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Landscape; a Shifting Concept The Evolution of the Concept of Landscape from Renaissance*

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Abstract

'Landscape' is a contemporary term in the field of urban and environmental studies. A concept which came from Europe to Iran and now is frequently used in various fields in the country. The concept of landscape, as a new kind of reality in the world, emerged in the Renaissance era in Europe, and according to the changes in the western worldviews in these centuries, has gained various aspects and meanings. The multifaceted concept of landscape which is even hard to describe in the philosophic view, had been coined in the field of art, passed through the world of philosophy, and affected by the recent achievements in the field of the relation between human and environment, is wildly considered in the planning and designing the human environs. Still, its multifaceted meaning frequently ignored by the specialist around the world as well as Iran. By considering the evolution of the concept of 'landscape' in Europe in a historic recall, this paper attempts to reveal the fundamental aspects of this concept, its current meaning, and anticipate its future shifts and its field of influence.

By adopting a descriptive method and comparative analysis, the concept of landscape from the Renaissance until now is examining and classified through the historical and existing definitions. At the end, based on this historical review, with the futurological approach, the paper looks into the possible future for this ambiguous. The results of the classification of the definitions of 'landscape' from the Renaissance until now shows that although the emergence of 'landscape' coined based on the classic dualism between subject and object and the distinction between the world of physics and the world of phenomena as an individualistic regard to the nature, but with by the failure of this dualism and accepting the uncertainty in the world, it evaluated as a subjective-objective phenomenon. In the 21st century, this concept as a new field of science has gained the considerable attention and considered as a savior discipline for our crisis period of mono-dimensionality in the human and its environs relation.

Keywords

Landscape, Theory of Landscape, Philosophy of Landscape, History of Landscape, Phenomenology.

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Introduction

'Landscape' is a recent concept in the world and in Iran. We hear more and more these days about this term but still rarely comprehend its multifaceted meaning which is so difficult and in the same time so important for our dualist mind. Today in Iran, what we know about 'landscape' in the professional field of planning and designing is mostly translated from English or French references in the last two decades. Disregarding the deep distinctive analysis of this newcomer word provides the context for shallowness and ignorance of the various facets of this concept in the professional fields.

The landscape is a complicated and multifaceted concept which is considered and defined by different approaches. By considering the evolution of this concept during the centuries, this article tries to identify the fundamental attributes of 'landscape'. To achieve this goal, the paper chronicles the historical milestones in the transformation of the notion of 'landscape' from the past six centuries in the European literature.

The paper tries to answer these main questions: how the notion of landscape emerged in the west, and which contexts prepared its transformation during centuries? And more precisely, what is the possible future for this notion in the western world?

The Research Method

From the late 20th century, the academic efforts in studying the notion of 'landscape' and the history of its evolution were formed, especially in France. With the establishment of the research laboratory of 'Jardins, Paysages, Territoires' in Paris from 1992 besides other academic focuses in this field, the distinctive studies were conducted in the field of the concept of landscape and its various aspects, led to evaluation of this concept and invention of new words and notion in this field. Scholars in various languages consider the notion of Landscape and its historic challenges e.g. Bernard Lassus, Agustin Berque, Alain Roger, Micheal Conan, Pierre Donnadiu and more recent Richard Besse

and Micheal Collot in French and John Dixon Hunt, Tom Turner, Denis Cosgrove, Kenneth R. Olwig and Tim Ingold in English. In Persian, by establishing the master degree in landscape architecture from 2000 in the universities the distinctive study on the landscape was started by publishing scientific articles in the journal of Manzar (landscape) and the journal of Bagh-e-Nazar. Moreover, by accepting candidates in the Ph.D. degree of landscape architecture in the University of Tehran the academic researches dedicated to the notion of 'landscape' and its historic presence in Iran, Iranian culture and literature. This article is derived from the second chapter of the authors' Ph.D. thesis which is conducted at the University of Tehran in 2015.

The Meaning of the Word 'Landscape' In the Western World

The word 'landscape' which coined in two different linguistic branches in the Dutch-German and French-Italian languages with the different conceptual way, formally and semantically is similar in all European languages (Table 1). The word 'landscape' in all European dictionaries had occurred in three meaning: 1) A part of a land which presents nature to a viewer, 2) A picture that represents a certain area of land where nature has an important role. 3) A common concept of a region or territory (Le Robert & Oxford). In two first meanings, the role of the human in personalizing the object (nature) is the main characteristic of 'landscape': 'the first meaning conveys the concept of cutting out and selecting by the human being. The second one also brings the meaning of the cutting to the mind, from the specific district, but here a painting canvas limited the cutting frame' (Videau, 1997).

