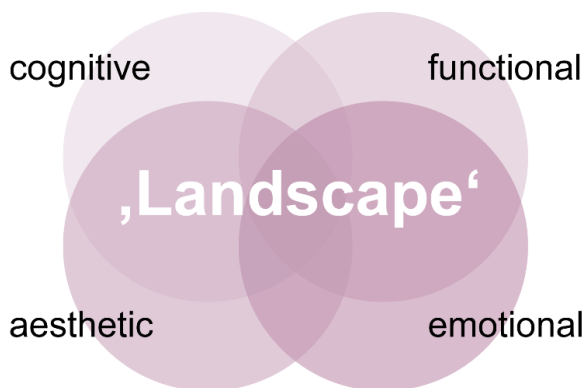


Figure 5: Different dimensions referring to “landscape” (Kühne 2019b: 61).

Within the framework of a social constructivist approach in landscape research, two typical approaches to “landscape” can be distinguished: the stereotypical “beautiful” landscape (Figure 6) and the “native normal landscape” (Figure 7). The stereotypical “beautiful” landscapes are conveyed through mass media, schools, books, brochures, etc. and include, in particular, aesthetic and ecological patterns of interpretation, evaluation and categorization that can be presented in a social context without loss of social recognition. In Landscape 1, the communal understanding of a stereotypical landscape searches for the stereotypical aesthetic and ecological ideas that shape it. If there is a deviation from corresponding expectations of vision, there is usually a devaluation of what is seen. The “native normal landscape” (Figure 7) is formed in childhood by the



Figure 6: Stereotypical “beautiful” landscape (Kühne 2018b, 2019b).

individual experience of a room 1, which is usually mediated by close relatives. The norm of stability is applied to landscape 1, i.e. the “native normal landscape” does not have to be stereotypically beautiful or particularly ecologically valuable, but only familiar.



Figure 7: Native normal landscape (Kühne 2018b, 2019b).

### 5. *Currently discussed theoretical perspectives on landscape*

In the following, different perspectives on landscape (1, 2 and 3) are outlined (more detailed in the literature addressed). Essentialism (from Latin *essentia* = “essence”), which goes back to Plato, assumes that “things have necessary properties that constitute their essence” (Chilla *et al.* 2015: 15). Accordingly, “landscapes” are understood as entities that have developed an “essence” through the reciprocal imprint of nature and culture, which underlies the sensory phenomena that can be experienced. Accordingly, landscape 1 contains “essential” and “accidental” components. The “historically evolved” (such as historical landforms, farmhouse forms, etc.) is considered “essential”, the “accidental” is not a specific feature of Landscape 1, but merely accidentally present (such as neophytes, bungalows, shopping malls). Characteristic of an essentialist conception of science is the belief “that the aim of science is to reveal entities and to describe them by means of definitions” (Popper 2003: 40). “Landscape” in this perspective can be seen as a mosaic of distinguished chambers, each specifically characterized by an “essence”, which are also subject to the danger of being overformed by accidental influences (Glasze 2015).

Positivist landscape research focuses on landscape 1 (Tafel *et al.* 2023) and understands it as a material object that is empirically accessible by measuring, weighing and counting and can be represented by dissection

into different layers (in layers of Geographic Information Systems, GIS), in which, for example, climate, vegetation, settlements, etc. are recorded. Landscape 1 is thus understood as a spatial container, which can be “filled” with different elements, which are spatially arranged in a mathematically determinable way and which can be made accessible to a computer-aided modeling (by means of GIS) after having been recorded (see Tilley 1997).

Constructivist understandings of landscape focus on landscape 3. They differ in their emphasis; what they have in common is the view that landscape 3 emerges in social processes and is then projected into material spaces (landscape 1 is the projection of landscape 3). Accordingly, social constructivist landscape theory is particularly concerned with the question of how landscape 3 is mediated to the individual (landscape 2) as well as how material spaces are symbolically charged (landscape 1). Following the sociology of Luhmann (1986), the radical constructivist perspective of landscape research is concerned with the specific construction logics of different social subsystems (such as politics, economics, science, etc.; Berr 2023; Wöhler 2023) that lead to different perspectives on landscape (for example, landscape can become a medium to make money or generate power; Kühne 2014). Landscape is primarily conceptualized here at the level of landscape 3. Landscape is also the primary focus of discourse-theoretical landscape research, insofar as it focuses on the questions of what different discourses about landscape emerge, how they develop, and in what ways these discourses strive for hegemonic power (see, e.g., Weber A.-M. *et al.* 2023; Fischer, Stock 2023; Leibenath, Otto 2013; Weber 2019a). The “moderate (social) constructivist” approach focuses in particular on landscape 3, but does not ascribe any constitutive significance to it. Landscape 1 is attributed (in positivist tradition) the meaning of an “unquestionable reality” against which “perceptions” can be measured (for instance in Council of Europe 2000; Keller, Backhaus 2021; Mayer, Bonde *et al.* 2023; Vicenzotti 2011).

