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THE POTENTIAL OF DISCOURSE THEORY FOR LANDSCAPE RESEARCH

POTENCJAŁ TEORII DYSKURSU W BADANIACH KRAJOBRAZU

Key words: landscape research, discourse analysis, methods, power grid extension in Germany, pastures in Austria
Słowa kluczowe: *badanie krajobrazu, analiza dyskursu, metody, rozbudowa sieci energetycznej w Niemczech, pastwiska w Austrii*

Abstract
'Landscape' is a concept charged with a colorful spectrum of associations and impressions. Certain aspects are, in fact, so firmly established in everyday life that they are scarcely questioned. Socio-constructivist landscape research has in recent years been concerned with the analysis of landscape as a social construct, but little attention has yet been paid to the impact of discourse theory, especially for the analysis of power structures. Against this background the article investigates areas of contact between the discourse theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and socio-constructivist landscape research, presenting central strands and modes of application of the theory, and exemplifying, in two case studies, how discourse theory can be used to analyze the genesis and reification of 'social reality'.

Streszczenie
Krajobraz jest pojęciem pełnym barwnych skojarzeń i wrażeń. Niektóre aspekty są w rzeczywistości tak mocno zakorzeniona w codziennym życiu, że nie są one prawie kwestionowane. Badania społeczno-konstruktywistyczne krajobrazu zajmują się w ostatnich latach analizą krajobrazu jako konstruktu społecznego, jednak mało uwagi poświęcono dotychczas wpływowi teorii dyskursu, zwłaszcza na analizę struktur władzy. W tym kontekście artykuł bada powierzchnie styku w dyskursie teorii Ernesto Laclau i Chantal Mouffe oraz społeczno-konstruktywistyczne badania krajobrazu, prezentując centralne wątki i sposoby stosowania teorii przedstawione, w dwóch case studies, jak dyskurs teorii może być wykorzystany do analizy genezy i reifikacji "rzeczywistości społecznej".

INTRODUCTION: LANDSCAPE AND DISCOURSE

'Landscape' inhabits a wide variety of contexts where, framed in many different ways, it plays a significant role. To remark on a 'beautiful landscape' is commonplace when speaking of a holiday destination or a site demanding protection from wind turbines or photovoltaic arrays (see Leibenath, Otto, 2014). The media convey any number of landscapes, from the 'idyllic mountain' to the 'urban' or 'industrial' (see Hofmeister, Kühne, 2016). Nature conservancy – followed by spatial planning – regularly highlights the 'unique variety and beauty of the landscape'. This places landscape within the remit of university research, with its departments of environmental (or 'landscape') architecture and planning. This was not always so, however: for German geographers from the late 1960s to the early years of the present century 'landscape' was something of a red rag to a bull. The seminal event in this respect was the National Geographers' Conference of 1969, which virtually proscribed a term that had long held a prominent position in geographical research. Landscape research, it was decided at this meeting, was descriptive, essentialist, empirically unverifiable, and methodologically almost indefensible (Kaufmann, 2005: 102; Kühne, Schönwald, 2014: 16). Its place was taken by a markedly positivist approach to 'space'. In such an environment to speak of 'landscape' would not help one's career (Schenk, 2006: 17).

More recently, geography has seen a growth in the importance of socio-constructivist perspectives that have given the question of landscape an entirely new lease of life. Key proponents of this new way of thinking are Gailing and Leibenath (e.g. 2015), as well as Kühne (e.g. 2006, 2008, 2012). In an essentialist perspective, landscape was seen as a 'container' filled with characteristic elements. The starting point was belief in a clear delimitable unit of culture and nature. Positivist approaches focused on the spatial distribution of objects and their ascriptions, which could be described using empirical methods (see Chilla et al., 2015). The decisive shift in relation to these approaches is that, instead of asking ontologically what landscape is or spatially differentiating landscapes by specific objects, researchers now ask how landscape is socially constructed. Landscape, in other words, is conceived as a product of changeable and changing speech patterns, and it is these individual and social patterns in their development, rather than a definition of the essence of landscape, that now constitute the focus of interest. The term 'landscape', then, becomes an iridescent play of impressions, associations and perspectives.

