

GUNHILD SETTEN

# Landscape and the making of competing moralities

For as long as I have identified myself as a human geographer, I have taken a keen interest in dialogues within international human geography, and in some of the conditions under which such dialogues take place.<sup>1</sup> I have in particular been concerned to understand how and why landscape, both as term and as phenomenon, has been given centre stage in some of the most important and critical dialogues within the discipline. These are concerns relating to power politics, and how, through our choices of research topics, theoretical approaches, terms, languages and research outlets, we let the discipline operate.

I believe my interests are not a matter of coincidence. I was supervised by Michael Jones and later also Kenneth Olwig during the 1990s and early 2000s. In different ways, they have made vital contributions to international landscape debates, not least through how they have analysed the complex meanings of (cultural) landscape and subsequently demonstrated how landscape works as a political and ideological phenomenon and materiality. Jones has analysed the complex usages and meanings of the “cultural landscape” concept in Scandinavian, German and English language contexts,<sup>2</sup> while Olwig “recovered the substantive nature of landscape” by showing that historically in the Scandinavian countries landscape was a space of justice and politics.<sup>3</sup> Hence, for several years, I found myself in the midst of some intense conceptual debates, extending well beyond the Department of Geography in Trondheim and the Landscape, Law and Justice group, which had a profound impact on my thinking

<sup>1</sup> Setten 2005; 2006; 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Jones 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Olwig 1996; 2002.

around and understanding of the term landscape. Equally important, both Jones' and Olwig's work made clear to me that choice of terminology, categories and definitions are fundamental for what we research and how we do research in the first place, with whom we communicate, and with what effects.

It was within this briefly outlined context that I started to reflect on the ownership of concepts (if there is such a thing), how terminology is set to "border and order", and ultimately how it works to exclude and alienate as well as include. So when I asked, "who owns the concepts?" 20 years ago,<sup>4</sup> it not only reflected investigations into the complexities of the meaning and usages of the concept of landscape, but also how I developed a deeper understanding of the way different meanings, by default, translate into powerful, yet situated, narratives about social, political and cultural processes driving academia as well as society at large. At the time, much energy was spent on debating the relevance of landscape, and what was already contained in the concept. In his excellent essay from 2003, 'What (else) we talk about when we talk about landscape: For a return to the social imagination', American geographer George Henderson expressed it this way: "I think the promise of the landscape concept is that adjectives such as *cultural*, *social*, *political*, and *economic* ought to be already folded into what we mean by *landscape*, or at least into the best of such meaning."<sup>5</sup> By implication, energy was also spent on debating the limits of landscape. Bluntly phrased, what should, or could, this "package" called landscape be—or not?

Henderson's quest for a "return to the social imagination", which, crucially, is a normative position, provokes careful consideration of what "else" landscapes might consist of: what are the cultural, social, political and economic relations that make up the landscape, and are potentially already folded into it? For Henderson, it was a call for a landscape concept that is much more sensitive to social justice, premised not only on an explicit engagement with moral and political philosophy, but also on the study of people's everyday lives and struggles. If we take Henderson's call from 20 years ago seriously, and I think we should, these two premises produce another premise: the degree to which people's everyday lives and practices are at the heart of the landscape concept tells us something about the degree to which (in)justice is also folded into it. This, in turn, lays the ground for differing and often competing conceptualizations of landscape.

In this chapter, I offer some personal reflections on how my work more broadly continues to be informed by landscape, as both concept and phenomenon, yet maybe in more implicit ways than 20 or even 10 years ago. When reflecting on reasons for

<sup>4</sup> Setten 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Henderson 2003, p. 336, n. 1, emphasis in original.

this, I continue to draw much inspiration from Henderson. However, his call cannot be confined to a fuller engagement with justice theory alone.<sup>6</sup> If landscapes, by default, are sites of contention and struggle, they are also always regulated by “beliefs, actions, and behaviors that reflect and underpin people’s conceptions of what is just and unjust, appropriate and inappropriate, right and good”<sup>7</sup>. Hence, “landscapes are always *moral* landscapes”<sup>8</sup>. However, and even though we routinely engage in moral and normative evaluation and regulation—moral issues pervade all realms of human life—this is rarely acknowledged, either in everyday life or in research. The crux is that “many of these realms can be all the more powerful for any apparent lack of moral content; a veneer of objectivity and self-evidence tends to make the underlying moral judgements invisible”<sup>9</sup>. Thus I argue that the often subtle norms and moralities held by individuals and groups of people, and how competing moralities are (re)produced through their practices, also need to be talked about.

