Urban and Landscape Perspectives

Volume 2

Aims and Scope

Urban and Landscape Perspectives is a series which aims at nurturing theoretic reflection on the city and the territory and working out and applying methods and techniques for improving our physical and social landscapes.

The main issue in the series is developed around the projectual dimension, with the objective of visualising both the city and the territory from a particular viewpoint, which singles out the territorial dimension as the city's space of communication and negotiation.

The series will face emerging problems that characterise the dynamics of city development, like the new, fresh relations between urban societies and physical space, the right to the city, urban equity, the project for the physical city as a means to reveal *civitas*, signs of new social cohesiveness, the sense of contemporary public space and the sustainability of urban development.

Concerned with advancing theories on the city, the series resolves to welcome articles that feature a pluralism of disciplinary contributions studying formal and informal practices on the project for the city and seeking conceptual and operative categories capable of understanding and facing the problems inherent in the profound transformations of contemporary urban landscapes.

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In memory of Giambattista Masia

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Urban Landscape Perspectives

Landscape Project, City Project

Giovanni Maciocco

1 Two Conceptual Worlds

Due to its numerous meanings, the term landscape cannot be reduced to a definition that lays claim to conceptual unity. But the title of this article comes to our aid in that it enables us to limit the field of possible definitions to the sphere of relations existing between the landscape project and the city project .

When we state the two terms *city* and *landscape* separately, we are implicitly acknowledging a detachment between two figures that tradition has considered inseparable, as if reality were inseparable from the representation of reality. But the city is difficult to represent, while the landscape becomes an "additional figure" that takes on the role of revealing the city in situations where it is possible to "see it".

But what is the landscape for modern people? What is meant by designing the landscape *today*?

These questions match up with two conceptual worlds: one is the "environmental image", the "cover" (Kaijima and Tsukamoto 2006) for the unavoidable dynamics of the metropolis, the other in some ways the "counter-space "[1] of the metropolis, the space available for the project, the space that still enables us to design the city.

The first one contains the classic concept of landscape that we have inherited from tradition, which underlies a *representational* conception of the landscape as "environmental image ", having impressed on it the acknowledgement of the separability of contemplation of the landscape from living in it, a notion of landscape-object constructed and made an institution by modernity, a type of landscape with which a relationship of equality is never established.

The second conception takes the landscape as an eminently *projectual* figure. It is a concept of landscape as a subject, which sets itself up as collective intelligence of the territory. A concept that implies a "willingness for the project", as a propensity to take on new meanings in the city territory, different from the conventional ones. Understood in this sense, the landscape is the place of retrieval of *ethos*, of

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everything that was not in the centre, not in the *polis*; the deep matrix of the primary elements of inhabiting, of the signs of nature and history that remain in the process of human settlement. It is a matter of drawing attention again to the landscape as the origin of the sense of man's home and of the reasons for the city, in the form of a search for the primary elements of its construction, of its *public sphere*.

This role can only be carried out by projectual intention that will reconstruct the link between city and landscape and this is why we combine the *landscape project* with the *city project*.

In this perspective, the landscape project may be imagined as a complex process towards understanding contemporary public space, a new concept of public space as a space for reflection, far from the habitual circuits, to escape from the hegemony of the communication flows that produce standardisation of spatial experiences, a modality of public space in which we can move without feeling manipulated (Abalos 2004).

The landscape project is the project for contemporary public space. In this sense, the landscape project is the project for the city.

2 Detachment Between City and Landscape as Detachment from Reality of Place

Since we have begun by implicitly acknowledging the detachment between city and landscape, we may try to sound out some interpretations, departing indeed from an initial study of the meaning of the concept of *detachment* in the spatial sphere of our organised life.

A basic worry of architects and town planners is, for example, the danger of detachment that may be hidden in the mutation or metamorphosis of the city from being an organic, corporeal one to being virtual. In this sense, *detachment* from corporality produces – as Silvano Tagliagambe (Tagliagambe 2000) writes – forms of mental nomadism, an outcome of the tension between anxiety over inclusion in an absolute space and the aspiration of surpassing all boundaries. In this detachment from corporality, from a life we have considered to be characterised by *proximity*, is measured our capacity to reconstruct urban ethics also in a condition of distance from place. This condition arises just as spatial forms of the urban change and different ways of considering the space of settlement open up, a mutation characterised by the dilation – above all mental – of the urban onto the territory; thus, what Massimo Cacciari (1990) defines as the contemporary contradiction between the need to maintain a relationship with places, and the demand for mobility which is indifferent to them emerges.

But the destiny of "practical reason" in our society also targets more radical horizons, which have as a common premise the assumption that our organised life is more and more affected by relations independent of physical distance. Though sharing these premises, the positions of Antony Giddens and Zigmunt Bauman (Giddens 1990; Bauman 1993) are at the two extremes of a range of positions varying from the "radical modernity" of the first to the "post-modern ethics of

distance and temporality" affirmed by Bauman. The importance of both of these interpretations on the destiny of moral reason in our society is recognised; they have common premises but significantly different solutions. Arnaldo Bagnasco (1999) notes that the two sociologists have in common the idea that to understand the present society it is crucial to consider the intensification of the process Giddens calls *disembedding*: social relations are released more and more from close contexts and engaged in at a distance, our actions therefore being increasingly conditioned by factors for us uncontrollable and unknown, just as, in their turn, they have unpredictable consequences in the long term. Risks have reached dramatic levels and in this situation Giddens recognises the limits of rationality. He nevertheless has faith in the reflexive nature inherent in modernity, which permits risks to be assessed and can think of colonising an open, uncertain future. Re-appropriation practices may be set against *disembedding* tendencies and within certain limits bring the conditions and outcomes of the actors' behaviour back under their control.

Bauman's position is more radical and explicitly touches on the moral dimension, thus taking shape as an "ethical" solution, departing from the idea that traditional moral thought also finds itself in difficulty due to the time and space distancing of social processes and their outcomes, because it deals with proximity morals. Moral thought thus ends up being dramatically disarmed in the face of today's moral problems. So the need prevails for "spatial and temporal distance moral studies" that will take on consequences that are difficult or even impossible to foresee; from this originate both a fear heuristic and a self-limiting ethic, for "it only needs one man to be irrational for the others to be so, and for the universe to be so" (Borges 1974). The history of the universe abounds with confirmation of this fear.

The premises for organising relations not physically constituted open up questions on the destiny of the urban condition, a condition examined with effective critical crudeness by Ricardo Dominguez (Dominguez 2000), who, taking the concept of "machine" to extremes and imagining a *post-mass media* science fiction scenario, dreams of *non-digital* macro-networks of civil disobedience against the "new order" ratified by globalisation which acts, in its turn, against the "disobedience of reality".

3 Detachment of the Images from Reality: The Figure of a Loss

Entrusting its image to the virtual, and with the image its cultural worlds, notional worlds, perceptive worlds, the true city becomes a refused world, whereas the virtual is an escape, an easy vision, almost marginal, of reality for men who seek original, genial machines because they no longer believe in their originality and therefore want to be rid of their own reflection and knowledge.

It is – according to Baudrillard – the theorem of the incomprehensibility of the world, where it seems that the task of human thought is that of making it more incomprehensible and enigmatic, and since the true world is incomprehensible, there is the temptation to produce a world that proceeds on its own (Baudrillard 1999).

This temptation has to do with the contemporary incapacity to "see" the city, to represent it. It is like – Italo Calvino is aware of this in *Lezioni americane*

(Calvino 1988) – an epidemic of the plague that has hit humanity in the faculty that is its greatest feature, i.e. the use of the word, a plague of language manifest as a loss of cognitive strength and immediacy, as an automatism that tends to level out expression in the most generic, anonymous, abstract formulas, to dilute meanings, wear down expressive points, quell each spark that spurts from the clash of words with new circumstances, etc., a plague described with mastery, for example, in Peter Greenway's films which, with all their studied excesses, their cruelty flaunted from a literary point of view, are more vulgar, more popular, more coarsely extreme in their description of the world. And the world described really does seem to have lost all its charm, including that of lightness of spirit, dominated as it is, exclusively, by the aggressive vulgarity of power.

At this point it is technology that marches alone, it is technology's automatic writing that marches without a subject. This is what happens in the virtual: there is no longer a subject, it is calculation that works alone, a number, logical-mathematic synthesis, the self-production of a system rotating on itself in a tautological way (Calvino 1988).

It is in a certain sense the Dorian Gray syndrome the other way round: men grant the virtual the image they consider the best,[2] splitting the time dimension, entrusting the real world with past time and the virtual with real time, the time we are in, in all parts of the globe and all corners of time (Baudrillard 1999). In this sense we entrust becoming to the real world and change to the virtual.

This changing without becoming is the virtual world. It is the possibility to adopt all forms that is specific to a certain task on the computer and that constitutes a sort of morphism. And the morphism in this continuous formal change is exactly the opposite of the concept of metamorphosis (Baudrillard 1999).

Referring again to the inverted Dorian Gray metaphor, metamorphosis is entrusted to the real world, morphism to the virtual, changing without becoming, without growing old. The world proceeds on its own, the virtual images observing us become autonomous, they acquire autonomous power and take us hostage to the point that we ourselves become an image, without identity, if this ever existed; since the world of images is autonomous, it proceeds on its own, it is self-referential. Each thing seems possible, even that people go shopping in the landscape.

The "unity of the world" has finally ended: man is at a distance from the landscape, and this distance has the dilated dimensions of a loss.

This development in our shopping society with its manifold requests results in our post-modern landscapes of a complete mosaic of different types of landscape (Vos and Meekes 1999).

These types show different intensities and styles of controlling man – from above to below – the products of which are all desired by society. In this sense, to industrial production landscapes, the *landscape as industry* corresponds as desired product, where each form of "nature" or scenario is an involuntary product of agriculture; to the multi-functional landscapes subjected to pressure beyond all limits in areas with a growing urban population is associated the *landscape as supermarket*, where the market has very recently asked our landscapes for a wide spectrum of functions *à la carte*: food production, industrial use, recreation, residence, water

extraction, nature conservation, etc., just as the *landscape as historic museum* is made to correspond to traditional archaic landscapes; to landscapes that are disappearing, being marginalised, is associated the *landscape as ruin*, where the spontaneous development of nature takes over and within some twenty years nature dominates landscapes that had been used for centuries, while natural landscapes, wrecks, correspond to the product *landscape as desert* (Vos and Meekes 1999).

The representations, the images, our society creates for itself of landscapes as "desired products" cannot, however, be separated from reality because if we lose their identity in images, we also lose it in reality and, in this sense, we cannot entrust our life to images because we will lose it in reality.

In this *detachment* between reality and representation, the contemporary incapacity to "represent" the city, to "see it", is recognised. It is the discomfort described in *Lisbon Story*,[3] in Friedrich, the film director's monologue which expresses the anguish of those who no longer manage to "see" the city, the distress of men to whom the city no longer shows itself.

The city withdraws, it does not let its soul be filmed because in the city the way men look has turned into the glance of cultural consumption, the glance that kills the city, in that it cancels out the existence of men, their life of reciprocal relations, of *civitas*, since it is directed solely at the spaces indicated and arranged by the media, where, as Pessoa writes, "I don't think anyone really acknowledges the true existence of another person . . . others are nothing but a landscape for us and, almost always, the invisible landscape of a known street" (Pessoa 1982).

What is projected in images that deviate to the point of losing what they are referring to, of being incapable of "seeing" it, is nothing less, probably, than the loss of the reference as such, a loss affecting language, the same loss that affects the inhabitant when he tries to think of the city. But maybe the inconsistency is not in the images or the language only: it is in the world, for an indissoluble bond associates language impoverishment and the images with which we try to understand the world and picture it for ourselves, expressing its nature, and world impoverishment. So from this point of view, the world ceases to appear as an object, an event, a process in itself and independent. Actually, it is more like a background, a scenario and field of action for all our experience which, nevertheless, cannot exist separately from our structure, our behaviour, our cognition.[4]

This growing process of integration between reality and the representation of reality, which are not totally independent, detached spheres but end up each affecting the other to the point of constituting a united whole, makes contemporary man adapt and react not only to the "world" as it actually is but to the images he creates of it and the representations that are provided of it, images and representations that therefore acquire their own "physicality" (Maciocco and Tagliagambe 1998).

We are dealing with an indissoluble unity, which is, for example, a part of the relationship between the city and the continuity of the project for it. The project is a representation of the city and at the same time an opinion on it oriented towards its transformation. The city gives to an expressive picture the positive part of its spatial and moral substance, trusting that it will be this faithful image that will progressively drag the city out of its defects and weaknesses.

4 Desired Landscapes: Separation of Perception from Action

The detachment of images from reality is significantly correlated with the separation of perception from action and, in this sense, with the ethical dimension of the landscape, which recalls its constituent connection with action. This can also be linked with the most recent experimental neurophysiology theories, referred to by Silvano Tagliagambe, on the inseparability of perception and action.[5] This has important implications for the correlations that can be glimpsed between the perception/action and landscape/city pairs. As Tagliagambe emphasises, the sense of this passage is well illustrated by Berthoz, who in a work of his of 1997 observes that "perception is not representation: it is a simulated action projected onto the world". Perception is an activity of simulation of the object from the practical opportunities the object offers – it is in this sense ingrained in the action and therefore in the project.[6]

The separation between perception and action that we have inherited is nevertheless persistent. It is present, for example, in the background of a conception of the landscape as ruin: an environmental landscape conceived as archaic, used as a museum due to social – and economic, cultural and political – isolation. This separation prevents us from anchoring ourselves to life lived, from feeling space and the environment as our home and, consequently, expressing the sensations and impulses it passes on to us when we authentically take possession of it. This capacity for expressing the authentic is taken over by the representation of the vacuous, the fictitious, the image meant as phantasmal duplication of the existing. This is a conception that lacks the vigour of landscapes under transformation, which changes as people and places change and accumulates the energy of history. The landscape as ruin comes under the rhetorics of contemplation that are present in the thematisation of landscapes, in the landscape as a theme park, as a spectacular tourism scene. The "conserved scene" becomes something else in the fixedness of its form, and becomes at the most the set of a great theme park (Costa 1996), of a "desired landscape".

"Desired landscapes" are fully contained in a classical concept of landscape, a *representational* concept of the landscape as an "environmental image", a common image, which makes the landscape an invention of modernity, granting it the sentimental aspect of specular image of nature: a historicist thesis that is rooted and often acritically accepted still today (Venturi Ferriolo 2003): it is the "projective" thesis that reads the landscape as "bouncing back, like a reaction to the popularity of the modern spirit of disenchantment" (Carchia 1999).

This vision is indeed in the background of the theme park landscape, as the scene of representation of something else, within a logic that leads to the uprooting of things and places so as to allow universal mobility, global interchange, without restraint, of goods and information (Costa 1996). The theme park appears when the modern world takes possession of non-urban topological experience, i.e. the experience of places based on the trajectory, free circulation and unproductivity where the visitor is a modern proto-spectator who abandons himself/herself to the influence of the place without the ambition of understanding it.

This type of landscape, with which a relationship of equality is never established, is the emblem of detachment from the city, a detachment which expresses

indifference to representation with regard to the city, which, precisely for this reason, we no longer succeed in representing.

The subject is brilliantly treated by Felix de Azua (2003) who, by an excursus into the different modalities of city representation through the various epochs, reaches the conclusion that the city cannot be expressed nowadays because it has become a *simulacrum* of the city. At each moment, the urban image projects and constructs itself for conscious judgments, be they mythical or religious. For a long time, both ancient and new cities were designed, engraved, portrayed or sculpted. The capacity to express the profound sense of cities also through visual perception made them something similar to a cult object (Mumford 1938), in which was condensed the capacity to express the invisible in visible forms, and so it went on up until the industrial revolution. For a thousand years, the prevalence of the visual document over the written one was to be dominant. Only at the beginning of the modern era, conventionally referring to the development of experimental sciences, did the literature show the first symptoms of interest for geographical description, which were to develop up until the beginning of the 19th century, when the last step would come about, showing how solidarity between urban space and narrative space leads to such a communion that one would be incomprehensible without the other. London is Dickens and Paris is Balzac (de Azua 2003). The first to acknowledge that this scheme was unsatisfactory for representing the city was Walter Benjamin, who, in his writings in the 1930s, asserted that the new metropolis could only be represented by the cinema and photography. Benjamin intuitively recognised that film editing was not only a specific technique of these recent visual arts but a new aesthetic category that arose from the essence of industrial metropolises, in the sense that the juxtaposition of images without an internal relationship expresses in all propriety the productive process and sensitive experience of the visual shocks of the citizen in the large industrial city (de Azua 2003). When we fly in a balloon with Felix Nadar, the city seems simultaneously real and unreal.[7] The spectacle offered from above is no longer false, like in panoramas. The distance neutralises the details and transforms the space into a mass of roofs similar to the cogs of a machine (D'Elia 1994). The representation of the city is a *montage* of stills.

But contemporary post-cities go far beyond what can be represented by the cinema and photography. "The invisible networks of the metropolis of informatics, which centre or decentre themselves ramifying their terminals, do not manage to form new *polises*. We therefore need to ask ourselves what the new space nowadays being constructed by these 'invisible networks' is? What are the societies like that inhabit them? What urban forms represent them?" (Daghini 1983, pp. 23–26). The question is relevant because we nevertheless have in the city the principal deposit of our memory. To give up the privileged mirror of representation would make us both dumb and blind. The city of the 21st century evades these technical means of representation, however. This loss of the capacity to represent the city corresponds, according to de Azua (2003), to the loss of the city as a conceptual unit. The contemporary city cannot be represented because it has become a *simulacrum* (de Azua 2003) of the city, light, fake, and as such, consumable, a copy of the copy of cities that have never existed, were never inhabited by any man but served a

function for mass consumption. Like the videocassette on sale in the United States for those who would like to have a child at home without any of the nuisance. "The child smiles at you, grows day by day, cries a little, too, but does not wet the bed and lets you sleep at night. . ." (La Cecla 1991, p. 61). Simulation, the artificial level of reality, can be useful only if it does not cancel out the evidence of that "something" that is beyond our representations of nature, is "given", made of limits and other by us and our intentions, which alone can guarantee us the future. "And, strangely enough, we have discovered that we are much more similar, more a part of what is 'given' than of the representations of it. We are mortals as is the world of nature, we are not inside the screen but, though only a little, outside it" (La Cecla 1991, pp. 61–62). The city, in the classical meaning, already no longer exists, but in its place and on it a *simulacrum* of classical city is being built which is considerably convincing. And this *simulacrum* is *true,* like the town of Seaside in Florida, which appears as Seahaven in *The Truman Show*, Peter Weir's film set in this affected little town covered with a great glass dome and separated from the rest of the world by the filter of television.

At Seahaven, the longest and most fortunate soap opera in television history is underway, the one that has Truman Burbank as its protagonist, an unaware star, since he was in his mother's womb, of a show that never ends and has as its gigantic studio the whole city: the "candid camera" of a true life (if it can be called that), spied on day and night by five thousand operators, with the complicity of a population of actors and extras who help, so to speak, the protagonist to live his existence under the hypnotised, participating eyes of the television public (Bignardi 1998). *The Truman Show* is clockwork, a highly sophisticated satire of the American Way of Life: departing from the sociological-urbanistic dream of Seaside which, with a double somersault, Weir takes from reality, using it as the apparently false background of his little television world, to finish with the fact that the life of Truman Burbank – the one that everybody, in the bars, in their homes, in drive-ins, avidly watches, without losing a single hour of it – is the most boring existence, we might say the "most generic" and has become an exciting show for the simple fact that it is at everybody's disposal on T.V. (Bignardi 1998).

The scene of the storm at sea, envisaged on the set, is emblematic, where Truman risks being shipwrecked and the sailor cannot help him because he does not know how to *do*, he only knows how to *act.* The difference between inhabiting and acting corresponds to the difference between the true city and the *simulacrum* of a city. The theme of *doing* in close connection with *inhabiting* is treated by Heidegger in his analysis of Holderlin's poem "Poetically inhabits man", which connects *doing* with *poetry* (Heidegger 1971) referring back to the etymological root of the Greek verb *poieo*. The *simulacrum* of a city is the city of hyper-reality, the city itself, or rather the idealisation of it, that has become the subject of simulation like, for example, the multiple hyper-realities involved in industrial battles to monopolise Hollywood in Los Angeles, where – as Mike Davis explains (Davis 1994) – the MCA has introduced into its almost tax-free enclave Universal City, a parallel urban reality called CityWalk.

Designed by Jon Jerde, CityWalk is an "idealised reality", the best attractions of Olvera Street, Hollywood and West Side synthesised in "quiet emotions" for consumption by tourists and residents. To alleviate the feeling of artificiality in this mixture, a "patina of antiquity" and a "handful of gravel" have been added. "Using a decorative conjuring trick, the designers plan to disguise the new streets with a cloak of instant past, on inauguration day some buildings will be painted so as to give the impression that they were already occupied before. Sweet wrappers will be stuck to the terrace pavement as if they had been dropped by previous visitors" (Davis 1994). As the owners of MCA have taken the trouble to point out, CityWalk is not a "hypermarket" but a "revolution" in urban design, etc., "a new type of quarter".

Urban imitation, the city emptied of all the experiences of human life. With all its fake sweet wrappers, fossils and other tricks, CityWalk takes us for a ride while it cancels out every trace of our true joy, pain or weariness (Davis 1994).

In this matter, there is a sample collection of entertainment industry attitudes: satisfy the tastes of its public arousing the least resistance possible, with the constant intention of increasing turnover. In a certain sense, this "entertainment urbanistics" works with the same tricks as Hollywood, the greatest enthusiasm in the simplest, most economic way, that kind of enthusiasm typical of anticipation, of the promise. However, as Wenders (1992) comments, at the end of the film, when you go out of the cinema, the surprise almost always remains that you have paid for it. For you go away depleted, with the feeling you have received nothing, you have only given: two hours of your own time for a great *sarabande* that leaves everything as it was before.

The impossibility of representing the city as losing its conceptual unity makes us conclude that we have come into the world of non-cities, but – as de Azua observes – the ambiguity is greater because *simulacrums* are *naturally* true. The *simulacrum* is therefore a masking of the conditions of life and the processes inherent in inhabiting. While it has been possible for a long time for social order to be read in urban form, in the new city legibility of this order has been dramatically manipulated and it has been completely obscured (Sorkin 1992).

A reason why it is impossible to represent the non-city *simulacrum* by classical means. Its ideal spectator is the tourist, a category that includes the city inhabitants themselves, whose behaviour as mere tourists is expected with regard to the "novelties" town councils and businesses are inventing, in a composed duet without flaws.

The generations for whom the dominant means of intellectual formation is the T.V. screen, that of the cinema and the photograph, do not notice any incongruence in the current *simulacrums*, and can therefore pass from one to the other, even if they contradict each other, without showing the slightest bewilderment; for them it is as if they were *zapping* (de Azua 2003).

Consequently, the non-city, as a representation of the present city, cannot be represented in its turn, given that it is itself the best and most convincing representation of the society inhabiting it.

In a paradoxical fashion, the non-city that today conceals everything again becomes, once more, the true mirror of society and its most faithful representation, like the Gothic or Neoclassical city represented those societies.

This would extend the matter to the urgent study of the non-citizen, or the *simulacrum* of a citizen, who believes he/she is free, living in the heart of a democracy and having a *public sphere*. But of this sphere he/she only has a bidimensional image, an image of desire, just as it appears in Hollywood films (de Azua 2003).

5 Destiny of the Landscape and Destiny of Moral Reason

We may therefore affirm that the destiny of the landscape and the destiny of moral reason are intrinsically bound. But how can we avoid the images "working on their own", "rotating on themselves in a tautological way"? (de Azua 2003). Perhaps history will take a protective role over the flood of visual flows, in the sense that images have only one possibility of not being swept away by this immense visual flow of competitiveness and commercialisation: they have to *tell a story*. Only history grants credibility to each single image, "founding a moral principle" (Wenders 1992). At the same time, it may be assumed that places that *narrate a story*, or various stories, are not swept away by the flood of images but, on the contrary, save us from the flow of global commercialisation, to which cultural consumption in the city is also entitled to belong. They "found a moral principle" in that they refer to their relationship with men, which is a foundation of urban ethics, but by referring to other places and other stories they also allow this relationship to be interpreted within the frame of communication and mobility requirements of the contemporary condition, which in a certain sense have indifference to place ingrained in them.

A landscape stands for a sort of additional figure. A street, a row of houses, a mountain, a bridge are something more than a simple background. For they possess history, a personality, an identity that must be taken seriously; and they affect the character of the men living in that environment; they evoke an atmosphere, a feeling of time, a particular emotion. They may be ugly, beautiful, young or old; but they are still present elements. So they deserve to be taken seriously (Wenders 1992) because they ask for a radical change in the way of paying attention to the landscape. Evolution towards the environment-landscape concept calls for the landscape to be the cantor of this natural, human epic and in this sense makes it become something more than a simple background of aesthetic evaluation of natural, human activities. We need to proceed in such a way that places conserve and show their history, and thus continue to nurture the imagination of the inhabitants, avoiding the stereotypes of *urban design* or, worse, of ludic historicism, of entertainment architecture.

In this sense, we may say that the landscape founds a moral principle. This thought has important consequences as it shifts the project for the landscape to the sphere of ethics and social legitimisation of our actions.

> Ethics reflects on the relations between man and environment. It investigates man's action. It reveals his vision of life, it is the possible world. It studies the contingent reality of the world. It shows itself to be the best instrument. Speculative reflection on the practical, everyday behaviour of man, ethics is directed above all at indicating the essence of true good and suitable means for achieving it.... It refers to the individual's action in a social structure that includes him/her.

These reflections of Massimo Venturi Ferriolo (2003) clarify that the association of the landscape project with the city project requires research on the essence of the landscape independent from true painting, representation, the sentimental image: from both ideal and real nature. "We are not looking for a modern category that expresses our need of lost nature, the reflection of hyperuranic beauty... This reality is not only aesthetic, but above all ethical, as it is connected with action, the individual's project within the environment and the community that include him/her" (Venturi Ferriolo 2003).

6 The Landscape Project and Contemporary Public Space

We have seen that this detachment, which concerns the separation of city from landscape, produces a non-city, the landscape of which is a *simulacrum*, a copy of the copy of a city that has never existed, and never been inhabited by any man. A non-city inhabited by non-citizens, in that they are deprived of the public sphere. The city's drift towards the *simulacrum* figure actually deprives the citizen of a true public sphere. We should nevertheless ask ourselves some questions: What, nowadays, is the *true* public sphere in contemporary societies? What is the contemporary public space that corresponds to it? How can we design it? And, to stay on the subject of this work, in what way can the project for the landscape construct contemporary public space?

Alberto Pérez-Gómez affirms that traditionally, the main objective of the city project has been the revelation of social and political order in the "chaosmos" of experience. It is, however, clear that the vocation inherent in the project for space is the configuration of public space, with the precise meaning of a proposal for order (Pérez-Gómez 1996).

It may nevertheless be argued that the privatising tendencies of the majority of modern societies continue to increase, and "symbolic space" does not interest the individuals of the industrialised, developed world. In an emblematic way, Richard Sennett speaks of the "modern fear of exposure". The dangerous, chaotic, conflictive, contemporary metropolis arouses detachment and defensive reactions, but the fear of taking risks also has ancient roots in western culture. This fear is reflected in the way the city has taken shape and reveals itself in full show nowadays in the metropolises. As Sennett notes, what characterises our way of constructing the city is the ghettoisation of differences, implicitly considered a threat for the collectivity rather than a stimulus. What we construct in our urban realm are therefore anonymous, neutralising places, spaces that remove the social contact threat (Sennett 1991).

The Greek *polis* and the medieval commune expressed a different possibility for free access to the other, though with ambiguity and severe limitations. Hannah Arendt reflected on this, to reach the idea of political and public life (Arendt 1989). In the Greek *polis* politics was born, understood as the public sphere of activities freely chosen and practised, emancipated from the private sphere of the family and

economics, places of necessity. In politics, one is among "equals", among men who are equally not subjected to other men, whereas in the family and family economics, relations are between "unequals", an inequality that is maintained in despotic government systems. In the second place, in public life, decisions are made with persuasion and the word, not with force: to force was indeed for the Greeks a pre-political way of dealing with men.

The French revolution, unequivocally giving an example, perhaps for the first time, of an authentic historical change, announced the values that we associate with democracy and modern individualism. This occurrence, which – as Foucault observes (quoted in Pérez-Gómez 1996) – defines the end of the "era of representation", in some ways ratifies the end of public space not only as the space of representation of power but also as the space of identification with power. This has determined a profound epistemological change, deeply transforming society's expectations with respect to spaces shared by society itself. The private sphere becomes more and more important, while public ritual sees its legitimacy questioned (Pérez-Gómez, 1994, 1996). The significance of public space will never again be an undisputable fact, in the sense that it is to be considered a cultural reality under transformation, intimately related with the historicity itself of culture. This is why contemporary public space can be conceived neither as the "space of representation" of the power of the *simulacrum* city nor in a simplistic manner as a typology of public squares or "drawn" city areas, however attractive they formally may be.

But which space is contemporary public space then? Are there alternatives to the telematic space (cyberspace) that seems more and more popular as a forum substituting public interaction?

Perhaps it is possible to demonstrate – following Pérez-Gómez' arguments – how our tradition might offer other alternatives (Pérez-Gómez, 1994, 1996).

Public space has been defined by Arendt as the "space of appearance".[8] It is the site where I encounter myself and my place through the eyes of others. In contrast with cyberspace, it is a space with limits; in effect, it is the space where the horizon makes itself visible. Its reality depends on the internal functioning of a culture and its rituals (Pérez-Gómez 1996).

If the *agora* was the unequivocal space for public speaking, nevertheless, our Greek cultural forefathers also began a tradition of alternative public space related with the theatre. Vitruvius recognised that the theatre was perhaps the most important of all urban institutions, seeing that a catharsis took place there, literally a purification that allowed each citizen to discover a sense of purpose or belonging. This recognition that made each spectator "a whole" took place, not so much through the foreseeable actions of the actors, but by the mediation of the chorus, a group of men who sang and danced, acting on the circular dance platform, the platform of the orchestra (Pérez-Gómez 1996). During the classical epoch, the orchestra platform was converted into a liminal space, a "threshold" space, for interaction between the chorus, representing the public, and the actors moved by the will of the gods. The orchestra platform was not the space of the spectator or of the actor, but it was the centre of attention for everybody, it was an *intermediate space* (Pérez-Gómez, 1994 1996). A space for mediation of messages, an intermediate, uncertain context

and therefore propitious for transformation, where it was possible to carry out the transformation of messages from the gods, where it was possible "to move without feeling manipulated" (Abalos 2004).

The theme of *intermediate space* is dealt with by Silvano Tagliagambe in his essay on the Russian philosopher Pavel Florenskij with reference to the theory of the symbol worked out by the latter (Tagliagambe 2006a).

Florenskij's *intermediate spaces* are the spaces of the invisible that the project renders visible, i.e. an intermediate world between subjective and objective. Florenskij studied the nature of the symbol in depth and made it the cardinal point of his philosophical and scientific reflections.[9] It is a binomic unity, unity in diversity, which is inseparable from the presence of the *skacok,* the *intermediate zone,* i.e. where conceptualisation of the mystery of the invisible should be realised. Reference to this "zone" represents one of the most problematic questions, as it is difficult to define with the rational instruments at our disposal. Nevertheless, we are dealing with an essential entity for interaction between the two dimensions, apparently irreconcilable, of the existence of man, the visible and the invisible, everyday experience and the insuppressible leaning towards an "al di là", to something "further" compared with this (Tagliagambe 2008a), this being a concept that corresponds to the cognitive process we associate with the project.

In the anthropology of Fink, a great pupil of Husserl, man knows himself to be in his work a factor of the reality that surrounds him and a part of a society which he confronts and collides with; in the loving relationship he is only a fragment in need of completion; in play, finally, and here Nietzschean suggestions transpire more vividly, he may inhabit the *intermediate spaces* of the "as-if" and the passages between the real and the imaginary, or that unreality in which sense and significance are heralded (Fink 1979 quoted in Baptist 2001). Like in the Greek theatre orchestra, in the *intermediate spaces* it is possible to mediate and transform the messages coming from the immense visual flow of competitiveness and commercialisation of the contemporary city (Wenders 1992). In these spaces, we are able to "move without feeling ourselves manipulated", refusing the claims of vertical knowledge and dogmatic truth. This is the "transverse reason" of which Wolfgang Welsch (1998)[10] speaks, who discovers, however, the substantial reference back to the understanding of knowledge as a horizontal adventure and as a capacity for crossing *intermediate spaces*, a concept constituting the heart of the post-modern modality of knowing and being.

In a certain sense, the conception of the landscape as a non-static, *intermediate space* linked with the theatre is present in the reflections of Eugenio Turri. If the landscape is theatre, it is not however a "given" theatre, with its scenes fixed on mobile backdrops, where only the actors and spectators can change (Turri 1998). Self-representation, which enables local actors to take their distance from events performed, becoming spectators of themselves, continuously reconstructs the theatre itself, or at least the significance it takes on for those who participate in various ways in theatrical action. Thus, too, if "the landscape is nature that reveals itself aesthetically" (Ritter 1963), the aesthetic contemplation which enables us to define it cannot be translated into an autistic, solitary narrow-mindedness (that would isolate

individual experience from the process of signification and from its relations with the social processes of the context), nor in a pre-ordained and in some way imposed rite, as in stereotyped models of "videotourists" (Gambino 2002).

The concept of intermediate space in effect welcomes processual connotation, in the sense that it designs the symbolic-practical complex around which a society can recognise itself. Intermediate spaces, then, understood not just or not so much as boundary zones in the territorial sense, but more as zones of cultural and disciplinary interchange, as attempts to "surpass" established mental and cultural orders. Attempts that are possible only in territories *external* to the metropolis. This *externity* is physical and mental, in the sense that it allows us to "move without feeling manipulated".

In the context of our contemporary metropolises, the border areas, obsolete, forgotten by development, present this character. These marginal areas, the representation of the black holes in the conscience of a city, residual spaces, discarded, no-man's-land, interstitial spaces where neither private property nor public law exists, seem to offer possibilities for new participatory situations to emerge. Ignasi de Solà-Morales has expressed the origin of this perception in the art of photography and has illustrated the relevance of the theme of the alien and alienation (de Solà-Morales 1995). They are the places that the Catalan scholar has defined, referring to the abandoned places of large cities, *terrain vague* where the connotations of "vague" as "undetermined, imprecise, indistinct, uncertain" are seen as implying a condition in which "the absence of borders contains in itself the prospect of mobility, of a journey without end, spare time, freedom" (de Solà-Morales 1995). They are the spaces where the "city of places" re-emerges in the "city of flows". But the city of places is in some ways latent, veiled and only shows itself as a set of traces. Where the concept of *trace* cannot be reduced to that of the historic palimpsest of classical analysis, but – as Derrida notes – "relates to what we call future no less than to what we call the past" (Derrida 1998). In these spaces, the landscape project has to do precisely with the revelation of the *traces* of the city of places, of its *externity* with respect to the world of urban flows. In these spaces, far from the flows, the urban landscape project creates conditions that are propitious for social practices, including new ones that make a new concept of public space constructed by people's habits imaginable, what we call "contemporary public space", going beyond the monumentalised public spaces of the institutions or the spaces of commercial representation.