This view of landscape opens into a fruitful field for discourse theory and analysis, especially with regard to the question how and why – i.e. via what processes – particular aspects of landscape gain a hegemonic position in specific discourses, while other aspects are marginalized. The processes by which attitudes and positions are established as 'natural and normal' are seen here as functions of power – a central category in discourse theory. This is evident, for instance, in the role played by 'landscape' in the renewable energy debate in Germany, where the construction of new wind farms or erection of power lines and pylons frequently triggers heated local

protest. 'Violation of the landscape' is an argument regularly cited in this context by citizens' initiatives, and one that can also influence political decisions (see e.g. Weber et al., 2016). Another example is the role played by landscape in the marketing of Alpine summer tourism. A recurrent motive is the beauty of hiking through idyllic mountain scenery and 'untouched natural environment' – a picture that stands in stark contrast to bare brown ski runs left behind after the snowmelt (see Kühne et al., 2013).

Against this background the present article seeks to elaborate the potential of discourse theory for the analysis of 'landscape', indicating the line of argumentation and analytic procedures involved. Following Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, central premises and methods of the theory will be introduced, and its application discussed in two empirical case studies: on the one hand of power grid extension in Germany, and on the other of the marketing of summer tourism for the Salzburg region in Austria. The article will end with a brief summary and an outline of future research prospects.

DISCOURSE THEORY FOLLOWING LACLAU AND MOUFFE – CENTRAL ASPECTS AND PREMISES

Socio-constructivist approaches understand 'landscape' as a social product subject to change, not only in its material components (woods, buildings, cultivation etc.) but also and precisely in the meaning (or meanings) ascribed to the word/concept. And it is the processual nature of this ascription and the meanings it generates that in this perspective comes in for particular attention.

In everyday life, however, 'landscape' is generally conceived as an objectively given, univocally determined reality (Ipsen, 2006: 31). Current evaluations of the term seem eternal and irrevocable, and alternative interpretations are simply ignored. This, too, however, is a process: 'landscape' is a mode of perception, a particular way of looking at the world (Cosgrove, 1998: 13), and it is worth asking how this perception comes about. Objects and aspects like woods, trees, and flowering meadows are selected and formed into a composite picture called 'landscape'. This is part of a socialization process that begins in childhood and (especially) adolescence and involves contact both with the immediate local environment and with images and commentaries conveyed by films, books, and other media (Kühne, 2006, 2008). In this way the concept not only of a 'normal' familiar landscape comes about – 'my country', the landscape of 'home' – but also of stereotypical landscapes that express received concepts of beauty: forests and mountains beneath a deep blue sky, the ocean pounding against the rocks, and so on. The question how some perceptions become 'normal' while others are excluded from this process is central to the concerns of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

In accordance with the structuralist and post-structuralist tradition, they argue that social reality is accessed through language (see e.g. Barthes, 1972 [1957], 1990 [1970]; Derrida, 1997 [1967]; Saussure, 2005 [1913]). Language conveys various

representations of reality and contributes to their construction (Phillips, Jørgensen, 2002: 8f.; Torfing, 1999: 87). A good example of this is a flood. The rising of the waters remains initially outside language. But a point comes when the phenomenon is spoken about – when it enters people's thoughts and discussions – and then a change in perception occurs. The waters become a 'flood'. Whether they are seen as a threat, or a natural event, or a manifestation of the divine will, they now have meaning. Transposed to 'landscape', this illustrates the role of language in the genesis, interpretation, and communication of (environmental) phenomena (Kühne, 2006: 59; Leibenath, Otto, 2012: 120).