According to these definitions, the concept of 'landscape' consists of three major parts, which are integrated in a complex relation: one site (land), one view, one image. In the concept of 'landscape' as an objective-subjective phenomenon in which the landscape defines as a perceived space integrated

with the specific point of view (Collot, 2011: 23), these triple integration exists.

The dual relationship between landscape and land which is reflected in the form of the word (land+suffix) in all European languages, shows a kind of added value to the land in which comes from the view and the perception of the man added to the raw land in the word 'landscape'.

The Birth of 'Landscape' in Renaissance

Almost all the scholars in the field of landscape insist that the concept of 'landscape' and the word of 'landscape' coined in Europe in the 15th century, concurrent with the emergence of the modernity (Berque, 1995); (Berque, 2013); (Roger, 1995); (Collot, 2011).

The emergence of the concept of 'landscape' as an aesthetical view toward nature took place by the inception of the classic concept of Modern, the discovery the world of physics and the distinction between the world of physics and the world of phenomena (Ibid). The revolution in the Western Worldview and the distinction between the world of subject and the world of object and the world of the object which was the Descartes inventions was the first step in the birth of 'landscape' in Europe in the Renaissance era. Agustin Berque considered the development of the perspective in the art and the establishment of the principles of modern geometry

as the second step in the birth of 'landscape' which totally separated the representation from the symbolism and subjectivism (Berque, 1995:108).

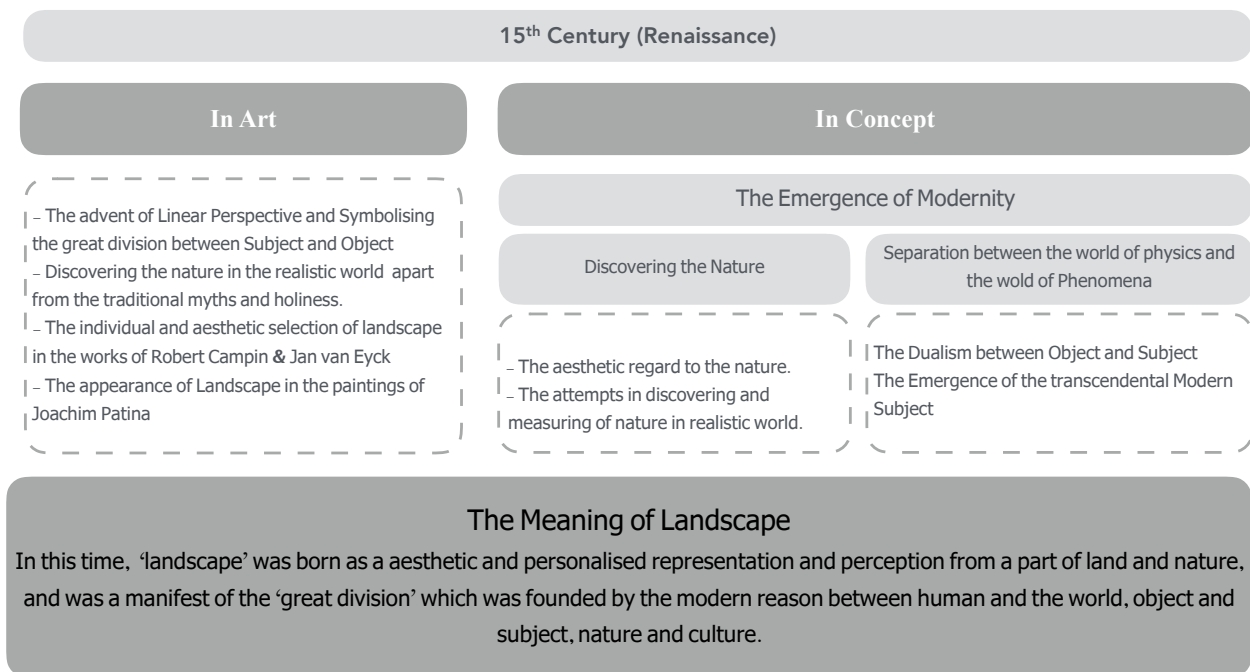
Furthermore, Berque (1995) cited the ascent of 'Antoine de Ville' as the first attempts at discovering of nature in the realistic world (Ibid; 108), and Alain Roger (1995) considered the emergence of window in the paintings of 'Jan Van Eyck' and 'Robert Campin' as the inception of 'landscape' in the world of art (Roger, 1995).

At the moment, the discovery and the special regard to nature which before this looked into based on traditional myths with holiness, mythology and some kind of fear, developed the concept of the landscape (Berque, 1995: 117-122). After Renaissance, the westerns have started to discover nature and gained the courage to look at nature, find it beautiful and enjoy it desperately. Later, the achievements of modern sciences are totally in harmony with modern arts and the painting is the context of the birth of 'landscape'. During Renaissance, with the establishment of the absolute modern subject and the subjective-objective dualism, 'landscape' was born as a aesthetical and personalized representation and perception from a part of land and nature, and was a manifest of the 'great division' which was founded by the modern reason between human and the world, object and subject, nature and culture (Table2).