In the following, I examine how and why notions of normativity and morality can give increased understanding of everyday lives and practices, what (in)justice can mean and how it might operate in, and in relation to, landscape. By drawing on examples from my own work, including works with colleagues, I argue that using a moral lens helps us understand that because we are unequally positioned to shape, regulate and dominate, we are also unequally positioned to claim material landscapes. I have on occasions conceptualized this as a “moral order”;<sup>10</sup> in other words, I have underlined that morality (re)produces hierarchies because somebody’s morality will always trump somebody else’s in given situations. Hence, morality is restrictive, yet, and crucially, also provides space for agency in ways that offer clues to current and future socio-environmental challenges. To set the scene for this approach, I begin with an understanding of landscape as a relational and tensive concept.

#### LANDSCAPE AND THE NORMATIVE TENSIONS BETWEEN RELATIONS

The bottom line is that the landscape can clearly teach us something beyond its morphology; in other words, landscape is always more complex than its material reality

<sup>6</sup> Very few have taken up Henderson’s call. Tom Mels and Don Mitchell are exceptions (Mels & Mitchell 2013; Mitchell 2023).

<sup>7</sup> Setten 2020, p. 193.

<sup>8</sup> Mitchell 2023, p. 212, emphasis in original.

<sup>9</sup> Setten 2020, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. Setten 2020.

implies.<sup>11</sup> Things that are often not readily visible are nonetheless fundamental for both the physical and the symbolic landscape—be they for example flows of capital, legal frameworks or ideas. Thus, Henderson, Mitchell, Schein, Germundsson *et al.*,<sup>12</sup> and many others, remind us that landscapes are never self-evident, nor innocent. By implication, to paraphrase Mitchell, landscape is power,<sup>13</sup> materially as well as discursively, which brings some fundamental tensions to the table. John Wylie's book from 2007, *Landscape*, opens with claiming that "Landscape is tension"<sup>14</sup>: landscape is made by a constant wrestling between "Proximity/distance [...] Observation/inhabitation [...] Eye/land [...] Culture/nature".<sup>15</sup> Representation/the represented, positive/normative, exclusion/inclusion, continuity/change, inside/outside, subject/object, material/immaterial, theoretical approach/political strategy, among others, could be added. These are not only various ways through which landscape has been understood and theorized. They are ultimately various relations that go into the making of landscape. In sum, landscape is produced through the tension between such relations, and this is what makes landscape such a powerful concept and phenomenon. This is, no doubt, also a claim, yet, I would argue, an uncontroversial claim within the broad field of landscape research. However, its "operationalization" has taken multiple forms.

There is insufficient space to present a detailed narrative of landscape research over the last 20–30 years. Much has been said already.<sup>16</sup> I want rather to underline that "injecting explicit consideration of justice into landscape studies"<sup>17</sup> has also injected inspiration to keep paying critical attention to landscape as that which can help us to "understand why the cultural, social, political, or economic might matter"<sup>18</sup> in real-world contexts. Yet, like so many other times, the crux of the matter lies in the multiple meanings of the landscape concept.

Seven years prior to Henderson's call, Olwig<sup>19</sup> had presented a take on landscape that stood in contrast to landscape as (hegemonically) conceptualized at the time, mainly by British "cultural turn geographers". The latter, referred to as "new" cultural geography, was "interested in landscape as representation and its ideologi-

<sup>11</sup> Henderson 2003; Mitchell 2003.

<sup>12</sup> Henderson 2003; Mitchell 2003; 2023; Schein 2003; Germundsson *et al.* 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Mitchell 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Wylie 2007, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Wylie 2007, pp. 2–11.

<sup>16</sup> E.g. Mitchell 2003; Wylie 2007; Howard *et al.* 2018; Setten *et al.* 2018; Germundsson *et al.* 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell 2023, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> Henderson 2003, p. 336.