For discourse theory in the wake of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) the important aspect is that social reality is produced. There is no firm reason why any specific interpretation should arise, no natural law that dictates the path taken to the establishment of this or that construct (Glasze et al., 2012: 1194f.): other paths are always possible, changes can occur, seemingly stable realities can be displaced (see Laclau, 1994: 1f.; Weber, 2013: 50). Laclau and Mouffe stress the impossibility of fixed and final structures, and the construction of landscape is a case in point: identities, social relations, 'spaces' – all these are contingent. Decisions taken one way could be taken another way, current meaning is per se temporary, change is always possible (Glasze, Mattissek, 2009b: 12; Mattissek, Reuber, 2004: 228).

Nevertheless, the structures of the day seem given: what is normal is almost by definition unquestioned. Discourses can therefore be described as the temporary fixation of meaning at a specific time (Laclau, Mouffe, 1985: 112). Laclau and Mouffe "take discourses to be structured totalities which relate linguistic elements such as words and utterances to objects and practices in a contingent manner" (Leibenath, Otto, 2014: 3). This contingency envisages the frequent coexistence of multiple interpretive possibilities – which may well be mutually exclusive (Kühne et al., 2013; Weber, 2015) – under the de facto dominance of one. The dominant – or in Laclau and Mouffe's terms 'hegemonic' – discourse serves to generate the clarity and security of what we take for granted. Hegemonic meaning is 'normal' meaning: anything else, any alternative social reality, is marginalized (Glasze, Mattissek, 2009a: 162).

Hegemonic discourses are seen as arising via chains of equivalence around a central nodal point. The various positions expressed as moments of a discourse (Phillips, Jørgensen, 2002: 26f.) form a set in which one moment can assume the function of node, and as such represent the others (Glasze, 2013: 80ff.; Phillips, Jørgensen, 2002: 27f.). But a discourse that is defined by inclusion is also defined by exclusion: by what does *not* belong. This is known as the 'constitutive outside' (Laclau, 1993; Stäheli, 1999: 151f.; Thiem, Weber, 2011: 175f.; Weber, 2013: 51ff., 2015). An example illustrating the process is the birth of '9/11' from the (until 2001) insignificant date 'September 11'. The terror attacks in the USA on that day, above all the destruction of the 'Twin Towers' of the World Trade Center with massive loss of life, created a moment of iconic significance whose constitutive outside, including 'rogue states' and 'Osama bin Laden', served to legitimate subsequent political actions of the USA (see fig. 1).