Table 1. Two kinds of the emergence of the word 'landscape' in the European languages. Source: author, based on Videau, 1997& Franceschi, 1997.

Notion	Root	Country	Meaning	Field of existence	Date
Paysage Paesaggio Paesaje	New word Without Latin Root	France Italy Spain	Painting represents fields and rural areas	Represent by human	16 th century
			An aspect of land, a territory which cover widespread distance of observer view.	Perceive by human	17 th century
Landschaft Landskap Landschap landscape	With Latin Root	Germany Netherland Finland England	A Region, land, part of land, country or town	Real land	8 th century
			A represented landscape in a painting	Represent by human	16 th century
			A part of land which is directly observed by human	Perceive by human	17 th century

Table 2. The notion of Landscape in its time of birth in 15th Century. Source: authors, 2017.



Romanticism and the gradation of the concept of 'landscape'

The scientific revolution which was emerged by the separation between the world of object and the world of the subject, allowed the human to be the lord of nature. In the 18th century by destroying landscapes in the modern and industrial cities, the romantic approaches to nature and the other aspect of the landscape in the paintings emerged (Berque, 1995:109). At that time, the development of landscape in the romantic arts and literature opposed with dominant modernization cherished the sensibility and affectation for nature and considered subjective and sensibility as the foundation of modern art and landscape (Collot, 2011:61). This romantic approach represents landscape as a whole formal and sensual unity which includes entire territory. This approach especially considered in the process of discovering the topographical poetry and picturesque landscape (Collot, 2011:61). In the 18th century, discovering and looking to nature still represent the dualism between subject and object, a duality which reaches

its peak in the representation of landscape. At this time, discovering nature during the artist's journey to the various places, particularly to the Alps and discovering the beauties of nature, agricultural and rural areas, had been led to the imaginary and emotional representation of the countryside. Due to this contradiction between modern art and modern science, further to the demand for the sensual paintings, the painting goes beyond the regular standardization and rationalization of illustrated spaces, which had been under the possession of perspective and the subject viewpoint during the modern era. At this moment, 'landscape' represents looks toward the distant by using the wide perspective in the background of the nearer objects. This concept of landscape especially occurs in the English and German romantic paintings, transcendental and non-measurable nature in the works of Caspar David Friedrich, and wild and unbridled nature in the Joseph Mallord William Turners' paintings from the sea landscape (Dastur, 2011).

In this time, 'landscape' represents the subject's

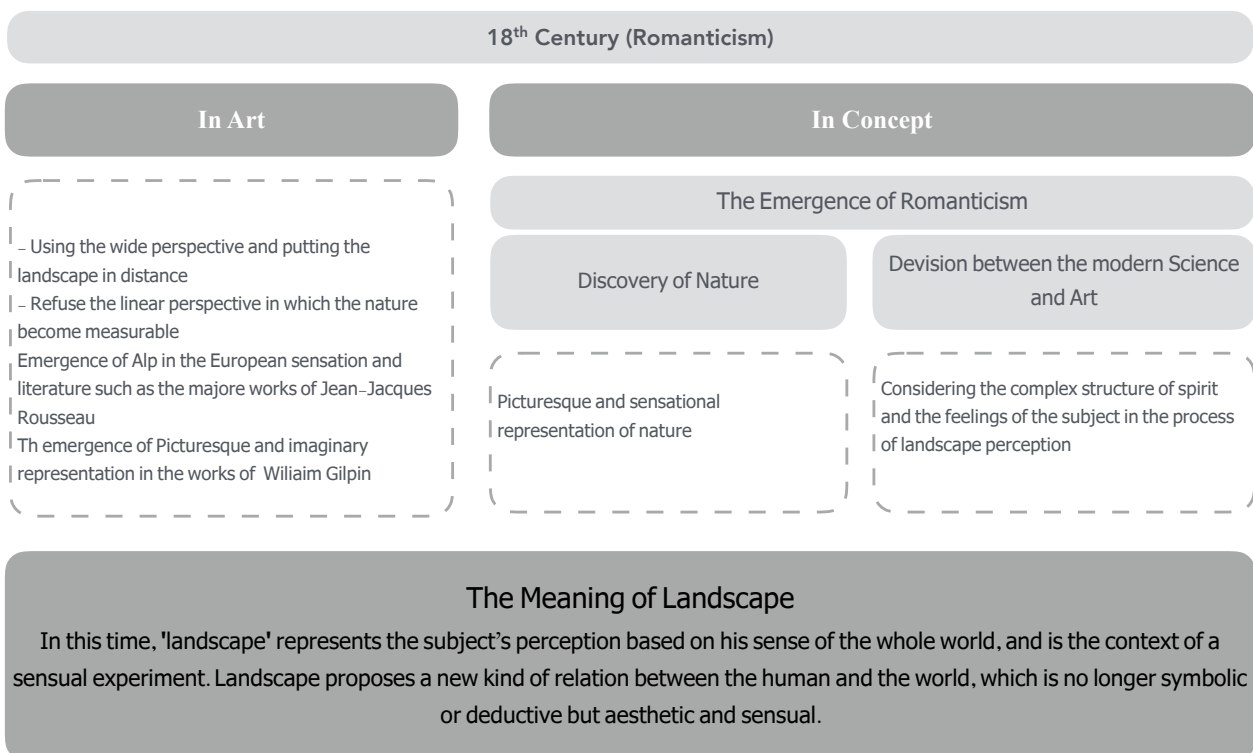
perception based on his sense of the whole world, and is the context of a sensual experiment. Landscape proposes a new kind of relation between the human and the world, which is no longer symbolic or deductive but aesthetic and sensual (Table 3).