<sup>19</sup> Olwig 1996.

cal underpinnings”,<sup>20</sup> that is, as a “way of seeing” and representing the world as and through text, image and discourse.<sup>21</sup> Weight was placed on the visual and scenic yet abstract power of landscape. In contrast, and with a particular reference to medieval Scandinavia, Olwig’s work stressed that “landscape can also be understood as that which connects community, justice, environmental equity and nature”<sup>22</sup> Olwig argued that the physical environment was a reflection of the political landscape, which is to say that landscape is more than “a way of seeing”.<sup>23</sup> Central to the work of the Landscape, Law and Justice group was not only to explore landscapes as places of justice, but also to devote time to debate and explore a range of various conceptualizations of landscape, which clearly were important for the very understanding and development of landscape as a field of research.<sup>24</sup> Yet Don Mitchell, who participated in several of the group’s seminars, observed that, for us, “landscape was quite something different than what we had come to think of it as in Anglo-American geography. [...] it was the degree to which the seminars took the *substantiveness* of landscape (to use Olwig’s, 1996, term) so seriously.”<sup>25</sup> The debates during the group’s work frequently revolved around material realities, people and places, which, in turn, underpinned how we were able to debate law and justice in the first place; real landscapes struggled over, enabled, indeed preconditioned such debates. By implication, “social justice is [also] folded into the landscape”<sup>26</sup> because, ultimately, landscape is a political task. This was also noted in Lesley Head’s review of the proceedings from the final conference marking the formal end of the group’s work, where she pointed to how “the book makes a different sort of statement about landscape and justice. [...] It potentially conceptualizes the human rather differently to the visual landscape tradition of Anglo human geography or the North American cultural landscape tradition.”<sup>27</sup> There are clear conceptual as well as geographical tensions in this. John Wylie, again in his book *Landscape*, makes on a similar note the following claim:

In focusing upon issues of memory, justice and law, much recent work by North American and northern European geographers has a substantive feel—it has concentrated, for the most part, upon “grounded” studies, rather

<sup>20</sup> Germundsson *et al.* 2022, p. 111.

<sup>21</sup> Cosgrove 1984.

<sup>22</sup> Germundsson *et al.* 2022, p. 112.

<sup>23</sup> Olwig 2002.

<sup>24</sup> Jones 2006, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Mitchell 2003, p. 792, emphasis in original.

<sup>26</sup> Setten *et al.* 2018, p. 421.

<sup>27</sup> Head 2007, p. 216.

than elaborating further concepts of landscape, and it is concerned with the affirmation of interpretative and discursive arguments regarding landscape within various tangible and physical contexts.<sup>28</sup>

There are two related points I want to make here: first, a “substantive feel” for landscape is what is needed to say something substantive about (in)justice; second, Wylie appears to be implying that such a “feel” stands in opposition to and is hence not enabling conceptual and theoretical developments. I question Wylie’s claim, and what I believe are false tensions, in the next section. Yet I agree with him that there is no doubt that landscape was a prominent feature of the cultural turn, and “with the natural ebbing of that particular disciplinary tide [turn], it may have seemed that landscape was also a concept in partial retreat, albeit from an advanced position”.<sup>29</sup> However, landscape scholars within their differing research traditions have since then taken advantage of such a position in several ways.

Although increasingly contested and maybe harder to defend,<sup>30</sup> it is still a trait of much landscape research to point at the Anglo tradition, the North American tradition and the Nordic tradition.<sup>31</sup> These traditions stand for certain conceptual legacies that cannot be ignored<sup>32</sup> in a current attempt to grasp how and why we also talk about the cultural, social, political or economic when we talk about landscape. So, since the cultural turn, and particularly in the UK or Anglo tradition, landscape research has in recent decades been heavily “inspired by phenomenological and non-representational understandings of embodiment, materiality and performance”<sup>33</sup>. These sources of inspiration have, no doubt, helped this tradition to remain a space where “creative and reflective research that promotes a stronger acknowledgement of practice [...] and affect”<sup>34</sup> is possible; that is, a space for a world that is *lived in*, and not only looked at or viewed from above. Yet, according to Harvey, it is also a space where the “self” and an “inward” focus rose to such prominence that nothing of consequence could be said about anything, “and where it appears that the self becomes the only element that can be safely talked about”.<sup>35</sup> In “opposition” to this crude(!) portrayal, North American and Nordic traditions have been more concerned to take advantage of their “substan-

<sup>28</sup> Wylie 2007, p. 198.

<sup>29</sup> Wylie 2007, p. 216.

<sup>30</sup> Germundsson *et al.* 2022.

<sup>31</sup> There are also other traditions, e.g. Widgren 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Germundsson *et al.* 2022.