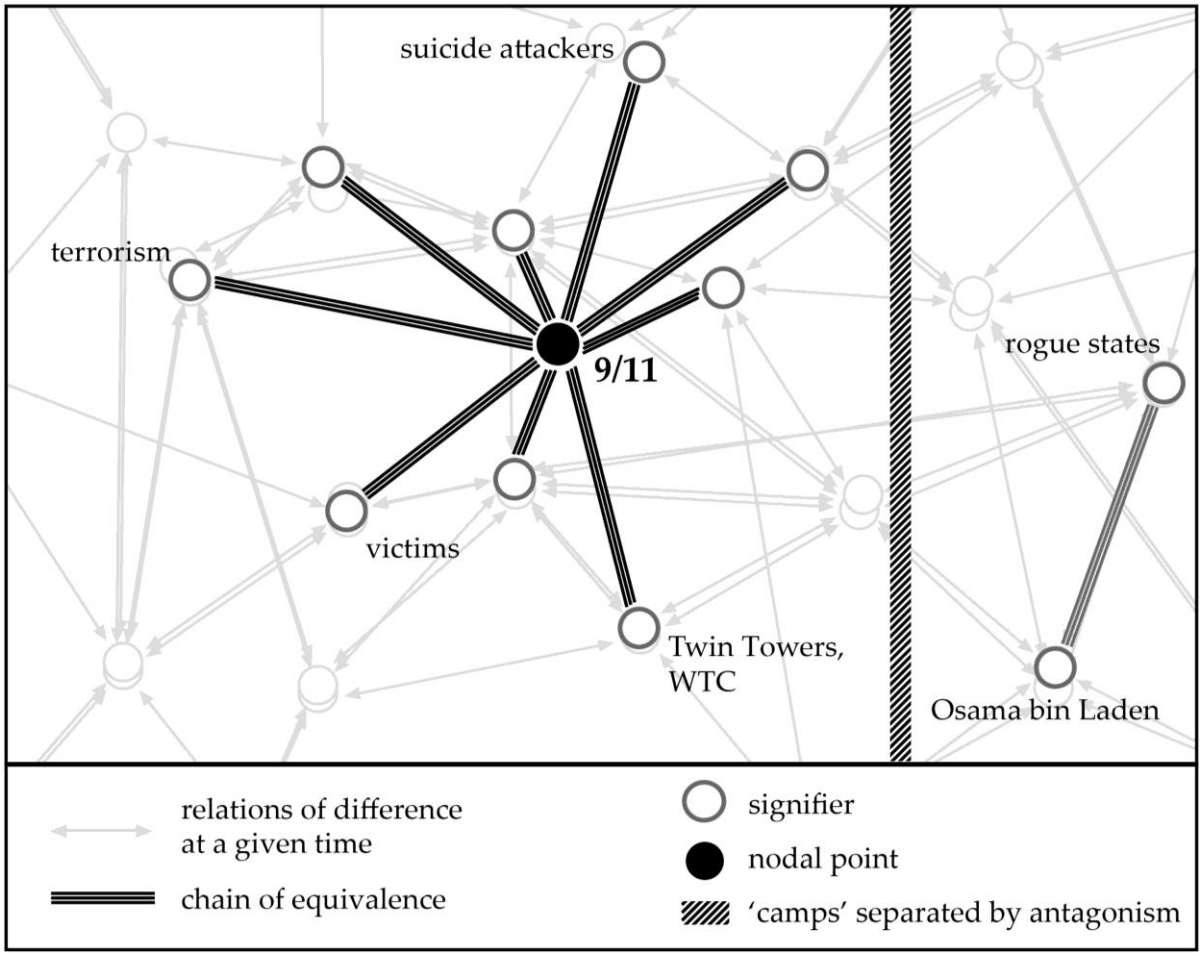


Fig. 1. Discourse structure following Laclau and Mouffe.
Source: *Own diagram based on Glasze, 2013: 83.*

The genesis of landscape discourse follows a similar pattern, with various moments positioning themselves in chains of equivalence, whose exclusion of other chains is frequently decisive for the identity of the discourse. The more powerful the discourse, the more it forces other interpretations into the background. The current face of the landscape becomes fixed as the one single condition demanding preservation, and alternatives, banished to a limbo of the unthinkable, become subdiscourses. But these subdiscourses may in due course rise from their shadowy existence and themselves become hegemonic (Weber, 2013: 63, 69ff.).

In its application, discourse theory can start by questioning current hegemonic positions and looking for alternative strands of subdiscourse, foregrounding the production and reproduction of power. 'Landscape' discourse can be analyzed by focusing on recurrent argumentative connections and the consolidations of meaning they effect. Such a focus on the production and establishment of specific meanings can open up rich new avenues of landscape research. How is landscape viewed in various thematic contexts? What sort of arguments does it arouse? What qualities are ascribed to it? What interpretations are currently dominant, and what alternative approaches sidelined? These and similar questions encourage a close look at

language and the pattern of connections it creates. Essentialist positions can thus be avoided or deconstructed, and the way opened for alternative perspectives.

For Laclau and Mouffe, discourse analysis begins not with units of meaning but with individual linguistic links. This becomes evident when one turns to the methodology of its application.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE: APPLYING THE PREMISES

Laclau and Mouffe have said little about the way their theory might be put into operation, but several attempts have recently been made in this direction by applying methods derived from the French school of discourse research (e.g. Glasze, 2013; Mattissek, 2008; Weber, 2013). In order to do justice to the implications of the theory, adapted methods must be chosen (Glasze, Mattissek, 2009c) to reveal not only "supra-individual hegemonic patterns of discourse on specific topics" (Mattissek, 2008: 115), but also discursive breaks and dominant changes.