Whereas the historic models of public space supported narrations linked with religion, justice or military power, this space does not represent any special type of power, in the sense that it is an empty space in the midst of a crowded context, a place without a plan. More and more introspective spaces are the only environments that manage to communicate a sense of truth to our society. Their nature is such that they allow us both social contact and the idea of the "individual isolated in the midst of a crowded environment" (Abalos 2006). We might say that the representative role of public space combines a collective ideal with an individual ideal.

The "city of places" that appears in the heart of the "city of flows" is in a certain sense a *different* city that is wedged within the space of the metropolis, an *externity*

that is an otherness, another city belonging to the contemporary urban universe. It is a new urban perspective of the European city represented by *territories external* to metropolitan density, where the reasons for the "city of places" can be experienced for the construction of other worlds of settlement. In effect, there is clear underestimation of the entity of the European *wastelands* and of the energy necessary to recuperate contaminated lands.[11] Since an urban perspective founded on "recuperating" these situations appears impossible, even in the long term, efforts for recuperation in European urban areas are not aimed in all directions but only according to modalities serving a function for urban marketing requirements.[12] But outside these urban islands adorned with *make-up*, the city however shows its real face deformed by excess pollution of places and ideas.[13]

For the spaces external to the European urban nebula, for the vast territories of nature and history, promising prospects may therefore open up for constructing a different urbanity, outside the European metropolis, in some ways its environmental counterpoint, making it so that one cannot exist without the other. In this sense, we need to promote awareness of the *environmental dominants*, of the spatial concepts and places of the territory rich in nature and history, as values that we take with us in the process of construction of identity, *traces,* that have relations, precisely, with "what we call future no less than what we call the past" (Derrida 1998). A basis of shared sense, which remains for us as a patrimony that beyond the *ongoing* "we drag along with us" and which "comes to drag us along" (Piccardo 2001), a system of sense of which the elements of conflict and change are to be recognised in a notion like the culture of a territory, classically a place of invariance (Carmagnola 2001). This being a conceptual and operative perspective, quite different from the re-composition of environmental frames as a static horizon, as a completed form towards which to tend or from which to depart. A perspective certainly able to be linked with the collective ideology of environmental sustainability, but that shifts from the *environmental functionalism* that has ingrained in it the illusion of environmental control of each intervention, to move towards a horizon that has ingrained in it the inseparability of the biological and cultural dimensions of spatial life and makes the bond with the inherited landscape the reason for different development. The landscape project has the purpose of revealing in the places of the city these meanings of the inherited landscape, which "we drag along with us and which drag us along".

Places that reveal to the human condition the possibility of understanding the territory of urban life are significant places. They are so, however, not in that they are specific, unique and unrepeatable, but in that they take with them in a specific, unique, unrepeatable way the meanings of other places, according to the viewpoint, the *moeurs* , the "general will", the unwritten laws that support a given society (Cacciari 1990), a new kind of ethics that might recognise the inseparability of the biological and cultural dimensions of the city (Clemente and Maciocco 1990).

Where these meanings reveal themselves, the *contemporary public space* is manifest, which allows each citizen to discover a sense of purpose or belonging, but also makes each citizen "a whole", an individual in a crowded space, a recognition similar to what used to happen in the Greek theatre, and which took place not so

much through the predictable actions of the actors but through the mediation of the chorus (Pérez-Gómez 1996), the *intermediate space*, which, as we have seen in the preceding pages, is a constituent feature of contemporary public space. For this, every gesture, even the smallest, has the task of revealing the meanings of this common world. Small gestures, present for example in the works of Georges Descombes (Léveillé and Descombes 1991; Wrede and Adams 1991; Corner 1999; Nicolin and Repishti 2003), such as in Lancy park, on the edge of Geneva, where on confused, degraded territory a few marginal elements have recreated a microgeography of elements equivalent to pre-existing ones and have given origin to a specific place.

The conceptual themes of the relationship between architecture and landscape and the "walk" to explore, recurrent in the work of Descombes, are also reflected in the Voie Suisse, a physical and conceptual park-walk which winds for 35 kilometres around the lake of Uri, marked by elements and presences that reinforce the exploration and understanding of natural places, otherwise hidden. The capacity artists possess to facilitate the transition from myths and legends to life *lived* may save the city. Just as the community of Ulassai, through the work of Maria Lai, has metaphorically been saved from the collapse of the mountain, and has retrieved its own ethnic roots and historic memory (Menna 2006). Lai posed the theme over twenty years ago, nowadays fundamental, of the relationship between physical space, place and community. The scene of this memorable intervention was her hometown, Ulassai, in Sardinia, shaken by internal tensions and rivalry, which made it a cluster of buildings but not a united social group. Lai joined the town to the mountain of Ulassai, its "mother mountain", with blue ribbon. Lai tied all the houses of the town to the mountain, authentic environmental dominant of Ulassai, with coloured ribbons stretched from one house to the next, in a lively, tight game of construction of links and interactions, thanks to which the image was obtained, visualised indelibly, of a *space of relations* between the different dwellings (Tagliagambe 2006b). "All those involved in this game were forced to understand that 'Ulassai', its soul, its intimate essence, its identity were represented much better and much more by the ribbons than by the houses and the streets, because a village is, first and foremost, a heterogeneous group of people who *communicate* across the space" (Tagliagambe 2006b, p. 38). A large city like Barcelona also updated its urban perspectives in the 1990s, integrating the double spatial grid of Cerdà's *ensanche* with the dominants of its environmental system, the Collserola, the coastal strip, the Besòs and the Llobregat, the two rivers respectively defining the northern and southern edges of the city. In a certain sense, this is a matter of another grid, not geometrical, which, together with the double spatial grid, constitutes the generative structure enabling the city to develop without creating disorder. The urban life of Barcelona, which is shifting to the coastal strip where the city seeks its natural environment by reconstituting the beaches in place of the railway goods park, is the proof that the city of places can reveal itself also in the city of flows. In this sense, the urban landscape project for the coastal strip of Barcelona has effectively made the meanings of this environmental dominant of the city emerge and has prepared the citizens to adapt, in an environmental sense, their behaviour. In spite of the difficulties, the future may perhaps be

scanned with faith: on looking closely, in these small and large experiences, oriented in the environmental sense, a cosmogony appears with its edges oscillating between the difficulties of conceiving the city project nowadays and the possibilities offered to the project by the presence of materials that belong to it, such as the land, time, history, the void and degradation.

These are the materials of the landscape project, which requires a leap with respect to reality, able to combine these materials in a different manner and courageously disrupt what has been satisfied. It is a possible way of contributing to public awareness and the construction of contemporary public space revealing the city of places in the city of flows. For this we may legitimately attribute an emblematic value and a general meaning to the tie between the landscape project and the city project.

7 Urban Landscape Perspectives: About This Book

"Urban Landscape Perspectives" is the title of this book which explores how landscape terminology can be usefully brought into the urban debate. Articles in this book include theoretical reflections on the landscape as an eminently *project-like* figure. It argues for attention to be drawn again to the landscape as the origin of the sense of man's home and of the reasons for the city, as well as to the search for the primary elements of city construction, of its *public sphere*. This role can only be developed with project-oriented intentions reconstructing the bond between city and landscape. We therefore associate the *project of the landscape* with *the project of the city*. Other theoretical reflections, applications and best practices explore the involvement of the territory in the organisation of both urban life and landscape, and the way changes within the city have opened up traditional concepts of centrality towards new centrality forms, as well as towards more environmental interpretations of centrality. The articles in this volume are by scholars with backgrounds in philosophy, urban and landscape planning, architecture, etc. who have a particular interest in and experience of the argument.

In his paper, "Thinking over urban landscapes. Interpretations and courses of action", Pier Carlo Palermo highlights the way the variety of interpretations of urban landscape requires a stance to be taken. A stance that the author makes explicit with respect to the paradigmatic reference frame and the idea of landscape, and regarding the most suitable regulation and transformation techniques and consequent implications for architecture and planning disciplinary traditions.

Palermo picks out some theoretical points of notable interest: the need to give a proper interpretation of the will for dialogue between project and context; the hope of actually conceiving the project as a virtuous evolutive possibility for the context, able to reconcile, temporarily, partial visions and collective interest, apparent forms, meanings and values. The idea of landscape, according to the author, presents unyielding ambiguity. It can be referred to profoundly different paradigms, which often seem to co-exist – in reflections or in practice – without being clearly

distinguishable. The specificity and importance of the notion of landscape (in the plural) lies in the reference to two fundamental principles for understanding settlement models and transformations of the relations between individual rationality and collective rationality, between visible forms and coevolutive processes.

In this conceptual frame, the need is emphasised for taking on the idea of landscape as a "cultural good", i.e. as a potential "common good". If the landscape is a "cultural good", it may be interesting to explore modalities of treatment of this category of goods through "projects for territorial transformation". This is an emerging hypothesis (though still controversial) with respect to the general problems of enhancing cultural goods. The landscape is a critical dimension of each "urban project": critical precisely because of the difficulty of reconciling plural interests and visions with the nature of "common good", and the visibility of apparent forms with the non-transparent, thick, dense sphere of meanings and interpretations. Each action on territory and networks becomes an intervention on the landscape (and vice versa). This principle of reciprocity should be respected by all actions for governing the territory.

Landscape topics contribute to legitimising the idea of "enzymatic architecture": architecture able to introduce itself into transformation processes without imposing pre-constituted codes from the outside, to go beyond the limits of the building to activate widespread services in the environment, without seeking final solutions but light, reversible ones, able to adapt to the dynamics of the context, that are increasingly fluid and changing.

"Landscape, live nature", Pedro Azara's article highlights the fact that contemplation should not be thought of as a passive process that considers the landscape the condition of nature exposed to the traveller. Azara emphasises the way that "landscape" and "tourism" are nowadays two terms that are indissolubly united in a perfect, symmetrical relationship, as if tourism had the purpose of parading in front of a landscape, and the landscape of composing itself solely for the traveller's pleasure.

We travel to contemplate cities, buildings, ruins and "nature", namely "landscapes". Against this way of thinking, Azara maintains that the landscape should, on the contrary, be considered a sentimental category. By this definition is meant nature subjected to assessment, in which elements are arranged, not for the purposes of what they are used for and the position they occupy in a geometric space, but for the purpose of human assessment, of the affective relations they establish with the observer, the feelings they arouse in him. Landscape, in itself, does not exist; it is only a mental construct, an image that the visitor builds from what he sees, filtered through his expectations and his prejudices. Some details are enlarged; others are shrunk, as if the landscape were a composition created according to a specific tone (the observer's sentiment, the affective colouring with which he paints it).

A landscape is a creation, it is nature filtered by feeling. Landscape is therefore a mental category, a quality imposed on things during contemplation. The world is not, nor constitutes, a landscape, but is transformed into landscape, thanks to the spectator's vision. For the spectator, says he, is completely enraptured, dominated by what he contemplates, feeling himself small and at the same time overwhelmed

by what spreads itself in front of his eyes. Actually, he is mentally constructing the landscape he is observing and changes boundless nature into a reduced view he calls landscape, which contains perfectly delimited natural and artificial elements. The act of vision makes equal all exterior elements and melts them in a single image. Once he has defined the landscape as assessed nature, in which reason selects and orders data administered mainly by the sense of sight (but also by hearing and smell), Azara points out that the idea of considering the landscape as an artistic genre rather than an object of tourism should not therefore surprise us.

In the concept of landscape, as Silvano Tagliagambe makes clear in his article "Landscape as a regenerative structure of a fragmented territory", is inherent and rooted the synthesis between objectivity and subjectivity, between natural entity and point of view of the world, in that it is not a simple "view", a natural fact, a physical, measurable entity, but was, and is always, "nature seen and filtered through culture", the outcome of a process of active construction on the part of the mind, which has to show itself in the ability not just to read and understand the signs and to decode the various types of message that different human activities have impressed and continue to impress on it, but also to *connect* and weld together, uniting them in a whole, these dispersed meanings. This capacity to connect does not, however, concern only the object of perception and knowledge, i.e. the landscape itself, but also the subject performing it: in effect, the "landscape" category refers generally to the *shared image of a territory* on the part of a community, and therefore implies the availability of a common background of objectives, premises, orientations and values on the part of its components, who need, consequently, to feel, take positions and behave towards it, not just as single subjects, but as members of a collective subject and a group.

Moreover, through common reference to cultivation there is a very close tie between the concept of "inhabit" and that of "landscape". To cultivate is one of the ways of inhabiting, the most original. To cultivate is to build the *symbolic and real space in which we are immerged, to build the landscape.*

Thought, too, being the building of this symbolic space, belongs to inhabiting, as does building, being necessary for inhabiting. For this, too, therefore, the same original relationship holds between inhabiting that characterises building, and which we can express by upsetting the common way of thinking of relations between these two terms and saying, indeed, with Heidegger that "only if we are capable of inhabiting can we build".

The article analyses this close co-penetration of inhabiting, building and thinking and, on the basis of this, underlines the crucial importance, also for the purposes of economic growth and innovation processes, that reference to the sense of identity of local communities takes on, to their cohesion and capacity for initiative, to the *participation* and *involvement* of the subjects composing them, i.e. those same factors that are now commonly placed at the basis of the definition of "landscape". The latter thus becomes the regenerative structure of a fragmented territory, in that the founding elements of its definition, and in particular the interrelations between natural and human factors, the incidence and weight of *collective action*, the local capacity to "contextualise" *global* economic, social and political dynamics, take on

the function of inseparable fundamental elements for the selection and choice of the structure of the relations most useful for the development, not just economic but social and cultural, of a particular local system.

In "The influence of the landscape on urban space identity", Nicola Sisti explores the role of a kind of city planning that considers the landscape in relation to the development of *identity* and *meaning*. Such city planning holds the landscape as crucial to its approach towards the territory. It opens up new ways of relating urban space organisation with that of the landscape, and suggests new perspectives for urban space, based on the *value* of the landscape. It hence no longer supports a traditional urban approach that considers the city alone, but instead takes the landscape as the very centre for organising the territory.

The great opportunity of such an approach lies in the possible development of new *identities* for urban space organisation. Sisti therefore explores the notion of *identity*, not as a property but as a relationship: as a system of relations between the different evolutionary stages in the development of that system. In this sense, by including the landscape in the organisation of urban space, traditional organisation and identity of urban space are extended. This manner of extending the identity of the territory – by including interactions between the urban context and the landscape – derives from the idea that the meaning of an element is determined by its context as well as by its relations with other, proximate meanings. Consequently, the meaning of an element is determined by the organisation of the *entire* context in which the element is placed. By taking into account the ever-different aspects of the landscape, the relationship between the city and the territory can take on different meanings. In this article, the relationship between the city and the territory is analysed (following J. Lotman) by means of the distinction between language and metalanguage. At the same time, the article demonstrates that relations between city and territory are always creative and enhance the identity of the territory.

Isabelle Doucet explores in "[Centrality] and/or Cent] [rality: a matter of placing the boundaries" the rise of new forms of centrality that make traditional boundaries and dichotomies of city/landscape, urban/rural, centre/margin, compact/dispersed indistinct – especially in everyday practice and activities. Rather than addressing the physical, social, cultural and economic shifts in centrality as such, she approaches centrality as a state of mind, still strongly present in disciplinary thought on spatial planning and governance, obsessed, as often still occurs, with the construction of facts, motivated by or packed within categories, typologies, diagrams and schemes.

Notwithstanding the recognition and acknowledgement of an increasingly multi-polar and dispersed social, cultural and physical reality, such reality continues to be approached from the viewpoint of centrality, as is illustrated in the description of city regions, the polycentric metropolis and all sorts of network configurations. These descriptions still derive from an apparent central ideology, assumed to be applicable to society in its entirety, but in reality being denied by any multi-cultural, multi-economic and especially any multi-natural reading of neighbourhoods. She therefore explores how a possibly less "modern" approach to space could be pursued and how, rather than a post-modern claim, a "non-modern" approach could be developed in which collectives build common worlds by means of risk, experiment

and learning curves (following Bruno Latour's explorations in "Science Studies"). Furthermore, she explores how the notion of "fluidity" can be applied to the planning context, more specifically within the Brussels Capital Region and what the consequences would be for spatial design disciplines in general.

The paper "Urban landscape and an ecology of creativity" by Silvia Serreli explores some experiences of transformation of contemporary urban space which refer to two extremes: on the one hand, the dominant centres of the global economy, the nodes that group together the higher functions of leadership, management and production; on the other, places with "few connections", bypassed places, which do not constitute periphery, but external arenas, regions excluded from the current world system. In particular, the first experience concerns the centralities that have large-scale effects and are localised within the city or in extraurban territory; creative islands belong to these forms of agglomeration in the form of *entrepreneurial epicentres* (integrated service-technology production systems), *high-culture epicentres*, *popular leisure epicentres*, *culture and leisure waterfront epicentres*. These forms of agglomeration, which present advantages and critical points, nurture intercity competition to become part of the system of localising preferences of the new profiles of the post-modern societies, the creative classes.

The second experience explores situations "in transition" where forms of resistance to transformation persist, positions of marginality, external territories. Through the transformations of the landscapes of Greece, from the rural domain towards new forms and styles of life linked in particular to tourism, an interpretative scheme is proposed which escapes from the consolidated conceptualisations of space. For this the paper resorts to certain studies in the field of geography where the dominant processes are specified using the terms *enworldment*, *unworldment*, *deworldment* and *transworldment*. In the third experience, hybrid landscapes are dealt with, which are strongly rooted in the place, on the one hand, and constantly exposed to transformations. Geographical proximity and socio-cultural proximity are the two conceptual categories to which reference is made to decode the new spatial modalities of the city, the elements that attract the creative class.

The evolution of the new generation of cultural entrepreneurship – also called *Culturepreneurs*– is an interesting example in the large European cities for interpreting new spatial strategies and of social microformations. The city, within its apparent disorder, offers the ideal places for developing new platforms for social interaction. An example of great urban importance is the experimental laboratories where the Culturepreneurs propose, supply and invent new urban narrations after selecting distinct locations and specific places of the city. Their creative and innovative activities and art practices combine local capacities with creative knowledge and new ideas. These situations may have a decisive role as incubators and attractors for the formation of new, creative knowledge *milieus*, in which relations are established at a local level between the global networks and the novel creative place-making methods and have great importance in the redefinition of relations between tradition and innovation and above all between city and inhabitants.

Ignasi Pérez Arnal addresses the study of the context in "Three Metaphors for the Next Landscape". He argues that perhaps the time has come to talk about

environment instead of context. In his search for parameters to take as a starting point for contemporary architecture and landscape architecture, he explores three metaphors: one from maths, another concerning an object, a submarine, and a third that could be defined as the Venturi effect. In his paper he outlines all three metaphors. The first, *outline conditions*, addresses four conditions of the creative processes when facing a new environment (or landscape): creativity as a way to *create problems*, as an *integrator*, as a *multiple phenomenon* and as *a fact* itself.

The second metaphor of the *Watertight Compartments Submarine* addresses the use of different forms of logic and its arrangement in different compartments, as if they were the independent spaces which make up a submarine, the architect's instrumental baggage. In the third metaphor, *the Venturi effect,* he compares American and European landscape approaches, as well as the (Robert) Venturi effect with the Venturi-effect in Physics theory.

Notes

[1] As Ignasi de Solà-Morales has us observe, the category of *counter-space* refers to past time. Just as the introduction of public parks in capital cities in the 19th century aimed at bringing nature into the city as counter-space at the moment when the cities of the first industrial revolution were built, as an antidote to the new industrial city, so our post-industrial culture calls for spaces of freedom, undefined, unproductive, but this time not linked with the mythical notion of nature but with the experience of memory, of romantic enchantment with the absent past as a critical arm in the face of the banal productivist present. The theme of counter-space is nowadays connected with disenchantment for the modern city, characterising a critical tradition always in search of alternative spaces outside or within the city, real and acceptable compared with the everyday reality of aggressive, anonymous, ugly metropolises. A disenchantment inherent in the urban pessimism that characterises the tradition of city disciplines and considers the city of the present a foretaste of a better life (de Solà-Morales 1996).

[2] With his single novel, published in 1890 in the American magazine Lippincott's Monthly Magazine, the English poet Oscar Wilde left us a long metaphorical fable with a profound significance. The story of Dorian Gray and the portrait, given to him by his artist friend, Basil Hallward, who portrayed him at the height of his youth and beauty, onto which, under the arcane spell of a vow, all traces of the vices and crimes of the protagonist are transferred, is much more than one of the stages, though highly significant, of the long history of the "double in literature", which reached its highest peak in German Romanticism. Together with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* by Robert Louis Stevenson, which came out in 1886, it is one of the two exceptional points which, at a brief distance one from the other, give new content and depth to this history (Maciocco and Tagliagambe 1998).

[3] *Lisbon Story,* directed by Wim Wenders, Road Movies Filmproduktion/Berlin, 1994.

[4] Developments in the modern theory of evolution reach the same conclusions, where it is stated that the organism and the environment are not actually determined separately. The environment is not a structure imposed upon human beings from outside, but is actually a creation of theirs; it is not an autonomous process but a reflection from biology of the species. In the same way as no organism exists without an environment, no environment exists without an organism (Lewontin 1983, pp. 63–82).

[5] These are recent studies by a research group at the University of Parma, led by Giacomo Rizzolatti, at the cutting edge of the experimental neurophysiology sector, which Silvano Tagliagambe refers to in his essay *The dilation of the concept of inhabit and the city/territory relationship* (Tagliagambe 2008b).

[6] But, according to Tagliagambe, it is the discovery of "mirror neurons" that enables us to say that observation of an action leads to activation of the same nerve circuit in charge of controlling performance: observation of the action, therefore, causes automatic simulation of the same action in the observer and,

through this, understanding. So to understand the meaning of the behaviour of others presupposes the possibility and capacity on the part of our brain to create models of this behaviour in the same way as it creates models of our own. The final result of this modelling process puts us into the condition of understanding and predicting the consequences of others' actions exactly in the way it enables us to understand and predict our own behaviour. The mechanism at the base of the two processes of understanding is the same (Rizzolatti and Sinigaglia 2006).

[7] F. Nadar, *Photographie de la Place de L'Etoile*, 1898.

[8] The "triple frustration" connected with acting – unpredictability of outcome, irreversibility of process and anonymity of authors – is the price man pays to be able to experience reality, and derives in the first place from the human condition of plurality, the preliminary requisite of that space of appearance that is the public sphere, the space of visibility in which some appear to the others and they recognise each other, which basically constitutes the condition of possibility of being together (cf. Arendt 2001). Since each person holds their own delimited position in the world, the characteristic of public space is that of joining and separating at the same time, that is to "articulate plurality through relations that are neither vertical nor hierarchical nor of the fusional type." (cf. Forti 1996, p. 275).

[9] To study further the conception of the symbol in Florenskij and his "epistemology of the symbol", see Tagliagambe 2006a.

[10] Wolfgang Welsch teaches at the University of Magdeburg and has been the most convincing and keenest advocate of the post-modern in Germany. He is the author and editor of various books, among which the recent is Aktualität des Aesthetischen, Munich, Fink Verlag, 1993; of his work an essay has been translated into Italian entitled "La terra e l'opera d'arte", published in 1991 by the Gallio publishing company in Ferrara.

[11] The Plan for European Space Development, to use the French acronym Sdec – the Italian one is impossible to pronounce – gives these numbers as a background to contradictory arguments which on one side place the emphasis on the endless entity of the problems and on the other envisage a field of conventional activities for impossible all-out recuperation. Cf. SSSE, *Plan for European Space Development (first official draft)*, Meeting of Ministers for territory order in member States of the European Union, Noordwijk, 9 and 10 June 1997.

[12] A position in which a business strategy is applied to the city, a strategy meant as minimisation of risk, of the loss the business city might suffer with respect to the external world, a strategy that not by chance was promoted by private organisations.

[13] "Guattari is right to take offence at environmentalist reductionism. To not see that pollution is a category of modernity, to not see that there is no difference, but a close relationship between pollution of ideas, excess of information and pollution of the seas, means to accept the game with the rules imposed by the great centres of the media." (La Cecla 1991, p. 56).

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Thinking Over Urban Landscapes

Interpretations and Courses of Action

Pier Carlo Palermo

1 Traces

Tim Richardson (2005a, b) tells us that in New York, where urban green is practically concentrated in a single large park, they are beginning to invent landscapes on the roofs of skyscrapers. Thus, on the roof of the MoMa, an artificial landscape has recently been created, made of fragments of glass, marble and plastic (light, not very expensive materials, permitting reversible use). It is an artificial garden that not only imitates nature, but also makes fun of gardens that are typical of the urban condition, being inaccessible and even out of sight, except from above – like a decoration that has no other aim. An ironic exercise in *landscape design*. Simultaneously, in the city, a redevelopment project of the old High Line can also be seen, which, on the other hand, seems to want to preserve the ecological character spontaneously taken on by that long-abandoned man-made zone: with the creation, perhaps rather banal, of a sequence of green spaces that are *as natural as possible* and tend to reproduce a contingent state, without giving a real, critical, innovative contribution, either from the architectural point of view or from that of design.

The apparent naturalness of this project might bring to mind, in contrast, the most problematic visions of the *third landscape*. Gilles Clément, as is known, introduced this notion to indicate all residual and indefinite spaces, neither freely anthropised nor subjected to protection, which become a land of refuge for diversities and require particular care (Clément 2004). In these spheres, it is not a question of imposing new order (there will always be residual spaces that escape any will to control them), but of respecting and backing up the emerging possibilities. This is a way not only of defending quality but also of expressing an unusual ethical principle that Clément calls "gardener's ethics". For in his opinion, it is not possible to apply the same rules to natural environments that guide social behaviour: *laissez faire* in the human society leads to lack of balance and taking advantage; in the "third landscape" it favours harmonisation of the components. In an urban garden, forecasts

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may be respected generally speaking, but they are not usually faithful in detail. Continuous emergences should not be repressed, but supported, showing respect and a sense of responsibility towards the variety of tendencies and relations that often become manifest in unexpected forms. The same attitude should hold for the "planetary garden" in which we all live, where diversity and quality are increasingly at risk.

The *garden metaphor* continues to attract great attention, also in forms that to me seem more traditional. This has for some time been a decisive category for Bernard Lassus' interpretative and projectual work (Lassus 1998; Venturi Ferriolo 2006). It is true that his projects do not just come down to classical compositions, like unambiguous, well-ordered pictures, or limited and above all finite objects (according to some "landscape architecture" traditions). Nevertheless, his declared will to rediscover forms and meanings by "delving into the memory of places", thanks to an in-depth movement, going backwards in time (a *millefeuilles landscape*), risks ending up being a self-referential process, in which the alleged spirit of places or perhaps the author's sensitivity play a decisive role. The plurality of traces and voices, any conflict in interpretations remain at the edge. The involvement of inhabitants is reduced to secondary practices. Lassus studied at length the ways in which *landscape inhabitants* decorate some of their life spaces, for reasons not of practical use, but above all of symbolic expression (like *landscape design* micro-experiences). Moreover, these are not the only ways, or the most important, in which inhabitants can contribute to transforming the urban landscape (suffice to think of self-construction processes or inhabitant participation in transformation projects). An intentionally partial vision seems also to emerge from the conception Lassus proposes of landscape reordering of infrastructure works. He hopes that a relationship will be re-established with places, thanks to the realisation of pause spaces, able to reveal local landscapes to those who pass through. The motorway should become a "garden of discovery". Nevertheless, the places revealed are first of all those suggested by natural features or by the dominant symbolic tradition. Usually, a real attempt to articulate with emerging meanings and transformations of local contexts, like the evolving social, economic and settlement systems, is lacking. These are some of the limits – it could be observed – of an influential tendency of contemporary landscape thought.

Other research and experimental trends emerge, however, that cross the fields of architecture. It would be misleading to identify nowadays the architecture of landscape with the traditional art of gardens (Maniglio Calcagno 1983). In Italy, Giancarlo De Carlo has strongly raised some quite radical questions (De Carlo 2005). A typical feature of the Mediterranean city is to live in symbiosis with nature and a multicultural environment. Where a unitary idea of space counts, that does not distinguish between full and empty, internal or external, and becomes a place when it is experienced, shared and transformed by the presence of men. The problem is how architecture can be practised in such a composite, plural environment. Crucial themes cannot be faced following inherited models and prejudices, but by attempts, from different points of view, often still unexplored, so that roots, relations and possibilities may emerge: without separating the single types or elements from the whole of landscapes. The purpose is not to draft single architecture projects, but

to study the way in which each project can be inserted into the landscape. Which is not the background against which the objects of architecture stand out, but the place and matrix of complex relations in which both the inhabitant and the planner are involved. Even clearer are Pierluigi Nicolin's conclusions (Nicolin 2003). The most traditional principles of modern architecture (order, hierarchy, duration and representation) must be questioned. The theme of comparison with forms of nature and the landscape is imposed. Architecture becomes *landscape redesign*, capable of making hidden forms become visible and making the landscape fit the needs and meanings expressed by the emerging cultures. An architecture incapable of matching up to these themes is destined to lose sense and value, until it is reduced to pure "landscape infrastructure". If this path is followed, new challenges for the work of the architect will arise. De Carlo shows the importance for the Mediterranean city of "homeopathic action" – limited and specific, but able to produce widespread effects (e.g. actions aimed at collective space which lead to subsequent transformations of individual spaces). Andrea Branzi (2005) conceives architecture projects as "enzymes", capable of leading to important territorial transformations, even if they are not conspicuous monuments or symbols: acting not only on forms but on ways of use and meanings. Worthy of note, I think, is the fact that even architects still tied to the modern tradition seem more open nowadays to these suggestions, though they are still convinced that the architecture project requires rigorous foundations. Vittorio Gregotti, for example, emphasises (Gregotti 2004) that landscape and architecture cannot be mixed, but excludes any conception of the landscape as a mere background to the architecture project: each one forms and transforms the other through a reciprocal dialogue. On the other hand, Gregotti himself had already introduced the "enzymes of architecture" metaphor in the 1960s, be it under conditions and requisites that were more demanding compared with some current tendencies, which express a more reversible, temporary, evolutive orientation (Boeri and Gregotti 2006). Thus, a space for experimenting seems to be opening up on the border between architecture and design, as long as this field of practice is understood in a non-reductive sense. In this sense, *landscape design* may also become an original form of dialogue with the context, instead of being limited to simple ornamental games.

Widening the field of problems is not limited, though, to this border. In the face of the ecological crisis and that of quality of environment in urban life, it seems necessary to think again about the approach to urban planning and urbanistics. A new need for division between *landscape* and *urbanism* arises. Landscape and open space projects again become a strategic variable, to try to renew the visions shared by an urban community (or rather by the plurality of communities that have to cohabit the same place). This is basically a theme that has already been explored by modern town planning culture, but with hypotheses and solutions that no longer seem suitable today. Nicolin has clearly formulated the problem (Nicolin 2003): "how the *landscape* can become a matrix for *planning*". Now the first attempts to gather the most recent experiments and results in the form of new manuals are not lacking (like that recently edited by the London Architectural Association, Mostafavi and Najle 2004). With greater care it could be agreed that this is a crucial field of advanced research, which still requires further experiences and reflections.

We are therefore faced with a large number of traces, suggestions and challenges which seem difficult to put in order following easy academic, disciplinary or professional schemes. The reference frame spreads from *landscape design* micro-experiments to the most complex, uncertain attempts to rediscover a shared vision of *landscape urbanism*. The variety and perhaps hotchpotch of languages and reflections is not surprising. I believe it is a mistake to accept this permanent ambiguity in an acritical, resigned way, but also to expect that a dominant paradigm be imposed in a short time in such a heterogeneous field. Whereas a commitment to clarify the multiplicity of interests and points of view seems reasonable and appropriate. Only if partial positions become more evident and rigorous will the dialogue, or at least the dialectic encounter between the concurrent visions, become possible and useful. The variety of interpretations in this field requires, it seems to me, some subjective position-taking: in respect of the paradigmatic reference frame and the idea of landscape, the most suitable techniques for regulation and transformation and the consequent implications for the disciplinary traditions of planning and architecture. To clarify the differences and perspectives, I think a critical and reflective return to certain roots seems essential.

2 Uncertain Paradigms

As is known, the idea of landscape has always presented unyielding ambiguity. It can be referred to profoundly different paradigms that often seem to coexist, in reflections or practices, without clear distinction. Furthermore, each one still reveals notable factors of uncertainty that assail its own internal structure. Landscape can be understood as the *scrap of reality discernable from a particular point of view* but also *specific modes of representation.* The latter, moreover, can be quite different: subjective up to the point of proving self-referential and ephemeral, mediated by the dominant culture, or concretely expressed according to the positive models of scientific investigation. The often banal popularisation of the romantic idea of landscape usually constitutes the most common documentation of the first tendency. Scientific visions have been worked out, above all, by an important current of geographic thought and, more recently, by some ecologically oriented schools of planning. If the romantic vision risks always appearing contingent and arbitrary, the scientific one tends towards reductive simplifications. The will to explain "also what the eye cannot see", i.e. to pick out relations and causes that are not obvious but useful for the aims of control and transformation of the environment, also inspired in Italy, in particular between the 1950s and the 1970s, a vast trend of "empirical research of positivist tradition" (Zerbi 1993). Results do not seem to have been all that important for some time and expectations are not very promising: a notable repertory is available of quantitative descriptions and taxonomic classifications founded on obvious features; less significant have been the contributions of dynamic and in-depth analysis of relations between physical, biological and anthropological features; overall understanding of phenomena and their evolutive possibilities

still seems to be limited. To find a representation that is synoptic and as stable as possible, we end up separating the physical world from the world of human ideas and actions (Berque 1995) and tend to underestimate the point of view and role of subjects. Consequent representations risk having no roots, no intentionality, no interactive possibilities (Farinelli 2003).

Between the two families of positions – *romantic* or *scientific* – a vast trend of *cultural interpretations* of the idea of landscapes arises, and in my opinion these constitute by far the most interesting references (perhaps the only ones today deserving new, deeper research). The idea of landscape is still *culturally determined* (Jackson 1984). Observation counts not only for eminent landscapes but for the whole territory, including its ordinary manifestations. With a move that was then rather unusual, Jackson invited us to look with interest and respect at any landscape created by human action, without judging it on the grounds of preconceptions, but trying to approach it "just as it is", with the tolerance we owe to every expression of individual or collective life (Petruccioli 2006). More recently, in Italy, some photographic research currents (Galbiati et al. 1996) have developed a point of view in certain ways similar, directing a glance full of *pietas* at daily events, which does not mean supporting a thesis or expressing an opinion, but seeking to restore visibility to ordinary situations that risk being lost, since the capacity for seeing of the subjects seems weaker and weaker in the face of the "knot of highly intricate signs" to which they are constantly exposed. But this is not the only emerging position.