<sup>33</sup> Wylie 2007, p. 216.

<sup>34</sup> Harvey 2015, p. 913.

<sup>35</sup> Harvey 2015, p. 913.

tive feel", and to keep on problematising and critically developing what Richard Schein termed the normative and normalizing capabilities of landscape.<sup>36</sup> So, if landscape is the site of social struggle between multiple claims, then "social struggles not only shape landscapes but crucially also involve attempts to naturalize them, making them seem inevitable, ordinary and even necessary".<sup>37</sup> Combined with the symbolic qualities of landscape, these are key capabilities that "make the landscape central to the ongoing production and reproduction of place and identity",<sup>38</sup> which have been so important to much Nordic and North American landscape research since the turn of the millennium.

#### ALL LANDSCAPES ARE MORAL LANDSCAPES

To understand more fully the context of the work of the Landscape, Law and Justice group, recall that, around the turn of the century, landscape research in the Nordic countries was to a large extent driven by interdisciplinary developments, and "came to have an explicit aim to both analyse and inform policy".<sup>39</sup> Landscape was put on the agenda by political and administrative bodies, ranging from the local to the international level, which saw it as a tool for the protection of environmental and cultural values and for countering a lament of (local) values being lost.<sup>40</sup> Landscape was set to serve as a normative corrective to the destruction of places and the alienation of people. Notably, the European Landscape Convention, signed in 2000 and coming into force in 2004, underlined this agenda.<sup>41</sup>

This was the context within which both my M.A. and Ph.D. studies took place. It was also the kind of normativity to which I was exposed. The policy-informed research was highly significant and inspired my research on the greening of Norwegian agricultural policies and farmers' responses to a shift that fundamentally challenged their identities as food producers, a shift "from production to the protection of environmental and cultural values identified with the rural landscape".<sup>42</sup> Even though policy-

<sup>36</sup> Schein 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Setten *et al.* 2018, p. 419.

<sup>38</sup> Schein 2003, p. 203.

<sup>39</sup> Germundsson *et al.* 2022, p. 110.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Jones' work on the cultural landscape concept (2003) clearly reflected that numerous administrative bodies were claiming the concept in order to meet demands for the protection of cultural and environmental values.

<sup>41</sup> Council of Europe 2000. There is a substantial literature on a wide range of aspects relating to the European Landscape Convention, e.g. Jones 2007; Olwig 2007; Jones & Stenseke 2011; Mitchell 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Setten 2004, p. 403.

informed research was exposing a need to pay attention to the values, aspirations and needs of people in different empirical contexts, I found it (too) descriptive, too set on loss and lament, and not critical enough of how local agency creates and sustains its own exclusions;<sup>43</sup> it was not saying enough about which exclusions were (re)produced locally, how and on what grounds, by the very same people. This became evident when I was doing fieldwork for my Ph.D. The farmers I walked and talked with conveyed a complex notion of landscape that was embodied, practised and judged against what they saw as appropriate farming or not. In essence, I found the farmers to be measuring their agricultural practices against certain moral standards that were spatially, temporally and socially specific. Hence, I was looking for a sense of the normative that could also explain different tensions between people and between people and the landscape; I wanted to understand “how the production and meaning of a lived landscape becomes a moral landscape”<sup>44</sup>

A key moment for my by now almost 25 years of grappling with “moral landscapes” was when I came across the book *Moralizing the Environment*, published in 1997 by a group of rural and landscape geographers in the UK, among them Susanne Seymour at the School of Geography, University of Nottingham.<sup>45</sup> In spring 2000, I was fortunate to be invited for a 3-month-long research stay at the school, which enabled me to understand in more depth what the moral(izing) dimensions of the environment—or the landscape—was about. I owe a lot of that to David Matless, who also held a position at the school, and his work on moral landscapes.<sup>46</sup> Among other things, Matless has been a key exponent of how “particular landscapes are complicit in shaping national and class identities, as well as in forming allied assumptions about acceptable modes of conduct”<sup>47</sup> When I understood not only that landscapes have moral(izing) effects, but also (and slightly later) that geography more broadly can be seen as “a resolutely moralist discipline”,<sup>48</sup> much of my work aimed to convey how people “deal with the variety of potentially conflicting notions of how we ought to be in and engage in the world”<sup>49</sup> In more concrete terms, how and why do we deem what is appropriate or not, good or bad, natural and unnatural, in particular spaces at particular times? If we

43 Setten *et al.* 2018.

44 Setten 2004, p. 389.

45 Lowe *et al.* 1997.

46 Matless 1997; 1998. I am also indebted to David M. Smith, whom I have been fortunate to meet and have conversations with. In particular, his book *Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference* (2000) has been a continuous source of inspiration.