Variants of positivist as well as constructivist understandings of landscape make, to varying degrees, a relatively clear separation between the world of the social/conscious and the external world of objects, and are thus more or less subject to a dualistic worldview. So-called “more-than-representational theories” (Lorimer 2005; Waterton 2013) have dedicated themselves to overcoming this dualism. Phenomenological landscape research focuses on the individual bodily experience of material-spatial arrangements (fundamental: Schmitz 1980), phenomenological

landscape researchers therefore become narrators of their spatial experiences (Tuan 1989). The focus is therefore on Landscape 2, which sets itself in relation to Landscape 1 and strives to fade out *common-sense interpretations* on Landscape 3 (Kühne *et al.* 2023; Quast, Linke 2023; Zimmer, Zimmer 2023). Assemblage theory, on the other hand, is concerned with the meanings of the material for agents in situationally constituted configurations (Mattissek, Wiertz 2014), i.e., with bringing landscape 1 close to landscape 3 (Korff, Winsky 2023). Actor-Network Theory (ANT; Latour, Roßler 2007) focuses on reconstructing the genealogies of relations that animate and inanimate objects can enter into with each other. From the relations of animate and inanimate elements that have become “actants”, space/place/landscape are always reversibly and unstably formed. Thus, in terms of landscape, those material objects become relevant that have an individual or social meaning (Wöhler 2023). With such a view, ANT is far away from a possible unambiguous assignment to the three landscapes, as it dissolves these three landscapes into equal networks.

Critical landscape research is mostly directly or indirectly in Marxist tradition and deals with the unequal distribution of power regarding landscape (1 or 3), especially as a result of economic dependency structures. The structures shape a “capitalist logic of space utilization” (Schein 1997) and suppress alternative spatial claims, such as communal ones (Etzemüller 2023; Fischer, Stock 2023; Plaikner *et al.* 2023). Through the more or less direct Marxist recourse, we find residues (Pareto 1916) of essentialist figures of thought, such as historicism, utopianism, alienation, etc. (Popper 1992b, 1992a). The domination of external nature is flanked by the “defamation of nature in man” (Horkheimer, Adorno 1969: 61), in that man has distanced himself from his actual needs. Critical landscape research can also be conducted using the sociology of Bourdieu (1987), for example, when discussing how landscape aesthetic standards are formed by specific segments of society, how these are socially disseminated, used for social distinction, and how these in turn materialize (Kühne 2008b; Freytag 2023). In general, critical approaches are inherent in the notion of a strong dependence of Landscape 2 on Landscape 1 and especially Landscape 3. Innovativeness of the individual in relation to landscape 3 or the possibility to shape landscape 1 is understood as minimal in (current) society.

## 6. Neopragmatic approach to “landscape”

In philosophy, neopragmatism is associated in particular with Richard Rorty (Rorty 1982, 1991, 1997, 1998) but also with Hilary Putnam (Putnam 1995) (for detailed introductions to neopragmatism, see: Gustafsson, Brandom 2001; Menand 2001; Mounce 2002; Müller 2021; Reese, Schäfer 2016). Underlying neopragmatism is American pragmatism, which advocates the primacy of practical criteria over abstract theory. The criterion for “truth” is the success of ideas, “interests, values, and goals” (Barnes 2008: 1544). John Dewey’s concept of “warranted assertibility” further specifies the pragmatic concept of truth (Dewey 2016; cf. Neubert 2004): “True” is called that which is located in the intersection of that which has already been elaborated by means of scientific methods and results and that which will be considered valid by means of methods and results to be developed in the future. (Kühne, Berr 2021; cf. Neubert 2004).