Look back to the world and the evolution of the concept of ‘landscape’

The late 19th century was the time of transition in the philosophical systems based on which the classic separation between subject and object were proposed. In the time, the theory of relativity critiqued the principles of the modern physic, showed that how each specific perception related to the position of the perceiver, and how the absolute objectivity was nothing but a mere dream (Merleau-Ponty, 2004:46). In the early 20th century, as soon as Husserl proposed his critical ideas about the phenomenology, the relations between subject and object (perceiver

and the perceived) entered a new phase which had a revolutionary effect on the formation of the concept of Landscape. Husserl was looking for the way between two extreme rationalism and naturalism approaches, and by emphasizing on intentionality, he proved that the perception and its dependence on nature were not two separated entities (Dartigues, 1972:13). In contrast to the dualism for the early modern theorists like Descartes and Locke, Husserl distinguished between content and object of consciousness and showed that the content of the experimental perception consists of not only the immediate visual perception but also the wide context of the all of assumptions, memories, Assemblies and Predictions which enrich the perceptual experiment (Carman, 2012). These attempts in recognizing the relationship between the phenomenon and the absolute being, the subject, and its structure linked the phenomenology to the ‘landscape’ which was started with the question

Table 3. The notion of Landscape in time of Romanticism. Source: authors, 2017.



from the relation between subject and object. By entering to the field of environmental studies, the phenomenology developed the approaches in studying the relationship between human and the world and provided the evolution in the concept of 'landscape' (Besse, 2000).

At the time, 'landscape' considered as a concept in the field of philosophy for examining the new ideas about the world of perception. Simmel is the one who uses 'landscape' in the field of philosophy; in his leading article 'the philosophy of landscape' (1913) he considers the fundamental distinction between nature (as a whole unity) and landscape (as a perception of a detached part of nature). By considering the achievements of phenomenology, Simmel highlights the role of the personal perception in selection and formation of the landscape and shows that the conception of the landscape in totally relies on the cultural, religious and historical contexts based on which our interpretation of the world forms. He introduces landscape as a subjective process, which its perception is comparable to the creation of artwork (paintings) (Simmel, 1913).