47 Setten 2020, p. 194.

48 Barnett 2011, p. 112.

49 Setten 2020, p. 193.

identify “moral landscapes” as a research agenda, and landscape as a particular space, then this agenda is always political because of an interest in how “moral boundaries are naturalized in and through landscapes [...]”<sup>50</sup> Landscape, then, becomes a site of contention and struggle that opens up for different normativities; to quote Henderson again, “any concept of landscape is bankrupt when it is not also a participatory concept. In other words, landscape, in our very invocation of it, ought to signify a particular normative state of social relations.”<sup>51</sup>

Arriving at this approach means giving landscape practice, or the “doing” of landscape, a central position. It also means giving the social, including meanings and experiences, an equally central position. Competing convictions are what produce moral landscapes and presuppose socially shared convictions or moral assumptions about what should be, which in turn shape or produce the landscape.<sup>52</sup>

In my estimation, a turn to “a normative state of social relations” has become more crucial over the years, both in real-world contexts and within the field of moral landscapes. If we see this field within the broader field of “moral geography”, the latter often focused in its early stages on empirically documenting opposing normativities located in space.<sup>53</sup> Over the years, moral geography has more explicitly acknowledged the dynamics of the relational, involving bodily negotiations within these normativities. This suggests that moral geography is far more nuanced than judging whether behaviours are “right” or “wrong”, and that negotiations are situated in dynamic social relations within diverse physical spaces. What these nuances tell us is that the significance of the social aspects of moral geographies require more attention; there is a need to understand and acknowledge the normative state and order of social relations. This calls for critical light to be cast over ideas around “right and wrong”. In research, we need to give more attention to how moralities transform in social contexts, hence operating on a relative scale of appropriateness. What is appropriate behaviour is not only spatially specific, but also specific to the social. This impacts what is appropriate behaviour, for whom, and how one comes to be judged. Crucially, this also impacts and (re)produces the moral order, in that different people are unequally positioned to claim what is appropriate or not.<sup>54</sup> However positioned, the crux is that people will attempt to normalize and naturalize the order. By implication, morality is always restrictive, unfair and exclusive, at least for some. There is not one morally “right” behaviour in any given context, but a multilinear process where relational status, unequal powers and

<sup>50</sup> Setten 2020, p. 193.

<sup>51</sup> Henderson 2003, p. 336.

<sup>52</sup> Setten 2004; 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Smith 2000; Setten 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Setten 2020.

expectations are constantly being socially negotiated and hence regulated.<sup>55</sup> Mitchell has pointed out that:

[...] in this view, “justice” is internally related to a normative order, not something that stands outside and defines it. There is, thus, a certain relativity in moral—or justice—claims, while they are also at the same time grounded within specific ways of knowing and historically developed practices.<sup>56</sup>

I now move on to offer some brief examples to illustrate this.

#### LANDSCAPE AND THE MAKING OF COMPETING MORALITIES

I have aimed to develop further the notion of moral landscapes, yet, over the years and maybe more appropriately, develop also the somewhat broader field of moral geography. In ‘Moral landscapes’,<sup>57</sup> I have summarized works that can be identified as versions of “moral landscapes” as a research field and as ways of doing human geography. I place my own work under the heading *moral practice and landscape* because there is much to suggest that “people express their relationship to their physical surroundings through their embodied practice”<sup>58</sup>; landscapes are “done” as well as “doing” something in themselves. Moral judgements, practices and landscapes are hence in a reciprocal relationship where ideas of appropriate and inappropriate practices are moulded into the physical landscape. Landscapes (or the physical environment) and human practices are thus in a tensile and morally charged relationship.

Out of my early grappling emerged a notion of “moral landscapes” where I wanted to convey how people, practices and landscapes are coproduced.<sup>59</sup> As pointed out in the previous section, a trait of much moral landscape (and moral geography) research at the time was to judge conduct against the landscape, rather than seeing practices and landscapes as coproduced in both time and space.<sup>60</sup> I placed weight on how the physical environment worked as an ordering device for farmers and their practices on the south-western coast of Norway. I saw the production and meaning of a lived landscape translating into a moral landscape which offered the farmers justification of choices made as well as views on alternative agricultural practices.