An initial quantitative approach may involve lexicometric procedures to determine the incidence of specific lexical moments and ensuing currents of dominance (see e.g. Weber, 2015). Frequency analyses can reveal the relative or absolute frequency of an item in a corpus or specific part of a corpus (Baker, 2006: 51ff.; Fiala, 1994: 115; Weber, 2015: 104). Such methods contribute to the identification of characteristically hegemonic moments of discourse, which can then be subjected to more intense qualitative scrutiny.

Tracing the 'outside' of a discourse, or the chains of equivalence that establish specific patterns of meaning, enables various different positions to be mapped in relation to each other, as indicated theoretically above. Depending on the complexity of the case, these may be open to quantification – for example the incidence of the items 'destruction of the landscape', 'violation of the landscape', and 'impacting the landscape' can be counted within a defined textual corpus and ascribed to the word-field 'landscape'. However, the proximity of such a procedure to qualitative methods precludes automatic processing, even in cases where the result itself is to be expressed in quantitative terms (see Weber et al., 2016: 31f.).

Qualitative procedures include analyses of narrative patterns that highlight the constitutive processes of meaning by examining the recurrent linking of linguistic elements in specific patterns (Somers, 1994: 616). Identifiable narrations with recurrent argumentative logic arise as the vehicle of fixed meanings (Glasze et al., 2009: 293f.), and it is possible in this way to identify the moments, central nodal points, and boundaries of a discourse, and hence, too, its constitutive outside. On this basis, current discursive strands – for example the 'landscape' discourse at issue here – can more readily be traced.

The focus on narrative patterns can be extended to pictures and film by empirical analysis of recurrent visual elements and their implied connections (on analogy with Miggelbrink, Schlottmann, 2009: 191), and determination (following Foucault, 2002 [1969]) of what they exclude as well as what they include. This is not a matter

of looking at a single picture, but of examining many pictures, comparing them, and relating them to each other. Only then can one determine which central elements – or more precisely moments – within images generate specific stereotypes. It is by doing so that they contribute to the construction of social reality (for details see Kühne et al. 2013; Weber, 2015).

The following section will be devoted to the discourse perspective and its potential for landscape research, illustrated, as indicated above, in two case studies: on the one hand power grid extension in Germany and its 'destruction' of the normal familiar landscape, and on the other the use of romantic landscape imagery in tourist industry marketing in Austria.

CASE STUDIES: POWER GRID EXTENSION AND ALPINE PASTURE LANDSCAPES

Landscape-based argumentation against power grid extension in Germany

In the wake of the Fukushima catastrophe, the German government decided in 2011 to phase out nuclear power generation of electricity: by 2022 all remaining nuclear facilities would be decommissioned. This has entailed the need for significant growth not only in renewable energy sourcing (see e.g. Bundesregierung [Federal German Government], 2015; The Economist, 2012), but also in the transmission grid conveying electrical energy from wind farms – predominantly in the north of the country – to the major cities and industrial complexes of the south. New north-south grid superhighways will, it is argued, be necessary (for details see Weber et al., 2016), and this has brought with it a wave of civic protest in which landscape-based argumentation plays a major role.

Initial investigation of this complex was via a quantitative analysis of the first 25 *Google* hits in which the terms 'Landschaft' ('landscape') and 'Stromnetzausbau' ('power grid extension') occurred in combination. Graphic presentation of the results using *wordle.net* (fig. 2) shows the high incidence of the word 'gegen' ('against'), which already reveals attitudes of argument and rejection. Another central term is 'Energiewende' ('energy turnaround'), implying the close connection between power grid extension, the growth of renewable energy, and withdrawal from nuclear-based resources. 'Freileitungen' ('overhead power lines') and 'Erdkabel' (buried cables) bring in the question of how power transmission should be implemented, with all its implications for the landscape, while 'Umweltauswirkungen' ('environmental impact'), 'Auswirkungen' ('impact'), 'Naturschutz' ('nature conservation'), 'Masten' ('pylons'), and 'Trassen' ('grid routing') involve further consequences of grid extension, including visual aspects. With 'Seehofer' (Bavarian premier Horst Seehofer) and 'Bayern' ('Bavaria'), reference is made to political and regional discussion hotspots, whose frequent occurrence is backed up by qualitative analysis.