Other authors tend to take *responsibility for an interpretation* of the signs of the landscape. They therefore inquire into the historic and cultural conditions that affect the way the subject sees (Cosgrove 1984). Or they explore the forms and processes of social signification and communication that can refer from one sign system to another, along an interpretative route perhaps without end (in Italy, Turri 1979). Yet others (e.g. Berque 1995; Roger 1997) appropriately insist on the *circularity of these processes:* interpretations of the environment and landscape as ways of seeing and representing depend on cultural factors that are the expression of social and territorial organisation, but they can contribute to modification of these factors (and therefore, perhaps, of the organisation itself). Roger, in particular, highlights how the subject's way of seeing depends on the arts that mostly influence him: "life imitates art much more than art imitates life", said Oscar Wilde. The artist's creativity generates new visions of the world and he is able to show subjects "the spectacle of which they are a part without seeing it", too taken up with conditions and commitments of daily life (on the idea of landscape as theatre, in Italy Turri (1998) can be consulted). The impossibility of finding a foundation for the interpretation and dynamic mediation of the cultural-historic context tends to exclude reverting to the traditional scientific paradigm. The picture appears enormously more complex: it is not enough to observe a state of nature from the outside; it is not enough to observe the world as a spatially settled society; *the actual way of seeing* and its evolution need to be questioned.

Thus, in the different cases the *idea of representation* is changing appreciably and raising problems that are gradually more complex. For representations can not only give shape to a repertory of ideal models (like certain forms of parks or gardens

created by the landscape discipline) but also highlight emerging changes in forms and meanings in contemporary urban landscapes. Such dynamic features, often contingent, can cause many traditional models to enter a crisis and require new architectural interpretations, both descriptive and projectual. The most radical difference, probably, is that arising between the (modern) conception of the landscape as a (*critical*) *vision at a distance* and the (classical) one of the landscape as a *sphere of belonging* in which the subject fulfils *lived experience*. The first presupposes not only a glance from some place, and the will and capacity for representation, but also the need for active distance-taking. The landscape "should not be touched, not crossed", Simmel observed (Simmel 2006). The vision is always dynamic and relational, as a temporary outcome of the continuous tension between an unbridgeable gap (the landscape does not belong to the subject) and the will to move nearer, which is expressed by action (you cannot understand the landscape if you do not act). It presupposes a situation of uncertainty and surprise, which raises questions on the real and the possible, and therefore research and discovery *underway*: "just as we begin to get oriented, then the landscape suddenly disappears, like the façade of a house when we enter it", noted Benjamin (Boella 1988). Whereas the second conception is founded on the presupposition that the landscape "is not looked at, but *lived*" (to use an expression from Goethe). It introduces an idea of landscape as an *ethical reality*, which expresses common belonging of the inhabitants of a place (Venturi Ferriolo 2002). The landscape is the place of identity to which the inhabitants belong, a complex creation of a community that expresses its vision of the world (assuming that notions of place and community in the strict sense are applicable for territorial contexts that present more and more atopical, multicultural features). It is a question of two contrasting positions that can take on an idealtypical value but perhaps should not be meant in their extreme forms. To imagine a close-knit territorial community anywhere would probably be careless in this phase. This does not mean expressing nostalgia for the apparent autonomy of the romantic subject and the possible arbitrary nature of his visions. Italo Calvino has clarified this point well (Belpoliti 1996): "the I is not the subject of the vision, but only a window . . . it looks out from its own eyes as if at a window-sill: out there is the world and here? still the world, what do you think it is". There cannot be a vision that is not mediated by the culture of the place, but at the same time "the world cannot look at the world without passing through the I . . . doing without that stain of anxiety that is the presence of the subject".

I believe that the most fertile paradigmatic orientation is that which does not presuppose a community and shared ethics where they do not exist, but recognises the need for active glances at a distance: moreover, not autonomous or arbitrary, but mediated by the influence of a common tradition or at least the context of cohabitation. We must imagine a plurality of situated glances and consequent action perspectives that can raise problems of mutual coherence. The fragmented and sometimes chaotic image of many contemporary urban landscapes probably expresses the uncertain coexistence of a plurality of partial orders, still little understood, the dynamics and interdependence of which create new problems for regulation and the project (Lanzani 2003). In any context, a patient reconstruction seems necessary of the

emerging points of view, the places and perspectives they express, the reasons and mediation constituting them, the interaction (also conflictive) between the many visions and their subsequent modifications by open processes of coevolution. The need is felt for multiplying visions to explore any meanings and possibilities in common, if these exist: not just concerning the visible forms (following a reductive notion of landscape as a view), but the ways a local society that has settled in the context organises housing, economics and environment, though remaining anchored to more general networks of relations. The specificity and importance of the notion of *landscapes* (in the plural) lies, in my opinion, in the reference to some fundamental themes to understand current settlement models and their transformation: the necessary relations between visible forms and coevolutive processes of production of sense, not only horizontal but also trans-scalar; the uncertain balances and dynamic interaction between individual rationalities and collective rationality, i.e. between the plurality of visions and interests in play, and the necessary sharing of the landscape as a common good.

3 Common Goods Regulation

In this conceptual picture, though problematic, I have no doubts about the need to adopt an idea of landscape as a *cultural good*, namely as a potential *common good*. Alternatives do not exist, even though the appropriateness of this vision might seem less obvious if the premise of a unitary, shared "place ethics" were questioned. To adopt this hypothesis means to put to the test in the context the variety of regulation principles and mechanisms that have been experimented in recent years in the field of cultural goods. A purely binding approach appears clearly inadequate, although a strong Italian tradition of cultural patrimony conservation exists, that has carried out essential functions during the phases of most intense growth of our country. Salvatore Settis (2002) rightly emphasises the fundamental contribution of a "secular conservation culture" that has managed to protect a rich, widespread patrimony, deeply rooted in territories, as a shared value belonging to the civil conscience. The most precious cultural good of the country is the overall quality of city and territory, landscape and environment, where a large number of specific goods have a meaning and the possibility of being appreciated. However, a protective policy, though it be active, "tending to spread knowledge and ensure maintenance", no longer seems sufficient.

The Italian problem has for some time been the relaunch of a virtuous course of development, capable of reconciling the growth of competitive efficiency with the European directives on cohesion and sustainability. If this is the perspective, the *endowment of common goods* – institutions, capital stock, cultural traditions, environmental situations and, indeed, urban and territorial landscapes – becomes a strategic variable of great interest, as Carlo Donolo has shown in a masterly way in various papers (see, for example, Donolo 1997, 2003, 2004). Common goods are not just productive resources but conditions of possibility that play an important

role in a variety of processes of value creation: development, sustainability, social cohesion, capital stock enhancement, improvement in quality of life.

A rich endowment of common goods ensures useful mediation with respect to possible excesses of self-interested behaviour (because it is known that market rationality is not able to guide the management of this family of goods). Also because the availability of common goods contributes to modifying the preferences of the single actors, guiding them on the basis of more sustainable and cooperative values. Thus, it can generate virtuous circuits: a high-quality landscape increases the probability of future care of the landscape, both by direct policies and thanks to widespread forms of self-regulation of behaviour. But we also know that common goods are exposed to incumbent risks of decay and dissipation (the tragedy of common goods), if regulation systems are not adequate. Between the orthodox hypothesis of pure public control (which has already given vastly unsatisfactory results) and the extreme alternative of privatisation or deregulation, a vast field of principles and techniques exists (Donolo 1997), which should probably not be considered as mutually exclusive: reassignment of rights, contractual agreements, definition of standards and incentives, forms of concerted effort and compensation, third-party arbitration.

The hypothesis of resolving problems of quality protection of a landscape by simply attributing ownership of it to a private actor risks being seriously deceptive: both because the risks of oligarchic use of the good are clear and because the definition of a transparent and safely legitimate procedure for individuating the private actors to whom goods of public interest are to be assigned raises serious doubts. Making some uses and behaviours, the subject of contracts involves transaction costs that are often not negligible. Certification and sharing of quality standards is a simple technique that can determine some positive effects on individual behaviours, as it contributes to strengthening the idea that a good endowment of common goods can ensure advantages for every actor living in the context. However, it cannot be ignored that the more intense transformation processes are, the more inevitable it seems that recourse to techniques of negotiation, arbitration and compensation will be. A field of treacherous experiences looms for the kind of goods being discussed and the substantial lack in our country of an adequate culture of concerted effort between public and private interests. In any case, it would be a mistake to imagine that some instruments may in general be more effective than others. It is always a question of activating suitable combinations of specific instruments with respect to the conditions and possibilities of the context. Formal definition of rules is not enough, without verification of induced or emerging social practices. It is the body of rules and practices that determines the quality and efficacy of a regulative system. Recent experiments of integrated action programmes, with contents both regulative and pertaining to transformation, have not yet given entirely convincing results. However, in my opinion, an innovative perspective can be detected that deserves attention: it is important that the strategic objective is not reduced to the *defence of specific goods* (in this case, landscapes), but is understood in more radical terms as the search for a *more effective process of development*, that should improve the value of local

potential (including landscapes). Namely it seems fundamental to find virtuous links between regulation and development objectives in order to sustain landscape care.

4 Transformation Projects

This perspective leads to transformation problems being faced on the basis of the same analogy. If the landscape is a "cultural good", it might be interesting to explore the ways of treating this category of goods through "territorial transformation projects". This is an emerging hypothesis (though still controversial) regarding the general problems of turning cultural goods to account (Ponzini 2005). A purely publicist strategy would nowadays be unsustainable. It seems necessary to frame the possibilities of virtuous promotion of cultural goods rooted in a context within territorial transformation projects able to produce added value in sustainable forms for the context itself. The same idea can be extended, with critical spirit, to themes of urban and environmental landscape promotion. The implicit hypothesis is that this should not be a sectorial problem requiring a separate approach, be it the traditional art of gardens or the new landscapism. The landscape is a critical dimension of each "urban project": critical precisely because of the difficulty in reconciling plural interests and visions with the nature of "common good", and of creating a relationship between the visibility of the apparent forms and the dense, often non-transparent sphere of meanings and interpretations. If it is true that "landscapes are not designed" (this is the opinion of Eugenio Turri, who is obviously not referring to the particular, rather unnatural case of designer parks and gardens), landscape transformations can be guided not just by the system of rules in force, but also by projectual action with a variety of aims. Which will present the general features of the urban project: as a programme of transformation concerning important parts of urbanised territory, it will adopt a horizon with pluriennial duration, it must respond to agreed requisites (on applications, aims and commitments) and be accompanied by procedural rules (process management is fundamental). Thus, it cannot be a definite product, like an executive architectural project. A capacity for evolutive modification is required in relation to the emerging conditions.

The contents are not limited to physical transformations. The "social" dimension cannot be developed a posteriori, in terms of completion or compensation. The cooperative contribution of professionals from various cultural fields and professions is necessary (it is not obvious who should be the coordinator: not always the architect, not just any architect). Some context requisites are fundamental: leadership and political responsibility, strategic vision and administrative-political commitment (without which processes do not proceed alone), management capacity (a project leader is necessary). On this subject, projects should be involved that match up to the ambiguous, plural dimension of the landscape. Each action on the territory and networks becomes an intervention on the landscape (and vice versa). This principle of reciprocity should be respected by all government actions on the

territory. It is not enough to consider the parameters of functionality, cost, safety and environmental impact of works, which must interact with contexts from numerous points of view (including those of morphology and landscape). Technical-projectual features and types must be specified in relation to the variety of local contexts and landscapes. A preventive assessment is useful of the effects of the works on the landscape. European directives tend to control sectorial impacts of the project (on air, water, earth, flora, fauna, material resources and cultural patrimony). But the quality of the landscape depends on modalities of local integration of all these factors: a more comprehensive, integrated vision is needed. Strategic environmental evaluations should be extended to the themes of the landscape, resorting to suitable forms of inter-institutional concerted effort, since the institutions involved are numerous. It is a mistake to separate the evaluation of technical-economic feasibility of the work, entrusted to the preliminary project, from any other evaluation (which, on the other hand, it would be useful to bring forward). These are outset positions that Alberto Clementi has tried to specify in recent years (see Clementi 2002, 2003), but they have only partially been experimented. Some progress in this direction is indispensable.

5 Landscapes and Planning

The perspective outlined here has nothing, therefore, to do with attempts to found specific disciplinary knowledge (widespread landscapism schools abroad, but not in Italy). Whereas it seems able to introduce elements of worry, potentially fertile in current conceptions of planning and architecture. Landscape planning has carried out some interesting experiments in Italy over the last twenty years (Gambi 1996; Gambino 1996, 1997), but nowadays does not constitute a frontier experience. Apart from a few exceptions (including original research by Giovanni Maciocco, 1995, and Maciocco et al. 2000), the majority of experiments do not seem able to offer innovative prospects these days. A balance is now available and some themes of criticism seem clear. As much as a plan usually expresses the will to act as control or overall guide for the transformation needs of a territory, paradoxically, landscape planning has ended up in many cases protecting particular goods isolated from the context. Care for overall quality of environmental and settlement systems has proved less effective.

Technical-scientific culture of the "ecological" kind has shown itself too schematic and reductive (see Steiner 1994). Many widely adopted instruments and techniques have proved to be clumsy: for example, the notion of "territorial invariant" has often been understood as banal research into immediately evident homogeneous spatial features, rather than integration into specific contexts of principles and factors of a different nature. Moreover, the hypotheses of projectual or normative use of empirical evidence revealed by mere statistical analyses have been too mechanical.

Nowadays, the hypothesis more frequently shared seems to be that a territorial plan offers first of all an "image of the future" of the territory being studied, able

to highlight critical relations and virtuous evolutive possibilities, without separating the landscape dimension from the great environmental, settlement and social tendencies: as matrices of more specific projectuality and a guide for local furthering of investigation and action (Palermo 2004). Without neglecting the risk that the guiding function of the plan be reduced to weak, vague orientation, compatible with real processes of substantial deregulation (as has happened in some Italian regions). This idea of planning is coherent with the vision of "landscape as a common good" and "transformation by projects" that has been mentioned. It becomes a complementary factor of notable importance for this vision to become more credible and effective.

This scenario, moreover, does not appear to be entirely plausible if the state of difficulty in which Italian urbanistics currently finds itself is considered. An unrelenting trend, though latent, namely not recognised or legitimised by theoretical reflection, has been underway over the last few tens of years (Palermo 2006). Practices have changed appreciably, the rejection of outset positions has been growing, but apparently no need has been felt for theoretical revision. In fact, in spite of growing incongruities, new facts and old ideas coexist ambiguously. Halfway through the twentieth century, Italian town planning was based on an original, somewhat improbable (almost unique) model: a form of *prescriptive* plan, at the same time *comprehensive and detailed*, which had to last for the *medium-long term*. After some thirty or forty years, partial revision proved inevitable, which introduced also into Italy the division, well-known in Europe, between *structure frames* and *operative programmes*. But the structural vision turned out in many cases still to be too generic and comprehensive (instead of being selective and strategic). Moreover, coherence of operations often appeared uncertain, be it due to the insufficient guiding function of the programmed frames, be it for the contingent and fragmentary nature of the emerging opportunities and interests. Over the last ten to fifteen years, there has been intense experimental work with *integrated projects for local intervention*, an interesting tendency, though perhaps overestimated, that has been negatively conditioned by the usually backward situations of contexts and nowadays seems to have lost a large part of its initial propulsive thrust. In the most recent years, the disciplinary culture has taken a further step backwards compared with the original premises, accepting some reductive and decontextualised ideas of *strategic planning*, coming from other fields of experience.

The entire process may be understood as a sequence of successive setbacks, revealing a surprising incapacity for *learning* and *integration:* between old and new experiences, between visions, rules and projects, between strategic visions and structural organisation. These limits weigh heavily when themes of care and transformation of landcapes need to be faced. Because in this sphere it is fundamental to be able to count on a "form of plan" understood as a frame of coherence between strategic projects for active protection or transformation; on "guiding visions" sustained by widespread consent and able to effectively orient the behaviour of actors; on "local projects" founded on specific reasons, of form and meaning, shared by the inhabitants and able to induce virtuous effects on vaster territorial situations. The landscape dimension of planning problems may be treated in adequate ways only if Italian town planning culture manages to renew itself in the direction indicated

here. The majority of models experienced – from the general *landscape planning*
prescriptive plan of the ecological school – belong to the past. They are clearly
inadequate to face the problems raised by emerging forms of social and settlement
organisation: the widespread city, dynamic networks of temporal relations and mo-
bility, places without identity continually redefined by use (Lanzani 2003; Bonomi
and Abruzzese 2004).

6 Landscapes and Architecture

The perspective outlined presents some important implications also for culture and
practice in architecture. As I have already mentioned, a separation between the two
fields does not seem convincing. The reflections of De Carlo, Nicolin and others
tend to exclude this possibility with convincing arguments. The landscape can no
longer be understood as the background to works of architecture, but as the *field of
interaction* of which each project becomes a part. It also becomes a point of view
that enables the idea of project to be renewed: no longer formal composition that
responds to pre-established requisites (according to some modernity traditions, in
particular the art of gardens), but exploration of possible relations between processes
and the multiple forms that arise from a common context.

   The disciplinary glance shifts from architectonic objects, from volumes and
forms of the built-up area towards mutual interdependence, significations, possibil-
ities. The landscape still represents a temporary manifestation of this multiplicity,
or rather a variety of representations according to influential mediation and points
of view. On the other hand, all modification of the landscape should be understood
as an architectural work, the temporary outcome of an incessant dialogue between
project and context. A work that is not configured as a traditional project on a dilated
scale, but is the outcome of a process of re-signification that affects both the existing
and the new, renewing each of them (De Rossi et al. 1999). This vision leads to new
reflections that are not trivial for various currents of the disciplinary thought. It
is not just a question of conceiving a work of architecture as a component of the
context, but as an isolated, fundamentally autonomous man-made element. But also
of reformulating the idea itself of *context* and *planning* from certain important points
of view. This seems to be the temporary outcome of a long course (described well
by Durbiano and Robiglio 2003) of difficult relations between Italian architects and
landscape themes. Themes that have never been underestimated, at least over the last
fifty years, but described in numerous forms, without any really satisfactory actual
results. Suffice to recall the long-standing need to take care of physical integration
of a work of architecture in the natural environment. The concept of "pre-existing
environmental elements" as a place of values rooted in a culture: to safeguard with
respect to post-war processes, not by mere prescriptions that bind, but thanks to
reinterpretation of the relations between environment and buildings, between tradi-
tions and innovative transformations. The idea of landscape as a "possible form of
the territory" and the attempts of an "integral approach" (including the landscape

dimension) to planning for the territory, on a wide scale previously little explored with regard to past forms of urban settlements. The culture of conservation of the most traditional typical landscapes. The emerging dimension of the "local", where landscape is not only a physical form, but a variety of ways of life and typical values of the place. The fragmentary and apparently chaotic landscapes of the widespread city that document the crisis of the most important theories of architecture but confirm, at the same time, a strong demand for projectual capacity.

This sequence of problems and attempts, often generous but usually incomplete, could represent a strong impulse for revising certain paradigms. Some innovative conceptions of the urban architecture project that gave international prestige to the Italian schools of the 1960s seem nowadays to have lost an effective capacity to influence. A morphological vision is not enough, if it is still too rigid, formal and prevalently limited to physical dimensions, the reproposal of alleged founding models or authors' visions that are late-modern inspired (Gregotti himself seems to reformulate his idea of "project as a critical modification of what exists" in more cautious, moderate forms, 2004 and 2006) is not convincing. Landscape themes contribute to legitimise an idea of *enzymatic architecture*: "capable of being inserted in transformation processes without imposing externally pre-established codes, of going beyond the limits of the building to activate widespread services in the environment; without seeking final solutions but light, reversible ones, able to fit into the increasingly changing, fluid dynamics of the context" (Branzi 2005). An exciting idea, if it were not for the risk of proving too easy and conformist. But in these elements of inspiration, a theoretical course of notable interest can be detected: the need to give an effective interpretation to the will (always expressed) for dialogue between project and context (without excessively one-sided reductions!); the hope of effectively conceiving the *project as a* virtuous *evolutive possibility* of the context, able to temporarily reconcile partial visions and collective interest, apparent forms, old and new meanings and values (Dematteis 1995, 2003). If modernity tended to legitimise direct, instrumental actions on visible forms, now a profoundly different perspective is taking shape: it is not a matter of acting on things in a guiding manner or of prescribing behaviour, but of trying to support the explicit or latent potential of the situation. This is the method that usually guides *social self-organisation* processes and strategic experiences and those of negotiation in *inter-institutional and territorial governance*. Its legitimacy and efficacy *in the field of architecture* is not obvious: in fact, it might be feared that this vision gives place to weak, acritical, conformist practice, limiting itself to rationalising or embellishing evolutive possibilities already implicit in existing situations. The tendency is not free from problems; therefore, indeed it brings some radical dilemmas to light. On the one hand, a model of rationality is taking shape which is actually still vastly alien to western culture (Jullien 1998) and risks being understood as a reassuring ideology, though vague and perhaps inert: i.e. it risks dismissing responsibility for critical modification of what exists. On the other hand, recalling stronger commitments and founding principles risks seeming nostalgic and ungenerous. Nostalgic for experiences and models of modern tradition that, in spite of virtuous intentions, have produced more than a few perverse effects (they were the generating matrix of

many non-places of contemporary times!). Ungenerous towards the vast field of the most recent investigations, which are varied and not always comparable: perhaps it is not fair to classify them all, indistinctly, as degenerative forms of post-modernity (Gregotti 2006). This would risk, to say the least, not gathering the new enzymes of possible innovations, giving up perhaps plausible hopes and opportunities for the necessary renewal of the discipline and practices (Boeri and Gregotti 2006). These dilemmas may find a solution only if architecture is able to match up in non-ritual ways with society and territory. The themes of the landscape, like "making a society on its territory" (Gambi 1971, 1996), are a way that might favour this tiring tendency.

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Landscape, Live Nature

Towards the Construction of the Image of the Landscape in the West

Pedro Azara

If a landscape is – as Byron said – a state of consciousness,
a state of consciousness is also a landscape
(Miguel de Unamuno).[1]

1 Panorama[2]: Landscape and Tourism

Enjoy summer throughout the whole year, surrounded by abundant vegetation, with exotic plants and flowers that make the landscape even more beautiful;

a really delightful landscape that closely unites us with Nature and its generous profusion of marvels;

Switzerland is a fairy-tale country (. . .); it distinguishes itself above all for its impressive landscapes: high, green mountains, lakes, waterfalls, plentiful streams. . .

With all the pomp and bad taste necessary, these three quotations, taken from travel brochures published this year, show that the landscape is the condition of nature exposed to the eyes of the traveller.

Nowadays, "landscape" and "tourism" are two terms that are indissolubly united in a perfect, symmetrical relationship, as if tourism had the purpose of parading in front of a landscape, and the landscape of composing itself solely for the traveller's pleasure. A third term is usually associated with them: "travel", as can be deduced from the quotations given above.

Together with gastronomy, customs, festivals, cities and monuments, the landscape is one of the final goals or attractions that travel agencies deal with, and with which tourists make up their programmes for forthcoming rest periods or for a holiday away.

We travel to look at cities, buildings, ruins and "nature", namely "landscapes". The landscape is also a category that defines taste, even the individual person. One "is" a lover of landscapes, travelling only to gaze at them, whereas others are "of" the city, preferring the dense, noisy urban mass. Tourists are divided into those who

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prefer travelling to cities (urban tourists) and those who choose "the" landscapes (shaping those who, seriously or with irony, define themselves as travellers with an "ecological conscience"), even though the city may belong to a landscape, and is part, like a mountain, river or wood, of a "view".

Landscape is an option, the answer to a preference. The expression (or command) quoted by many agencies – "enjoy the landscape" – clearly reveals that this is a fact or event associated with spare time and recreation and that landscape is incompatible with work. During the working week, the landscape (meant as a pleasant view that fills the desires and is freely accessed, and not just what is in front of us and can be seen, whether we want to or not) does not exist.

The landscape is a spectacle, the backdrop of an impressive scene under the vault of heaven. Mountains, fields, woods, streams and hamlets, where domestic animals ruminate in the meadows with the occasional person, who appears to be standing still in the distance as though part, since time immemorial, of the environment, however small and insignificant, set there to be gazed at.

These are spread before the eyes of the observer. A landscape is always open nature, manifesting and revealing itself completely (even at the cost of losing complexity and secrets, folds where truth is hidden). There is something immodest about a landscape; nature torn from itself abandons itself, it would seem, totally; or pathetic: a glance undresses the whole. Nature undressed (by sight), exposed: this is a landscape. No one places himself/herself in front of a landscape perceiving nothing from it.

Trees cannot hide the wood. Maximum exposure is sought, absolute clarity, a dominating vision. A landscape is an environment that has stayed still under the spotlight of those observing, it is nature arranged according to a point of view, that observes from afar, composed by individual subjectivity.

Something like sentimental cartography: This could be the definition of landscape. It is nature subjected to an opinion, where elements are placed, not depending on what they are and the position they occupy in a geometric space, but depending on human judgement, on the affective relations they establish with the observer, the sensations they arouse in him. The landscape does not exist in itself; it is only a mental construct, an image that the visitor builds from what he sees, filtered through his expectations and prejudices. Sight also eliminates unwanted details, but nothing, neither smoke nor a grey day, can change or spoil the enjoyment anticipated from contemplation. Some details are enlarged while others, like that ugly chimney or those twisted electricity poles, are made smaller: we say they are out of place, as if the landscape were a composition created according to a certain tone (the sentiment of the observer, the affective colouring with which he paints it). Released elements are immediately placed in relation to each other. Sight voluntarily guides nature's components with the aim of putting them in order (in all senses of the term), to frame (a verb with strong military echoes) a landscape that responds to the taste and whims of the observer. A landscape is a creation; it is nature filtered by feeling:

> landscapes are like music that leads us sweetly to the land of formless dreams, of ineffable ideas, of bodiless representations, from which in a strange mixture of forgotten ideas and dormant feelings from the depths of the soul arises all the delightful world of the

subconscious, usually powerful with the power of silence, a world of threads so complicated and infinite like that of reality, a world that awakens and reveals itself to man showing him the hidden treasures of its soul

(de Unamuno 2004, pp. 10–11).

The landscape only appears at a certain distance and, if possible, at a certain height. Valleys are always low, at the bottom, and even their highest crags do not rise above the head of the spectator. Sounds are transformed into undefined noise and cannot be located, cannot be associated with any real fact. It is like the whirling of the wind that wraps around and dilutes noises that are excessively sharp or recognisable, or the tinkling of bells that echo in the cold air.

For those who work in the country, for those who obtain their living from agricultural goods, the landscape does not exist – only the earth. The soil is present, and the relationship between man and land is not visual but physical. The country person is rooted to or uprooted from this. Between them they are a body; the distance between the peasant and the land that supports him, necessary for the aesthetic contemplation that a landscape view generates, does not exist. For country workers, nature is not perceived as an image.

The land is impregnated with smells, acrid organic, animal emanations that ooze from the land at sunset, in a warmed atmosphere. On the contrary, the landscape does not give off smells. It belongs to the world of the image, of fiction. Everything associated with the inferior senses (smell, taste, touch) is forbidden. There simply is no room; it is unthinkable.

The landscape is, by definition, aseptic, nature freed from "nature" (from "natura naturans"), from the prolific condition of matter. Odours establish intimate relations with what surrounds us. They signify the nearness of things and entities that pulsate. Smell is an inevitable indication of proximity, of closeness, almost of physical contact, but also of filth and desire. Smell alerts us of the small distance of things. Odours are only permitted for family members.

With unknown people, the environment should be ventilated, so that no sign remains of our condition, our habits, each time odour denotes our tastes, or ultimately, what we are. To maintain distances, it is an impersonal environment that needs to be achieved, conceived only to be shown, not lived. No one can live in a landscape. We live only on (or under) the land, in permanent contact with (odorous) matter.

Recreation areas, belvedere spots exist, almost always in places set at a certain height, where the traveller can gaze at and command the view. The relationship between man and nature (converted by this relationship into landscape) is apparently passive. Both are still. To be able to gaze at a landscape, one must stop and be isolated.

Landscapes are always fixed views from a single observation point. Only the circular movement of the observer, who turns his head, gives an illusory dynamic effect to a fundamentally static view. The landscape is nature that has stood still, posing, immobile, for man. The spectator says he is dominated, completely enraptured by what he is gazing at, feeling himself small and at the same time overwhelmed by what spreads itself before his eyes.

Actually, he is mentally constructing the landscape he is observing and changing boundless nature into a reduced view he calls landscape, which contains perfectly delimited natural and artificial elements. The act of vision makes all exterior elements equal and melts them in a single image.

The fact that nature is observed from a distance helps cancel out the differences between the elements and blend them into a whole, in which light unifies and completes elements not meant to not unite – given that union or harmony is not inherent but is only the result of the power of the glance, establishing links between distant elements enclosed in themselves, which were not created to be either related or balanced.

Would that Gea, the almighty, fragile Mother Earth, manage to balance up what she creates, but she, too, is an invention or human construction that tries to give sense to that which is basically unchangeable – Gea, or Mother Earth, exists only in myths.

Differences are smoothed out, dangers crushed, irregularities reduced, immersed in a bright, coloured whole that lasts only for the time of the act of observation.

Landscape is therefore a mental category, a quality imposed on things during contemplation. The world is not, nor constitutes, a landscape, but is transformed into a landscape, thanks to the spectator's vision. A landscape does not have a background but all the elements seem arranged, they seem to exist, as if by magic, just to be contemplated. Thus as many landscapes exist as subjects. It is an incommunicable image that, nevertheless, can be moulded. The landscape is, then, nature converted into an image, reproduced, photographed or painted.

2 The Art of the Landscape

2.1 The East and the West (twelfth–seventeenth centuries)

There was a time when the landscape was an artistic genre and not a tourist objective. The relationship between landscape and art should not really surprise us, given that the landscape has been defined as judged nature, in which reason selects and orders data supplied mainly by the sense of sight (but also by hearing and smell), put in order by individual subjectivity.

Oriental tradition is rich in landscapes, especially Chinese painting of the last one thousand five hundred years approximately (even if the moment of splendour was around 1200 AD). Large, vertical compositions, often in black and white, show unusual views (to the eyes of the West) of dizzy heights, solitary trees suspended in the emptiness, steep gullies where harsh rivers wind, clouds whimsically tacked onto a summit, or some thinker absorbed in himself, small compared with Nature, almost a stain on a sheet or canvas, facing the void.

These large compositions, where the basic elements – water, earth, air and light – combine, recall natural scenes (and are without doubt inspired by them), but are not a faithful reproduction of them. The space is not unified, but it would seem as

though the composition were the result of the juxtaposition of partial views taken from a variety of natural scenes.

What the painter pursues is not a model of reality but a calculated composition, aimed at provoking certain states of the soul considered beneficial. The function of these images is to cause particular ecstasy, provoke spiritual movement, to move the soul towards certain regions where it will be calmed or troubled.

These images have a function similar to that of the Byzantine icons. They are not portraits of reality, nor do they aspire to be (in spite of the apparent realism of certain elements), but they should be considered religious images. Actually, they do not reflect nature; on the contrary they are wise combinations of elements that come from outside, duly stylised, ordered according to fixed rules, with views that create an image fit to awaken precise sentiments in the mind, arouse the soul or establish favourable states for concentration, reflection, meditation. These compositions should be considered an arrangement of forms that may be abstract or geometrical. Their resemblance to reality is secondary compared with their capacity to direct the spirit in one direction or another. They are not "real" or external landscapes but are, however, faithful portraits of states of mind that are translated or become manifest, thanks to particular (natural) forms.

Even when it was thought that Leonardo Da Vinci's studies on nature, such as a well-known sketch in ink of the Valley of the Arno (perhaps the first landscape in western art), were influenced by the theory of Chinese art (brought by merchants or Venetian ambassadors who had relations with the Chinese Imperial court, and studied by Leonardo during a journey to Venice, the "Serenissima"), western landscape tradition was much later compared with that of the Far East, and was based on postulates and pursued aims that had little to do with those of the Chinese painters.

With the exception of the first works of Leonardo and Dürer at the end of the fifteenth century, which are so extemporary it is difficult to know how to interpret them, the landscape begins to be a new minor pictorial genre halfway through the sixteenth century – together with the modest genres of the portrait, pictures of still life or edible items, the prestige of which was dimmed compared with that enjoyed by historical paintings (mythological and Old Testament scenes) and religious and devotional painting (focused on the life of Christ).

This new genre developed mainly, though for very different reasons, in Italy and the Netherlands, especially in the seventeenth century, and in the United Kingdom in the eighteenth century. Its triumph in Holland, together with the success of the minor genres quoted above, is clear, if we think that with the reformed church and reigning Puritanism images (both profane and religious) were judged with diffidence; for the mythological nudes were a hymn to paganism and idolatry, already severely condemned by the Bible. They took attention away from the real God, and religious painting might lead to thinking, as was already happening at the Court of Byzantium in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – and which would set off a cruel conflict between partisans and detractors of the image of the Christian God – that Christ, whose portraits were being painted, was a common man (as defended by Catholicism), who was not particular about his daily diet, as Theresa maintained about Jesus) and not an exceptional being, an elected one, the anointed,

a spiritual guide high above humanity (as reformed Christianity, triumphant in Northern Europe, postulated).

Its development in Italy, as a background to mythological and religious scenes, was also predictable; the ancient models were well worthy of admiration, and among these models were also to be found Arcadian images, which constituted a suitable frame for the heroes of the past to move in, especially if we think that at least a part of such scenes were the result of the vegetable metamorphosis undergone by unfortunate heroes like the famous Danae, transformed into laurel to escape from Apollo's siege, or Narcissus, reduced to a pale flower of the same name liking damp ground, which recalled his fragile, meditative splendour, who drowned due to the beauty of his face reflected in the quiet waters of a lagoon.

Landscape elements (trees, flowers) were composed of heroes turned to stone who had put down roots (or who had had wings grow, transforming them into birds of good omen) and could, at any moment, quietly converse with a solitary, meditative walker and advise him of his destiny.

What did the art of the landscape reveal?

The landscape in Nordic art contained views of the fields as they existed at the time: streams, medium-range waterfalls that fell slowly into the river, muddy paths between enclosed cultivated fields, round-topped hills, churches with pointed bell towers over the plain and clouds full of flakes and ashes.

Views appeared to be realistic images of a daily environment in which imperfections, a sudden puddle, the tracks of a cart in the mud, the threatening sky, a broken tree, dead leaves covered in mud or pitted brambles, very far from the images of ideal or dreamt-of gardens, were not concealed.

The mud, the humus, the ephemeral leaves, dried-up flowers, all signs of the merciless passing of time, were present, mercilessly present, almost enhanced, so that they did not fall into oblivion nor were they buried by an illusion of immortality. And yet the views were the fruit of calculated composition.