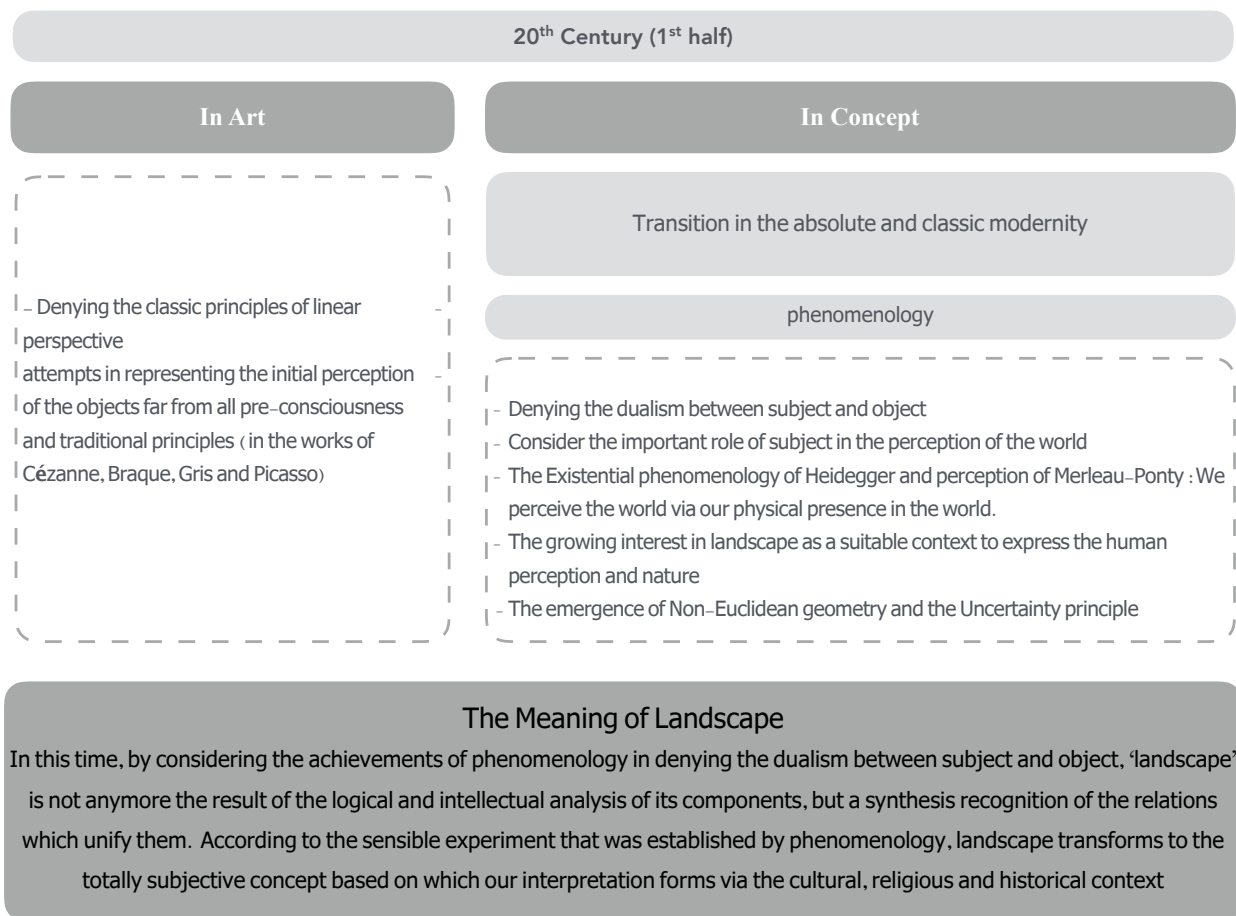
Based on phenomenology, Erwin Straus (1935), German-American phenomenologist, differs landscape from geography. Meantime, Merleau-Ponty proposes his idea of the phenomenology of perception in which he regularly adopts the concept of landscape and its perception. Merleau-Ponty shows that the perception is neither totally in the subject nor in the object, he emphasizes that our relationship with the world goes through our five senses and our perception is not only visual but mixed with our other sense (Dastur, 2011). Since the first half of the 20th century, by showing that the perception of the world never departs from the subject individuality and his cultural and historical contexts, landscape shows us the way of recognition. Husserl with introducing Epoché as suspending all judgments, and Merleau-Ponty with his proposition of initial experiment consider the detachment of the human preposition as a way of arriving to the world reality (Ibid).

In this time, by considering the achievements of phenomenology in denying the dualism between subject and object, 'landscape' is not anymore the result of the logical and intellectual analysis of its components, but a synthesis recognition of the relations which unify them. According to the sensible experiment that was established by phenomenology, landscape transforms to the totally subjective concept based on which our interpretation forms via the cultural, religious and historical context (Table 4).

New modernity and the development of the concept of 'landscape'

From the second half of the 20th century, with the recognition of phenomenology in the field of relationship between human and its environs as well as nature and ecology in the western world, new windows have been opened to the concept of landscape. Agustin Berque considers the regard of geography to the phenomenology as a motive to inter landscape to the science of geography and highlights the leading work of Eric Dardel 'human and land' in 1952, as a starting point based on which the geography opens its doors to the phenomenology: 'this molting is not finished yet and geography still stays far away from accepting the fact that the human environ is another kind of reality (beyond mere subjectivity or objectivity)' (Berque, 2000). Phenomenology develops the more flexible approaches in defining objects and selecting methods in studying the relationship between human and world and opens the way for the new field of study, from natural sciences and psychology to social sciences and geography, into the human- world relationship. By adapting psychology in the field of physiology and the human-world relationship, particularly the achievements of James Jerome Gibson and his thesis of 'Ecological Approach to Visual Perception' and 'Affordance' in 1960s, in addition to the studies on the perceptual learning in infants and toddlers in the works of 'Eleanor Jack Gibson'

Table 4. The notion of Landscape in the first half of the 20th century. Source: authors, 2017.