<sup>55</sup> Anderson *et al.* 2023.

<sup>56</sup> Mitchell 2023, p. 11.

<sup>57</sup> Setten 2020.

<sup>58</sup> Setten 2020, p. 195.

<sup>59</sup> Setten 2004.

<sup>60</sup> E.g. Matless 1998.

In later work, together with Frode Flemsæter and Katrina M. Brown, I have examined articulations of the mobile and moralized outdoor citizen produced through the discursive practices of “state actors who play an important part in stabilizing, reinforcing or challenging various normativities of the right to move in particular [outdoor] spaces”<sup>61</sup> In this work, we understood this citizen as coproduced with landscapes rather than merely judged against them. Landscapes are thus a necessary context for practices, whatever these practices are. By drawing on insights from mobilities and citizenship literatures, we were able to convey how “moral landscapes of the outdoors may work to unsettle and reinforce social differences and existing power relations, and thereby influence the legitimacy and inclusion of different mobile citizen subjects”<sup>62</sup> This work, then, clearly speaks to how morality is restrictive—for some—while at the same time providing space for others to regulate, dominate and alienate.

In current work, Sarah Anderson, Hilde Nymoen Rørtveit and I are bringing moral (landscapes and) geography into conversation with another dimension of the Norwegian outdoors: how outdoor activity organizers regulate refugees’ behaviour so as to fit into established normativities in a space already ideological and contested.<sup>63</sup> Here, we again demonstrate how restrictions for some, the refugees, allows space for others, the activity organizers, to “order and border”. Being outdoors is hence not neutral. In this work we draw on debates around social inclusion, how “regulation” is employed as a mechanism to normalize certain values and behaviours, and the role of ideological landscapes and outdoor practices in this normalizing process. No doubt this work also speaks to how the outdoors—or the landscape—signifies a particular normative state of social relations. Yet, and crucially, those prone to regulation, are also actively responding to and resisting the normalizing efforts.<sup>64</sup> Hence, the moral order is also challenged and has the potential to change. To this I turn in the final section.

#### LANDSCAPE AND THE CHANGING OF THE MORAL ORDER: WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

First: “If naming places is a means of claiming land, then naming concepts is a means of claiming discourse.”<sup>65</sup> Michael Jones makes this statement in his summary article

<sup>61</sup> Flemsæter *et al.* 2015, p. 342.

<sup>62</sup> Flemsæter *et al.* 2015, p. 344.

<sup>63</sup> Anderson *et al.* 2023. This, together with Anderson & Setten 2023, forms part of Anderson’s Ph.D. project currently being completed.

<sup>64</sup> Anderson & Setten 2023.

<sup>65</sup> Jones 2006, p. 7.

of the work of the Landscape, Law and Justice group. There is no doubt that the concepts, categories and languages we use are fundamental for the work we do and for how we understand and interpret the people and the world around us. There is nothing innocent or neutral about the fact that terminology does powerful work. Hence there is epistemic (in)justice too. The things one can do with terminology and concepts—name experiences, claim truths, aim to persuade, create realities and draw borders—continue to deserve critical attention. Landscape, as one such concept and term, is no exception.

Earlier in this chapter, I pointed to how certain “traditions” within landscape research have over time become harder to identify or defend (if necessary).<sup>66</sup> I maintain, however, that landscape serves as a more radical and materially grounded approach among Scandinavian and American scholars than among many British scholars. As argued above, this is key for saying something substantive about the problems of the real world.

So, what are the problems, then, that we should normatively concern ourselves with? I have on other occasions, and together with colleagues, emphasized a need to be much more alert to how movement, process and flow are key for steering landscape in more “just” directions.<sup>67</sup> For landscape (research), a field that has a very long history of being concerned with dwelling and settledness, this takes some radical thinking. Many, including myself, have thus argued for redirecting landscape towards relational thinking.<sup>68</sup> As if landscape has ever been anything but relational! However, the point we are making is that there is a need to be sensitive to how landscapes are produced through entanglements of people and places, across scales. A premise for such an argument is, crudely said, that “everything is somehow related to everything”. In theory, I suppose it can be, if we look carefully enough. But, substantively, is it, really? Relations, entanglements and the moral order are also actively resisted. In *What Comes After Entanglement?* Eva Haifa Giraud importantly alerts us to what she terms “the paradox of relationality”, meaning “that it struggles to accommodate things that are resistant to being in relation, including forms of politics that actively oppose particular relations”.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> See Germundsson *et al.* 2022 for a further discussion.