What was sought was to underline how the landscape, far from being wild or shaped by the hand of God, was the result of the tenacious work of man in harmony with the cycles of life subjected to celestial plans.

The landscape was born of human labour, which completed the divine creation. Effort and total, silent dedication to work, inherent in all the phases of preparation of the land so that it would produce fruit, from sowing to harvest, which was nothing more than paying homage to God's creation, humbly serving, were clearly manifest in the views of these fields constantly being worked, the wooden fences standing up to the fury of nature, the little hidden houses, with their top part low under wide thatched roofs, which evoked the flavour of harsh daily life given over to work that made both the land worthy and those who cultivated it, and the churches entreating the heavens.

Ora et labora: together with the bell tower, the mill with its wide sails and the yard or stable were the main buildings immersed in nature. Sometimes a restored country house could be glimpsed, closely bound to the earth, with smoke issuing from its chimney. Wooden fences divided the plots, enclosed and framed the landscape, through which wet paths wound, their furrows deep and muddy, showing the

weary, habitual passage of carts loaded with goods. The landscape constituted proof of man being entrusted with the divine mandate: you will cultivate the land, to which you will return, with sweat on your brow.

These "live nature" scenes, where the imprint of the hand of man was so visible, contrasted with two other external views: sea views and representations of Paradise. In the first, the galleons, held in an enclosed bay, protected by the ocean's bidding, seemed to have taken refuge there while waiting to sail again. Again, nature was protecting careful, working man, who was adapting to its serene cycles.

On the other hand, other views showed the ships tossed, if not wrecked by an unleashed storm, under a sky spread out in grief, on the high seas, left to the divine will, which well expressed what happened to human beings who abandoned, without doubt inevitably, the environment they knew best, wanting to go farther than their limited forces allowed, facing the sea and destiny.

Their strength, their cleverness degenerated. They could do nothing against the blind impetus of the elements. Only the divinities (at times entreated to no avail) could save them, then. Pictures of shipwrecks were warnings of the destiny of man who had finished with heaven.

These images of pain and destruction, in which human beings were hardly shown, buried under the greatness and fury of the whole, frozen by the fragility of human work, were not so different, contrary to what it might seem, from the views of Paradise.

These abound in manierist and baroque Flemish painting. Nature showed (and shows) itself in all its splendour – the technique, oil on copper sheets, helped to give the images a smooth, brilliant, immaculate aspect, as if they were a mirror, in which the manual work, the pen strokes, sign of work, of dedication and effort, were not recognised. They were and still are magic images.

The earth, before the fall, was a luxuriant forest, almost excessively superabundant with life, invaded by leafy trees under a green mantel, splendid flowers, huge and ever-renewed, and all kinds of wild, exotic animals (real and fantastic, among which the lion and the unicorn lived together, birds with multi-coloured plumage in blinding colours – the desired birds of Paradise – predators and prey that shared the same space unthreatened), among which Adam and Eve reigned, with no anxiety, still innocent, unmasked. The snake always emerged in a corner, almost hidden, hissing, even if no mouldy leaf or sudden disorientation announced what was about to happen. Uncontaminated Paradise seemed open forever. These pictures, almost always of small dimensions, numerous examples of which exist that should be seen together with views of nature worked by man, must have been pitiful images, recalling what humanity had lost with the Fall, a final, painful loss which, nevertheless, the work of the peasant, bending over the land he worked, tried to diminish, though not compensate. The landscape genre was a genre that implied the lack of man. Rather than land acquired, what was shown was land lost. The land was given to man; his greediness and curiosity made him lose it. The punishment, incessant work, only softened the sentence. But the land was now no longer at his entire disposal, rather, from then onwards he had to earn it, earn it day by day, under the ever-present threat of inclement elements (caused by disappointed ambition, inevitable failure), which

again separated the land, obtained with difficulty, all the more from human beings. The void created between them was a ditch.

2.2 The Landscape in Ancient Times (Messopotamia, Greece, Rome)

Landscape art did not belong, however, to renaissance "discoveries". It was a genre that was already practised in ancient times, at least in the classical epoch, though few results remain. The ancient vision of the landscape is fed above all by descriptions or poetic allusions.

Visual iconography records only a few images in Egyptian and Cretan frescoes (and partially in details of Mesopotamian frescoes – of the city of Mari, mainly – and in Assyrian reliefs); we have to wait for Pompeian wall paintings to find suggested landscapes, halfway between the dream and the realistic representation, between a daytime view and an infernal – or nightmare – vision, which do not transcend towards the much later genre of the manierist landscape: profane fields and, above all, natural elements and spaces, such as a leafy tree or steep mount, full of religious content.

In spite of the variety of landscape motifs, the majority profane, that Vitruvius noted ("harbours, promontories, beaches, rivers, springs, straits, temples, woods, mountains, flocks, shepherds…", *De architectura*, VII, 5), the Pompei-style frescoes recovered throughout the Roman world show above all sacred scenes, dominated by sanctuaries, altars, statues or natural cippuses, without doubt supernatural presences.

Egypt and Crete, halfway through the second millennium, perhaps show the most ancient, important examples of western landscape art – which should not surprise us, as the two cultures were related at those times. Frescoes with pictures of flowers, plants and trees are known in the palaces of Tell-Amarna (Egypt) and Knossos (Crete) – the latter influenced perhaps by Amarnian art, considering the economic and cultural links between the Egyptian and Cretan courts.

In actual fact it is not so much a question of images of natural landscapes as of gardens (stylisation of images also prevents us from recognising with absolute certainty to which means, natural or artificial, the – controlled – plants represented belong).

The images evoke a tidy, civilised world and not a forest, nor lands abandoned to their fate. Animals that were harmful for the chicken coop or game, the predators, remain outside these scenes.

In any case, the presence of wild animals, always in royal hunting scenes, would indicate the omnipotence of the monarch, who fought them, wounding and killing them. Later, in the reliefs of Assyrian palaces, scenes were to be represented in which predators, lions principally, lay in wait for and hunted herbivorous animals such as nervous horses or timorous deer. In these cases, the irruption of violence and death did not constitute an outrage against the order established by the divinity and ensured by the monarch, but was part of the life cycle.

Fig. 1 Assyrian landscape
(farm and farm workers),
Palace of Sennacherib,
London, The British
Museum[3]

Life and death, exemplified by relations between animals of a very different kind, constituted the necessary, unavoidable poles of terrestrial life. Hunting scenes where the monarch was the protagonist served, with respect to the wild animal, only to proclaim that the animal did not have the key to the life cycle, this being in the hands of the king, the only one able to decide, with the divine blessing, on life and death on earth. Plants and animals (mainly birds) lived together in harmony. Nature appeared to be tame or under man's control, in this case the sovereign. Pictures which offered images of partly recognisable plants did not depict (or not solely) the landscape. Their aim was not to faithfully represent nature, but the king's possessions, or rather, an environment that showed his pacifying power.

Nature revealed itself as an extension of the prince, to whom obedience was given, as a reflection of his power, of his capacity to rule the world by divine mandate, since he behaved like the son or representative of heaven on earth. The harmony that still transpires from the pictures (from the light colours and clearly defined shapes that sometimes compose almost geometrical friezes, where disorderly life has been subjected to the regulating plan of geometry or pre-established forms) was a symbol of the harmony reigning between heaven, the king and nature, of the power of the monarch as mediator between the heights and the earth.

Untamed, wild, "original" nature, not yet marked by human action, also existed solely in relation to royal power. Wild nature was a distant land, populated by monsters that lived before man's presence but were waiting for him: it was offered as a place where the monarch could show his omnipotence. Enemies and evil gods lived on the peaks of mountains that separated the Tigris and Euphrates valleys from the steppe of Central Asia. Through deep gullies in the snowy mountain chains, barbarians and evil spirits continuously entered into the orderly territories governed by the Mesopotamian kings.

In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*[4] of Mesopotamia, a thick cedar wood was described in the mountains of Lebanon, almost a labyrinth of trunks, the branches of which

formed an impenetrable, oppressive roof, in the centre of which lived Humbaba, a terrifying monster, whose shape alone cast danger, far away from Mesopotamian cities like Uruk, over good urban order along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. For this reason, Gilgamesh was a semi-divine hero (not just a mortal), king of Uruk and the paradigm of good government, who did not hesitate to enter the thick forest to face the ancestral monster. Nevertheless, "the Cedar Mountain, the dwelling of the gods, the throne-dais of the goddesses" (or "The victory", over which "the cedars rose majestic and luxuriant" (V, I, 6–7) did not seem to be a place to be feared. Firstly, it resembled a seductive (and frightening, without a doubt) courtesan, with the aura of "a sweet smell, thick with perfume. The land was full of bushes that filled the forest" (V, I, 10) who inevitably caught whoever came near in a net. The trees were like lianas that wound round the pulsating, frightened body of the victim.

The place was described as "mysterious" and "slippery" (V, I, 21, 22). Images of softness, blandness arose. Humbaba (the symbol of untameable nature) surrendered, implored, wept even and gave up, abandoning himself; in the Hittite version of the legend, the monster lowered its guard when about to yield and exclaimed pathetically: "O Gilgameš, spare my life (...) let me dwell here for you in (...) Trees as many as you command for me (...) I will guard for you the myrtle, the (...) timber that is the pride of a palace (...)" (V, IV, 47–48). The entire landscape was placed at the feet of the king. A damp, suffocating heat seemed to issue from the (excessively) fleshy plants. The description of the landscape, alive and luxuriant, dangerous, deadly, also because too attractive, heralded the Hellenist images of the deadly Gorgon, the hypnotic beauty whose face petrified whoever gazed at it. Wild nature was not presented as a terrifying place, but as a flattering context in the nets of which the king should not fall, and which had to be possessed, defeated by the king.

"The paths were in good order and the way was well trodden" and were like the later stoic path of vice, "easy" (V, I, 5). In some way, wild nature was, like the ancestral goddesses, excessively beautiful, not yet dominated by man, causing him temptation and putting his valour to the test. The untamed landscape challenged the king and showed his power.

In fact, the king governed, and the well-composed environment exhibited its strength and magic, as it had faced and defeated forever those who had caused, and were symbols of, chaos, such as the hybrid Humbaba (the Beast of the tale), for example, and had not fallen prey to the charms of violent nature.

Only at moments following the death of the king, and preceding the rise to the throne of his successor, re-establishing the order destroyed, could nature show itself as an untameable, violent means, in which human life, when abandoned, was in grave danger. But these situations were not, obviously, portrayed, nor usually narrated (except as a lament). Finally, the garden, both that which grew in enclosed patios and the unlimited Garden of Eden itself, was an extension and manifestation of the power of one man (the monarch, a god on earth, really) over the environment.

These highly stylised primigenial images, in which nature remained subordinated to man – to the monarch, the key of the life cycle – contrasted with other, usually later, scenes, in which the role of protagonist fell not to a monarch but to a human being in flesh and blood, a peasant or a shepherd. In Hesiod (and, later, in bucolic

poetry, just as, though later still, in Rome, the stoic descriptions of the honest land of workers, contrasted with the dissipated, lazy life of the city) nature was used to symbolise the goodness of a life attentive to natural cycles, in harmony with them and regulated by their phases.

Worked land was not an expression of punishment, nor of grace. Men did not cultivate the earth that gave fruit because their ambition or curiosity had to be harshly and eternally castigated, nor because some were elected, to whom nature had delivered, after a hard period of work, its most precious fruits (as would happen, later, generally, with Christianity). The idea of punishment or grace in the pagan world was alien to the conception of nature. This was considered in relation to the human being. It was a land that welcomed him, fed and protected him, on which he liked to live. It remained clear that man was a part of nature, subservient to it and accepted it.

However, this submission did not seem to be a punishment imposed on him. The natural cycle set its conditions, which had to be respected if life was to be kept safe. But these were not felt as a harsh imposition, in spite of the occasional, unpredictable storms, that put life in danger and were perceived as the expression of the anger of the gods because men had not respected the rules and guidelines of nature's cycle. It was not a question of a lack of moral, but of natural, order, the fruit of lack of knowledge of the rigid rules that disciplined life on earth.

For this reason, the close relationship between man and environment was not the consequence of any expulsion or punishment. It was not experienced as a condemnation. Nature was not a prison but a space for living together (animals, human beings, spirits and gods). Man was not abandoned to nature.

On the contrary, man had grown up with nature, thanks to constant, silent work, which in the end gave its fruit. This work was voluntary. Cultivation responded to a decision, freely taken, and not to a divine order which subordinated man's will and his "back". It was a question of being emancipated, not subjected. By cultivating the land, the human being was being formed and moulded.

Man had access to the world and placed it at his service or, rather, discovered how to get into contact with it through work. By working on the land the fruits of the earth were obtained. Man was the agent who managed to complete the natural cycle. Symbiosis between the world and man was produced.

The earth and living beings could not develop one without the other. Cultivated nature was the expression of man fitting perfectly into the world. Fruits and flowers were a symbol of regulation of the life cycle. Contemplating them aroused man's anxiety to be part of nature, and a certain nostalgia for the accelerated pace of time which made this desired encounter difficult or prevented it.

But the sight of those things that tranquillised the soul also made the loss of youth more bearable:

> But if the childhood about my heart bar me from reaching those realms of nature, let my delight be the country, and the running streams amid the dells –may I love the waters and the woods though fame be lost (. . .) O for one to set me in the cool glens of Haemus, and shield me under the branches' mighty shade!

> Blessed is he who has been able to win knowledge of the causes of things, and has cast beneath his feet all fear and unyielding Fate, and the howls of hungry Acheron!
>
>   (Virgil, Georgics, II, vv. 485–496).[5]

Of course, the sight of a fruit or fallen leaf, suddenly emphasised, enlarged, foremost, almost separate from the context from which it came, could arouse sentiments of nostalgia for a life, always fleeting, that was coming to an end, though these same exclamations denoted that life was worth being contemplated and that man was not trying to separate himself from it. On the other hand, a fruit in its splendour could also arouse sentiments that were not joyful, but of nostalgia for a life that had begun a long time ago (and whose maximum impetus had already passed), and of sadness (due to love of life) in the face of the nearing of the end, but never of anger or guilt, and therefore the sight of a vital element only confirmed the goodness of life and the human being's belonging to this cycle by which men, animals and gods, too, move on.

> We are like leaves which the flower season of spring brings forth, when they quickly grow beneath the rays of the sun; like them we delight in the flowers of youth for an arm's length of time, knowing neither the bad nor the good that comes from the gods. But the dark spirits of doom stand besides us, one holding grievous old age as the outcome, the other death. Youth's fruit is short-lived, lasting as long as the sunlight spreads over the earth
>
>   (Mimnermus, 2).[6]

Nature, then, was the sign of a full life, brought to a head in accordance with vital, natural cycles, to move away from which had a price, not without sadness. It symbolised the happiness of the human being, total acceptance of his human condition – and the unhappiness that seized him at the sight of autumn, which heralded or brought to mind his close departure from terrestrial life.

Sweet nature, but which, at any time, could be devastated by divine anger, nature the sign of human fragility, always at the mercy of the unpredictable plans of the heavens:

> Zeus oversees every outcome, and suddenly, just as the clouds are quickly scattered by a spring wind which stirs up the bottom of the swelling and undraining sea, ravages the lovely fields over the wheat-bearing land, reaches the gods' high seat in heaven, and again brings a clear sky to view; the strong sun shines in beauty over the fertile land and no longer can even a single cloud be seen – such is the vengeance of Zeus. He is not, like a mortal man, quick to anger at every incident
>
>   (Solón, 1D, vv. 17–26).[7]

All these landscapes were not "natural", but had been created or had taken shape through man's deeds. His work had ordered, delimited, divided up the territory. Nature had become a source of wealth at the service of the human being.

Woods, fields, paths and buildings constituted an organised unit, structured around an urban nucleus. Nature was necessary for the city, at the same time as the city set itself up in the centre from where it organised the creative action of man, capable of substantially modifying the world that surrounded him.

The modern notion of landscape, on the other hand, suggests uncontaminated nature that has escaped man's regulatory action (but that is placed and prepares

itself to be enjoyed, more visually than physically, by man). This notion is actually false. Virgin nature currently (practically) does not exist.

On the other hand, in the hypothetical case that even if zones were found that had not been changed by the hand of man, in some place or on a foggy, remote island, they would not be accessible and could only be known by photographic or filmed images, that is, converted into landscapes.

The parks called "natural" are human creations: woods, meadows and paths that have been composed in such a way as to adapt to the image we have of what nature is, or should be, in which man has not (yet) intervened.

Like Japanese gardens which produce an intense feeling of "naturalness" – when actually each stone, each pebble, each rough grain of sand, each leaf has been arranged in such a way as to give the feeling of being casual or "natural", all composing a harmonic whole that is calculated, the rules of its composition not "evident", since the traces of human action have been cancelled out, swept away, although without this the reigning harmony so "natural" or free in appearance would not exist – the contemporary landscape of "natural" parks, considered the paradigm of free, uncontaminated nature, is the result of the discreet action of man trying to compose a landscape moulded on an ideal, harmless image.

The modern paradigm of wild nature is very similar to the ancient image of nature organised around a city or a village: nature converted into landscape, that is, at the service of man, both for his pleasure and for his nourishment.

On the contrary, in Greece and Rome, nature existed that was uncontaminated by the hand of man – at least up to a certain point, given that, since Palaeolithic times, man has altered, sometimes profoundly, voluntarily or not, the environment with the aim of disposing of it at his service – as did such a concept.

Similarly, in Mesopotamia, this "original" nature, not yet cultivated, was the home of untameable, dangerous, or at least, unpredictable gods, like Dionysus or Artemis, of wild animals that destroyed lives, like lions and panthers, animals that destroyed crops, such as unusual wild boar with fangs like daggers, or bulls thirsty for blood, as big as the Minotaur.

These places did not, however, have the charm of the unknown: lands that presented rough orography, composed of "rugged mountains", steep crags and impenetrable woods, crossed by impassable torrents like those that gave shape to the rugged, woody zone far from the city of Thebes where the women driven mad by Dionysus took refuge, as described by Euripides in *the Bacchantes*. The deafening sound or even the deafening silence shortly before Dionysiac madness took possession of the women that had fled from Thebes, covered the high peaks and proud firs, Euripides narrates. Dark night reigned in these places shunned by terrified men. Not even the infernal regions (Hades and the vertiginous Tartary) caused such fear.

Land of barbarians, the uncivilised, those who did not know the art of creating a community and living in it, of working or cultivating the land, land abandoned by the hand of the gods, which men had not been able to regulate! Land suitable only for the Cyclops, merciless giants, man-eaters, so different from men, who ate raw flesh and did not know the virtues of the hearth, were incapable even of taming animals as meek as the lamb; land where only those could enter who were going directly to their

death: "A man who all alone met up with a lion or a leopard on a narrow path in the shadowy mountains would not have been so afraid" (Semonides, 12D).[8] However, the dangerous charm innate in unfamiliar spaces was not unknown in Greece. The heroes and mortals who dared penetrate the thick forests, beyond the limits of the territory, organised and cultivated around an urban centre, or became casually lost there, perhaps, like Acetone, following his prey, a wounded deer, sometimes reached a clearing where the goddess Artemis (Diana, in her bathing) and her companions, the nymphs of the wood, nonchalantly bathed in the nude.

The splendour of their bodies was so intense that it dazzled man. Imprisoned, subjugated by the sight, eager for the cool, trembling greenery that surrounded them and the sparking reflections of the light that filtered through the leaves and was reflected by the agitated waters, sparkling on the tops, the hero, disoriented and enchanted, fell prey to the spell of the goddess and surrendered to her.

The bright body of the goddess was the last thing able to be seen: furious at being discovered, the goddess blinded her victim or delivered him to the harmful beasts that lived in the thickness of the trees. Contrary to what happened in Mesopotamia, the winner of the fight was the king or queen, the goddess of the unknown woods. In the same way, the destiny of Pentheus, king of Thebes, was very different, and that of Gilgamesh. Both left the walls of the city over which they were reigning to penetrate distant, unexplored territories. But while Gilgamesh managed to take over those – whose existence only made sense because they tested the courage of the king – Pentheus fell, disoriented. The wild animals of the wood (the Bacchantes driven mad and incited by Dionysus) saw the king whose despised body they dismembered. Feverish nature won.

Wild landscape certainly existed in Greece, too. But it was far from being a territory where the greatness of the king was manifest, far from being a refuge where one could step aside from the inhuman life of the city, a harbour of peace, a true home, as currently happens (or as already happened in imperial Rome or the Renaissance), the territories not yet civilised (wild beasts, marshes and mountains), dominated by the violent gods of nature, barbarians and monsters, being judged as spaces of evil (that is, lacking in civilisation or urban culture), against which measure and reason clashed.

The natural landscape on which man's tidying action had not been able to be exerted had no attraction. On the contrary, it was banned.

Uncontaminated nature could not be a landscape since it was impossible to contemplate it. The sight of it alone put one in danger. This nature had to be avoided at all costs. It was the antithesis of the landscape shaped by man's work. The landscape needed to be inhabited by human beings, it required the presence of man, of houses and cities, which tranquillised the spirit, since it ensured that night, its children and monsters had been banished.

Nevertheless, a second type of landscape image certainly existed where nature did not necessarily seem to be subjected to man or intimately related to him, but showed itself just as it was, sometimes even before human beings arrived, at the origin of the world. In this case, it was a question of ideal landscapes, models of how nature should have been.

These landscapes grew at the edges of the known land, beyond this, or in the *aldilà*, in the heavens or hell, places where the influence of man could not reach. They were to be found in a different space or a different time, which was not the usual, human time or space: it was the era of the land of the origins (the Age of Gold, Paradise, Jauja), the Island of the Blessed, where heroes settled at their death to continue the life they had had on earth, or the Land of the Hyperboreans, a fantastic land, at the ends of the world where Apollo, at the first snow, emigrated each year from Delfi to spend the winter near the sun.

The land did not have inevitably to be worked, cultivated. Plants and fruits grew by themselves;

> And many coarse foods, too, in long ago
> The blooming freshness of the rank young world
> Produced, enough for those poor wretches there
> > (Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, V, 943–945).[9]

Fresh water was abundant and its flow regular. Milk and honey issued constantly from the earth or the trees. The deluge had no effect on them. Harmful beasts did not live nor roam there. Death was denied. Fortified cities did not need to be built as enemies did not exist: the earth was free from constructions, or the villages, without walls, opened themselves up, giving protection:

> For thee, O boy,
> First shall the earth, untilled, pour freely forth
> Her childish gifts, the gadding ivy-spray
> With foxglove and Egyptian bean-flower mixed,
> And laughing-eyed acanthus. Of themselves,
> Untended, will the she-goats then bring home
> Their udders swollen with milk, while flocks afield
> Shall of the monstrous lion have no fear.
> Thy very cradle shall pour forth for thee
> Caressing flowers. The serpent too shall die,
> Die shall the treacherous poison-plant, and far
> And wide Assyrian spices spring. But soon
> As thou hast skill to read of heroes' fame,
> And of thy father's deeds, and inly learn
> What virtue is, the plain by slow degrees
> With waving corn-crops shall to golden grow,
> From the wild briar shall hang the blushing grape,
> And stubborn oaks sweat honey-dew.[10]

Thus wrote Virgil (*Bucolics*, IV, 18–25, 28–30) in an enigmatic eclogue with a prophetic tone, the (new) Age of Gold, with the birth of a "saviour", perhaps an heir to Augustus.

In Sumer, in the Ancient Near East, at the time of the origins – the era before mortals – when only the gods and heroes lived on the earth, cities built by supernatural beings already existed, for they were a sign of regulated space, arranged for eternal life.

The city was not perceived as a sign of decadence nor judged as the cause of all evils – as often happened, on the contrary, in the Bible – but warned of the nearness of a blessed land.

The Age of Gold was lavish in dream places, which one reached only in sleep or during eternal sleep. They were lands where life beyond death dwelt, the eternal life.

> First was the Golden Age. Then rectitude
> Spontaneous in the heart prevailed, and faith.
> Avengers were not seen, for laws unframed
> Were all unknown and needless (. . .)
> The towns were not entrenched for time of war (. . .)
> There were no thought of martial pomp – secure
> A happy multitude enjoyed repose
>   (P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, I, vv. 89–90, v. 97, v. 100).[11]

Whereas in Egypt the land of souls was worked. The fields of immortality were looked after and were like an improved, idealised reflection of fields on earth. The dead came back to life and worked hard, cultivating the land, as they did in the earthly world. They had the same tools and animals as on earth. This work was, however, a song of hope.

Work on the land had sense because immortality was achieved and there was movement to lands beyond; they worked in close union with the beneficial forces of the earth. On the other hand, the vital space was conceived only as surroundings modelled by the hand of man. Virgin land, where no hoe had penetrated, where the soil had not been freed from stubble and no area delimited, could only belong to the feared gods of death and destruction represented by harmful beasts like the hyena.

Even though landscapes described by an adjective exist (for example, an "urban" or an "industrial" landscape), what is certain is that the notion of landscape, almost always (incorrectly) described as "natural", evokes images of nature free from the presence of man, almost always uncontaminated, "original", near to a paradisiac vision. The "concept" or "category" of the landscape seems to oppose that of the city.

Lovers of "landscapes" have the habit of withdrawing from the cities; they go into, flee or withdraw to the countryside and mountains, as though these were deposits of the virtue lost in the cities due to human presence and action. In this sense, this conception would be in agreement with the scorn or fear that most of the authors of the Bible felt for urban life, in contrast with the defence of nature as the bearer of divine signals (clouds, rays, fires, mountains) that gave shape to a landscape full of feeling.

The landscape is, however, a human creature. Nature taken shape or altered, free from danger, which opposes the vision, almost Dantesque, of the city, the landscape

responds to the image of Paradise lost, of a paradise that never existed, except in the image of nature that man created for himself, an image or dream of what he wanted nature to be: surroundings which tranquillised (and enhanced) the spirit, which took him away from men (landscapes are contemplated alone or as a couple – united in a single entity, but always separate from others) and gave him the feeling of being a single being, in intimate, solitary dialogue with nature, communicating with it. The landscape is, therefore, a creation of the soul, a spiritual projection, nature invented to appease "natural" human dissatisfaction, or where the soul escapes to free itself from daily material duties.

Notes

[1] I wish to thank Prof. Gregorio Luri for this reference to the Byronian concept of landscape.

[2] *Panorama, viewpoint, view* are terms that tour guides habitually use to indicate places giving a wide vision of scenery "that deserves to be contemplated", almost always a natural or "protected" landscape where ruins and occasional monuments increase the value of the scene.

[3] Copyright: AISA.

[4] I have used the French edition by Tournay R J and Shaffer Aaron: *L'épopée de Gilgamesh*, París, Les Éditions du Cerf, 1994, which includes all the variations of the tale, as well as marginal ones found up to this moment. Currently, the most complete version is that of George A, *The Epic of Gilgamesh,* Penguin Classics, 2000.

[5] Virgil, Georgics, II, vv. 485–496. Rushton Fairclough H (ed) *Virgil, vol. I: Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid,* 1–6, London y Cambridge, Massachusetts, William Heinemann y Harvard University Press, 1965, Loeb Classical Library, pp. 149–151.

[6] Mimnermus, 2. Gerber D E (ed) *Greek Elegiac Poetry from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, y London, 1999, p. 83, The Loeb Classical Library, 258.

[7] Solon, 13, 17–26. Gerber D E (ed) *Greek Elegiac Poetry from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, y London, 1999, pp. 130–131.

[8] Semonides, 14. Gerber D E (ed) *Greek Iambic Poetry from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1999, p. 321, The Loeb Classical Library, 259.

[9] Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, V, 943–945, William Ellery Leonard (ed) E. P. Dutton, Boston, 1916 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0131&layout=&loc=5%2C+943–945). Consulted on 17 July 2007.

[10] Virgil, *Bucolics*, IV, 18–25, 28–30 (http://www.fullbooks.com/Vergil-s-Bucolics-in-English.html). Also in http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/eclogue.html.

[11] P. Ovidius Naso, *Metamorphoses*, I, vv. 89–90, v. 97, v. 100, Arthur Golding (ed) Brookes More, Boston, 1922 (http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0028;query=card%3D%233;layout=;loc=1.5). Consulted on 17 July 2007.

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Landscape as a Regenerative Structure of a Fragmented Territory

Silvano Tagliagambe

1 The "Landscape" Category

Before speaking of the landscape as a *structure* and trying to understand if, and possibly to what extent and how, it is able to regenerate a fragmented territory, we need to provide a precise definition of the concept of landscape we intend to use and on which we wish to work. To this end, it is certainly useful to start from the etymology of the term, from which certain indications of particular interest are to be gained.

The word "landscape", which the Devoto *Etymological Dictionary* specifies, comes from *pagus/* paese (Eng. country) and derives from an Indo-European root also found both in *pangere* and in *pa* ce (Eng. peace) and *pat* to (Eng. pact) (Devoto 1968). The verb "pangere" means, basically, to embed, to plant. The Latin *pagus* is, in its turn, linked with the Greek παγος, which englobes in its semantic field all that has become firm and hard, like ice, frost, rock, crag, hill, prominence, meanings derived from the verb πηγνυμι which has quite a wide range of senses, including "plant", "embed", "connect" (and therefore join together single parts or pieces, making them into a whole), "build", "make something soft or liquid solid and compact" (and therefore to make (something) set, condense or freeze), and metaphorically, "to fortify", "to validate".

The first of the above meanings refers however, on the one hand, to agricultural use of the soil ("plant") and, on the other, to the action "to hold firm", "to establish something firmly, by beating, knocking, embedding" and therefore to delimit and enclose a territory by embedding a boundary stone there, a meaning which is also found in the Latin "pangere". On the other hand, the fact that the root *pag/pak* is found, as stated, also in "peace" and "pact" extends the semantic domain to be taken into consideration when speaking of "landscape" also to the act of pacification, and therefore to the resolution – and prevention, too – of a possible conflict.

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If we try to make all these meanings converge and bring out the reciprocal link between them, we therefore have, as corresponding to the concept of "landscape", the idea of a natural territory limited by *boundaries*, marked and thus colonised by man, modified by him, used for agriculture and *cultivation* on the part of a *community* that has settled on it and become resident, whose members could potentially enter into conflict due to unfair division of the said territory between them and who, to avoid this risk, *agree upon* rules in order to live in *peace.* The cardinal points of the semantic field relevant to the concept we are dealing with are in italics; they also act as nodes in the net of links and connections that can easily be set up between the different senses that are part of the said field.

Landscape is not, then, simply a "view", a natural fact, a physical, measurable entity, but is now and always "nature seen and filtered through culture", which presupposes a *world viewpoint* and is the outcome of a process of active construction on the part of the mind, which has to show itself in its capacity not only for reading and understanding signs and decoding the various types of message that different human activities have impressed and continue to impress on it but also, as has been seen, for *connecting* and uniting, making them into a whole, these scattered meanings, grasping the interrelation between the values of different kinds that are contained and expressed.

This capacity for linking up does not just concern the object of perception and knowledge, however, i.e. the landscape itself, also the subject enacting it: for, as has been emphasised, the "landscape" category usually belongs to the *shared image* on the part of a community, and therefore implies availability of a common background of objectives, premises, orientation, values on the part of its members, who must, consequently, feel, act and behave towards it not just as single subjects, but as members of a collective subject or group. The fact that the root *pag/pak* is also found in "peace" and "pact" cannot therefore be considered a chance occurrence or factor of secondary importance for it is actually an "indicator" and proof of the importance of the convergence of individuals on common meanings and of collective acceptance not only of rules and pacts but also of readings and interpretations which consolidate reciprocal ties and bonds.

The synthesis between objectivity and subjectivity, between natural entity and world viewpoint of a specific community, inherent in the concept of landscape, has another important consequence that can neither be neglected nor underestimated, that is the fact that this "viewpoint" cannot simply deal with a clear, direct vision (however historic and scientific this may be) but must also comprise more complex and "intimate" traits, less easy to decipher and decode, therefore, and bound up with the internal nucleus of the *deep significance* of specifically inhabiting that territory on the part of that particular community. For what we call the "sense of dwelling" calls into play not just the transparent, crystalline quality of *signs*, but also the ambiguity, rather the opaqueness, of *symbols* and the involuntary and uncontrolled emergence of *symptoms.* To clarify this aspect further and specify the sense of the presence of each of these components that are a part of the concept of "inhabiting" and contribute to making up its meaning, it is fundamental to think about the link between the latter concept and that of landscape.

2 The Link Between "Landscape" and "to Inhabit"

As is known, the concept of "dwelling" was explored in depth by Heidegger at a famous conference entitled *Building Dwelling Thinking*, held on 5 August 1951 during the second Darstadt meeting on "Man and space".

The objective the author pursued was to establish not only what "to inhabit" means but also to investigate the links between inhabiting and "to build", meant not from the specific viewpoint of architecture and technical aspects, but as the expression of our activities within the material writings that have constituted and constitute the world of men. To this end, he began by pointing out the limits and partiality of platitudes, according to which only by building do we achieve inhabiting and that to inhabit is, always and anyway, the aim of building. Whereas, as an etymological analysis shows in this case, too, building is already in itself inhabiting. *Bauen*, to build, derives from *buan*, to inhabit. To inhabit is usually meant as a form of behaviour man shares with others (here we work, there we live. . .). But the original sense of the word to inhabit also tells us that *bauen* and *buan* are the same as *bin* (I am). "It is not that we inhabit because we have built, but we build and have built because we inhabit" (Heidegger 1991, p. 98). To be a man means to inhabit.

But what does inhabit mean? To own a dwelling is not sufficient to mean one dwells. The Gothic *wunian* indicates, like the antique *bauen*, to remain, to stay; it also stands for to be happy, to have peace, to stay in peace. To inhabit, then, is "to remain under the protection of that which is related to us and takes care of every thing in its essence" (Heidegger 1991, p. 99). The way in which we men are on the earth is *buan*, to inhabit. To be a man means to be on the earth as a mortal, that is to inhabit. The antique word *bauen*, according to which man is since he inhabits, also means, however, to look after and cultivate the fields (*den Acker bauen*), cultivate the vineyard.

By common reference to cultivation, there is thus a very tight link between the concept of "inhabiting" and that of "landscape". To cultivate is one of the ways of inhabiting, the most original. To cultivate is to build the *symbolic and real space in which we are immersed, to build the landscape.*

Thought, too, as construction of this symbolic space, is part of dwelling, like building, as it is necessary for inhabiting. For it, too, therefore, the same original relationship with inhabiting holds as characterises building, and we can express this by turning the common way of thinking of the relationship between these two terms upside down and saying, indeed, that "only if we have the capacity to inhabit can we build" (Heidegger 1991, p. 107). Precisely for this reason, building and thinking remain insufficient for dwelling until they each separate from the other, dealing separately with their own activities. The conference ends thus: "What has happened to inhabiting in our worrying times? [. . .] Could it not be that man's uprootedness consists of the fact that man does not yet reflect at all on the authentic crisis of the dwelling, recognising it as *the* crisis?" (Heidegger 1991, p. 108). Nevertheless, no sooner man reflects on his uprootedness, this ceases to be a misfortune and becomes an appeal, the only one that calls mortals to bring inhabiting into the fullness of its essence, by building starting from inhabiting and thinking for inhabiting.