While advocates of grid extension like the federal government and transmission system operators tend strongly toward cognitive argumentation based on technological and economic need, their opponents' positions are generally expressed in more

aesthetic and emotive terms, especially with regard to 'landscape' (see Kühne, Weber, 2015; Weber et al., 2016). An analysis of 90 citizens' initiatives with Internet or Facebook profile shows that more than three-quarters use landscape-based, closely followed by health-based, arguments (figure 3). In Bavaria, where resistance to existing plans is particularly high (38 of the 90 civic initiatives are sited in Bavaria) 90% of the groups refer to landscape in their public utterances.



Fig. 2. Frequently occurring terms in the first 25 Google hits for 'Landschaft / Stromnetzausbau' ('landscape / power grid extension').
Source: *Graphics created with wordle.net on the basis of Google search results (font size indicates relative frequency).*

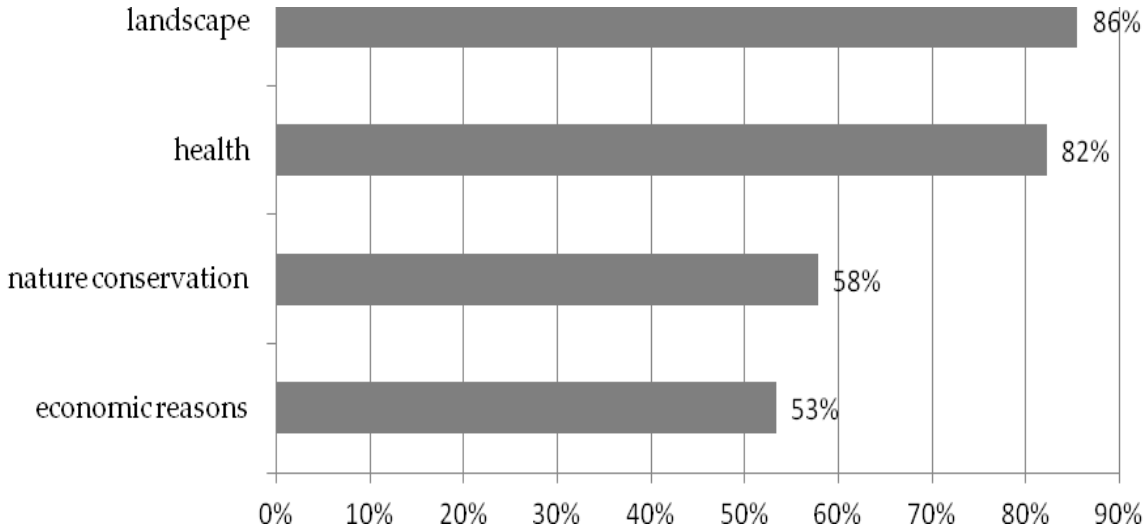


Fig. 3. Key areas of civic initiative argumentation against grid extension.
Source: *Kühne et al., 2016.*

'Landscape' can therefore be said to assume a hegemonic position in the arguments of the citizens' initiatives, whose aim is to protect the currently existing 'normal' familiar landscape from intrusive change. In this situation a wide range of narrations creates emotively charged chains of equivalence around the terms 'landscape', 'home', 'destruction', 'threat', and 'violation' or 'ruin' (see text box 1). The central relevance and regular repetition of this line of argumentation gives it a position of power in a debate in which 'sustained energy turnaround' is understood as 'decentralized regional provision with renewable resources' (especially in Bavaria), and the outside of the discourse is held by 'overhead power lines'.