<sup>67</sup> E.g. Setten *et al.* 2018.

<sup>68</sup> E.g. Wylie 2007; Setten *et al.* 2018; Germundsson *et al.* 2022.

<sup>69</sup> Giraud 2019, p. 7.

## CONCLUSION

For (moral) landscape, it is the *active politics* that should concern us. Furthermore, if landscape is (also) a political task, then the active politics is what equals the normative state of social relations. Finally, to say something about such active politics, I briefly return to the above-mentioned research on the Norwegian outdoors as an arena for the social inclusion of refugees. *Friluftsliv*, or outdoor recreation, has become pivotal to government-funded programmes to teach migrants Norwegian language and cultural values in order to increase place attachment and acculturation, and to prepare for entry into the workforce and educational system. There is much to suggest that migrants are expected to take possession of and perform particular norms, values and customs, already carried by the majority population and projected onto the material landscape.<sup>70</sup> Through regulating the immigrants' sociability, their behaviour is sought to be normalized so as to fit in. However, and crucially, many migrants also take possession of the outdoors, regulating their own sociability through disrupting the set-up and disturbing the order of interactions and activities. This is an active politics where relations are (con)tested, suppressed and re-made, and where the landscape is mobilized ideologically as well as materially. To move on from here, and to potentially change the moral order, it is thus not sufficient to merely account for (dis)connections between, for example, refugees and a majority population. Identifying *which* (dis)connections and *which* moral order seems to become ever more important. This takes us back to the right to claim landscapes, and, importantly, the analysis of which landscapes are claimable for whom and why, hence the making of competing moralities. I have contended that all landscapes are moral landscapes; hence I also contend that we need to analyse the practices and power of subtle norms and moralities in order to advance our understanding of how the landscape works, for whom, and why order is (re)produced.

---

<sup>70</sup> Anderson & Setten 2023; Anderson *et al.* 2023.

## REFERENCES

Anderson, Sarah & Gunhild Setten 2023. “It was only when I came here that I learned about walking”: Creating meaningful contact in the Norwegian outdoors’, *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 13, pp. 1–16.

Anderson, Sarah, Hilde Nymoen Rørtveit & Gunhild Setten 2023. “That’s not how you do it”: Moralising the migrant in the Norwegian outdoors’, *Geoforum* 147, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103903>.

Barnett, Clive 2011. ‘Geography and ethics: Justice unbound’, *Progress in Human Geography* 35:2, pp. 246–255.

Cosgrove, Denis 1984. *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Council of Europe 2000. *European Landscape Convention*, Florence: Council of Europe.

Flemsæter, Frode, Gunhild Setten & Katrina M. Brown 2015. ‘Morality, mobility and citizenship: Legitimizing mobile subjectivities in a contested outdoors’, *Geoforum* 64, pp. 342–350.

Germundsson, Tomas, Erik Jönsson & Gunhild Setten 2022. ‘In search of Nordic landscape geography: Tensions, combinations and relations’, in Peter Jakobsen, Erik Jönsson & Henrik Gutzon Larsen eds, *Socio-Spatial Theory in Nordic Geography: Intellectual Histories and Critical Interventions*, Cham: Springer, pp. 105–125, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04234-8>.

Giraud, Eva Haifa 2019. *What Comes After Entanglement? Activism, Anthropocentrism and an Ethics of Exclusion*, Durham, North Carolina & London: Duke University Press.

Harvey, David C. 2015. ‘Landscape and heritage: Trajectories and consequences’, *Landscape Research* 40:8, pp. 911–924.

Head, Lesley 2007. Book review: Peil, Tiina & Jones, Michael (eds.) 2005. *Landscape, Law and Justice: Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Oslo 15–19 June 2003*, Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Serie B: Skrifter, Vol. CXVIII, Oslo: Novus Forlag, *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift–Norwegian Journal of Geography* 61:4, p. 216.

Henderson, George 2003. ‘What (else) we talk about when we talk about landscape: For a return to the social imagination’, in Chris Wilson & Paul Groth eds, *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 178–198, 335–340.