This close interpenetration of dwelling, building and thinking makes us understand why by inhabiting, in the sense Heidegger gives to the term, it is not enough to be objectively "at home", inside a built dwelling or at least a place, natural or artificial as it may be, which functions as a refuge; we need instead to *feel at home*, i.e. to fill that place with a series of symbolic meanings that go well beyond the need for a shelter, which are the expression of an *emotional need*, first and, even more, than of a biological need. Our original home is not a building, it is not something "constructed", but the result of a conscious modification, on the part of man, of a small part of the environment in which he lives, reorganisation of the space aimed at making it a welcoming *place* and above all familiar, where he feels himself and at ease precisely because of the *symbolic reassurance* it is able to transmit due to the intervention, though small but significant, that the person owning it has made (the building of a hearth; the repeated imprints of hands on the rock, coloured white, ochre, red and black; the walls painted with scenes from daily life). The world of symbols is therefore a fundamental, constituent part of dwelling, of "feeling at home", precisely because to inhabit in the authentic sense, we need to *have roots*, to be able to mediate between the external environment and the internal universe, between the visible world and the invisible one. The symbol is the most efficient instrument we have for carrying out this mediation for, as Pavel Florenskij, who has studied its nature in depth and made it the cardinal point of his philosophical and scientific reflections,[1] emphasises, it is a binomic unity, unity in diversity, in which concrete reality and invisible mystery, finite and infinite, signifier and signification, and also knowing subject and investigated object find themselves synergically blended, though not muddled. As he underlined in his essay of 1904 *O simvolah beskonecnosti. Ocerk idej G. Kantora (The symbols of the infinite. Study on the ideas of G. Cantor)*, which might be considered the initial nucleus of a theory of the symbol, the structure of the latter is inseparable from the presence of the *skacok*, the intermediate zone, that is, where conceptualisation of the mystery of the invisible should be realised. Reference to this "zone" represents one of the most problematic questions, as it is difficult to define with the rational instruments at our disposal. Nevertheless, we are dealing with an essential entity for interaction between the two dimensions, apparently irreconcilable, of the existence of man, the visible one and the invisible, daily experience and the insuppressible leaning towards an "al di là", to something "further" compared with this. And the fundamental philosophical problem to be faced becomes, for Florenskij, that of managing to activate a *transitive capacity* between the one and the other worlds, through which to manage to progressively diminish the diaphragm between the two zones, apparently irreconcilable, of the life and experience of man, making the visible world the potential mirror of the invisible and thus favouring penetration into super-reality.

We can, then, say – using these reflections of Florenskij – that to inhabit, in the sense Heidegger gives the term, means to manage to activate a "mediating" function between the external world and the internal one and trigger a transitive capacity from one to the other. The symbol is the most efficient instrument at our disposal for this aim, due to the fact that it presents itself as "an *amphibian entity*, which lives both in one and the other, and weaves specific relations between this and that world."

(Florenskij 2001, p. 51).[2] Through it, therefore, daily experience is transformed and assimilated in the spirit, and dwelling, the way in which man is on earth, takes on a sense which amalgamates him and makes him conform to the concept of "being man", that original sense for which "*bauen* and *buan* are the same as *bin* (I am)".

3 From the Landscape to the *Milieu*

Placing inhabiting in the intermediate space between external and internal worlds turns the rooms and places inhabited into something indissolubly tied to the forms of life of subjects, individuals and above all the collectivity and their particular perceptive and cognitive styles. This aspect is, not by chance, the constituent element of the definition of "landscape" ratified by the European Convention on Landscape (ECL), signed in Florence in 2000. For in Article 1, this considers the landscape "part of the territory as it is perceived by the populations, the character of which derives from the action of natural and/or human factors and their interrelations". In the next article, it is specified how this definition is to be applied, as far as localisation is concerned, to "natural, rural, urban and periurban spaces, to earth landscapes, internal and marine waters" and, with regard to value, to exceptional landscapes like those of everyday life or degraded ones. The subject in question, then, is as much as possible a multiple one (each "population", as a collective subject, perceiver and transforming agent of the territory); and the object of perception and knowledge is just as vast, made up as it is of the most varied and differing facets of the earth's surface, regardless of their value or state of degradation.

Unlike the UNESCO "International Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage", adopted in 1972, which concerns patrimony with an *exceptional universal value* from a historic, artistic or scientific point of view, the European Convention concentrates its attention on the landscape "as an essential component of the context of life of populations, an expression of the diversity of their common cultural and natural patrimony and *foundation of their identity*". Though both conventions, therefore, refer to the principles of participation in management of the landscape of the communities directly involved, for the UNESCO Convention they are the protectors of an extraordinary value which ideally belongs to the whole of humanity, whereas for the ECL populations are considered the rightful owners of the quality of their own landscape, in that it is the repository of their identity, which is true for all territories, regardless of their aesthetic, naturalistic, historic/cultural, etc. importance.

This therefore confirms that one of the fundamental, essential constituent elements of the "landscape" category is the reference to the identity of the collective subjects that inhabit it. Protagonism and the priority role attributed to the latter subjects is translated into a different interpretation of the territory, the nature of which is no longer defined by reference in an exclusive or at least priority manner to specific elements and objective differences, but rather has its mainstay in the subjective qualities arising from relations with actors that are geographically, historically and

culturally defined. As a consequence, these processes of territorial transformation are the result of *collective action*, of the capacity locally to "contextualise" *global* economic, social and political dynamics, "cutting them out" to conform with their own modalities of rationality and organisation and mediating between the two. A new category originates from this mediation, that of *milieu*, defined as "a set of handholds, of potentiality expressed by a particular territory which, to be realised and established as resources of processes of territorial development and transformation, must be recognised and accepted by the *local network*, the expression of social subjectivity."

4 Globalisation and Fragmentation

The importance the "*milieu*" category increasingly takes on shows how distant from reality the representation is that still tends to be proposed nowadays, of globalisation as a sort of "Moloch" which pitilessly devours local cultures and traditions without leaving any significant residue. Whereas a more careful reading of the processes underway both in the social and cultural spheres enables it to be ascertained that ours is by no means the epoch of global knowledge which overwhelms and mortifies local knowledge; on the contrary, it is one that cuts more and more down to seize the claim of some languages and disciplinary fields to be the only repositories of rationality and the exclusive cardinal points on which it is founded.

This claim is increasingly being taken over by the idea that what we call rationality is a kind of *patchwork*, the result of a sort of "sticking together" operation of spaces of local and circumscribed rationality, which need to be linked in reciprocal communication through the availability of a common language and a shared background. This is confirmed by the fact that when nowadays it is stated that new technologies and networks favour the transfer of knowledge, it is by no means meant that they in some way make available a kind of *"universal" database* from which all local contexts can equally serve themselves, but refers to the possibility of extending interaction between communities to limits that were before unthinkable, creating a network which enables local contexts to communicate, allowing the latter to interact and look for common solutions together, or pinpointing in a community manner how to have the respective cognitive basins communicate best.

Not by chance is the sun going down on the traditional paradigm of western rationality based on the conviction that the availability of an appropriate language and method can ensure in a simple and "natural" manner the progressive convergence of conceptions of each single rational agent towards shared solutions, which are incontrovertible and thus able to constitute a definite base for the progressive construction of what we might call a "collective or social intellect". In its place, a model of "connected intelligence" is becoming stronger and stronger, having as its primary objective the identification of *distributed knowledge* or knowledge shared by a group of agents (*common knowledge*) and the analysis and translation underway

of the modalities and routes by which each of these acquires the capacity to reason not only about its own knowledge and points of view but also about those of others.

This more and more noticeable tendency towards an idea of rationality as the outcome of a patchwork operation on local spaces is also tied up with another aspect, underlined by Robert M. Pirsig, in that extraordinary first work of his entitled *Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance* (Pirsig 1974), i.e. the growing reference to a theme, that of *quality*, which increasingly faces us with the need to adopt a theory of value which does not only incorporate economic values but also social and cultural values. According to Fedro, the protagonist of Pirsig's novel, the way is composed of three elements: mind, matter and, indeed, quality. "He noted", writes the author regarding the latter,

> that, although Quality is normally associated with objects, sometimes sensations of Quality occur without objects being present. This, initially, had led him to think that perhaps Quality was subjective, but on the other hand subjective pleasure was not what he intended by Quality. Quality makes subjectivity decrease. Quality makes us come out of ourselves, it makes us aware of the world around us. Quality is the opposite of subjectivity
>
> (Pirsig 1974, p. 235).

This need to free quality from claims of subjectivity must not, however, lead us, according to Pirsig, to fall into the opposite error of likening it to quantity. Transition from the latter to quality, in effect, implies a change not only in evaluation criteria but also in the subjects who are the protagonists of the respective choices. Quantity can be managed *from the outside and from above* because evaluations which deal with quantitative variables are performed on the basis of standard rules, it being clear, by definition, that one more is always better than one less. Whereas, quality is a difficult matter to define from outside or from above.

Nowadays, indeed, its deterioration cannot be attributed to purely external factors such as technology considered for itself. For the latter, being the production of something, is no different from the arts, which can also be the expression of the same ability to make, as, moreover, the Greeks had well understood, and they did not originally use the root of the word "technology", τεχνη, by chance to indicate, precisely, art, nor can the lack of quality be blamed in some way on the materials used by modern technology, as is often said too, since, if anything, plastic and products manufactured in series refer *by association* to ugly things, i.e. things without quality, but not intrinsically ugly or poor. For ugliness lies in the *relationship* between *those producing* technology and the *things* produced: it is precisely this original unhappy relationship which is reflected and which conditions the relationship between those who *use* technology and the things *used*. This tie and that relationship, in the opinion of Pirsig, are unsatisfactory and generate, therefore, objects or systems that are just as unsatisfactory in the sense of quality since, be it those who produce technology, be it those who use it, they are unable to be part of it, i.e. to feel any particular *sense of identity* with the objects produced. From this point of view, creativity, ability, the capacity to make something beautiful may, as a first step, be considered the result of a particular *mental condition*, following which those who make do not separate themselves from their own work but identify themselves in it, and indeed for this reason, do things well and produce something beautiful. Considered in this way

beauty (or, symmetrically, ugliness) *is not a property of things*, objects, systems produced by technology, but the expression of a particular *relationship between those who create and what they create*, which then, as said, in some way also affects the relationship between those who use and that which is used or enjoyed.

The most interesting aspect of this matter is that it makes *involvement* – the original involvement of the artist, artisan or technician in his/her work – and *participation* of the user of the product in this involvement, i.e. his/her capacity to become part of the object or system produced, the key to understanding the *quality* of any technological object or system. To express this relationship, we might use the verb "to care about", in the sense of being part of what we are doing: and to grasp the specificity of the relationship between the product, whatever it may be, and the user or consumer, we might probably refer successfully to Heidegger's expression "to look after", to which we will be returning.

The same relationship that Pirsig establishes between technology and those who produce or use it can be adopted as a base for defining the quality of places, environment, contexts we inhabit. For also in this case, precisely because of the definitions of "landscape" and "*milieu*" which we dwelt on before, ugliness cannot be considered an objective property of places themselves, but rather the expression of an unsatisfactory relationship between these and the communities inhabiting them, which translates into the fact that the latter show they do not "care" enough about the environment in which they live and do not know how to "look after" it. The quality of the landscape, therefore, positively or negatively reflects the level of the capacity of community groups to *self-organise* their life and set of values, their choices and decisions on the basis of which they establish what should be known or done, following their own ideas of what quality it really is worth working for. This is why, as Rullani emphasises, it proves more and more arduous, as well as unproductive,

> to try to tack together, technocratically, some "neutral" assessment procedures on the quality of the service offered to users by the university, a hospital or a transport network. If the complex aspects that really interest the user are looked at, it is easy to understand that the only true assessment that counts is directly his/hers, which can give importance or not to factors that technical evaluation does not know how to "weigh up". Quality cannot, therefore, be *either defined or offered from outside, but must be worked out in an autonomous manner, from the bottom,* taking its own responsibilities and risks
>
> (Rullani 2003, p. 242).

It cannot of course be considered a chance fact, in this respect, that the increase in interest for topics linked with the "quality of life" is being accompanied by an ever greater spreading of the issue concerning "self-organising" or "self-organisational systems", the essential feature of which is *autonomy*. The passage from the "landscape" category to that of "*milieu*" is also certainly a pointer and significant in this sense, given that one of the constituent elements of this passage, as has been seen, consists of reference to the *local network*, as the expression, indeed, of "social subjectivity".

At a institutional level, this reference is causing, as is known, a growing transition from traditional ways of *government*, to different models of collective action

and self-organisational forms, which go under the name of *governance*, and are characterised by at least four common distinctive traits they share:

– *Interdependence between organisations*, in that theories on *governance* postulate the co-presence of a multiplicity of actors (*stakeholders*), the expression of the different interests – public and private, individual and collective, economic and social – present in every society;
– *Interaction between members of the network*, for which the different subjects are committed to a continuous process of exchange of information and resources in view of achieving a common objective;
– The *definition of negotiated and shared rules of the game*, placed as an alternative to regulation from above of *government* mechanisms;
– The significant *degree of autonomy* of local networks with respect to the state.

These distinctive traits are based on an *inclusive logic* which takes for granted and ratifies the opening of *governance* networks to all holders of legitimate interests present in the society. This attention to differences of evaluation and to authentic conflicts, latent or manifest, which exist between the various actors involved, actually ratifies the *fragmentation* of social systems, bringing us consequently up against the growing difficulties that accompany the decisional processes of our times. Since *governance* proposes the management of territorial and social transformations that are neither conflictive or authoritative, the remedy for these difficulties and solution to the problems which ensue must be found in new routes and unedited processes, capable of triggering a process of reassembly of this fragmentation which is not the result of imposition from above or the outside.

5 In Search of an Organisation That Will Connect: The *Innovating Milieu*

To understand what this route might be, we must depart from some of the most important aspects of the national and international debate on the theory of the development of innovation, which is very advanced and has already reached undoubtedly significant and interesting results, and try to understand if, and possibly how, the *national innovation system* concept can also be referred, first of all, to sub-national and local territories.

To this end, it is essential to begin to focus on some of the most significant results, at least for the purpose of our argument, which local development analyses have achieved. The most recent statements have highlighted – as a strategic factor necessary to ensure the capacity of local systems to promote development and competitiveness – the availability of a *network not only in the physical sense but also and above all in terms of culture and values.* In particular, a perspective has come to the fore which pinpoints a form of "connected intelligence" in the local system, an expression we have already referred to; a decisive contribution to the fortune

and diffusion of this, as is known, has been made by the research of Derrick De Kerckhove, a student and cultural heir of Marshall McLuhan.[3]

Connected intelligence is, according to the definition he supplies for it, a form of connection and collaboration between different individual and collective subjects which is the result of sharing, built on the basis of a dialogical exchange. The aspect characterising this way of thought, which distinguishes it from the types belonging to what could be called "collective intelligence", is that, contrary to what usually happens with the latter, in connected intelligence, each single individual or group keeps their own specific identity, though within the sphere of a highly ramified and extensive structure of connections. We are therefore faced with a process of *externalization of intelligence*, which turns into a process supported and revealed by the network.

The connected type is therefore a form of intelligence determined by the relations of single agents, which can (and usually does) produce learning and innovation, improving the skills and performance of individuals and the system. This is not just an extension of the Marshallian notions of territorial advantages and externalities with effects on local development, as the simple spatial proximity between businesses, institutions and infrastructures does not always sufficiently explain the degree of development of given territorial contexts. The concept of *relational* is therefore involved here, as the set of relations within and external to the market, of cooperation between economic actors (businesses, suppliers, clients, institutions) that are geographically and culturally close, of infrastructure networks directly and indirectly useful for the economic system.

It is interesting in this respect to understand that concepts like "local system", "industrial district" and *milieu innovateur* are placed within the general paradigm of the network development model, which is also at the base, as has been seen, of the idea of *governance*.

By local system, the literature on the subject means a group of places, i.e. residential and productive settlements, the reciprocal relations of which are determined by the everyday behaviour of the operators, who tend to delimit an area within which the majority of social and economic relationships are established and tend to be statically repeated over time.

The industrial district is tied to the local system, in which it finds the premises for its own development, but from an economic point of view, it shapes the relations that define it in a dynamic sense. Each single productive activity within it ceases to be an exclusive reference to each action of intervention, but is considered, even with its insuppressible individuality, an element of the structure and total organisation of the group constituted by the district itself, for which it is functionally defined by the system of relations which bind it to all the other components of the latter.

The concept of *milieu innovateur*, traditionally used to interpret phenomena with the character of district, is interesting as it takes spatial development phenomena as the effect of innovative processes and of the synergies manifest in limited territorial areas. It is defined as a set of relations which lead to the unity of a local system of production, a group of actors, of representations and industrial culture, and due to this, it generates a localised dynamic process of *collective learning*. We

are speaking, therefore, of a concept that fits within the framework of approaches to development processes which highlight and promote the "constructive" component of generation "from the bottom" of innovation processes, and which re-examines and reinterprets, in a manner conforming with this way of reading, time and space categories. The first, instead of being understood as mere geographical distance and extension, is seen as *relational space*, i.e. as the context in which common cognitive models operate and in which tacit knowledge is created and transmitted: consequently, time is understood in a dimension referring to the rhythm of learning and innovation/creation processes (Camagni 1995, pp. 195–216).

These definitions of time and space show explicitly the fact that in the case of the concept of *milieu innovateur*, it is not only geographical *proximity* aspects that are decisive, thanks to which significant reductions in disadvantage can be obtained in terms of costs for small businesses compared with large ones and help be given to them in innovative processes by:

– a reduction in production costs which can be obtained thanks to the presence of externality, infrastructures and services aimed at specialist sectors, as well as by cooperative predisposition to such externality;
– reducing "transaction costs" and in general the "cost of use of the market", made possible by easier and faster distribution of information, face-to-face contacts and more limited costs of information gathering within the local economy;
– imitating and spreading organisational models, managerial decision routines, commercial strategies, technological innovations;
– coordination and reciprocal control between production units, as well as control over some innovative *assets*, like the pool of local specialist skills.

To be able to speak of *milieu innovateur*, we need to add *socio-cultural proximity* to these elements, definable as the presence of shared behaviour models, mutual trust, common language and representations and common moral and cognitive codes. Geographical and socio-cultural proximity create high probability of interaction and synergy between economic agents, repeated contracts tending towards informality, absence of opportunistic behaviour, greater division of work and cooperation within the *milieu*: what we call its *relational capital*, consisting of propensity for cooperation, trust, cohesion and a sense of belonging.

According to Camagni, the role of the local *milieu* in terms of economic theory links up with three types of outcome with a cognitive character, supporting and completing the normal mechanisms of information distribution and coordination achieved through the market:

– a reduction in uncertainty in decisional processes and innovative pro-cesses;
– ex ante coordination between economic actors facilitating collective action;
– collective learning, as a process realised within the work market and the local industrial atmosphere (skills, knowledge, professionalism).

So the *milieu innovateur* category covers aspects that can be summarised in two general terms that are certainly not familiar to the economist, who does not possess adequate analytical instruments to assess them: the increase in *connected intelligence* and the creation of *local identity.*

The concept of "connected intelligence" refers to an idea of language as a type of exchange which takes for granted the availability of a *common context* of speaker and listener and fits into a background of assumptions and presuppositions shared by the speakers, as a space of possibility permitting what is being said to be listened to and what is kept silent to be understood. From this point of view, the primary constituent function assigned to linguistic exchange and dialogue is not to transmit pre-organised, ready information, but to induce understanding or "listening" between people who share background knowledge, interests and habits, generated by the traditions they belong to and the context into which they are "thrown". In this perspective, the most appropriate domain of explanation within which language is to be framed is that of *actions* and *human interactions:* "An expression is a 'linguistic act' which has consequences for the participants, leads to other immediate actions and commitments for future action" (Winograd 1980, p. 229). This characteristic of language, this function consisting of creating a thick *network of reciprocal commitments* shows how truth is "far from being the only semantic property of importance": in daily conversation "many linguistic acts – like questions, orders, interjections, but also many quips and jokes – are neither true nor false" (Haugeland 1981). And in fact it is clear, as J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle emphasised in their early analysis of language as a group of significant acts put into effect by the person speaking in interactive situations, that orders, requests to do something (directive acts), promises (commissive acts), declaring two people husband and wife (declarative acts) or excusing oneself for something (expressive acts) cannot be considered expressions having truth value. But assertive acts, too, which can also be inserted in that dimension of evaluations which includes the true and the false, include further commitment regarding the fact that knowledge of what is being asserted comes from one's own personal experience. All these acts, then, albeit in different terms and to different extents, create *commitments*, in that the speaker commits with regard to the intelligibility, truth, sincerity and appropriateness of what he is saying. But commitment cannot be one-sided: the listener must in his/her turn undertake the activity of understanding and interpretation. In this sense, "the essential importance of the illocutive point is the specification of the meaning in terms of modalities of commitment undertaken between speaker and listener, given that both participate in the conversation" (Winograd and Flores 1986).

From this point of view, and precisely for the fundamental characteristics and functions of an eminently social nature attributed to language, the ideal problematic situation from which to depart to specify its nature is not that of "decision-making", in which a solitary reflective mind is at work, conscious and rational, studying complex alternatives and making use of systematic techniques of evaluation considered in the abstract sense. We need instead to depart from *collective subjects*, i.e.

communities, organisations, associations and so on, considered as *networks of interactive exchanges and reciprocal commitment*, consisting mainly of promises and requests which develop between the members composing them. Within this situation the key condition is that of *resolution*, which, in contrast with conscious, rational decision-making, is already always oriented in a certain direction of possibility: *possibility pre-orientation*, "which discovers a space of possible actions hiding others" (Winograd and Flores 1986), and allows he/she who finds himself/herself in an irresolvable situation, i.e. in a situation in which they wonder: "what should I do?", to solve a problematic situation.

Growing interest for these dialogical exchanges has stimulated many fields (philosophy of knowledge and action, logic, informatics, economics) to study models from the 1980s onwards to fit to represent interaction between several agents, capable both of knowing and acting. In these contexts, it has proved essential to develop ramified rational instruments allowing these agents to describe knowledge, carry out inferences, apply different communicative modalities and, finally, to plan actions, as single agents, but also as a group, with the coordination problems involved. It is precisely in this direction that Derrick De Kerckhove's research mentioned above is going, concerning forms of "connected intelligence".[4]

Reference to this type of intelligence shows, in the first place, how – also following the irruption of the "network" paradigm and its growing popularity – the image of knowledge changes, how it stops being seen as an isolated phenomenon produced inside the heads of individuals, to be considered more and more a *distributed phenomenon, which englobes its environment and its culture.* The sense of this change of perspective has been properly understood and expressed by Gargani, who emphasises the need to begin

> thinking of mental things in terms of a different set-up, a syntonic set-up, a solidaristic, relational set-up. Compare the mind not so much with an occult pro-cess going on inside each of our skulls, but think of mental things as an atmosphere surrounding us which we can also touch, in the same way as during the various phases of the day we experience moments of heaviness and then of relief. This is the mind, this is mental activity, a context and space we share
>
> (Gargani 1994, pp. 71–72).

Identity, in its turn, is an element, the creation and consolidation of which arise from all the functions, aspects and processes characterizing the *milieu innovateur* and which constitute an important factor of cohesion and stability of the latter in a dynamic context. For a sense of belonging and local pride are elements that strengthen the will for cooperative and synergic action, both by developing "protective nets" for single businesses in moments of difficulty and by incrementing the potential of local creativity. The concept of identity in this is therefore a direct expression of the social structure and relations between the subjects that compose it. It is characterised by intertwining of the physical, cultural, relational and economic factors which determine the shape and quality of single settlements and condition the formation of the economic and productive base of each specific community. The important aspect of reference to these concepts is that they arise from a clear indication that it is impossible to disregard the *local communities* and

participation and *involvement* of the subjects composing them, when formulating policies for territorial growth and development. The challenge given to the political class and government social system executives by the objectives inherent in adopting this category consists of the need to create a *strong tie between innovation, participation, orchestration and training* and to give a central role to the latter, so as to make it the strategic lever for sharing objectives for innovation and modernisation and the base of a new widespread culture and new organisational model that are more effective and respond to the now unpostponable demands that must be faced if we wish to embark on the way to solid and lasting development.

Camagni, who is one of the creators and greatest theorists (Camagni 1988, 1991, 1995, pp. 195–216, 1999, pp. 591–606, 2000, Camagni and Capello 1991, 2002) of the *milieu innovateur* concept, underlines this tie with particular emphasis, pointing out the fundamental role of *strategic planning* which "constitutes the main instrument for re-launching projectuality, both public and private, through new forms of decisional coordination. Strategic planning can be defined as the collective construction of a shared vision of the future of a given territory by processes of participation, discussion, listening; as a pact between administrators, actors, citizens and various partners to realise this vision with a strategy and consequent series of projects that are interconnected, justified, assessed and shared in various ways; and finally as coordination of responsibility taken by the different actors in realising such projects.

It therefore:

– gives privilege to perspective and scenario analyses;
– leads local complexity and specificity back to a single strategic plan;
– operates in an openly pragmatic dimension, aware of acting in a context of limited rationality, and consequently adopts dynamic and flexible behaviour with regard to the definition of objectives and actions;
– relies on learning and iterative revision processes;
– promotes consultation and extended participation of the civil society and interests, evaluates projects on the grounds of their coherence with the general strategy and (current) urban compatibility and sustainability principles;
– assigns strategic importance to the phases of plan implementation;
– entrusts plan documents with an eminently persuasive and promotional function" (Camagni 2004, p. 14).

It can therefore be said, in conclusion, "that strategic planning constitutes the most suitable instrument for finding the best way of coexistence of different objectives acting on the mix of projects and the definition of alternative projectual architectures" (Camagni 2004, p. 15). Reference to this ratifies the need for *formal institutions* (for example, orchestration tables, common organisations, companies of a mixed nature, public–private, etc.) which make up the "place" where *governance* is becoming established and concretely realised.

6 The Landscape as a Regenerative Structure

The analysis and deepening of the concept of *milieu innovateur* have thus enabled us to ascertain the crucial importance, for purposes of economic growth and innovation processes, too, the reference to the sense of identity of local communities takes on, to their cohesion and their capacity for initiative, to the *participation* and *involvement* of the subjects composing them, i.e. to those same factors that, as we have seen, are now commonly placed at the base of the definition of "landscape". From this point of view recalling the latter category might almost seem a useless duplication, and therefore considered superfluous, given the absorption of its founding features within a concept like that of *milieu innovateur*, which, moreover, guarantees the rightful and now essential attention to determining aspects of local development.

That things are by no means like this and that the landscape category has indeed an essential function to carry out as a regenerative structure of a territory and a society that are more and more fragmented is witnessed by the difficulty, precisely within a logic of networks and *governance*, that the definition of territory boundaries and areas of competence of different systems confronts. For in this type of logic it is not the border, established a priori perhaps on the grounds of a bureaucratic and normative approach, that decides which relations can be considered internal to a particular system or sub-system and therefore of its strict competence but, on the contrary, *it is the relations that delineate their own boundary.* Some links and ties are, in effect, aimed at structuring and organising the internal functioning process of the system or local sub-system under examination (state, regions, with respect to the tasks they have to carry out as far as a particular function is concerned, e.g. education); whereas others are devoted to the creation of links, and therefore nodes, with other places and systems (the State with the Regions, and vice-versa, and of both with local boards and autonomous scholastic institutions, in our example). If we take the whole set of functions that with the Reform of Title V of the Constitution are assigned to the Regions, it is clear that this takes for granted and delineates a *double configuration of the context:* the context external to the regional territory and the internal one. The first is the space for construction of a *super-system* of which the other Regions, the State and the European Union are part, while the second is the constituent space of the organisational and management dimension, the exclusive competence of the Region itself.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that the same remarks can and must be applied, within each single territory, to the boundaries of the different functions and the systems managing them (in our case, the education system).

The centrality of the *theoretical problem of boundaries* therefore appears clearly evident in the two meanings we are giving it, both on a territorial level with the need to take into account the double configuration of the context and relations between each single system and the super-system into which it fits (which makes it feel its effect and weight in the form of "European" and national "ties" which no scholastic institution, however autonomous, and no regional system can disregard); and on the level of "horizontal continuity" between different functional systems belonging to the same territory, which show themselves in the form of reference to the demand for

integrated modalities between education and professional training and between both of these and work, having recourse, for example, to school/work alternation, which is being experimented more and more frequently and with more and more pleasing results. It therefore proves clear that to establish, for example, reciprocal boundaries between these three latter systems, first of all the flow of relations and relationships that it is intended will be established between them, needs to be determined, and the specific *internal relations* pinpointed for each of these, i.e. those that, by functional organisation, will occupy the space necessary for its conservation and development.

This theoretical argument on boundaries, which constitutes an attempt to concretely apply to the problems we are dealing with the reflections I tried to develop years ago in a book entitled, not by chance, *Epistemology of boundaries* (Tagliagambe 1997), means that for problems regarding the delimitation of spheres of competence, vertically, between super-systems, systems and sub-systems and, horizontally, between systems with different functions, attention should be concentrated, rather than on the related terms, on the relations between them and the *modus generandi* of the respective structures.

When speaking of the development of sub-national systems, for example, we have taken into consideration the different categories of "local system", concentrating our attention in particular on Marshallian industrial districts and *milieux innovateurs.* The difference between the one and the other lies, as has been seen, in the *form*, or the structure of the relations and therefore in the diversity of accumulation and importance of the same: in the district, the best developed relational canal proves to be that between welfare and supply, while in the *milieu*, according to Camagni's approach, we will have a very strong relationship between productive structure and that of *path dependence*, i.e. the type of memory aimed at organising knowledge, competences and routines, and which therefore constitutes the dynamic archive of knowledge and the capacities of available production and innovation.[5] In this second case, the importance given to *socio-cultural proximity*, to the processes of *collective learning* and the centrality of the link between *innovation, participation, orchestration and training* makes the education and training system one of the places from which to depart and towards which the relations decisive for the purpose of local system development are concentrated.

The form, i.e. the structure of the relations most useful not just for economic but for the social and cultural development of a particular territory and local system, cannot be selected and chosen in abstract terms, or by having recourse only to those theories dealing with growth and innovation. It should be selected as a result of an in-depth analysis of the forms of life of populations and their style of perception and thought, the nature of which derives from the action of natural and/or human factors and their interrelations, as well as the effect and weight of *collective action*, the local capacity to contextualise *global* economic, social and political dynamics, that is those aspects the ECL adopts as constituent elements of the definition of "landscape".

The concentration of attention on certain aspects to be considered essential for the purpose of themes concerning growth and innovation, with the consequent exclusion of all those considered "not pertinent" for this purpose, which characterises

the passage from the category of "landscape" to that of milieu, and from this to the ever more specific one of milieu innovateur, and the obvious consequent limiting of perspective, are certainly useful when we are dealing with the construction of a model of local development and controlling its validity. It is a different matter, though, when we are dealing with facing, in all its worth, the vast, complex spectrum of relations between a territory and the community that has settled there, to assess the quality of inhabiting and to answer questions that are particularly demanding on the theoretical plane, like those regarding the boundaries between the different contexts and levels into which a particular territorial sphere has ramified, and between the different functions carried out within it, or like those posed by Heidegger on the "uprootedness" or not of man with respect to the place where he lives and on the crisis of inhabiting, meant in the fullness of its essence. In cases like these, it is clear that the above limitation does not prove at all useful or functional. Themes of this kind require full promotion of the category of landscape and its adoption as a guide to assess and select the whole set of relations to refer to and to be backed in order to achieve authentic regeneration of a fragmented territory.

Notes

[1] To study further the concept of the symbol in Florenskij and his "epistemology of the symbol", see Tagliagambe (2006).

[2] The same essay is present entitled *Il valore magico della parola,* in the Italian translation by E. Treu, in D. Ferrari-Bravo, *Slovo. Géométrie della parola nel pensiero russo tra '800 e '900,* Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 2000, pp. 165–211.

[3] De Kerckhove developed this topic above all in the works *Connected intelligence: the arrival of the Web society,* edited by Wade Rowland, Kogan Page, London 1998, and *The Architecture of Intelligence,* Birkhäuser, Basle-Boston, 2001.

[4] De Kerckhove developed this theme in particular in the works *Connected intelligence: the arrival of the Web society,* edited by Wade Rowland, Kogan Page, London, 1998, and *The Architecture of Intelligence,* Birkhäuser, Basle-Boston, 2001.

[5] It is useful to remember that when we speak of "memory", we refer here to a conception of memory that leads us to consider as inadequate any conception that likens it to *a container, an "archive" of memories.* As Edelman in particular emphasises, "not only does the archive not exist, but it is not correct either to speak of memories, in that at the level of memory conceived and meant that way, which is a constant activity of re-categorisation of responses to stimuli, the recalling of a particular categorical response, which always happens in continuously changing situations, cannot but modify the structure and dynamics of the neural populations implicated in the original categorisation [. . .]. Such recalling may give rise to a *response* that is similar to a response given previously (a 'memory'), but in general the response is modified or enriched by changes underway" (Edelman 1991, pp. 138–139).

In this context, the memory is therefore defined as a re-categorisation originating in the process of a return among images in subsequent moments of perception: from this same dynamic process of comparison between images of things perceived and linked together at different moments, the imaginative function also arises, which consists of the capacity to make new images and representations emerge, through constructive associations. This first level of the memory is integrated by a second one, the *long-term memory,* tied to "*secondary* synaptic changes, which link up some of the same neuron groups that were implicated in a given short term memory" *(Ivi).*

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The Influence of the Landscape on the Identity of Urban Space

Nicola Sisti

1 The Influence of the Landscape on the Identity and Organisation of Urban Space

When planning is oriented in an environmental sense, the resulting urban perspective places the environment as the central nucleus for the city and territory project. This allows the prospect of new ways of imagining relations between urban space organisation and the environmental system, so that new urban perspectives can be proposed based on an awareness of the values of the landscape. The urban context and the environmental one are no longer seen as two separate systems, but as systems that strongly interact via various modalities of relating with each other.

The orientation of planning in an environmental sense occupies a place that contrasts with the traditional town planning approaches tending to focus attention on the city alone, believing it to be the only element to consider. Thus, different hierarchies do not exist, or organisations separated from each other; what exists is more an integrated organisation of networks of structures that cooperate between them, each integrating the others.

This orientation also permits possible evolution to be proposed regarding the identity of the organisation of an urban space. For each urban context – regardless of its geographical location and dimensions – must manage to evolve in step with historic times and the spatial-geographical context of its setting, or it will risk losing its own identity.

The relationship of a city with the context it belongs to may be compared, according to Heidegger, with that of an individual with the reality surrounding him/her.

In Heidegger's (1927) terms, each existence is characterised by a "thrownness", by belonging to a context that has not been chosen, which constantly has to be taken into account.