Text box 1: Narrative patterns of 'landscape' and grid extension

"The grid routing would destroy 450 km of landscape and bring incalculable health risks; it would in no way contribute to a sustained energy turnaround […]."

(Website of 'Pegnitz electrified' citizens' initiative, Bavaria, 2015)

"We are threatened. Our landscape is threatened. Our health is threatened. Our urban development is threatened. Our home is threatened."

(Speech by Mayor of Pegnitz on founding of 'Pegnitz electrified' citizens' initiative, 2014)

"So the [grid extension] will be at the cost of our home and our landscape."

(Interview with municipal representative, Pegnitz, 2015)

"We refuse to be guinea-pigs for these nonsensical energy policies. […] The landscape will be ruined forever."

(Website of Hormersdorf-Schnaittach citizens' initiative, Bavaria, 2015)

At the everyday level, then, social reality is understood as a fixed and established order: a state, not a process. And intrusions into that order – of which the here-and-now shape of the landscape is an important constituent – are perceived as a threat. The construction of new overhead power lines and pylons represents such a threat. Quantitative approximations and detailed qualitative analyses shed light on the interpretive pattern generated by these attitudes, which in turn can explain why certain positions seem so normal and factual, why they develop such political impetus, and why other positions – among them i.e. the potential argument for the aesthetic appeal of pylons (an argument from sublimity: see Kühne, Franke, 2010) or the argument of power lines as a ‚normal' part of the landscape in a few years – are simply thrust aside.

Tourist marketing strategies for Austrian high pasture landscapes

Summer tourist marketing of the Salzburg region in Austria takes the converse position, emphasizing the positive associations of high Alpine pasture-land and – in what has been called a strategy of invisibilization (see Kühne, 2013) – ignoring counter-elements like off-season ski lifts and brown, grassless ski runs. This too is

a question of power, whose emotive charging, revealed in appropriate photographs, can also be fruitfully approached via discourse theory.

Globalization in terms of increasing airborne accessibility has profoundly affected the tourist industry (Bätzing, 2005: 146f.; Luger, Rest, 2002), and against the background of climate change, sinking snowfalls, and dwindling numbers of winter skiers, it is no longer possible to rely solely on winter seasonal income, and a campaign has been started to attract summer holidaymakers for the hiking, cycling and relaxation that the Alps also offer (see e.g. Vogt, 2008). In this context the high summer pastures originally used for grazing cattle have become a tourist magnet.

A survey of advertising material issued by two major tourist agencies, including flyers, Internet pages and press clippings for the Salzburg region, was conducted by Kühne, Weber and Weber in 2013. This showed the key role played by panoramic photography – alongside textual advertising – in the presentation of the region. Simply structured – at times even cliché-type – images are used here to create positive associations of stereotypical, idyllic mountain scenery. The landscape is communicated through a few clearly differentiable elements. Meadows, woods, mountains and sky framing age-old herdsmen's huts combine to communicate a sense of unique 'beauty' and 'perfection' (see fig. 4).

The texts framing these images have a similar structure, again dominated by a few recurrent aspects: mountain peaks and ranges, lakes, meadows, and wide panoramas (see text box 2). Linked in chains of equivalence, these motives constitute a reduced set of fixed discursive moments that assumes a hegemonic position in the marketing of Alpine summer tourism.

Text box 2: Narrative patterns of 'landscape' and alpine pastures

"What hikers in the Salzburg region so treasure is the abundance of outstanding landscapes: the gentle hill country around the northern lakes; the interplay of verdant slopes, rocky peaks and picturesque mountain waters to the south."