and 'Ulric Neisse', the learning of the human perception was developed. These achievements proved that the perceptions are equally in the subject and object (Berque, 1995:25-27). In the late of 20th century, based on these accomplishments Agustin Berque introduces landscape as a human landscape which relates to the human view and not to the perceived object. He also indicates that this perception is not limited to the senses, but we perceive objects by deduction, by establishing the relations between visual data and the series of data related to our memories, and our historical, cultural and biological mentality (Berque, 1995:24-25). Since the last two decades, the academic approaches to 'landscape', especially in France, develops new

ideas in the literature of landscape. In France, Agustin Berque is one of the pioneers in introducing new concepts in this field, he proposes landscape as a series of relations between human and land, the relation which he calls *Écoumèn* and indicates that from this bilateral relationship between two aspects of our animal and mental body, between our soul and what has surrounded us, landscape is born. This relationship is not divided to the visual data in one part and mental data in another part, but subjectivity and objectivity integrate into a smart structure which is simultaneously ecologic and symbolic: They are Eco-Symbolic (Berque, 2013:67); (Berque, 2000). Furthermore, Alain Rogers, another French scholar, by introducing the theory of 'Artlisation' indicates

that landscape is an artistic production, and the only way to percept and represent this phenomenon passes through ‘Art’ (Roger, 1995:448).

In this time, landscape emerges as a symbol of the new reality which is neither totally objective nor totally subjective, but a new kind which is resulted from the interaction between objectivity and subjectivity. This trajectory relation which its definition is impossible except by the language of art passes through the world of phenomenology and finds its way to the median between human, society, history, and ecoumen (Table5).

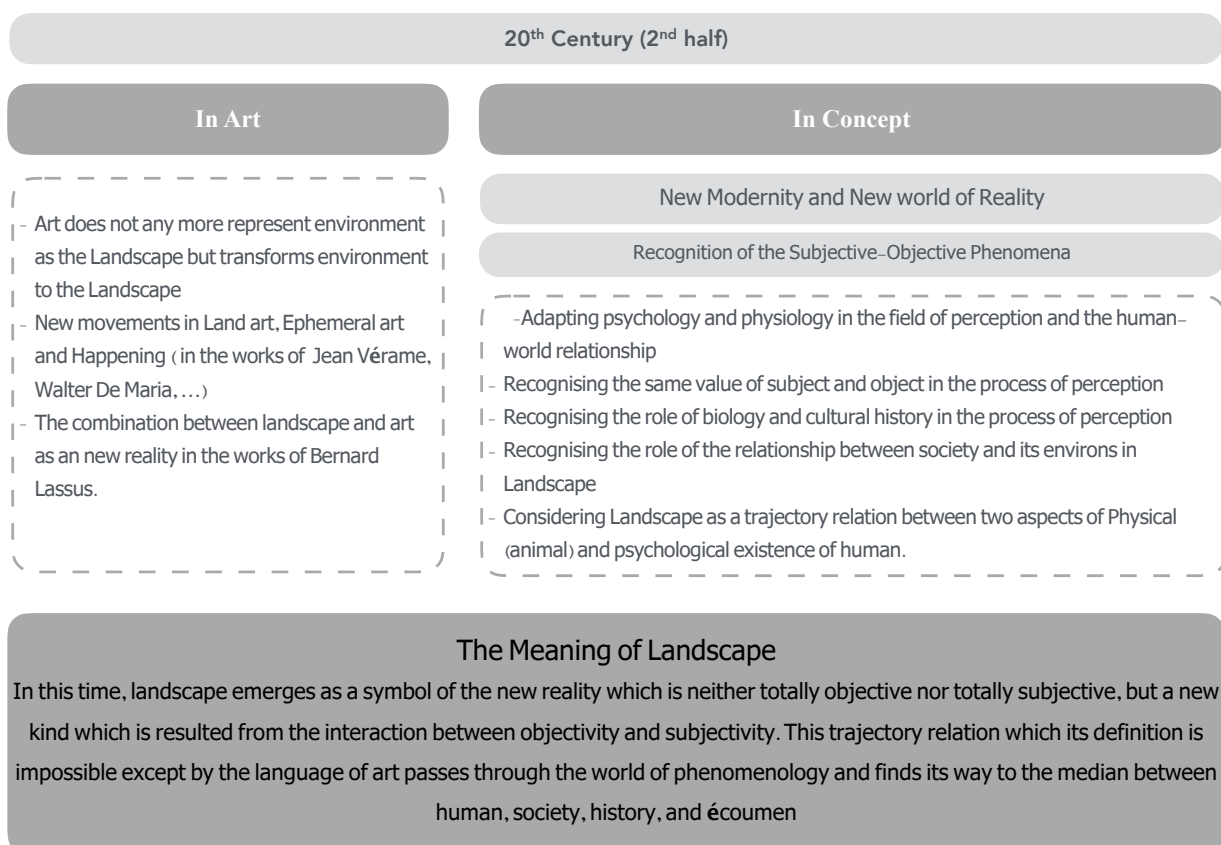
The period of stabilization: landscape as a discipline for future

Early 21st century, by recognizing the multidimensional relationship between subject and object, the

complexity of relationships between human and environment and the unearthing of the inefficiency of the objectivist modern approaches in perceiving the new relationship between human and its environs, looking for the new approaches in organizing human environments become into the focus. At this point, landscape, as a mediator which makes the concept of ecoumen is one the main keys develops the global solutions for the mono-dimensionality in the field of environmental planning (Roger, 1995); (Berque,1995:165-171); (Berque, 2000).