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The relationship with reality, with things, is determined by belonging to a specific context in which we find ourselves "thrown" and continuously involved. Each individual is determined by this state of being-thrown as a condition of Being-in. Each subject is always engaged in action within a situation, without having the chance to free themselves completely and to function as an external observer.

According to Heidegger, however, in spite of this primordial relationship with the world that is unavoidable, it is possible for each individual to grant sense to the context by our *practical-involvement,* being-in-the-world, acting not as a passive subject but as an active subject able to think of reality through continuous creation of sense.

Each city, then – like each individual – is historically determined. It is not possible for each city to take on a meaning and a fixed, unchangeable identity, independent from time and place. This context is none other than a system of meanings interacting continuously with the urban system. For on the one hand, with its meanings it generates continuous disturbance for the identity of the city. On the other, it is the city itself that generates continuous disturbance in the context to assert its own identity. The city tends, therefore, towards achieving a constant balance between its own identity and the continuous evolution deriving from these interactions; it should be able to subordinate the structural changes deriving from these interactions to conserving a specific identity consisting of continuity with the structure of preceding meanings.

Its existence is bound, therefore, with its capacity to develop in step with the times and with the reality surrounding it. For when any system loses this capacity and has no future prospects, it risks total disintegration and the loss of its own identity.

Identity is not a property but a relationship (or system of relations) between different evolutive stages in the development of a system. What is important is that between these different evolutive stages there should always be a relationship of continuity which, even admitting the loss of some features, will still lead to individuation of others characterising the identity of the base system. For in the opposite case – as Maturana and Varela (1980, 1985) emphasise – we would no longer have the evolution of a system but its disintegration, and the consequent loss of its identity.

The aspect that has had the greatest influence on this change of perspective has been the emerging of complexity and the consequent shift from the reductionist to the systemic approach.

We should not, therefore, adopt a "collectionist" type of attitude towards the environmental landscape. On the contrary, we need to involve the landscape in urban life organisation.

Integration between environmental processes and urban processes

> may be interpreted as an opportunity to create new forms of interaction between the space of man's activities and the biological dimension of the environment. In this perspective the project reinterprets traditional approaches characterised by the dichotomy between nature and city, between city and country, to move towards the exploration of new project territories
> (Maciocco and Pittaluga 2003 , p. 9).

In this way, the environment – its richness in nature and history – takes on a more and more strategic role in building urban-creating prospects for territories (Maciocco 2003, p. 21). If we consider, in particular, areas that are "external" to the great urban nebulas,

> to these perspectives correspond promising opportunities for integration with the urban universe that is taking shape: an opportunity for urban construction as support to the environmental quality of the European city; an opportunity for economic growth centred on the contribution the environment provides to the construction of new economies founded on nature and history; an opportunity for regeneration of identity of the eminently local character the environment adopts, which is a constituent element of the project of identity construction
>
> (Maciocco 2003).

The adoption of a "collectionist" point of view in respect of the landscape leads to considering environmental organisation and urban space organisation as two aspects that are each totally independent from the other. The two organisations are not thought of as two realities to be integrated and correlated. The organisation of urban space and the meanings of the environmental landscape are considered two different systems.

Landscape is thought of as a reality bearing meanings that are alien to urban space organisation; its value is recognised by structural interventions and prohibitionist measures that have, however, the sole objective of protecting and conserving it. In this way, the landscape is not involved in urban space organisation and loses its strategic value for development of the territory.

Whereas to single out the value of the landscape in territorial planning means to adopt a completely different attitude. Landscape and urban space organisation are thought of as two aspects to be integrated and correlated: the environment thus becomes the point from which to depart to reorder territorial organisation.

For the relationship with respect to the environmental dimension may be interpreted on the basis of two different arguments as follows:

> The first argument concerns object-oriented types of approach to the project, in which the environment and the processes underlying it are treated as objects from a point of view that sees the city and "country" as separate entities, a dichotomy between the built-up environment and the natural environment according to which nature begins where the city ends. [...] The basic spatial figure for this traditional argument is precisely "city and country as separate entities", a spatial category deriving from a strategy that belongs to our disciplinary culture. On this separative strategy are founded, for example, boundary policies for parks and protected areas. These management policies require a strong institutional base to be able to enclose a park exclusively as a service for the collectivity, as a good to be conserved for future generations. In a certain sense policies for the construction of important economies are excluded from this figure. Marginal economies are connected with them, which are ornamental compared with urban ones. [...] While a second argument is that defined as "ecological modernisation" and is oriented towards the process. The emerging process-oriented approach focuses attention on the ecological processes of a territory to plan spatial organisation of it
>
> (Maciocco 2003, p. 24).

In this second case, territorial space organisation tends to be integrated into environmental structures. Hierarchical organisation of the territory is overcome. Urban space becomes a reality integrated with the specific features of the landscape on the

basis of a search for requisites of coherence between the environmental–landscape system and urban space organisation. Territorial space becomes an integrated organisation of networks of structures that cooperate together, each integrating the other.

Instead of considering urban space organisation and that of the environment as two totally alien systems, in this way they are considered as two realities to be integrated and correlated. Territorial space is therefore centred again on the environment, and the environmental system is considered the centre of organisation of the territory.

We should not, therefore, look at the landscape adopting an attitude of protection and concentrating only on its properties. On the contrary, the environmental landscape needs to be involved in urban space organisation, concentrating also on environmental system relations. For the involvement of the landscape – through continuous relations with urban space organisation – nurtures the development of territorial space identity by reorganising it in an environmental sense.

2 Evolutive Dynamics in the City–Territory Relationship When Orienting Planning in an Environmental Sense

The possibility of nurturing the development of territorial space identity by promoting ever new interactions between the urban context and the environmental one is based on the consideration that each reality has a different meaning depending on the context in which it is placed and according to the relations it establishes with those surrounding it. The meaning a reality adopts is deeply determined by the context it belongs to and the relations it establishes with the meanings around it.

One particular part has different characteristics if it is taken singularly or as a part of a whole: consequently, if one particular part is introduced into two different wholes it can take on different characteristics. The whole – as highlighted by Gestalt psychologists – is greater than the sum of the parts. The meaning of an element is not determined by an analysis that fragments, but from the organisation of the global entity in which it is set. The meaning of an element is not given by the juxtaposition and composition of parts generated by non-interactive meanings, not linked between them. It depends more on the complicated equilibrium of existing tensions between all the other meanings that surround it. The meaning of the parts is determined by the organisation of the whole or, in other words, it is a whole that cannot be reduced to the simple sum of its constituent elements.

A melody, for example, possesses intrinsic unity, an individuality that goes beyond the simple succession and juxtaposition of the sounds composing it; in fact, it can be played in a different key, while to the listener it is still the same melody, though its elements have all changed. If we take a melody into consideration, it is undeniable that it is made up of parts, the single notes composing it. The final result, however, is not the sum of the parts, for the melody has different characteristics from those of the notes. And it is so independent from the qualities of the single parts that we can recreate the same melody either playing it with different instruments (the

notes will have a different timbre), or even transposing it into a different key and therefore almost completely changing the note-elements that form it. The quality of the whole itself is not given therefore by the elements, but by the relations between them, by their structure.

In attributing a meaning to an element the system of relations it becomes part of thus proves decisive. For the different outcomes of these interactions and how they are organised generate structures and meanings that are different, as the structure is made up of elements and of relations created between the elements. The meaning of an element is given by the type of relationship it becomes part of. If it becomes a part of different relationships, it takes on different meanings. Thus, elements do not exist that have their own meaning. The meaning of each element depends on its relations with the others. Each single element may be defined in one way or another depending on the relations it has with the other elements.

The ambiguous figures illustrated by Kanizsa are a clear example of this situation.[1] Depending on the type of relations considered, therefore, certain structures are favoured rather than others, and certain meanings are singled out rather than others. The meanings of a city are therefore never unambiguous but depend on the elements and on the relations between the elements that are taken into consideration each time. In the same way, the relationship between city and territory may take on meaning variables depending on the "dominants" that are considered each time.

So in the case of meanings of relationships between city and territory, there will be a situation where, depending on the dominants taken into consideration, certain relationships will be selected rather than others.

In this process, however, not all possible structures are taken into consideration; only those appropriate for the aims of the project and compatible with already existing structures are selected. To select the structures most suitable for the aims of the project means to single out from all possible structures those that are interesting with respect to the project intended to be realised, those useful for determining a city–territory relationship in one way rather than another.

Whereas to select the structures most compatible with already existing structures means to single out those structures that, though effecting a change in the structure of the relationship between city and territory, will be able to single out those compatible with the previous structures. For in the opposite case – as has already been seen – if in the course of its own interactions a system adopts changes that are not compatible with the previous system, the problem will be encountered of changes made to a system like the city–territory one which risk leading to structures determining the complete disintegration of the organisation of the base system, entailing complete dissolution of the identity and characterising aspects of the system itself.

The phenomenon just described may also be seen through existing relationships for the same figure between object represented and background. For it is possible to highlight the variety of structures that can be found in the same figure, according to the relationships favoured each time between the represented object and the background. Analysis of these models highlights how the meaning of each element depends on its relations with the others (Kanizsa 1980). By favouring

certain organisations as figure or background rather than others, each time the image expresses different meanings.

The relationship between city and territory – exactly like that between figure and background – may therefore be determined in one way or another, depending on the relations existing between their elements. If the organisation of the city and that of the territory are considered as two realities each independent from the other, a "collectionist" point of view will be obtained, whereas if the organisation of the city and that of the territory are considered as two integrated, correlated realties, completely different spatial organisation will be obtained, the outcome of synergies between the two previous ones: the city will be reorganised in an environmental sense. In this second case, each time different possible organisations between these two systems will be obtained, depending on the relations between the elements taken into consideration.

The relationship existing between possible meanings in which relations between the city and territory may be organised can be understood if we resort – following Lotman (1985) – to the logical distinction between language and metalanguage.

Let us look first of all at the difference existing between these two categories: in logics, the study of formal theory constitutes a new theory called metatheory, the language of which is called metalanguage. Metalanguage therefore deals with studying the elements of language of the theory that is the subject of study. To understand better the difference between subject language and metalanguage, we can also refer to natural language such as the Italian language. The dictionary of the Italian language describes the words, classifies and structures the language and also has a normative function in that it describes the correct use of the language. In the dictionary, there are words that refer to reality, words therefore that establish a correspondence between themselves and the world and serve to describe things. But there are also words that are used to describe words like, for example, "adjective", "noun", "masculine", "singular". These are all terms that are not used to refer to the world of experience but to refer to other words. There are thus words that refer to things and words that refer to other words ("adjective" cannot be applied to the external world but only to another word). Two types of language therefore exist: descriptive language that is used to directly describe external reality and language used to speak of another language, of other words, of itself as language. The first is indicated as object language, the second is called metalanguage.

In *Semiosfera* – with regard to the city of St. Petersburg – Lotman makes a distinction between city language and city metalanguage. City language is the chaotic, real city existing in daily life. Whereas city metalanguage is the ideal city, the one that expresses the identity of that city in an exemplary manner. The identity of the city may be the one that has remained constant throughout past epochs, or it may be the one the city has decided to give itself by renewing itself. City metalanguage, which contrasts with city language, thus represents the organisation of the city, towards which to look and at the same time to lean. City language, in effect, "always tends towards the non-regularity and contradictoriness of the artistic text" (Lotman 1985, p. 242), whereas city metalanguage always tends towards "the normative regularity of metalanguage" (Lotman 1985). For each city possesses a

basic identity that can be traced back to the evolutive time–space dynamics it was subjected to in the course of time. Identity is in effect – as also seen previously – a relationship (or system of relations) between different evolutive stages in the development of a system.

This identity is what enables us to identify one city compared with another, and what distinguishes it and represents the element in which its inhabitants are reflected. When, generally speaking, harmony is felt in living in a city, this is nothing more than feeling in harmony with the identity it expresses. Identity, understood in this sense, is the element that guides every urban project. All project structures that contradict the identity of a city, and therefore its organisation, are rejected to avoid these running the risk of disintegrating it.

Some examples are very clear in certain urban projects characterising town planning interventions in some of the cities of Italy and Europe. All these intervention plans are inspired by and take into account the identity of the city, bearing in mind its strong points and the reasons for which it is known and appreciated.

In Milan, for example, a large redevelopment and restoration project has been begun in important areas that have always made the city famous in the world as the "active city". The urban plan involves both city and outskirts, with the purpose of multiplying its vital centres. The objective is to redesign the structure of Milan over ten years, creating lots of "cities in the city", expanding and renovating entire areas that have made it famous. In this sense should be seen among the various projects the restoration and renovation of La Scala Theatre; the realisation of the great Pero-Rho Fair pole built on an area of two million square metres; the Garibaldi-Repubblica project with the realisation of the city of fashion; the realisation of the great cultural pole in the ex-Fair area; the Bicocca and Bovisa projects to accommodate, respectively, next to the areas destined for residence and spare time, the Bicocca University and the second pole of the Milan Polytechnic; the town planning project for the Rogoredo-Montecity zone, based on a "centre in the outskirts" model, which envisages the realisation of parks, cabled, I.T.-supplied dwellings, centres for hosting congresses and spaces to accommodate international events.

Other cities, too – as Maurizio Carta (2004) has pointed out – are following the same trend. Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lyons, St. Denis, Turin, Dortmund, Porto, Bilbao, etc. have started up projects for regeneration and development of their own image.

The urban project for Marseilles is interesting, for example, as it aims at reinforcing the image of its own identity by reassessing it. For Marseilles, which has always been a transition city for different cultures and ethnic groups, is planning its future on the concept of "integrated cultural inheritance", namely on a strong link between cultural patrimony of every description and quality of daily life of inhabitants, in terms of social integration, quality of environment, local identity, recuperation of traditional knowledge and handicrafts (Carta 2004, pp. 77–78).

All the interventions carried out and those planned are moving towards strengthening this image.

The identity of a city may also, however, be an objective to look towards not only to recuperate the organisation distinguishing it, which has failed due to less

fortunate time–space dynamics. A city's identity may also be the proposal for new organisation of the city – compatible with the previous – able to renovate and enrich it.

Lisbon is quite a recent example of this process.

During the years between 1990 and 1998, Lisbon underwent a series of restoration interventions firstly on the occasion of the 1994 "Lisbon capital of Europe" event, but above all for what was perhaps the event most looked forward to before the end of the millennium: the Expo of 1998, which indeed saw Lisbon as the last centre for the Universal Exposition before the end of the century.

Interventions in the city have concentrated more on its future, on the image the city wanted to give of itself to the whole world by organising those events. The underlying message aimed at relaunching an identity to be looked at in the coming millennium: the name chosen for the 1998 Expo was, in effect, "Lisbon, city of the oceans" and was well represented by one of the most surprising buildings constructed for the occasion: the *Pavilhao dos Oceanos*, which was put up to host and test all aspects of the water, the environment and the inhabitants. This building, together with a new bridge entirely set in the green of parks containing residential and commercial centres, schools, hotels and shops, has changed the look of the city and the environmental landscape surrounding it. Then, next to these interventions, the new *Estacao de Oriente* was created, a linking node for trains, underground, buses, taxis and airport shuttle service, and, further into the outskirts, the recuperation of surrounding territory by creating quarters immersed in the greenery able to host buildings, pavilions and infrastructures. With this the city expressed its will to be relaunched, choosing a name (and therefore a model) that seemed to turn its back on the continent – and therefore, indirectly, on that nostalgia of the most westerly capital in Europe that distinguished it – and to look with optimism to the "infinite possibilities" of the Atlantic (tied to the fortunate past of geographical discoveries and therefore full of positive meanings). Altogether the city expressed its will to be free of that melancholic veil that characterised it, to look ahead at a new model which – linked with the pomp of the past – could prove to be in harmony with its identity without running the risk of disintegrating it.

In each city, it is therefore possible to single out an identity and, at the same time, distinguish between city language and city metalanguage. City language is the chaotic, real city existing in daily life. Whereas city metalanguage is the ideal city, the one that expresses the identity of that city in an exemplary manner. An identity that – as also seen in the examples – may be the one that has remained constant throughout past epochs, or it may be the one the city has decided to give itself to renew itself.

The relationship existing between city language and city metalanguage enables us – as mentioned – to understand the relations existing between the possible different meanings in which the relationship between city and territory can be organised.

Following the distinction between city language and city metalanguage, we can easily realise how city metalanguage organises the chaotic whole of city language,

trying to "impose" precise organisation, but at the same time allows communication of the different, alternative structures of the city and the environmental landscape composing the shared background of the different variants.

For the identity (city metalanguage) can constantly be detected in the continuity relations that link the different evolutive stages of the system. Be it in the case in which the city looks to identity to recuperate the organisation that characterises it, be it in the case in which the city looks to identity to propose new organisation compatible with the – previous, it is important that between these different evolutive stages there is always a relationship of continuity. In the opposite case, in effect, we would no longer have the evolution of a system but its disintegration and the consequent loss of its identity.

Metalanguage has a descriptive, organisational and normative function of language. City metalanguage – compared with city text – therefore serves to structure, organise and give overall order to environments that are heterogeneous, centring the organisation of the city and the environmental landscape on a *leitmotiv,* on a model.

In the relationship between city and territory, the city is seen, on a metalinguistic level, as an organised, ordered system that contrasts with the amorphous, untidy character of the surrounding territory. The city is, then, seen as something organised, whereas the environment is seen as something shapeless, without a structure. In the case described by (Lotman 1985, pp. 225–243) – that regarding St. Petersburg – the city is, for example, what is contrasted with the marshy, stagnant places on which it is built. Nevertheless, as seen beforehand in the case of the figure/background relationship, this does not mean that metalanguage is the only bearer of alternative meanings. For new meanings can also arrive from the linguistic level.

In the case of the relationship between figure and background, we saw how these were complex relations due to the alternation of an organisation occupying respectively the role of figure or background. The background might in many cases be the bearer of organisations that were alternative to the meaning of the figure. By favouring a particular organisation as figure or background different configurations were obtained each time.

The same relationship can also be found in the relationship between language and metalanguage, for language is in its turn a bearer of alternative meanings in many cases. Returning to the example of natural language, think of the case of updating a dictionary. Each year dictionaries of the Italian language are updated with new words and uses: words and expressions created for cultural, legislative and technological innovations; new meanings for existing words; words and expressions coming from other languages. In this case, it is not metalinguistic organisation that is addressing the disorder at a linguistic level. Rather, we are witnessing an overspill of the linguistic level into the metalinguistic one and its subsequent organisation. New meanings, created at an everyday real life level, characterised by complexity and disorder, receive a structure and organisation at a metalinguistic level. The level

of metalanguage is therefore dynamic and is continually updated (influencing it in its turn) through interaction with language.

This phenomenon has been expressed by von Foerster (1981) using a famous formula: "order from noise". With this formula, Von Foerster emphasises how in a self-organising system, an increase in order is produced departing from noise. This process does not, however, take place through the preliminary action of factors coming from the environment to the system, but from a sort of natural selection that the system itself carries out so as to accept only those components of noise able to contribute to the increase in order of the system.

The unusual nature of a self-organising system is indeed that of being able to react to unforeseen disturbances by changing itself, i.e. by modifying its internal organisation. These new organisational forms emerge following interaction with events that in another system would have produced disorder and disorganisation, or even the destruction of the system, while in these systems they have the effect of generating an increase in order.

At the basis of this process, there is the idea that every dynamic system tends to evolve towards a state of equilibrium. The more rapidly a system moves along the space of its possible states, the more rapidly it will reach a state of equilibrium. Disturbances serve, precisely, to "make the system move", and therefore to allow self-organisation. Systems of this kind are characterised by continuous disorganisation followed by reorganisation at higher levels; so disorder and disorganisation, like disturbances, are not negative factors for these systems, but essential elements to increase their order and internal complexity.

The relationship between city and territory is thus not only a relationship between two organisations having different categorial levels. It is more a relationship between two organisations in continuous interaction which affect each other reciprocally, exactly like what happens in the dynamics seen with regard to the relationship between figure and background and between language and metalanguage. The meanings refused by metalanguage, by internal organisation of the city, become alternative possibilities for rethinking the city and its relationship with the territory.

The identity of the city, in effect, presents itself as a place where different meanings are simultaneously present. Within this infinite range of meanings each time what appears to be the dominant one compared with others, and the one most coherent with the environmental context, emerges. Next to the emerging meaning, however, the others continue to exist but remain submerged for the whole time that the hegemonic interpretation prevails over the others. When the predominant meaning loses consistency, another of the competitive ones takes over, exactly the one that seems to lend itself better to the twofold requirement of conserving the still valid meanings of the previous one and taking into account the new elements that have emerged. In this way, the identity of the city does not remain imprisoned in a single meaning. Different competing meanings cohabit within it resulting from the different organisation of the city–territory relationship. What emerges each time in the course of the process of resignification is nothing more than what seems to be the most coherent with the environmental context present and with the situation previous to it.

3 The Creative Character of the Evolutive Dynamics of the City–Territory Relationship

To guide the organisation of urban life in an environmental sense (re-centring organisation of the city on the environmental components of a territory) and to nurture the development of city and territory identity, it is therefore important to see in the context the structures and relations between the elements.

For creativity lies in seeing similarities where there are none, making them be seen and imposing them on common sense by selecting what is significant and what is not. Similarity, therefore, is not immediately present; it is important to highlight it. This selection of what is significant and what is not is based on the capacity to distinguish the relevant aspects that are not necessarily the most accessible.

For we often tend to consider the most accessible reading, the most accessible route is not necessarily the most relevant, interesting or creative. In fact in many cases, it happens that what we call realistic representations are simply the most habitual, the most available, and therefore deprived of novelty and invention (Tagliagambe 2005, p. 28).

Creativity does not lean so much on accessibility. It is based on relevance of details that perhaps appear secondary.

If the relationship between city and territory is a link between two organisations with continuous interaction affecting each other reciprocally, then it becomes important to analyse the way in which communication between the two systems can reveal itself creative, nurturing the development of the identity of the territorial space by reorganising it in an environmental sense.

By analysing the process that occurs during the course of communication between two systems, Lotman drew attention to how communication is always translation, translation from the language of the speaker (sender) into the language of the listener.

The sender, Lotman observes, "codifies the message by means of a series of codes of which only a part is present in the decoding mind of the receiver. Each act of understanding, therefore, when a semiotic system that is quite well-developed is used, is partial and approximate. It is nevertheless important to emphasise that a certain degree of misunderstanding cannot be explained only as "noise", i.e. as a damaging effect due to the imperfect structure of the system, which was defective in its ideal scheme. The increase in misunderstanding or poor understanding may indicate the presence of technical defects in the communication system, but may also indicate that the system is becoming more complicated, that it is capable of carrying out more complex and important cultural functions. If we put the various systems of social communication one next to the other according to their degree of complexity – from the language of road signs to that of poetry – it will be clear that the increase in non-ambiguous deciphering will not be able to be attributed only to technical errors of a given type of communication.

The communicative act (in all quite complex, and therefore culturally rich, cases) should therefore be considered not as a simple transfer of a message which from the mind of the sender to that of the receiver remains adequate in itself, but as a

translation from a text in the language of my "I" to the language of your "you". The possibility itself that this translation occurs is conditioned by the fact that the codes of the two participants in the communication form, though not identifying them-selves, a series of elements that intertwine with each other. But since in the act of translation a part of the message will always be lost and the "I" will be transformed into the code of translation of the "you" language, what is lost is precisely what characterises the sender, i.e. what from the point of view of the whole constitutes the most important element of the message. The situation would have no outlet if in the part of the message that the receiver has managed to perceive, indications were not contained in the way in which the receiver has to transform his/her personality to recuperate the lost part of the message. Thus the lack of adequacy between the agents of communication transforms this same fact of passive transmission into conflictive play, during the course of which each of the parts tries to construct the semiotic world of the other following his/her own model and is at the same time involved in conserving the unusual nature of his/her counter-agent (Lotman 1980, pp. 37–38).

The communicative act is never a simple transfer of a message that from the sender to the receiver always remains adequate in itself. The communicative act is indeed always a translation from the language of the speaker (sender) into the language of the listener because even if two subjects speak the same language this does not mean, however, that they have the same basic knowledge that enables them to understand and share the message. Non-fictitious communication, which can be realised and must be realised between two subjects who start out with different "packets of beliefs"

> depends on the possibility that each of the two speakers is able to recognise the beliefs of the other in relation to the same context, to simulate them and incorporate them within their own "semiotic world", building a reliable model so as to achieve, thus, progressive "harmoni-sation" of respective orientations. Communication is possible only with this shareability of notions and beliefs as a premise or, if this is lacking, rather than ignore its absence, if effort is made to start off and gradually develop the activity of working out a common, shared set of ideas and points of view on the "world"
>
> (Tagliagambe 1991, p. 82).

The relationship between city and territory is, as seen, one between two organi-sations that interact and communicate continually. The fact that communication is always translation from one system to another and never the transfer of a message that from the sender to the receiver always remains adequate in itself enables us also to understand how, orienting planning in an environmental sense, these continuous interactive dynamics can reveal themselves creative in reorganising the relationship between city and territory on the basis of relations that are always different but con-tinuous between them. When the two systems interact and communicate with each other, they always select new relations and different meanings. It is important, nev-ertheless – as stated – to verify each time that only relations appropriate for the aims of the project are selected and those compatible with already existing structures. For in the opposite case, the problem will be encountered that the changes made to a system, like that singled out of city and surrounding territory, risk leading to

structures that will determine the entire disintegration of the organisation of the base system, entailing complete dissolution of the identity and characterising aspects of the system itself. This, in terms of the study of communicative processes, is equal to avoiding the effort of working out that shared background of ideas and points of view on the "world" we have seen to be essential for communication: something equivalent to the will to stop giving information and remain withdrawn in one's own world (though continuing interacting with others) without trying to understand the messages on the same issue that are sent to us by other interlocutors.

Note

[1] Some of these examples, illustrated in Kanizsa (1980), have recently been analysed in Tagliagambe (2005).

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[*Centrality*] and/or *Cent*][*rality*

A Matter of Placing the Boundaries

Isabelle Doucet

1 Introduction

We 'moderns' believe, even in a post-modern age, that we have the power to control the earth, despite our deep ambivalence about whether we know how to exercise that power wisely (Cronon 1991, pp. 18–19). From thereon, William Cronon neatly unravels the historical entanglements and interdependencies of city and countryside: Chicago *and* the Great West.

This article addresses the notion of centrality in the context of spatial theories and practices in the field of architecture and (urban) planning. It first explores the rise of new forms of centrality that make the traditional boundaries and dichotomies of city/landscape, urban/rural, centre/margin, and compact/dispersed indistinct. Addressing these altering dichotomies and the increased spatial, social, economic, etc. complexities that came along with them is worth profound research. This is confirmed by numerous publications in planning, spatial governance, and urban studies aiming to grasp our increasingly complex and multiple environments. The article presented here does not aim to present such exhaustive research. Its focus is elsewhere.

After addressing changes in centrality as a *phenomenon*, this article will shift attention towards centrality as a *state-of-mind*. This shift is motivated by the fact that centrality is problematically embedded in spatial practice as a *state-of-mind*, as an attitude of thinking. Traditional dichotomies cannot be countered as long as important disciplinary centralities are maintained. One can think of the distinction between design and conception versus performance and use in practice. One can also

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think of the recognition of some forms of knowledge while marginalising others. Aiming to construct *facts*, spatial disciplines tend to stick to rational categories, tools and conventions, even though such categories might no longer be suitable for dealing with our spatial reality. Studies that *do* radically break with planning's privileged role of knowledge production, by allocating centrality to alternative knowledge production, often struggle to obtain recognition.[1] Therefore, rather than as a *phenomenon*, one needs to critically address centrality as a *state-of-mind*, as an *attitude*.

This article questions how such a different *state-of-mind* can occur. One way to approach this question is through Bruno Latour's notion of *collectives* building a *common world* by means of *risk*, *experiment*, and *learning curve*. In relation to Latour, the question can be approached by the notion of *fluidity*, as introduced by A. Mol and J. Law.[2] To fully understand the relevance of these concepts for spatial studies, this article will travel as far as the extraordinary analysis of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump (De Laet and Mol 2000) and as near as familiar urban planning contexts. This journey's objective is to offer the reader a different understanding of centrality as well as to outline a set of new research directions, yet to be explored.

2 New Notions of Centrality

2.1 *Shifts in Centrality: What About* Boundaries?

Fig. 1 Struggle for Centrality as phenomenon

Historically, boundaries are related to the notion of 'city' and its distinction from the 'rural'. The traditional Chinese words for 'city' and 'wall' are identical; the

character ch'eng expresses both of them. The English word 'town' comes from a Teutonic word that means hedge or enclosure (Kostof 1992, p. 11). This indicates that the city, as an economic, political, and cultural centre, could survive, thanks to being enclosed by clear boundaries: a (physical) city wall for military defence purposes and a (mental) toll boundary for financial and economic protection. In other words, centrality and power implicated enclosure by means of clear boundaries. Consequently, the breaking open of the city-centre into its surrounding environment was for a long time considered a serious threat. The fact that city walls were demolished long before toll boundaries demonstrates that this threat was stronger in economic than in military terms.[3] It also demonstrates the power of the *mental* enclosure of the centre. Notwithstanding borders restricted growth, it was all sorts of border-creativities, in the shape of *extra muros* activities, which initially triggered expansion.[4] That such creativity often went hand in hand with marginality did not only have to do with downright necessity.[5] It was also related to the nature of spatial strategies, which were traditionally based on centrality and which considered the margins of centres as residual, as of minor importance, and as grounds for conflict.

'Spontaneous' border activities, such as early squatter communities in and around city walls, have demonstrated that margins can be something more than a conflict zone or a zone of secondary importance. In response to such practices, several urban theories were built around those counter-initiatives that aimed at upgrading margins as spaces for contestation and citizenship.[6] The meaning of boundaries has changed significantly for other reasons also. *Urban growth spilling out from the edges of towns* (Ingersol 2006, p. 3), meanwhile known as *sprawl*, was, from the 1950s on, no longer considered a *marginal* phenomenon. Originally, urban extensions existed of *residual* and out-of-scale activities that were banished to outlying zones or 'urban fringe belts', such as cattle-markets and leper houses. The urban extensions that came to be called *sprawl*, on the contrary, are more a consequence of *possibilities* within wealthy (at the first instance American) contexts.[7] Due to their explosion into a largely distributed, omnipresent reality of almost totally urbanised territories, such urban extensions gradually lost their proximity and affinity with the city. Moreover, as both a geographical *and* an anthropological mutation, sprawl no longer extends merely into the countryside but right into the city cores too. At the same time, it grows at an astonishing speed around third-world *megacities*, ironically regaining its initial association with marginality.

What this article argues is that despite these conceptual and morphological shifts in the meaning of boundaries and marginality, contemporary spatial practices still struggle, integrating such shifts into the existing (institutional) planning processes. Two bottlenecks are to be addressed. First, planning theory often reduces the discussion on centrality to the problem of decentralisation and fragmentation, as influenced by globalisation, increased mobility, and the middle-class desire for peripheral dwelling. It often overemphasises phenomena like *sprawl* as a manifestation of these influences, but without radically re-addressing centrality as a *state-of-mind*. Secondly, those contributions that *do* address centrality as a *state-of-mind* have problems in developing into a *new* form of planning. Being inspired by social

theories from the everyday (like those by Michel De Certeau and Henri Lefebvre), they make a radical shift in centrality by defending more 'bottom-up' space production. One needs to question whether such 'bottom-up' space production is realistic, and if so, how it can be (better) enhanced in established planning processes.

2.2 The Notion of Centrality

In order to explore centrality *beyond* the limitations of these two bottlenecks, one can start analysing in more abstract terms the relationship between centre and boundaries.

'Centrality' is by definition the *quality or state of being central, a central position or tendency* (Lorimer and Lechner 1996, p. 160). As such, it expresses indirectly the *privileged* position of the centre: as a *quality*.

'Centre', by definition, indicates the *approximate middle part or point of something… occupying a middle position* (Lorimer and Lechner 1996, p. 159). But it also indicates the *place where activity is concentrated,* as in the case of a *shopping centre* (Lorimer and Lechner 1996, p. 159). What is remarkable today is the naming as 'centre' of those activities that in fact take place at the edges of urban centres: shopping centre, sport centre, subtropical centre, and so on. What makes them function as 'centres', despite their peripheral location, is their accumulation of activities and their strategic, accessible locations (though mainly by car) as nodes on the polycentric networks of the space of flows.[8] Because of the centre's tendency to be in a *privileged* position, and because of its tendency to *exclude* (the 'Other'), it makes sense to explore the centre *through* its boundaries or margins. Those are precisely the places where the included and excluded meet.

A 'margin' is an *outer limiting edge*, a *narrow area adjacent to the border of something*, a *limit beyond which something ceases to exist or to be possible or tolerable* (Lorimer and Lechner 1996, p. 609). But since the centre is *an artificial construct that relies on the marginalisation of 'Others' for its existence, the centre itself is* somehow *marginal* (Trinh T. Minh-ha in Taylor and Winquist 2003, p. 48).

An interest in the margins of the industrialising world can be traced back to those 19th-century urban explorers/anthropologists who developed the habit of enquiring into the English inhabitants of Victorian slums, the urban poor, analogous to the 'uncivilised' of truly foreign lands (Epstein Nord 1987, p. 122). But the *dependency* of the centre on marginalisation has been described probably most accurately by Friedrich Engels' descriptions of Manchester in the Victorian era.[9] Engels described the relationship between the Victorian ruling class (the centre) and the working class (the marginalised) as being *connected in such as way as to be integral components of a unified–diversified phenomenon,* the very division of which is the clue to their unity (Marcus 1973, p. 262). According to Engels, a part of the (bourgeois) hegemony was revealed in the location of the working-class districts: *at the very centre of things, yet out of sight* (Marcus 1973, p. 271). *To say that they were at the same time central and peripheral is to describe their contradictory*

existence in the structure of the social consciousness of the time (Marcus 1973, p. 271). Thus, what Engels made clear was precisely the ambiguous relationship between centre and margin: distinguished *but* dependent, geographically close *but* out of sight.

That the centre itself can become marginal is concretely demonstrated by the desertedness of the *central* business districts of contemporary cities outside office hours and by residential abandonment of city cores due to tourism overload and gentrification. But the battle for centrality continues in the form of socio-economic homogenisation and segregation that fight the 'Other' or at least its visibility.