Neopragmatism is a further development of pragmatic thinking, in that pragmatism is extended in particular to include language-theoretical approaches (Baltzer 2001). The linguistic-theoretical turn is evident in Rorty’s understanding of “the true”: in place of “truth”, Rorty puts “redescription”. This notion highlights both the constitutive importance of language in the production of world and the contingency (a central concept in Rorty) of human life in general and of knowledge in particular (Baltzer 2001). Neither knowledge of nature, nor moral convictions, nor insights into social facts are, for Rorty, a reflection of a “reality” (Baltzer 2001). The notion of “discovery” (of a context) is replaced by the notion of “invention” (Baltzer 2001; Rorty 1991, 1997). In the pragmatic tradition, it replaces fundamental differences such as lie/truth or appearance/reality with an understanding of useful/less useful ways of talking (Rorty 1994). Rorty understands ideas in the tradition of Dewey as instruments or tools with which people are able to access the world in order to solve problems (Dewey 1996; Rorty 2001b).

Neopragmatism means the insight “that [one’s] central beliefs and needs are contingent” (Rorty 1989: 14). Following the notion of language play in Wittgenstein’s (1995), Rorty (1991) “vocabularies” as shared platforms of social justificatory practice, where justification always refers to the context of the vocabulary of a concrete speech community (Müller 2021). Language communities (especially the scientific ones, even to landscape) are different, creating a need for justification of one’s own approaches to the world (Rorty 1981). “Justification”, however, is not to be

understood as “proof” or causalistic “substantiation”, but Rorty understands “justify” as “unfolding reasons that speak for that belief” (Rorty 2001a: 259).

New redescrptions become necessary when a “time-honored” vocabulary becomes questionable. It becomes questionable when it can no longer redeem its claim to fitness for purpose (Rorty 1997). Redescription can be understood as an attempt to deal with unsolvable problems, unsolvable conflicts, or unsolvable anomalies; they create a “fabric” that re-weaves “time-honored” vocabularies into a new vocabulary (Topper 1995), thereby recycling the remnants of old vocabularies (Rorty 1997; Topper 1995).

With regard to a neopragmatic landscape research, one can refer to Karl Popper’s (2011) “spotlight hypothesis” can be referred to (Figure 8). Popper assumes that any theory of complex research objects is only capable of illuminating partial aspects of the complex object, while other partial aspects remain unexplored (on the topic of complexity and space/landscape: Papadimitriou 2010, 2021). Especially the research objects of “horizontal geographies”, whether cities, regions, countries, landscapes, etc., show a high degree of complexity; after all, it is necessary to bring together and relate results from social, cultural, economic and natural sciences. The different disciplinary and sub-disciplinary approaches, here to landscape, are based on very different theoretical perspectives (overview works on this can be found in different languages and emphases in: Bourassa 1991; D’Angelo 2021; Howard *et al.* 2013; Kühne 2019b, 2021c; Roger 1995; Winchester *et al.* 2003; Wylie 2007; Kühne 2023a, 2023d, 2023e; Poerting, Marquardt 2023; Weber 2023; Weber, Kühne 2023). Given the high degree of complexity of the object “landscape”, a monotheoretical approach is therefore not very promising, that is, if an understanding of complexity and contingency of the object is in the foreground of interest, rather than “unity of theorizing” or “lack of contradiction”.

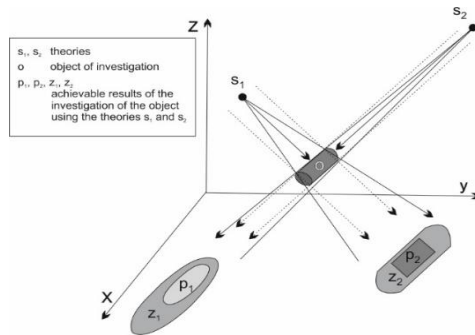


Figure 8: Native normal landscape (Kühne 2018b, 2019b).

The neopragmatic redescription of landscape research can be understood in this sense as a “weaving around” the known vocabularies of different theories. However, this weaving around the central argument of neopragmatism is linked to the fact that contingency is at least not excluded, which is why essentialism is not suitable for a neopragmatic redescription, since it assumes that “landscape” has an unambiguous and normatively charged “essence” (Figure 9).