(The Salzburg Region: Summer Pasture-Land, History, Tips and Offers, Panoramic Hiking Maps)

"The entire landscape will soon be an Alpine garden, while to the south the peaks with their glaciers glow in the morning light […]"

(Salzburg's Summer Pasture-Land – Dreamtime Summer, 2011)

"Experience the charm of 40 comfortable herdsmen's huts, the scent of flowering Alpine meadows, the purity of crystal-clear mountain lakes, and the breathtaking panorama of Hohe Tauern National Park."

(Alpine Pastures in the Grossarltal)

Further moments in these texts associate the high pastures with tranquility, reflection, and idyllic Romanticism. The scenic sublime is presented in motives reminiscent (among other references) of Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of*

Fog (see Fig. 5). Text and image stand here in intimate relation, the visual impact accentuated and fixed in selected words. The high pastures breathe the "unique romantic aura" of the herdsmen's huts; the landscape is a "romantic idyll", its grassy slopes "filled with the atmosphere of simple living", the Alpine scene "a simple world" of "unspoiled freshness", unfalsified and authentic (for sources see Stakelbeck, Weber, 2013). The powerful visual impact of photography is so reinforced by such phrases that no one thinks of asking, for example, what present Alpine pasture tourism has to do with traditional farming life. The language is loaded with connotations that set the Alpine landscape in polar opposition to city life with its hectic pace and flood of stimuli, and make the city itself the 'antagonistic outside'.

Text and image together present the landscape not merely as a physical agglomeration of peaks, meadows, huts and cows, but as an emotionally and aesthetically charged complex with a specific pattern. Other aspects of the Alpine pastures like roads, ski lifts and ski runs, the sometimes less enjoyable sights and scents of farming, or even the discomforts of romantic simplicity, are banished to the realm of non-hegemonic subdiscourse.



Fig. 4. A 'typical' high Alpine pasture landscape.
Source: *© www.grossarltal.info.*



Fig. 5. Romantic panorama.
Source: *© www.grossarltal.info.*

As in the case of grid extension, so here too, the appeal to discourse theory enables one to differentiate and, as it were, dissect individual discursive moments for closer analysis, revealing the border separating inside from outside. In this perspective the language of advertising demonstrates the processes of production and reification of meaning that establish its power, and at the same time shows who is responsible for the meanings constituted around 'landscape' and in what ways that responsibility is exercised.

SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

Whether in the context of renewable energy sources and their distribution, the rehabilitation of former industrial and mining sites, or the marketing of regional tourism, 'landscape' is a term whose scientific analysis sheds considerable light on the mechanisms that produce social reality. As stated above, however, this is *not* a matter of defining the essential characteristics of a landscape, but of determining – and differentiating between – the *social ascriptions* that generate it.

The approach outlined in this article, following the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe, allows close scrutiny of the components of a discourse to determine the hegemonies it both produces and reproduces. In the case of 'landscape', one can ask what mechanisms of power underlie the social construction of the term: i.e. *who*, *when*, and *in what context* can say *what* about 'landscape' without jeopardizing the respect of their peers; or in other words *how*, *by whom*, and *for what purpose* 'landscapes' are created, and how certain impressions are so reified in the process that they are no longer questioned (Kühne et al., 2013). How do specific moments and generic patterns begin to define a discourse, and why are they perceived as so 'natural' and unquestionable that they function as self-evident truths? Conversely, what alternative meanings are marginalized, although they still remain thinkable? A parallel investigation employing linguistic lexicometric procedures or narratological analysis, along with an examination of pictorial or film images, can effectively illustrate the intimate connection between the modalities and impact of textual and visual media. This is especially useful with respect to 'landscape' constructs.

Analyses based on discourse theory are directed to actually given conditions of social reality, and they can widen the horizon to take in alternative constructs that might otherwise be entirely ignored. However, they have their limits. Texts and images can be profitably analyzed, but not in a way that provides practitioners with a guideline to the *one true way*. This would contradict the very premises of social constructivism. Discourse theory has to do with the analysis and deconstruction of discourse. In this sense it opens the way to many research fields, and can specifically enrich landscape research with its new perspective.

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