In post-colonial thought about Otherness, the centre/margin distinction has changed drastically now that the old colonising centres in the West are themselves intermingled with the former 'Other'. The margin has folded right into the centre, becoming an ever more inherent – but not always integrated or tolerated – part of it.[10] Moreover, in formerly *colonised* contexts too, the boundary between 'the Other' (in this case the former coloniser) and 'us' (the colonised) is blurred, since the former coloniser is still significantly present in the life and habits of formerly colonised peoples and has turned the formerly colonised into an 'integrated' Other.[11]

Centre and *margin* have become hard to distinguish or fix. Whether the Other appears as Pakistanis in London, Moroccans in Marseille or Brussels, Turks in Berlin, homosexuals in conservative societies, and women in patriarchal ones,[12] the once marginal has been allocated or has enforced – at least to some extent – a central role. Such social and anthropological intrusion of the marginal *into* the urban centres blurs traditional meanings of centrality as much as sprawl does at the edges of cities. Due to this gradual, sometimes radical folding of the margin into the centre and the consequent hybridisation into 'centre–margins', where centre and margin are no longer unambiguous, *the question arises* – in both anthropological and geographical terms – *as to where the centre stops and the margins begin* (Taylor and Winquist 2003, p. 49). Rather than clear, sharp lines of division, these 'centre–margins' have become hybrid, ambiguous yet vast spaces in contemporary societies. This is the case of the distinction between city and countryside. Where the former is now also a ground for *discovery* (a quality that used to be linked to more rural settings), the latter is increasingly inhabited and urbanised (a phenomenon formerly related to cities). This is the case of the distinction between geographical centres and peripheries: while some centres become activity voids, the periphery *booms*. Such 'centre–margins' also occur in the form of new economic grey zones often in equilibrium between economic survival and criminality, and on which marginalised groups rely for their survival.[13]

What in fact happens is that *both* centre and margin compete for centrality: for the *quality of being central*. They are constantly negotiated by their users and stakeholders in their search for stabilising the hybrid reality they live in. As a consequence, the 'centre–margins' are under a tension that either supplies energy for resistance or escalates into conflict. It is the outcome of this process that will determine whether these areas become breeding grounds for innovation, intervention, and democracy, or endless battlefields.[14] This outcome depends on how much room is allocated to *negotiation*, to *experiments*, and to *collective* experiments, involving *both* centre *and*

margin. Therefore, to explore such 'centre–margins' and particularly the *event of a process,* the *centrality* shift from 'either/or' to 'and/and also' has to be completed with a *boundary* shift from 'in-between' to 'in-becoming'.[15]

2.3 (Obvious) Signs of New Centralities

Before addressing centrality as a *state-of-mind,* I would like to address centrality as a *phenomenon*. One can observe that, along with the phenomenon of sprawl, new forms of centrality have arisen. One can think of new network-like configurations as polycentric city-regions and of the hybridisation of urban/nature and city/periphery distinctions. Titles like *Zwischenstadt, After-Sprawl, La Città Diffusa,* and *Sprawl-town* give proof of such new centralities and of the attempts to develop new approaches for dealing with these hybrid realities (Sieverts 2003; De Geyter 2002; Indovina et al. 1990; Ingersol 2006).

Living forms no longer relate either to proximate or to long-distance realities, but to both at the same time. They no longer relate to either the natural landscape or the urban setting. Indeed, urban activities are now also staged against rural backgrounds: leisure landscapes, rural residential clusters (whether or not 'gated'). But also once-rural notions like exploration and discovery are now exercised within urban environments too: city-safaris and *multicultural* explorations in cosmopolitan settings.

One can recognise three types of shifts in centrality: the intermingling of scattered urban and rural fragments (2.3.1); the rise of new spatial configurations (2.3.2); the rise of new public spheres (2.3.3). These phenomena will demonstrate once more the need to focus on centrality as a *state-of-mind*.

2.3.1 Intermingling of Scattered Urban and Rural Fragments

Urban fragments disperse throughout the landscape. At the same time, rural or scenic ideals infiltrate the urban context. Such *urbanised* rural ideals are then projected back again on the rural landscape in the form of peri-urban communities and settlements: sometimes 'gated' and always 'in-the-green'.

Dispersed urban fragments occur in various forms, sizes, and densities. Leisure centres, remote business parks, and university campuses occur as well-connected points in regional networks. Business activities are mainly attracted by high accessibility and by the concentration of related businesses.[16] Leisure activities often combine accessibility with a more or less nature-oriented location. Residential functions, in search of quietness, clean air, green, and space, combine ideology with the availability of capital. It is meanwhile agreed upon that these phenomena hide significant mechanisms of exclusion and segregation.[17] Analysis of such exclusion and segregation is nevertheless often problematic. They derive either from fatalist thought, formulating doom-scenarios, or from inappropriate idealism. The latter acknowledges the *productive* possibilities of cracks in economic power and social

structures but risks misreading the downright necessity of such production or self-organisation.[18]

Moreover, it is acknowledged that new phenomena like peri-urban shopping malls and leisure landscapes occur *within* historical city centres too. This is problematic in terms of segregation and exclusion. Therefore, one no longer needs to question just environmental and mobility issues but also the targeting of *citizen-tourists:* the tourist as the ideal citizen in neoliberal economic terms (Ingersol 2006, pp. 35–36). How can one create an environment that is for both citizens and tourists while avoiding the amalgamation of both into the hybrid citizen-tourist? (Ingersol 2006, pp. 42–50). This question is crucial if one wants to avoid the exclusion of those (mostly lower class) inhabitants, considered undesirable and incompatible with the profile of the citizen-tourist. This balance between inhabitants and tourists is also challenged by more 'natural' leisure activities in rural settings: agricultural tourism (agriturismo), hiking, and biking. These are additionally challenged to find a balance between authenticity and commercial exploitation.[19] In a similar way, the *rural* ideal of discovery and exploration has been problematically commercialised and urbanised into phenomena like city-safari and fun-shopping[20] (Boer and Dijkstra 2003). Problematic, indeed, since the real *chance* for unexpected encounters disappears along with the homogenisation of urban centres, being freed from the Other.[21] One can add to this the consequences of inner city exploitation or *tourism's double imperialism,*[22] as in the case of Venice (Ingersol 2006, p. 29).

What 'fun cities' like Berlin, London, and Amsterdam (Boer and Dijkstra 2003) and 'postcard cities' like Venice and Bruges (Ingersol 2006) have in common is a tendency to *homogenisation*. As such, 'fun cities' risk losing what made them attractive: cultural mix, tolerance, and diversity. Meanwhile, the consumption of the 'postcard city' occurs through simulation: the genuine city has become a perfect copy of itself (Ingersol 2006, pp. 37–41). And the success of homogeneous leisure islands keeps increasing (cruise ships, artificial subtropical parks, indoor slopes). Driven by a fear of the 'Other', homogeneity is achieved by segregating entry prices, restricted accessibility, and careful control.

These examples, though mainly taken from leisure issues, demonstrate planning's need for *integrated* solutions. It is broadly acknowledged that one needs to integrate the rural with urban issues, the functional with social diversity, as well as transport, culture, environment, agriculture, and housing responsibilities within and throughout the local authorities.

2.3.2 New Spatial Configurations

As a response to the fast growth of cities into their surrounding landscape, spatial models were developed to deal with this new phenomenon called *sprawl*. The current rise of new spatial configurations, as city-regions, growing no longer concentrically but polycentrically, has generated new forms of centrality that are no longer graspable as either compact or dispersed. While the existing Amsterdam and Johannesburg models still survive as the go and no-go models for cities, more hybrid forms are developing too. And this is needed, according to Edward

Soja, since sprawl is a *nasty term* (Soja 2002, p. 76), not so much because of its *effects* as for its *position* in a highly polarised debate between the sprawling city (Johannesburg model) and the sustainable one (Amsterdam). Next to sprawl as a *phenomenon,* Soja emphasises its problematic *state-of-mind:* between the *bad, stupid, destructive growth associated with sprawl* and *good, smart, sensitive, sustainable development* (Soja 2002, p. 76). According to Soja, not sprawl but the blaming of sprawl for contemporary urban and rural landscape dysfunctioning should be re-addressed.

The *Amsterdam model* describes the ideal model of the compact city as dense, mixed, diversely populated, linked to public spaces and services and cultivating the art of *vivre ensemble*. In contrast, the *Johannesburg model* describes the diffuse city, segregated in separate quarters in which each social group lives for the essential *entre soi*.[23] Since Amsterdam seems economically, politically, and socially the preferable model, cities have striven to become more Amsterdam-like. Only the Amsterdam model, standing for variety rather than segregation, seemed to express the principles of *urbanity* (Levy 2004).

In reality, most cities have treated their *difficult* quarters much more on the lines of the Johannesburg model than the Amsterdam one, with segregation as a means to organise encounters between social groups. Clearly, the sprawl-versus-sustainability debate no longer actually holds. It needs broadening to the whole set of *changes which together define the 'postmetropolitan transition'* (Soja 2002, p. 77). Soja argues that prototypical suburban manifestations should not be confused with more fundamental phenomena marking shifts over the last decades in our society as a whole: 'neoliberal and unregulated globalisation . . . the rise of New Economy flexible production . . . weakening of organised production and welfare state . . . uneven development of ICT' (Soja 2002, p. 88). Since 'other forms of injustice and inequality are built into the specific geography of all contemporary globalised city-regions' (Soja 2002, p. 88), alternative developments are needed.[24]

2.3.3 The Rise of New Public Spheres

When one studies the new spatial configurations, new forms of centrality and new complexities as mere *phenomena,* one risks ending up in polarised debates that, in spite of their outcome, seem to end up segregating and excluding realities. As Soja has also pointed out indirectly, centrality as a *state-of-mind* needs emphasis too. Felix Guattari's *Ecosophy* indicates 'the existence of an ethical and political option of diversity, of creative dissensus, of responsibility with regard to difference and otherness' (Guattari 2003). He argues for *supplementary deterritorialisation* that organises the city towards *non-segregative yet* 'resingularised' *subjectivity* and that redeploys values, other than the polarised rich/poor, independence/aid, integration/disintegration. He emphasises precisely the importance of the concentration of *capitalist power* in cities, due to which world cities today are *absolutely deterritorialised*, with its *various components scattered across a multipolar urban rhizome*

(Guattari, 2003).[25] *Capitalist deterritorialisation of the city* is for Guattari an *intermediate stage, setting itself up on the basis of poor/rich reterritorialisation.*[26] Therefore, it is addressing a change in mentalities and collective habits that is at stake rather than a mere modification of the *physical* environment.[27]

3 Centrality as a *State-of-mind*

Fig. 2 Struggle for Centrality as a state-of-mind

The first part of this article explored how meanings of centrality have shifted significantly in physical, social, cultural, and economic terms. It consequently argued that centrality needs to be addressed as a *phenomenon* as well as a *state-of-mind*. This is necessary since centrality, as a *state-of-mind,* is still strongly present in spatial thinking (in architecture, planning, and spatial governance). Architects, for example, develop spatial proposals through a translation process from their own creative ideas towards the built reality. This process takes place through a series of representational and notational systems: sketches, drawings, renderings, and models. In spite of the fact that the importance of *process* has long been emphasised, it has been delimited mainly to the *design* process: to the self-referential, autonomous character of spatial design, to its own proper history.[28]

But if one wants to take into account the multiple actors and stakeholders that influence spatial practice, one needs to extend the *design* process of the planner/architect to the *performance* side of spatial practice. The process is hence no longer related to the design process alone, but to the way a building or plan performs

in reality: how is it used and by whom? Who profits from its functioning? What has come to be at issue in spatial practice is the question of *agency*, but *agency* understood in relation to 'instrumentality'. In this sense, an *agent* is a means, an *instrument (person or thing) used to secure some effect* (Lorimer and Lechner 1996, pp. 15–16). Following the notion of *agency,* both the planner and his plan, both the architect and his architecture, are *agents* in the spatial design process. When this process is moreover extended to the performance of a plan or a building in reality, then the users also become agents of spatial practice.

It is by allocating agency to more than one central actor that traditional centrality in spatial practice can be addressed. It implicates allocating agency to *all* the actors in spatial practice: the architect/planner, the architecture (building)/(master) plan, the user of the building/city. One cannot but add public stakeholders and regulations as well as – unavoidably in a neoliberal planning context – economic stakeholders (such as real estate developers).

What was argued in the first part of this article was that questioning centrality is to question its role as a *state-of-mind*. What is furthermore argued here is that questioning centrality is to question *agency*. Who gets allocated agency in the production of space? Which users and stakeholders are involved in the attempt to achieve *common* spatial knowledge production? The integration of alternative knowledge production, such as knowledge produced by the users of the city, often proves problematic. Spatial disciplines tend to build knowledge through the construction of 'facts'. Such a rational, hierarchical knowledge process allocates central agency to the professional, the public stakeholders and willingly or not to economic powers. As a reaction against such an approach, counter movements started to pay more attention to the usage and appropriation of space. In other words, a more 'bottom-up' approach, aiming to counter the over-determination of 'top-down' planning in the production of space.

But if addressing new forms of centrality means questioning how *all* those agencies can be involved in spatial knowledge production, then one needs to move *beyond* either bottom-up or top-down planning. One needs instead to develop approaches that integrate both. One way to work towards such an integrated approach is by Bruno Latour's notion of 'collectives in search of a common world' (Latour 2004). The relevance of the notion of planning *in common thought* can easily be agreed upon. What seems more difficult to grasp is the fact that *collectives* allocate agency to both human and non-human actors, or things. Since precisely the agency of *things* or *objects* is crucial to spatial practices, this part of the article will focus on that.

After exploring the notion of *collective*, I will explore the agency of non-human actors. I will do so with the aid of the actor-network-theory recognition that 'objects, too, have agency' (Latour 2005) and De Laet and Mol's notion of a 'fluid object' in their analysis of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump. Moreover, I will link such theoretical notions to the concrete planning context. As such, the aim is to demonstrate that precisely the reinterpretation of the boundaries of actors and entities will open a way towards much more complex agencies, and towards the integration of *many* agencies within one and the same knowledge process. At the end of the article, possible

research perspectives will be outlined that could contribute to concrete challenging of centrality as a *state-of-mind*.

3.1 Collectives in Search of a Common World

To understand Bruno Latour's notion of 'collective', it is best to start from the distinction between society and collective. A society gathers social, human beings. A 'collective' contains both human and non-human actors: it recognises that objects have agencies, too. In *Politics of Nature,* Bruno Latour distinguishes an old, modern regime from a new, non-modern constitution or political ecology (Latour 2004, pp. 184–188). It is this distinction that lies at the very basis of the distinction between society and collective.

The 'First Arrow of Time' is, according to Latour, based on the *modern time machine* and is obsessed with time and progress. Progress means thrusting forward on an ever more clear distinction between facts and values. It does so by both inclusion and exclusion. It creates a *reservoir,* in which it collects indisputable facts. But it also creates a *dumping ground*, where it dumps disputable values (Latour 2004, pp. 188–190). Therefore, according to Latour, the modern time machine builds on two 'powers': the power to take into account (indisputable facts) and the power to order those facts (Latour 2004, p. 233).

The 'Second Arrow of Time', in contrast, mixes facts and values into *matters of concern*.[29] It sees progress differently, namely as becoming *ever more mixed, attached, and complex*. Progress is seen as *collective experimentation* following a *learning curve* (Latour 2004, pp. 191–192). An experiment means passing through a trial and coming out of it with lessons. It offers an intermediary between knowledge and ignorance and is defined by the quality of the learning curve rather than by the knowledge available at the start (Latour 2004, p. 195). Because of the importance of the learning curve and of the continuous process of experimentation, one can speak of an *experimenting, learning collective*. Such a collective creates only *provisional* boundaries: *provisional* totalities and *provisional* exclusions from the collective. In order to allow experiment, learning curve and provisional totalities, one needs to be able to keep constant track of the *quality* of the learning curve. This is why the two modern powers are completed with a third power: the power to follow up (Latour 2004, p. 205).

Only in the 'Second Arrow of Time' is the *collective* introduced. By including both humans and non-humans within one and the same collective, it counters the object/subject distinction and the nature/society distinction (Latour 2004, p. 232). That is why the notion of *society*, main cause of the subject–object separation, is replaced by the notion of *collective* (Latour 2004, 2005, p. 75).

Thinking in terms of *collective* allows both facts and values in knowledge production. It allows the integration of both the cold, inhuman world of science and the rich, lived world entirely limited to humans (Latour 1999, p. 9).[30] Since spatial practices, too, balance between sciences and humanities, the notion of *collective* can offer a possible way out of the polarised debate between rational,

top-down planning producing *facts,* and more bottom-up planning, dealing with the *human dimension.*

3.2 'Fluid Objects' – Objects and Their Boundaries

This article explores whether and how spatial practices, such as planning, (could) behave like *experimenting collectives*. This implicates that one accepts that non-humans (objects, classification systems, etc.) also take part in the collective experiment. Although this is but one aspect of the notion of collective, it is a crucial one and probably the one that is most difficult to grasp. It implicates a radical shift in centrality, since no longer only humans (planners, inhabitants, politicians) do planning, but non-humans also somehow *act*. One way to understand how objects can *act* is by analysing the behaviour of objects within existing collectives. I would therefore like to introduce the reader to a planning instrument from Brussels. This instrument, an urban renewal instrument called neighbourhood contract (NC), is relevant for this purpose since it allocates an important role to the *collective nego-tiation* around urban questions. One can wonder whether such negotiations act as 'collective experimentations' and whether objects play a role in them, too.

Through neighbourhood contracts (NC), the Brussels Capital Region aims to up-grade its most difficult neighbourhoods.[31] This urban renewal instrument is region-ally allocated but locally applied. It is worth about 10,000,000 euro over 4 years and is funded by regional, community, federal, municipal, and European resources (Urban, Doelstelling II).[32] NCs are particular because of their integrative approach (housing, public space, social activities) and because of the fact that the participation of local inhabitants and associations is standard procedure within their development. Their success hence depends on both proper integration of the different needs and a proper diagnosis, by letting the different stakeholders participate. In other words, its proper functioning as a 'collective in search of a common world' seems crucial. What I want to explore here is what type of human and non-human actors occur in this collective and what role they play. To do so, I will start from the notion of 'fluid object',[33] which I will explore through A. Mol and M. De Laet's detailed analysis of the behaviour of the Zimbabwe 'B' type Bush Pump (De Laet and Mol 2000). Their description of the behaviour of this non-human actor, from its design and conception up to its implementation, performance, and maintenance, shows parallels with the development of neighbourhood contracts.

Why an interest in the bush pump? By analysing the pump, De Laet and Mol added to the Social Studies of Science debate a demonstration of what it means to be an *actor*.[34] Instead of the classical actor – a well-bounded, sane, and centred human figure, *Rational Man* – De Laet and Mol introduce the Bush Pump (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 226). They explore how the pump *acts* as an actor and demonstrate how the pump, rather than being well bounded, is entangled in a variety of worlds – both in its performance and in its nature. But, so they state, to be able to *act* in its entanglements, the Bush Pump has to be 'fluid': adaptable, flexible, and responsive

(De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 226).[35] Thus, De Laet and Mol conclude that if they can demonstrate that the Bush Pump is an 'actor' despite its fluidity, then 'actors' no longer *need* clear-cut boundaries. Instead, actors can be non-rational, non-human and they can be fluid without losing their agency (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 227). Throughout their analysis of the pump, several characteristics of *acting* objects are unravelled. As an analogy, I will explore whether these characteristics can be found, too, in the negotiation of Brussels neighbourhood contracts. Therefore, the structure of my analysis of neighbourhood contracts will follow carefully the criteria according to which De Laet and Mol have unravelled their pump.

3.2.1 When Objects Act

To describe the Bush Pump, De Laet and Mol state, means to describe its *model*, its *looks* and its *technical mechanisms*.

The pump *model* is variable over time: the current model results from restyling and improving an older manually operated water pump (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 228). Neighbourhood contracts (NC), too, did not just 'pop up' in the Brussels planning context. Brussels' attempts towards more integrative planning were crystallised by the approval of the Regional Development Plan, as a more visionary plan compared to the existing statutory planning of the Regional Area Destination Plan.[36] In this Regional Development Plan, a *city project* was developed for integrative urban renewal. NCs can be seen since 1994, together with municipal development plans (GemOP), as local applications of this *city project*. But in fact, their roots go further back in time. They replace and extend a much older planning instrument called 'woonkernvernieuwing' (residential core renewal), which was, from 1977 to 1993, the most important instrument for urban renewal (De Corte 1996). NCs are hence also variants or upgrades of older planning models. What makes them *different* is not so much that they are to be developed *in common thought* but that the instrument *officially* foresees a negotiation *structure* involving the different stakeholders.

The pump can also be described according to its visible characteristics, its *looks*. The current model is cheerfully blue, attractive, and appealing (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 228), and this will prove to be crucial to its success. NCs, too, are made increasingly appealing. The current generation of NCs, those of the last couple of years, has introduced a 'logo' for each individual NC. This logo allows immediate recognition of the NC when represented in the local press, in mail correspondence, etc. Its 'looks' are mainly used for communication purposes. In some cases, special local newspapers were set up. In other cases, the installation of a local (information) office proved fruitful. In the very latest model, this set-up of a local office has become obligatory in order to add to its visibility in the quarter.

But the pump is *more* than its looks. The *mechanics* of the pump are largely related to its invisible parts: the underground hydraulic system. However, so De Laet and Mol state, this hydraulic system does not necessarily make the pump unique,

since the pump is part of a *family* of pumps with a similar hydraulic system. What makes it unique is its capacity and durability. If one wants to describe the pump in terms of its difference from other pumps, one needs to recognise that it always has similarities with some others. 'Being itself' means that it is also in line with a number of others (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 231). The mechanics or functioning of NCs is for a large part to be defined by their 'orchestrated' character. NCs are predefined or orchestrated in detail on a regional level, by means of an official 'Cahier des Charges' or 'specifications sheet', but they are locally applied. As such, they, too, are always 'specific' but 'similar'. One will see that precisely this 'orchestrated' character of the mechanism of NCs influences their success or failure.

3.2.2 What Makes Objects Act?

When the Bush Pump is delivered on site, it is not yet a pump. To be able to deliver water, De Laet and Mol argue, it has to be assembled and installed. But to be able to deliver *clean* water, it has to be assembled and installed *properly* (De Laet and Mol 2000, pp. 231–233). What determines the *successful* delivery of clean water is not so much the hydraulic principle of the pump, but the fact that *health* is generated. It is hence *health indicators* rather than the pump's mechanics or looks that will measure its success. And to generate health, thus clean water, it is crucial to properly install (on site) in particular the headworks of the pump. An improper installation can result, for example, in wastewater flowing into the system. But what is first of all required is to find the right spot for drilling the hole. And this activity is community based. Without *community participation* it is impossible to find and drill the hole. Not only because the drilling requires more than one person but also because the local 'spiritual powers' of the village leader play a crucial role in identifying the place to drill (De Laet and Mol 2000).

The structure (and mechanism) of NCs is 'orchestrated' by the Brussels' Regional Government, but are installed and assembled in the concrete local context of a neighbourhood. Based on numerous observations of NCs, I could conclude that precisely this local installation is often problematic.[37] NCs foresee a negotiation structure during the set-up phase, in which the different stakeholders are involved: planners, local and regional public stakeholders, local associations, and inhabitants. By observing these negotiation processes, a recurring phenomenon could be identified, namely that debates often tend to polarise between planners and politicians versus inhabitants. It could also be observed that the needs, as indicated by the users of the neighbourhood, are not always fully integrated into the common diagnosis, and are hence not adequately addressed. The 'orchestrated' character of the negotiation structures and in particular their *formation* and *functioning* have seemed to be an important factor in the problematic implementation of NCs. This is the case because the formation of NCs is regionally predefined, while locally applied. The way this application is carried out determines for a large part the quality of the negotiation and hence of the learning curve of common knowledge construction.

Therefore, the formation, functioning, and implementation of NCs are worth closer observation.

Only 25% of the total project time of 4 years is dedicated to the negotiation and setting up of the programme. This allows little time for a thorough diagnosis and for 'hands-on' debates around concrete possibilities. As a result, debates remain vague and abstract and are mainly based on oral speeches rather than discussions on concrete material. Due to time pressure, discussions address generic, stereotypic themes rather than experiments with *specific* solutions for *specific* neighbourhoods.

Who is involved in the debates and on the basis of what proportions is predefined, too. Negotiation takes place in a 'General Assembly', open to the public, and in a 'Local Commission for Integrated Development', in which a restricted number of actors takes part in negotiation. Several public stakeholders take part in the debate, as well as a private planning office selected by the municipality, established to set up the programme. According to predefined rules, a minimum amount of inhabitants, associations, and entrepreneurs can take part. In reality, and for feasibility reasons, these numbers are often taken as a maximum, too. In the case of NC Kaaien, there were nine candidate associations for only a few seats.[38] The selection was based on the geographical distribution of those associations, rather than on their thematic focus or target audience. As a consequence, organisations with a similar activity were selected. This central quarter is characterised by a much higher number of cultural and socio-artistic organisations than in many other areas. This could not be taken into account due to the generic, rigid 'orchestrated' frame. For the same reason, place-specific actors could not be included. A large refugee centre is located in this quarter, housing around 300 'inhabitants'. Though an important actor in this quarter, the 'orchestrated model' did not define such an actor-type. Being neither inhabitant nor association, and being neither local nor regional but a federal stakeholder, such an actor could not be officially included in debates. Similarly, influential actors that are located just outside the perimeter cannot be included. In contrast, some actors within the perimeter that *should* be involved but did not show any interest in participating were not proactively approached. No single shopkeeper of the fashionable 'Rue Dansaert' attended the meetings. But since this standing shopping axis has a core impact on the quarter and its gentrification, it should have been involved in the development of the NC.

The content for discussion is also regionally defined, in the form of five thematic groups or – in French – 'volets' (shutters). Three 'volets' invest in housing projects (social, public, private/public), another in public space, while the fifth and last 'volet' invests in socio-economic and socio-cultural initiatives. Implementation of the latter is often problematic since it is difficult to define what can be considered a 'social' project. It is observed that other agendas (of local authorities, of artistic centres) often try to get in here. Can, for example, the renovation of a local museum asking 10 euros entrance fee be considered a 'social' project?!

The planning context is also delimited by a geographical perimeter, defined *before* the start-up of the NC. When, during the debates, a need is expressed to enlarge or adapt the perimeter, this is impossible: one cannot deviate from the 'orchestrated' space. Its boundaries are once again fixed! The extent to which the

content is allowed to deviate from the 'orchestrated' frame depends on the flexibility of local and regional authorities. For example, in another NC observed, which was trying to reconcile a red light district with residential streets, an urgent need was expressed to install 'urinoirs'.[39] Since this type of 'building' did not fit into any of the five thematic frames, nor into standard urbanism procedures, it was highly complex to achieve their installation within the available time frame.

Though the legal, orchestrated framework is rigid on paper, it is nevertheless flexible in reality. Regional powers steer the process according to their own mindsets and beliefs. This can be directly, by changing the *Cahier des Charges*, or indirectly, by expressing their wishes during follow-up meetings with the municipalities. For example, in the set-up of the 2006 NCs, emphasis was repeatedly put on commercial aspects, employment, and kindergartens. Emphasis was also put on the importance of maintenance and continuation of the programme, after finalisation of the NC. This was expressed by means of a new compulsory management and maintenance plan. In order to gain more control over the development of the NC, the region also introduced a whole new set of standardised report templates.

What becomes clear now is that good functioning of an NC, just like the Bush Pump, depends on its *proper* application and assemblage in the local reality. Often this implementation sticks very literally to the generic model. But as the Bush Pump showed us, successful implementation has nothing to do with the correctness of implementation according to the predefined model, nor with the delivery of an 'urban renewal plan' (water) or even the '*best* urban renewal plan' (*clean* water). What it *is* about is reaching the intended goals, namely a better, more liveable urban environment (health), *by means of* urban renewal (a pump giving clean water). One can conclude that NCs, despite all efforts, do *not* always manage to reach that goal. One of the reasons is that community participation is *not* considered crucial, in contrast with the Bush Pump, for which community integration is crucial for drilling the hole. Although inhabitants and organisations are involved in the development of NCs, they are not *really* participating: a *common* diagnosis is not achieved. In the prostitution quarter mentioned before, for example, the many socio-cultural projects that were financed by 'volet 5' of the NC made interesting achievements. Through socio-artistic initiatives with local inhabitants remarkable insights were gained into the specific needs and problems of that quarter. Nevertheless, the urban renewal programme did not fully enhance these insights and showed more interest in activity and financial reports than in the content produced. In other words, community participation is constantly 'present' in the development of NCs, but it is hardly 'taken into account'. Even though participation would be considered successful, it does not guarantee knowledge being generated from it.

To describe the Bush Pump, one had to acknowledge that finding the right spot, drilling the hole, assembling the pump, and constructing the headworks are all 'common' actions. The pump is nothing without the community! Consequently, one should accept that the pump's boundaries *include* the villagers who install it (De Laet and Mol 2000). In contrast with the Bush Pump, the boundaries of an NC do not include the community but, instead, provide constant *exchange* with it. This difference between *inclusion* and *exchange* is important to understand the

meaning of 'common thought' for neighbourhood development. The very *definition* of negotiation by the Brussels government means *to bring the different actors involved around the negotiation table from the very start of the planning process.* It acknowledges the importance of also *foreseeing a participative phase in the planning process in which the population is involved,* but it does so by *offering citizens the opportunity to get insight into the project and contribute to its development process.*[40] This emphasis on informing (rather than negotiating) and on the distinction between the informed (inhabitants) and the informers (policy makers and experts) demonstrates once more the non-inclusive boundary of the NC.

One step towards more appropriate urban renewal programmes is to enlarge their boundaries and to include the community as a *crucial* partner. Without the community, proper urban renewal can be delivered, though a better urban environment is not necessarily achieved.

In the case of Zimbabwe, De Laet and Mol continue, the Bush Pump does not only build the community: clean water helps to build the nation too (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 235). In Zimbabwe, water distribution forms a social boundary: between those who have plumbing, those with water in their yards, and those who have to walk to get it (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 235). Providing a national water infrastructure can help dissolve those boundaries. The pump has become a national standard, which results in the fact that more and more villages replace the existing pumps with this 'B' type. When villages buy the pump, they hence not only help to provide clean water but also link up to the nation. The pump is designed, built, and assembled in Zimbabwe and is tailored to local circumstances (for example, spare parts are available locally). So De Laet and Mol are dealing with a pump that is *nation-building* while at the same time remaining *local*. This is what makes the pump unique! The pump has *a number of possible boundaries*: *from a small device to an entire State* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 237). But the fluidity of its boundaries *does not mean it is random or vague: they each enact a different Bush Pump* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 237).

I observed that NCs, on the contrary, do not have very fluid boundaries. Their boundaries are rigid and fixed. *Who* and *what* is included is clearly predefined by the regional powers. Only in rare cases are the boundaries of NCs adaptive, and then mainly from the point of view of its makers (the regional power) rather than as a response to application needs. As observations in the Brussels reality suggest, the implementation of an NC could be more accurate if its boundaries were allocated more flexibility. The inclusion of non-standard actors and themes could be guaranteed, the local community could be *genuinely* integrated, and neighbourhood-specific needs could be accounted for.[41]

3.2.3 What Makes Objects Act Successfully?

If one concludes that the pump is indeed an *actor*, one may wonder: does it also work (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 238)? The importance of delivering 'health' over 'clean water' over 'water' has been emphasised already. But how can one judge whether 'health' is delivered successfully? First of all, maintenance of the pump is

crucial for guaranteeing health. In the case of the Bush Pump, therefore, one can take it to pieces and repair it locally without harming crucial parts and without the need for a highly specialised and skilled team. New models of the pump have brought in innovations precisely in the sphere of maintenance. Secondly, to question whether the pump works is to question whether it provides health. Following the official health standards is hard in the Zimbabwean context, where the pump's functioning alters over time (rain/dry season), and where questions of health are relative, not absolute (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 243). Since standards not only create but also require uniformity, and since such uniformity is lacking in the Zimbabwe context, standards hardly apply. Therefore, the important question is, how meaningful standards are in practice (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 243). As De Laet and Mol clearly indicate, criteria for success and failure judgement are not clear-cut but depend on whether one prioritises to provide water or health, to build communities or a nation.

In the same way, one may wonder what defines the success or failure of a neighbourhood contract. An NC aims at both physical renewal of a quarter (housing, public space) and social development. These aims are very different in approach and cannot therefore be judged by the same standards. If an NC is to be evaluated, many different criteria are to be accounted for. A neighbourhood can be physically improved, thanks to an NC, while at the same time socially twisted.[42] Rather than solutions-with-stones, other types of intervention might be as important for developing problematic neighbourhoods. Local inhabitants often suggest such alternative interventions during the negotiation process of an NC. Then, when is an NC successful? Is it successful when it contributes to the neighbourhood's 'looks'? When social and cultural initiatives manage to collect knowledge about the quarter or carry out successful interventions, even if this knowledge is not used further? Is an NC successful when employment is created during its development phase, even if it drops down again after the 4-year programme is finished? If negotiation amongst stakeholders ends up in frustrated debates, is the NC then still a success? Is an NC successful if its 4-year work is not continued?[43]

3.2.4 The Role of Fluidity

Answering whether NCs are successful is difficult since it depends not only on their legal frame but also on a whole series of specific neighbourhood conditions. As with the Bush Pump, it is sometimes the *identity of the users that is most important in determining whether the pump works or not* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 245). Rather than a binary boundary between success and failure there are only *fluid transitions* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 245). 'But if fluidity does not seem to help us in judging success or failure, what's the point of investigating it?' the reader might (rightly) wonder by now. What is the role of fluidity? Why is it important that objects are fluid?

De Laet and Mol observed that the Bush Pump both *requires* and *constitutes* a community (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 245). When it fails, especially, the pump needs the community for its survival. If the pump does not manage to constitute

a community, it might fall into disrepair (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 246). Still, the pump can survive. Through private ownership, though not part of the government's intentions, the pump could be saved. Thus, the pump can survive precisely, thanks to its own fluidity, its adaptability (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 247). When 'fluidity' allows objects to survive in changing circumstances, should planning instruments also become more 'fluid', more adaptive, and flexible to changing circumstances?

'Fluidity' adds another value, related to its maker, its designer. The Bush Pump's designer never claimed authorship. According to De Laet and Mol, this has not only to do with modesty, *but with the fact that by granting it to 'the people', this contributed to the pump's success. The Pump has no name attached to it: it is in the public domain* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 250). And not paying for a name means offering 'affordable' technology (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 249). What the designer dropped is any aim to 'control' the lifetime of his product. He abandons the status as 'master-mind' and accepts a lack of 'control' in implementation (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 250). He *allows surprises* and accepts that things can go wrong. In the example of the Bush Pump, the decision where to drill the hole is supported by GIS systems and engineers, but the true central importance is dedicated to the village: the well-to-be-made, the future users, and the advice of the village 'Nganga' (De Laet and Mol 2000, pp. 250–251). It is the Nganga (the spiritual leader of the village) who decides when drilling can start, *after* the engineers have done their work. Engineers have become mere 'facilitators' or *peripheral agents*, *no "longer 'central' to the activity* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 251). The designer of the pump can work the pump precisely *because* he is not central to it. If in urban planning, too, some agents were made more 'peripheral', more centrality could be allocated to *common* diagnosis and *collective* action, in which different types of knowledge coincide.