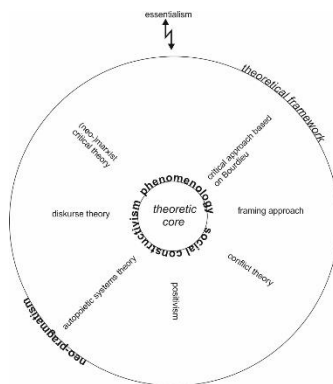


Figure 9: To date, tested theories have stood in the context of spatial neopragmatic research, the core of which has been a combination of social constructivism (relations world 2 to world 3) and phenomenology (world 2 to world 1). Kühne *et al.* 2021.



The redescription of “neopragmatic horizontal geographies”, here of landscape, is divided into six dimensions of triangulation (more detailed on the different triangulations: Denzin 2007; Flick 2007, 2011; Jick 1979; Kuckartz 2014; Kühne 2021a; Kühne, Jenal 2021a, 2021b; Morse 1991; Schründer, Lenzen 2013):

1. *Theory triangulation* is the core aspect of the neopragmatic approach. Different theoretical perspectives are applied to a complex object, whereby the choice of theories requires justification against the background of the research object and the research question as well as against the background of the expected (contingent) findings. Competing interpretations of the different theoretical approaches and partial contradictions are no obstacle to their use, as long as they are reflected against the background of the meta-theoretical framework.
2. *Method triangulation* derives from theory triangulation and also needs to be justified in the context of the research object and the research question against the background of the expected results.
3. *Data triangulation* is ultimately a consequence of theory and method triangulation. Data from different sources as well as scope and type (qualitative or quantitative) are evaluated and contextualized against each other. Like theory and method triangulation, this also helps to avoid biased interpretations. The appropriateness of the type and extent of data used is central in relation to the research question and expected outcome. Also to be reflected is the informative value of the data used, regardless of whether it is data collected from third parties or data collected specifically for the study.
4. The *triangulation of interpretative approaches* is another core aspect of the neopragmatic approach. Here, perspectives of people are integrated into the investigation who have no or only selective expert special knowledge about space and landscape. After all, expert special knowledge stocks represent a very specific view of the world, which are associated with very specific patterns of interpretation and especially evaluation of the world (cf. Kühne 2023b). This transdisciplinary integration, also means that knowledge stocks, interpretation and evaluation patterns of the common

sense, here to landscape, are integrated as well as grants from a native perspective (Weber F. *et al.* 2023).

5. The *triangulation of the forms of presentation* refers to the presentation of the results, which has to be designed suitably depending on the research question and results, the quality of the data basis and especially with regard to the comprehensibility for potential users. This refers to the linguistic, graphical as well as cartographic presentation. These representations should be designed in a way that is suitable to clarify the contenance of the world.
6. The *researcher triangulation* can be understood as a consequence of the triangulations presented in the previous. In the handling (from knowledge, comparison to application) of theories, methods, data, transdisciplinarity and representations, high demands on researchers become apparent. These are particularly high when recourse is made to different disciplinary logics (such as the natural, social or cultural sciences). With the aim of dealing with a complex topic, in this case landscape, from multiple perspectives, the integration of different disciplinary backgrounds as well as, depending on the research question and the topic, other aspects, such as gender, spatial origin, cultural and social backgrounds, career status or ideological orientation, must be taken into account.

## 7. Conclusion

According to what has been said so far, a quote from Jones can again be useful as a summary definition of the challenge that landscape theories fundamentally face: “The landscape concept embodies several unresolved conflicts: between collective belonging and individual control, between the subjective and the objective, and between the mental and the material” (Jones 1991: 234). That means: using a neopragmatic approach, we do not need to solve these conflicts, we can understand them fruitfully as different perspectives, and we can try to regulate in this sense conflicts of different discourses.

The impact of scientific theoretical challenges to “landscapes” consists of the following aspects: “Neopragmatic landscape research” can be described as a reflective science of the production and distribution of geographic knowledge; the basis of (interdisciplinary) balanced access to

spaces and as a producer of professional standards for the practice of geography (also transdisciplinary). Furthermore, there are thematic challenges in investigation and presentation of results, for example in digital media (e.g. VR, social media). Necessary is also the empowerment of synthetic and contextualizing thinking, the certainty of the contingency of knowledge about spaces and the ability of self-irony.

With the offer of neopragmatic landscape research we want to make a contribution to enable a more versatile understanding of the complex object landscape on the one hand, and on the other hand to offer an alternative to understand theories not exclusivistically, to construct incommensurabilities, but to check which complementarity potentials they have.

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