However, the other related disciplines in the field of environmental planning including architecture and urbanism are not able to solve this problem: “the first one has extremely tended to the objective and physical approach and the other has been totally conquered by ecologic and technical components’

Table 5. The notion of Landscape in the second half of the 20th century. Source: Authors, 2017.

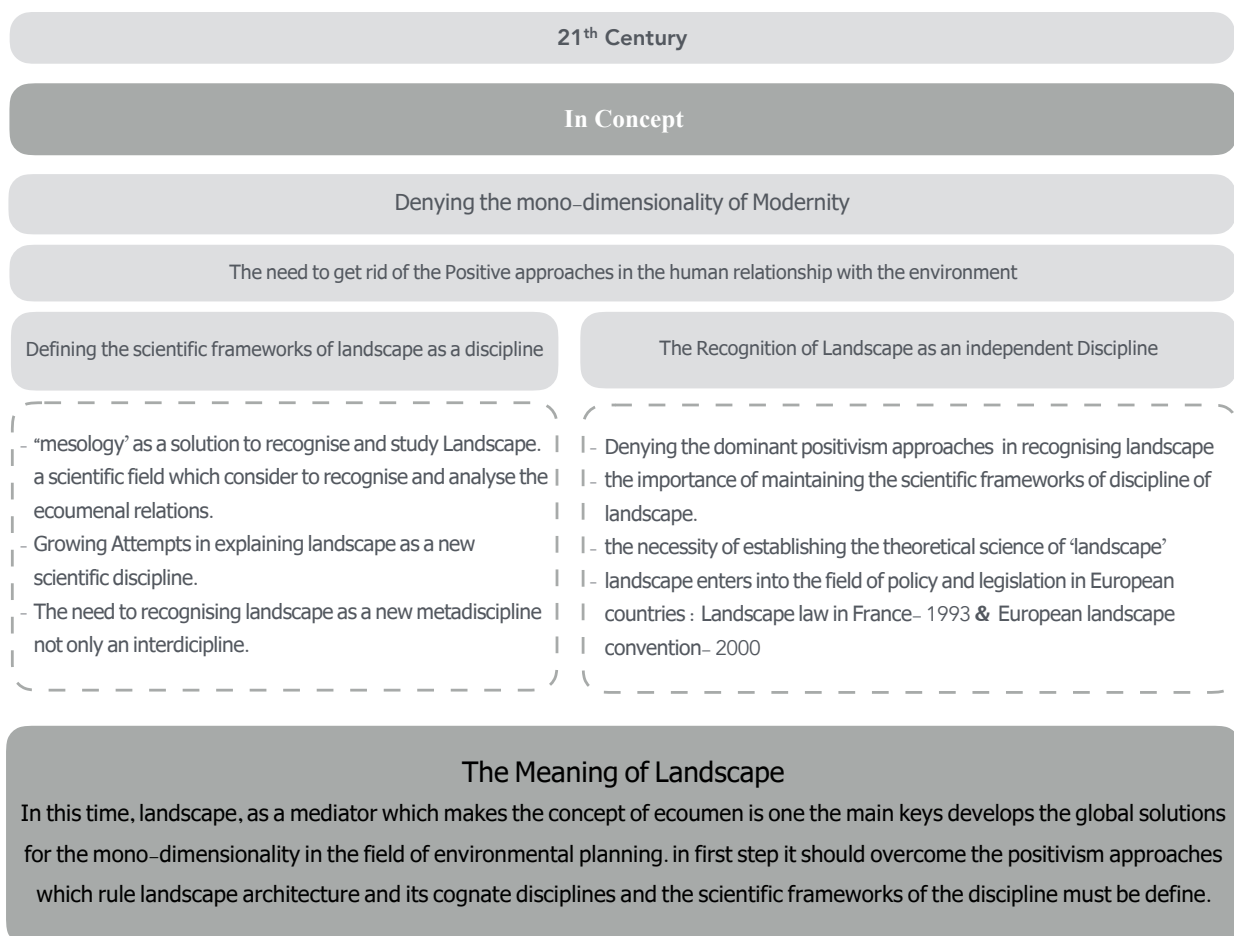


(Lassus, 2013). In two last decades, scientific studies in this field have focused on defining the scientific framework for 'landscape'. To overcome the objective analysis and unconscious separation between object and subject, Berque proposes a new term of "mesology" as a solution to define the trajectory between the subject and the object. On the other hand, Bernard Lassus indicates that the mere solution to prevail the crisis in the field of landscape planning and management is to recognize landscape as a new interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary science for environmental management: 'landscape, due to its approach which is less linear and more diagonal (multi-dimensional), must be the eligible discipline... to achieve such concept of landscape and to studying that, the science of landscape must