Howard, Peter, Ian Thompson, Emma Waterton & Mick Atha eds 2018 [2013]. *Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, 2nd edn, Abingdon & London: Routledge.

Jones, Michael 2003. 'The concept of cultural landscape: Discourse and narratives', in Hannes Palang & Gary Fry eds, *Landscape Interfaces: Cultural Heritage in Changing Landscapes*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 21–51.

Jones, Michael 2006. 'Landscape, law and justice—concepts and issues', in Michael Jones ed., 'Special Issue: Essays on Landscape, Law and Justice', *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift–Norwegian Journal of Geography* 60:1, pp. 1–14.

Jones, Michael 2007. 'The European Landscape Convention and the question of public participation', *Landscape Research* 32:5, pp. 613–633.

Jones, Michael & Marie Stenseke eds 2011. *The European Landscape Convention: Challenges of Participation*, Dordrecht: Springer.

Lowe, Phillip, Judy Clark, Susanne Seymour & Neil Ward 1997. *Moralizing the Environment: Countryside Change, Farming and Pollution*, London: UCL Press.

Matless, David 1997. 'Moral geographies of English landscape', *Landscape Research* 22:2, pp. 141–155.

Matless, David 1998. *Landscape and Englishness*, London: Reaktion Books.

Mels, Tom & Don Mitchell 2013. 'Landscape and justice', in Nuala C. Johnson, Richard H. Schein & Jamie Winders eds, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Cultural Geography*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 209–224.

Mitchell, Don 2003. 'Cultural landscapes: Just landscapes or landscapes of justice?', *Progress in Human Geography* 27:6, pp. 787–796.

Mitchell, Don 2008. 'New axioms for reading the landscape: Paying attention to political economy and social justice', in James L. Wescoat & Douglas M. Johnston eds, *Political Economies of Landscape Change*, Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 29–50.

Mitchell, Don 2023. 'Landscape justice', in Johanna Ohlsson & Stephen Przybylinski eds, *Theorising Justice: A Primer for Social Scientists*, Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 205–222.

Olwig, Kenneth Robert 1996. 'Recovering the substantive nature of landscape', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 86:4, pp. 630–653.

Olwig, Kenneth Robert 2002. *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Olwig, Kenneth Robert 2007. 'The practice of landscape "Conventions" and the just landscape: The case of the European Landscape Convention', *Landscape Research* 32:5, pp. 579–594.

Schein, Richard 2003. 'Normative dimensions of landscape', in Chris Wilson & Paul Groth eds, *Everyday America: Cultural Landscape Studies after J.B. Jackson*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 199–218, 340–343.

Setten, Gunhild 2004. 'The habitus, the rule and the moral landscape', *Cultural Geographies* 11:4, pp. 389–415.

Setten, Gunhild 2005. 'Who owns the concepts? Notes on the product, practice, property and power of writing', in Tiina Peil & Michael Jones eds, *Landscape, Law and Justice: Proceedings of a Conference Organized by the Centre for Advanced Study at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters, Oslo 15–19 June 2003*, Instituttet for sammenlignende kulturforskning, Serie B: Skrifter 118, Oslo: Novus forlag, pp. 3–13.

Setten, Gunhild 2006. 'Fusion or exclusion? Reflections on conceptual practices of landscape and place in human geography', in Michael Jones ed., 'Special Issue: Essays on Landscape, Law and Justice', *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift–Norwegian Journal of Geography* 60:1, pp. 32–45.

Setten, Gunhild 2008. 'Encyclopaedic vision: Speculating on *The Dictionary of Human Geography*', *Geoforum* 39, pp. 1097–1104.

Setten, Gunhild 2020. 'Moral landscapes', in Audrey Kobayashi ed., *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2nd edn, Amsterdam: Elsevier, pp. 193–198.

Setten, Gunhild, Katrina M. Brown & Hilde Nymoen Rørtveit 2018. 'Landscape and social justice', in Peter Howard, Ian Thompson, Emma Waterton & Mick Atha eds, *Routledge Companion to Landscape Studies*, 2nd edn, Abingdon & New York: Routledge, pp. 418–428.

Smith, David Marshall 2000. *Moral Geographies: Ethics in a World of Difference*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Widgren, Mats 2015. 'Linking Nordic landscape geography and political ecology', *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift–Norwegian Journal of Geography* 69:4, pp. 197–206.

Wylie, John 2007. *Landscape*, Abingdon: Routledge.