be established (Ibid), which has not happened yet. Other scholars, such as Catherine Chomarat-Ruiz, emphasize the necessity of establishing the theoretical science of 'landscape': 'only the theoretical science can provide the interests of 'landscape'. Inventing the landscape in the first step close to arts and in the second step to the applied science ... and in the third step, the theoretical sciences come along ... only a neutral label doesn't solve anything, but we need a cross-disciplinary science.

During the 21st century, with the conference of Uniscape (Paris, 2013) and introducing landscape as a discipline in this conference, the intentional attempts in establishing the discipline of landscape started the new phase (Mansouri, 2013). It seems that these attempts in defining the scientific frameworks

Table 6. The notion of Landscape in the 21th century. Source: authors, 2017.



for landscape, will shape the achievements in the field of landscape in current century (Table 6). Furthermore, considering the notion of landscape in relation with its cognate disciplines reveals the hidden aspects of this concept (Doherty, G. & Waldheim, 2016). Concurrent with development of the notion of landscape in the European scientific society, landscape enters into the field of policy and legislation in European countries e.g. Landscape law in France- 1993 (Donadieu, 2012:152-153) and the European landscape convention- 2000 which passed to promote the conservation, planning and organizing the European cooperation in the field of landscape (Jeant-Pons, 2006). During the 21st century, by the current developments in the technology and the scientific achievements in the field of knowledge and artificial intelligence, various aspects of human subjectivity and perception have been examined. For instance, the works of Daniel Clement Dennett in the field of philosophy of mind in which he argues the new aspects in the human perception mechanism based on new accomplishments in biology and informatics and disavowing the Cartesian dualism (Dennett, 2017). These new achievements will certainly affect and improve the concept of landscape as a human perception of the environment.

Discussion

The historical review on the evolution of the notion of landscape in Europe shows that since the 15th century, along with revolutionizing in the human worldview, this concept has been transformed. The notion of 'landscape' coined out simultaneously with the emergence of the modern dualism which separated the world of the object from the world of the subject. In this time 'landscape' was born as an individualistic and aesthetic conception of nature. Then, with the uprising in the concept of absolute Modern

Subject in the 20th century and recognizing phenomenology, the notion of 'landscape' was fundamentally transformed to the cognitive combination of relations that unifies the subject and object in a whole entity. Meanwhile, the new achievements in the psychological, perceptual and biological sciences had remarkable effects on the evolution of the notion of 'landscape'. By recognizing the role of subject and its individual, social, cultural and historical roots in the perception of the environment, along with the cognition of the subjective-objective phenomena as a new kind of reality, landscape improved to a mediator between inside and outside, subject and object, society and environment which is not anymore separable to the mere subject or object. The 'landscape' is one of the few concepts which successes in overcoming the traditional dualism between object and subject that was the mainstay of the objectivism and rigidity which ruled the sciences for centuries (Table7).

During the 21st century, according to the modern achievements in technology and artificial intelligence, also the accomplishments in biology in understanding the mechanism of perception in systems, the notion of 'landscape' improves. In this era based on recognizing landscape as a discipline, scientific attempts took place to compile the theoretical frameworks for this concept. Furthermore, the relationship between the concept of landscape and its cognate fields including urbanism, painting, gardening, architecture, etc. has also gained the attention and during this survey, the notion of the landscape itself has been decoded. Besides, in the field of environmental planning and management, with the establishment of various commitments, different fields of planning and management of human-environment will benefit from the concept of 'landscape'.

Conclusion

Along with the other scientific achievements in the field of perception, physics, psychology, and phenomenology, the concept of 'landscape' has been transformed during five centuries. We could recognize two main milestones in this transformation; first, the conception of the absolute subject of modern which was the result of the dualism between subject and object in the 15th century; second, the emergence of phenomenology which was derived from the objection of the separation between object and subject in the west and improved the concept of landscape in other way (Table. 8). The historical review on the evolution of the concept of 'landscape' during five centuries, reveals that the 21st century will bring the new structure for landscape as a scientific discipline. Besides, new achievements in the field of perception, biology, technology and artificial intelligence which has changed the previous scientific accomplishments, will be useful in designating the new concept of 'landscape' and opening the new window to this concept. By entering the concept of 'landscape' into the other fields of science and profession, the evolution of the concept will speed up. The attempts that already are started and will consolidate the position of 'landscape' among other sciences.

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