What the analysis of the Bush Pump ultimately teaches us is the importance of a shift in centrality (as a state-of-mind) for the success of the actions we take. By making certain agents and agencies more 'peripheral' – in some stages of a planning process, for example – centrality can be allocated to what is really at stake.[44]

3.3 Objects too have Agency

When stating that 'objects too have agency', Bruno Latour refers to the notion of 'fluidity' by defining the social as *a momentary association, characterised by the way it gathers together forming new shapes* (Latour 2005, p. 65). A *social world* is then *understood as an entanglement of interactions, as in 'associations' rather than 'social ties'* (Latour 2005, pp. 64–65). Both humans and objects are involved in these associations. These 'things' added to the social can be found in many forms. In public spaces, for example, such objects-with-agency can be found in the design mode of benches. Benches *act* differently when they have a

traditional, stereotypical form, a form that discourages one from sleeping on them (anti-homeless benches), or a form encouraging flexible usage.[45] In spatial disciplines, it does not seem so strange (as it might seem for sociologists) that objects, too, have agency, and that one is to accept them as full-blown actors. Making objects participants in action is possible only when an actor is defined as *any thing that modifies a state of affairs by making a difference . . . in the course of some other agent's action* (Latour 2005, p. 71). For a long time, objects have been considered *humble servants, living on the margins of the social, doing most of the work, but never allowed to be represented as such* (Latour 2005, p. 73), *because action was delimited a priori to what 'intentional', 'meaningful' humans do* (Latour 2005, p. 71).

In the example of neighbourhood contracts too, several objects have unexpected agency: their negotiation structures also involve, apart from human actors, non-human actors, capable of acting as social actors and redistributing speech (Latour 2004, pp. 53–90, 232). In an official French/Dutch bilingual context language *as such* is an actor: documents are not always available in Dutch; French and Dutch versions are not always identical; French often remains dominant in discussions. The (physical) room for negotiation plays a role in the debate, too. In some cases, a speaker–audience position is formed, involving microphones and impressive projection screens on the side of the officials and experts, while inhabitants, organisations, and other local actors are positioned as an 'informed' audience. This construction seems to add more to the polarisation of debates than when negotiations took place as round-table discussions. In addition, the quality of the planner's PowerPoint presentations, maps, and charts has the power to accentuate, hide, or manipulate knowledge. So they, too, *act* in negotiation. Since many non-human elements clearly play a role in 'building the collective', one has to drop the distinction between material and social. This is why Latour replaces 'society' by 'collective'. Latour's new definition of the social is hence of *a fluid visible only when new associations are being made* (Latour 2005, p. 79). In order to understand objects properly, one has to drop the disciplinary polemics about distinguishing one part of the object as developed by scientists and engineers, from another side – the 'human dimension' – as explored by sociologists (Latour 2005, p. 83). This is demonstrated by the fact that sociologists often address the problems in NC negotiation as a participation problem. This focus on mismatched participation, on 'the human dimension', hides the real problems underneath that are related to the 'engineering' or (common) knowledge production. It hides the fact that the very object of participation is increasingly reduced to trivial aspects such as the colour of benches or type of trees, while essential issues are discussed between experts and engineers. It conceals that the real problem in planning negotiation is that it does not allow full integration of agencies *across* knowledge levels. In this sense, planners risk, even when encouraging user participation, behaving like sociologists, if they are not careful in their use of social explanations, becoming themselves the ones who hide the real causes of social inequalities.

3.4 Research Outlines

De Laet and Mol's Zimbabwe Bush Pump, as well as Latour's acknowledgement that 'objects too have agency', demonstrates what kind of actorship technologies may have. When extending the mechanics of 'fluid' technology, following Mol and De Laet's conclusions of the Zimbabwe Bush Pump analysis (De Laet and Mol 2000, pp. 252–253), to planning, research perspectives for spatial practices occur. These research perspectives indicate not only the importance but also the difficulty of extending the notion of 'fluidity' from being an analytical tool to a force of transformation.

3.4.1 Towards 'Fluid Planning'?

As a first aspect in *the mechanics of fluid technology,* De Laet and Mol indicate that *the boundaries of the Bush Pump are not solid or definite but 'fluid'* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 252). In another context, the editorial introduction 'Boundary variations' to Environment and Planning D: Society and Space (Law and Mol 2005), Law and Mol build further on the notion of 'fluid' boundary by searching for good *images* for boundaries. These images are needed according to the authors since the traditional link between 'far away' and 'different' and between 'proximate' and 'same' no longer holds. In other words, boundaries, in terms of geography (here and there) and identity (me and you), no longer map onto one another (Law and Mol 2005, p. 637). In order to imagine complex boundaries, they enhance sociological, anthropological, and biological sources, hence discussing boundaries in terms of crossing, blurring, and folding, rather than in terms of mere distinction.[46] According to Mol and Law, a boundary is both inclusive and exclusive (Law and Mol 2005, p. 640), as biology and immunology in particular demonstrate.[47] The social world, as much as the biological one, is filled with *semi-permeable* boundaries (social clubs, castes, shopping malls, etc.). What Mol and Law demonstrate is that the *complexity* of boundaries and the work of making *gradients* are crucial both to biological cells and to social beings.

In urban planning – as in the case of Brussels – structures for knowledge building, sharing, and negotiation are rigidly bound. Knowledge building around urban questions takes place according to predefined, fixed rules regarding *who* is allowed to act, *when*, and *how*. By thinking in terms of 'fluidity', such knowledge processes could become more 'in common' and more adaptive to local circumstances. 'Fluid planning' would then deal with permeable rather than solid boundaries. It would accept its boundaries being open to change and a possible 'loss' of control. 'Fluid planning' no longer fights for *more participation,* but for more adaptive knowledge production: in *common thought* but therefore not necessarily with *all* actors at any stage of the process. 'Fluid planning' can break down the too rigid actor categories: in contemporary cities actors constantly change, mutate, disappear, while new actors, too, enter the urban stage. 'Fluid planning' most significantly allows re-thinking of planning's rational, rigid knowledge production

and it being opened up to more subjective concerns. It questions how subjective, concerned knowledge production can be incorporated into the rational production of facts. As such it counters the 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' debate by moving the focus of research away from the distinction between knowledge produced either *on* or *in* the city, towards research addressing knowledge production *by* the city: both types of knowledge but particularly the translations taking place between them.

Consequently, existing practices and theories building on the 'everyday' and on the distinction between tactics and strategies (De Certeau 1984, p. xix), between soft and hard capital, utopian thinking and insurgent citizenship, software and hardware, are to be re-evaluated.[48] Several attempts demonstrate a belief in constructing knowledge from below.[49] When evaluating such theories from the point of view of common knowledge construction and 'fluid planning', one is able to analyse whether such studies go *beyond* a bottom-up approach, *beyond* the poetic and idealising reading of the everyday. How can one avoid functioning, as *Everyday Urbanism,* ultimately as a commentator on the city, an interpreter, rather than a force of transformation (M. Speaks in Mehrotra 2005, p. 36)? One might question whether these attempts from the 'everyday' have not focused too much on *human* practices only. Moreover, if the planner was, rightly, considered a facilitator, a peripheral agent, did those studies not focus too much on the facilitation for the users *only*?

3.4.2 How to Judge Success? How Normative is 'Fluidity'?

De Laet and Mol conclude that whether the Bush Pump is successful is not to be answered by a binary *yes* or *no* (it might deliver water but not therefore health). This question about how normative 'fluidity' is has to do with what 'good' means (De Laet and Mol 2000, pp. 252–253). De Laet and Mol indicate that, as for the pump, 'good' has different meanings for 'fluidity'. When there is no single self-evident standpoint to speak from, as is the case with the pump, one *cannot* be normative (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 252). Therefore, 'fluidity' is not about *judging* but about *being moved by* (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 253). Can a similar relativity apply to the eventual normative character of 'fluid planning'? If its 'fluidity' no longer allows clear-cut *judgement* then how can it be *evaluated* at all? This question opens up a whole series of research questions: related to the multiplicity of accounts of knowledge construction *on*, *in*, and *by* the city; regarding its sense-making, being no longer tied to 'urban renewal' or 'socio-economic development' *only* but to a multitude of visions of the city. 'Building a common world' is not the same as 'making the best possible plan': best for whom and according to which standards? The collective that De Laet and Mol described, indeed, did not aim to build the best pump ever built. They aimed to build a successful common world, in which, yes, the pump plays a central role. Similarly, by shifting away from the central emphasis on 'participation' in planning processes, one can address profoundly rather than superficially the construction of knowledge about space.

3.4.3 The Role of the Expert

The pump's designer, so De Laet and Mol taught us, was a rather invisible, peripheral actor. Being 'fluid' himself is precisely what adds to the success of his product. He acts as a true 'non-modern subject', willing to serve and observe, able to listen, not seeking control, but daring to give himself over to circumstances (De Laet and Mol 2000, p. 253). Similarly, the success of spatial design could be increased if the spatial expert (as planners and architects) were able to act as a peripheral agent. What are the disciplinary consequences of such a shift? What is the new role of expertise when shifting from participative societies to experimenting collectives? What new role is allocated to both the expert and his design output? How can the expert *share* authorship with his product as well as the product's users? How can he develop the new requirements of *making understandable* what is at stake, where *making understandable* does not implicate the *denial* of the role of the expert and his (technical) language, but the exploration of *common* languages.[50] It also implicates a new, more risky role for design, away from the one and only solution towards a multitude of design *proposals* that can inspire and feed discussion. And yes: failures matter![51]

4 No conclusions, but Work to do!

I have guided the reader on this long journey throughout centres and peripheries: spatial, mental, and disciplinary. The journey indeed was long: from spatial dichotomies and shifts in our ways of (spatially) thinking about centre and periphery up to centrality as a state-of-mind, still active in our way of (socially) producing space. Moreover, the word 'social' as such was addressed, with the assistance of J. Law, A. Mol, M. De Laet, and B. Latour. The journey aimed to explore the relevance of their notions of fluidity, (experimenting) collective, and objects-with-agency-too for dealing with knowledge production and negotiation of space. It aimed furthermore to demonstrate that, indeed, such notions are useful in altering our thinking about developing and planning the city.

No wonder the journey was long and exhausting. And does the end of our journey offer us any relief? Not really. Instead it opens up more questions, more bottlenecks, and more insecurity in need of careful attention. It only lightly touched on some of these questions while others still remain intact: the *concrete* consequences of 'fluidity' for planning as much as the precise consequences of enhancing actor-network-theory for research in the lab called city.[52]

The title of this article suggested that the inclusiveness and exclusiveness of centrality relate to its boundaries. Throughout our journey, we discovered that this is not just the case for centrality as a *phenomenon*, but even more so as a *state-of-mind*. What was furthermore revealed is that these boundaries are not fixed, neither in space nor over time, but fluid. At the end of our journey, we find ourselves with few questions answered but new research perspectives waiting to be challenged. Our journey pauses here. Just for a moment.

Notes

[1] Several studies have focused on alternative knowledge production as by the use or appropriation of space. One can think amongst others of studies like *Everyday Urbanism* (Chase, Crawford, Kaliski: 1999), *Spaces of Uncertainty* (Cupers, Miessen: 2002), *Occupying Architecture* (Hill, 1998).

[2] A. Mol and J. Law introduced the term 'fluid' in 1994: in 'Regions, Networks, and Fluids: Anaemia and Social Topology'. For more details I refer to the second part of this article.

[3] In Brussels, the two city walls were demolished in 1760 and 1780, while the toll boundary was only abolished a century later, in 1860. For a more complete historical overview on boundaries and the power of the mental aspect of the boundary, I refer to Doucet (2006, pp. 330–345).

[4] Especially close to the city gates, in the shape of inns, *fanti portes*, and trade settlements. *Trade settlements* were set up in order to avoid paying a toll when passing through the gates; loose gate communities or *fanti portes* gained identity from their role to defend the city gates; temporary stays or *inns* rose at city gates, for spending the night after the gates had closed (interpreted from Kostof 1992).

[5] This is demonstrated by early squatter communities in the abandoned spaces adjacent to and even *within* medieval city walls: places chosen by those who could not afford living in the more expensive estates in the centre, by 19th-century slum development around industrialising European and American cities and by 20th-century slum development in third-world megacities. Marginality as a necessity has been explored amongst others by bell hooks (1989, pp. 203–209).

[6] Amongst others Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski's *Everyday Urbanism* (1999), Cupers and Miessen's *Spaces of Uncertainty* (2002), James Holston's *Insurgent Citizenship* (1999), Nancy Fraser's *Multiple (counter) Publics* (1992), Boeri/Multiplicity's *Border Syndromes* (2003).

[7] Amongst others the democratisation of car use made possible the habitation of the outskirts of cities: now perfectly connected with the city centres for work, leisure, etc.

[8] For more information on the Network Society and Space of Flows, I refer in the first instance to the work of Manuel Castells (1996) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture,* Vols. I, II, and III, as well as to his more recently co-edited volumes on *The Network Society*. Contributions related to planning can be found in L. Boelens (2003) *La Città Muovere: Towards a Phenomenology of the Space of Flows*. In: *Urban Development in Rotterdam*. P. Meus, M. Verheijen, eds. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers and L. Boelens (2004) *Sturen door netwerken: voor reclustering van ruimtelijk beleid. S&RO* (2) pp. 48–53.

[9] F. Engels (1845) *The conditions of the working class in England in 1844,* see Marcus (1973).

[10] As, for example, in the case of Brussels where Turkish immigrants are often perceived as well integrated because of their limited, peaceful way of being present in society, in contrast to Moroccan immigrants, who are considered more 'noisy', 'disturbing', and 'less integrated'. In reality, however, this perception of 'well integrated' hides the fact that the Turkish community is more isolated within the local Brussels society, while the intrusiveness of Moroccans sometimes hides a desire for integration.

[11] See, for example, Appadurai (1996), where the joint effect of media and migration on the *work of the imagination* is explored as well as how electronic mediation transforms pre-existing worlds of communication and conduct.

[12] Or for that matter English habits in Indian cricket (Appadurai 1996).

[13] See in this context the 'Micronomics' research project on (economic) 'Krax' by Citymine(d): http://krax.citymined.org/ and http://www.citymined.org/micronomics.

[14] For a conceptual as well as empirical exploration (within the context of the Brussels Capital Region) of boundaries as spaces for negotiation, tension, and in(ter)vention, I refer to Doucet (2006, pp. 330–345).

[15] For example: 1960s–1970s debate on the 'in-between' by Aldo Van Eyck and The Smithsons, as a reaction against the either/or dichotomies of the modernist thinkers. The notion of 'and/and also' can be explored through Soja's Thirding-as-Othering in Soja (1996) 'Thirdspace' and in Soja (1995) *Margin/Alia: Social Justice and the New Cultural Politics.*

[16] Embedment takes place in regional, national, and supra-national networks as well as sometimes in local networks, as in the case of business centres where the different companies take advantage of the proximity of partners and suppliers. Thanks to new technologies, businesses no longer depend on the proximity of the dense, traffic-loaded city. Instead they are able to be located across the landscape,

while remaining accessible due to their location close to highway exits. The proximity of related business counts more than a city as such (as in Silicon Valley). See amongst others Ingersol (2006) and Boer and Dijkstra (2003).

[17] For example, the motivation for quietness and green hides a fear of the *Other*, so present in the city. This has resulted, mainly in American contexts, but increasingly elsewhere, in a radical exclusion of the Other by means of 'gated communities'.

[18] I agree, for example, with Christine Boyer's critical view on the analysis of Lagos (by R. Koolhaas and Harvard Project on the City), which she sees as a (partially) misreading of the genuine needs of megacities. Christine Boyer, lecture 'Lagos; A Birds-Eye Perspective or an Engaged View' at TU Delft, DSD 3 November 2006.

[19] Tracy Metz (2002) has demonstrated the difficulty in finding this balance (rural beauty farms and holiday colonies) and in integrating contradicting social, cultural, and economic needs. The consumer's expectations of the countryside are no longer mere space and quietness but *amusement*. At the same time, recreational activities are *needed* to finance the preservation of nature parks (a good example is Insel Hombroich). As a result, power shifts from the supplier (farmer) to the consumer (visitor) of the countryside. See also Boer and Dijkstra (2003, pp. 167–214).

[20] The city-safari can be described as the phenomenon in which alternative, sometimes jungle-like or even dangerous places are visited as if they were a tourist attraction: graffiti clubs, urban activist movements, but also housing for the homeless, the red light district, a zone occupied by drug addicts. Fun-shopping extends shopping with small 'discoveries' like eating, strolling around, a cinema.

[21] For example, due to the gentrification of neighbourhoods.

[22] Both making a spectacle of the Other and turning cultures into consumer goods as well as being an opiate of the masses in the affluent countries themselves (Crick 1989 in Ingersol 2006, p. 29).

[23] Where the compact city is mainly considered as present in the old rural, European and Asian societies, the diffuse city is seen more as an African-North American phenomenon. Latin America and the Arabic world are somewhere in between. According to the geographer Jacques Lévy, there are indeed two urban development models: the Amsterdam and Johannesburg model (Quincerot 2004, p. 9).

[24] Here Soja introduces *Development with Justice,* which combines the different scale levels, from local to regional, and takes into account the 'injustices' in the new geographies.

[25] Guattari re-addresses the city–countryside distinction by emphasising the long (historical) migration process of *world cities* (following Fernand Braudel) by which cities gradually became emancipated from the countryside. Since during the next decades the majority of the world population will live in urban agglomerations, and the rural population will be dependent on urban economies, he argues that *what remains of nature ought then to become the object of as much care as the urban fabric.*

[26] For example, distinctions exist between the city centre and its periphery as well as amongst areas *within* the city.

[27] Guattari speaks in this context of the 'subjective city'.

[28] Following Stan Allen (2006), one can bring back the success of the 'design process' as giving meaning to architecture, to Eisenman's work from the 1970s, which was inspired by Rosalind Krauss' text *Notes on the Index*. After Eisenman, up till today, architects tend to justify their work by means of unravelling its design process. At the same time and increasingly, Allen and others have criticised such self-referential architecture and pleaded for an architecture that focuses more on its process in reality: its 'performance'. Allen has suggested the importance of representation for generating this shift from design to performance (Allen and Agrest 2002). Others, like Eisenman himself, have moved away from the index into the 'post-indexical' (see Eisenman in Hunch 11 Rethinking Representation, February 2007, The Berlage Institute).

[29] Latour's notion of Matters of Concern as an alternative for Matters of Fact has become widespread through his article *Why has critique run out of steam: from matters of fact, to matters of concern* in Critical Inquiry, Vol. 30, n. 2, Winter 2004 and has been explored in detail in Latour (2005).

[30] Though useful, a detailed analysis of Latour's work in what he calls 'science studies' falls outside the scope of this article. Rather than being a discipline containing a homogeneous body of work with single coherent metaphysics, science studies are to be seen as a unified field in which he includes himself (Latour, 1999, p. viii).

[31] For more information: www.wijken.irisnet.be.

[32] In Belgium, a distinction is to be made between the three Regions (Flanders, Wallonia, and the Brussels Capital Region) and the three language communities (French, German, and Dutch), which do not overlap! They have moreover different responsibilities. In Brussels, the French and Flemish communities overlap.

[33] The term 'fluid' was introduced by A. Mol and J. Law in 1994: see Law and Mol (1994).

[34] See also Latour (2005): chapter on Objects too have Agency, pp. 63–86.

[35] I would like to mention that the use of the notion of 'fluidity' is significantly different from the enhancement of the term in many other contexts, as for example by G. Simmel in terms of 'Urban Flow' (in *Die Groÿstädte und das Geistesleben*), the Chicago School's 'Constant Equilibrium' (Robert E. Park) and Ulf Hannerz' concept of 'Urban Flux' (examples taken from Anja Schwanhauber's seminar contribution at the Centre for Metropolitan Studies in Berlin, 23 May 2007). This type of 'fluidity' in terms of a place where everything is open and nothing is fixed is fundamentally different from Law, De Laet and Mol's extension of fluidity to the social behaviour of objects.

[36] 'Gewestelijk Ontwikkelingsplan' (GewOP 1995 and 2001); 'Gewestelijk Bestemmingsplan' (GBP).

[37] Within the framework of the research project that lies at the basis of this article, such negotiation structures have been explored from 2004 onwards: by document analysis, direct observations, as well as through interviews with public actors involved, municipal administrators, etc. Since 2004, this research project has been financially supported by the Brussels Capital Region, IWOIB, within the framework of Prospective Research for Brussels.

[38] NC Kaaien is located in Brussels' dense historical centre. All observations have been made possible, thanks to the openness and support of the official actors within these platforms to let me take part in all meetings.

[39] The quarter discussed is the Brabant Quarter, which is one of the major cases of the research project at the base of this article. This quarter is not discussed here, but it is located just outside the historic centre of Brussels and is characterised mainly by two major 'commercial' axes: a street of prostitutes and an ethnic shopping street. Both are embedded in international trading networks. As such, the quarter is on the one hand highly isolated (locally) but also strongly integrated on a supra-national level.

[40] Brusselse Hoofdstedelijke Raad. Regeerverklaring en Regeerakkoord, gewone zitting 20 juli 2004, p. 61 – for the development of Schémas directeurs.

[41] When extending the notion of 'fluidity' to research within the laboratory called 'city', one cannot but question the (unavoidable? necessary?) introduction of a 'normative' approach, something that is significantly not present in the observations and descriptions of the Bush Pump. Since this issue is worth particular attention, it is not addressed within the frame of this article.

[42] For example, when real estate prices increase and quarters gentrify, some inhabitants might be forced to move to ever-cheaper quarters.

[43] Since 2006, every initiative that applies for funding within an NC needs to prove possible financial continuation *after* the NC. Is this additional attention to maintenance adding to an NC's success? It could, but it is almost impossible to find such funding security within the limited time frame of an NC preparation.

[44] This could assist in the practical consequences of a shift from statutory to development planning, as, for example, in the case of *Ruimtelijk Structuurplan Vlaanderen* (RSV), developed by L. Albrechts and Ch. Vermeersch. Such a planning instrument provides for more open, flexible, and adaptive planning, while remaining space specific (see Albrechts 1999 and Taskforce 2003). However, in reality, this instrument seems hard to implement precisely due to its struggle with respecting openness while becoming structuring.

[45] A good example is Xaveer De Geyter Architects' design for benches for the Pont du Gard site in Nîmes (France), as large concrete surfaces on which one can sit, lie down, picnic, etc. See Bekaert (2001, pp. 54–61).

[46] When questioning how things keep their identity when *crossing* geographical boundaries, a distinction between (unchangeable) universals and an (embedded and hence changeable) local does not work, since (as Latour indicates) universals also depend, for keeping their identities, on important transport work that is often so well institutionalised that it is invisible (Law and Mol, p. 637).

[47] The body's defence system can respond to an invasion only because what is invading is not entirely foreign to it (Law and Mol 2005, p. 640). In immunology, the boundary between self and other is turned

into a set of insertions, a fractal, a set of folds (p. 641) – see also Deleuze's 1993 *The Fold and The Baroque*.

[48] In order of appearance: R. Koolhaas in *Brussels: Capital of Europe* (Koolhaas, Eco); Holston J (1999) *Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship*; M. Speaks in Mehrotra R (2005).

[49] Such as Chase, Crawford, Kaliski (1999) *Everyday Urbanism*, Bunschoten/Chora (2002) *Urban Flotsam*, Cupers and Miessen (2002) *Spaces of Uncertainty*, J. Hill (1998) *Occupying Architecture*, Urban Unlimited (2004) *Shadow City*, Basar and Miessen (2006) *Did Someone Say Participate?* Shamiyeh (2005) *What People Want*.

[50] In the sense of Latour's notion of the diplomat, searching for an 'eco-logos' or 'oikos-logos', the language of the common house, that 'speaks the language of dwellings' (Latour 2004, p. 213): a language in which both sides feel comfortable to negotiate.

[51] These specific questions related to the planning expertise have been addressed more in detail in the conference paper Doucet 2007 *Negotiating complexity: 'professionals' in action?* In: Conference proceedings The European Tradition in Urbanism – and its Future, ISUU, September 2007, TU Delft.

[52] Scepticism amongst contemporary scholars in planning and geography can be largely explained by the lack of concrete demonstrations of the added value of actor-network-theory in planning studies (as, for example, remarked by both Bob Beauregard and Neil Smith during their lectures at the TU Berlin, May 2007). A scepticism that has also to do with the need to address the normative character of research, when moving from scientific laboratories to the city.

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Urban Landscape and an Ecology of Creativity

Silvia Serreli

1 Urban Networks and Bypassed Places

Some of the research that has interpreted the effects of globalisation on cities has highlighted the way contemporary urban landscapes have become the product of complex economies and marginal economies, a phenomenon that concerns all cities, without a specific local character (Friedmann 2001, Graham and Marvin 2001, Hall 2001).

> One of the effects is *geographical connectivity*, which "assumes multiple socio-spatial forms, patterns and meanings within tangled, overlapping or dispersed scalar mosaics and networks, in conjunction with other forms of socio-spatial structuring, such as place-making, localisation, contact, distancing, network formation and so on"
>
> (Terkenli 2005).

These connections are realised through constant interaction between the global scale and practices in local life (Hannertz 1996). New spatialities, that confront the progressive obscuring of spatio-temporal barriers, the explosion of interconnectivity, and also processes that have generated great fragmentation, differentiation, conformity and complexity, are the outcome of "a highly unsettling process of rescaling – of capital, of the territorial state and of social power relations more generally – that are occurring throughout the world system" (Swyngedouw 2000).[1]

In these scale changes, two different urban spheres emerge: on the one hand, the large urban concentrations in the form of city-regions and city-networks (Sassen 1994, Scott 2001), the mega cities that internally disconnect local populations not functionally necessary (Soja 2000, Castells 2002, Keiner et al. 2005); they are the dominant centres of the global economy, the nodes that group together the higher functions of leadership, management and production that link enormous segments to the global system, whose importance is not considered just in terms of size but on the grounds of the gravitational power they exert. In situations with a complex economy can be recognised, as well as the large urban agglomerates, the different forms

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of sprawl, and also the new landscape spatialities linked with the variety of urban phenomena of densification and agglomeration (clusters) of the city (Sudjic 1992, Calthorpe and Fulton 2001).

On the other hand, places with "few connections" emerge which define spheres with a marginal economy. Jane Jacobs (1984) defines them as *bypassed places*, in contrast with the "well-connected vibrant cities" that are the centre of advanced production processes. Bypassed places do not constitute periphery, but are rather external arenas (Lagendijk and Lorentzen 2007), regions excluded from the current world system: "the periphery is not defined by default in terms of what is missing; rather, periphery is purposively created. It is the iniquitous mechanisms of the projection of city economic power that are periphery-producing processes" (Jacobs 1984).

In both situations, as various authors point out (Mollenkopf and Castellsì 1991, Friedmann 1995, Sassen 1998), some common phenomena are recognised, such as social inequality, in which social classes polarise between a wealthy professional class and an impoverished, low-wage service sector class, and uneven development, "which occurs as social polarization becomes embedded in the spatial form of the city in the form of socioeconomic segregation and unequal access to livable space" (Shatkin 2007).

In this sense, the dynamics of world economy generate two processes, one positive, the other iniquitous (Fainstein 2001, Taylor 2006, Shatkin 2007):

> There do appear to be some significant links between global-city and inequality: first global city-regions encompass particularly high-earning individuals resulting in an upward skew in the income distribution curve. The second correlation is a spatial one: the high cost of living in the core areas of these global-city-regions either forces low-income people into unaffordable housing at the center or pushes them, along with industries not associated with the global economy, to the periphery. To the extent that they contribute to a spatial mismatch that reinforces labormarket exclusion, global-city characteristics may then be an indirect cause of income inequality. Third, those global cities whose fortunes are particularly tied to financial markets are supersensitive to swings in those markets, with the consequence of serious instability in the livelihoods of their residents
>
> (Fainstein 2001).

The great efforts in economic growth identified by Jacobs – enlarged city markets, increased numbers and kinds of jobs, transplants of city work, new uses for technology and growth of city capital – create high productivity due to the reciprocal synergy between the different factors that generate different economies in the city. At the same time, these same efforts create regions with a simple economy that become peripheries of the world economy, territories without scale that need an alternative urban perspective to that of the large concentrations.

The loss of importance of the factors that were guiding the new economic activities towards specific places – which in the traditional city were tied to geographic localisation and physical infrastructures – has caused cities to become interchangeable entities, multifarious and multifunctional systems in competition with each other to attract localisation of creative professionalism and intelligence (Hamnett 2003, Tagliagambe 2006), and also capital investments, as a consequence of the fact that capital has the ability to move in a rapid way towards different localisations (Storpor 1995, Friedmann 2004). "(Multi)cultural rerooting is hailed

as a promising strategy to construct 'competitive spaces' and 'entrepreneurial' cities that can be slotted successfully into the new global spaces of competition" (Swyngedouw 2000).

Urban competitiveness is, indeed, more and more linked with the presence of new creative classes that contribute to the realisation of a greater quality of life in the city. As Silvano Tagliagambe maintains, referring to Richard Florida's research:[2]

> We do not intend to refer to the generic and often rhetorical references to the "society of knowledge" and its basic principles, but to concrete facts and data, like those from which the analysis proposed by R. Florida departs, referring, indeed, to a new class, that of the "creative individuals" who, as has been proved by census data of 1999, in the USA now represent 30% of the active population. The core of these professions is represented by work in informatics, engineering, architecture, education, design, communication, entertainment: and the traits these have in common are the production of information and ideas and not physical products, and the fact that the value of their services is determined above all by the degree of innovation, and only to a small extent by the time consumed. Their emergence and consolidation is the outcome of the ability to have *intellectual capital*, i.e. the production of knowledge and information, converge with *social capital*, i.e. the ability to capture what is the authentic poor resource of the global market, i.e. people's attention, creating a new common sense
>
> (Tagliagambe 2006).

From these premises, the chapter explores three different situations representing some significant examples of the ways in which some transformations of the city and territory may be described. Particular attention has been given here to the dominant processes that produce the specificity of contemporary urban landscapes: spatial variability, multiple and interlocking geographic scales, self-organisation, path- and place-dependence and the relationships between people and the environment.

Spatial variability responds to the continuous changes characterising interaction between the networks. As it emerges from the first case study, within the new forms of agglomeration and in particular the creative islands, the localisation of aggregated urban functions (residence, productive activities, spare time activities) creates urban systems that "are characterized by internally differentiated structure, not homogeneity, and their evolution is driven by the ongoing creation and propagation of this internal differentiation. This is a strongly spatial understanding of the world, consistent with space-based and place-based studies that accentuate the dialectic of space and spacelessness". As these clusters belong to the networks of flows, the concept of "positionality" may be associated with them, i.e. their localisation in relation to time and space, as "both shaping and shaped by the trajectories of globalization and as influencing the conditions of possibility of places in a globalizing world".

The *processes at multiple and interlocking geographic scales* show how in systems characterised by edge situations compared with the transformations induced by the dominant culture – as emerges in the second case study concerning tourist landscapes in Greece – the appropriate scales to be considered are multiple and not fixed (O'Sullivan 2004).[3]

The evolutive processes of these territories act according to different scales: they can operate more or less simultaneously and may depend on or be reinforced by other processes external to the system. It is not necessarily a question of space-based situations as "they may adhere to the realms of the real, of the virtual,

the imaginary or the artificial, the extraordinary or the familiar, etc." (Terkenli 2005). These processes thus involve the fact that the landscape cannot be interpreted according to a single scale of spatial organisation, but *interscalarity* needs to be dealt with, being the relationship between different operational scales that "should be a fundamental requisite that the project must take on at all operational scales seeking the reference points that urban life requires with greater selectivity compared with the past" (Maciocco 2008).

Path- and place-dependence features enable evolutive structures of landscapes to be highlighted: "the evolution of systems over time is *path-dependent* so that the next stage in the development of a system is not trivially predictable from its current state, but is instead a product of its whole history" (O'Sullivan et al. 2006).

To design transformations, it is necessary that the relational channels between productive structure and path-dependence structure – "the type of memory aimed at organizing knowledge, competences and routines, and which therefore constitutes the dynamic archive of knowledge and the capacities of available production and innovation" (Tagliagambe 2008) – be very strong. The system is also *place-dependent* in that to be understood the following are relevant: physical locations, interactions among neighbouring locations and the flows along interaction networks.

The *relationships between people and the environment*: as is illustrated by the third case study regarding the Berlin urban experimental laboratory, these relationships are one of the distinctive features of the new landscapes (the visual and the relational vis-à-vis an "observer"), i.e. they represent "the most intimate scale at which landscape is articulated, one that relates the subject (observer, user, visitor) most intricately with the object (landscape) of perception, exploration or intervention, with the aid of all human faculties: cognitive (mental and perceptual processes), experiential (landscape functions, uses and behavioural relationships between subject and object), as well as psychological (emotional responses and connections to the landscape)" (Terkenli 2005).

The experiences illustrated by the geographer Bastian Lange (2006a, b) show that the different forms of interaction between subject and environment create new modalities of project for urban space: the observing subject questions the world on the grounds of his/her presuppositions (Berthoz 1997). In this picture, the subject, rather than representing for himself/herself a world that continues to remain alien to him/her, produces his/her own world as a domain of relations and structures inseparable from the internal organisation characterising the subject himself/herself.

2 Urban Landscape of the Creative Islands

The new landscape spatialities emerging within the traditional city and in the extraurban landscapes of widespread settlement (Hutton 2004) are the products of a particular variety of urban agglomeration phenomena, or cluster.

In the European cities, the prevalent model of the new centralities is linked with the presence of single complex functions – retailing, leisure, services, transport, etc. – that have large-scale effects; the new poles, rather than being localised in areas external to the city, involve the central areas of the compact city (Keil and Ronneberger 1994).

These agglomerations are "epicentres" of new economies due to the mixture of urban functions they incorporate and the variety of activities of highly specialised production. The first are tied to residence, services, places of culture and leisure; the others include advanced production functions and incorporate a greater concentration of propulsive companies in key economic sectors of communications and the new technologies, research and innovation (Burfitt et al. 2003).

The urban landscapes generated by these epicentres are dominated both by local spatial references, which incorporate the world of tradition, and by the dimensions of the innovation with more universal and global references. These clusters enrich the cities with new experiences, and urban space is rapidly transformed to direct economic globalisation, to govern intercity competition and to face up to the requisites of post-modernism (Friedmann 2001). Some clusters, especially from the 1980s onwards, are the outcome of projects of urban regeneration which have developed in central areas of traditional cities, becoming an opportunity for a process of re-inclusion in urban life of obsolete, abandoned areas. On other occasions, the creation of clusters is just the opportunity to change the face, to have activities and services converge which contribute to creating an authentic brand of recognisability of the city, giving life to spectacularising the urban atmosphere and morphology (Harvey 1989, Soja 1996, Hannigan 1998, Hall 2001).

Creative islands belong to these forms of agglomeration which enable different urban functions to be found clustered in a single space, as well as the possibility of satisfying the post-modern condition of "cultural individualisation" to be maximised (McRobbie 2006): "the inner city is dominated by an eclectic clustering of economic activities: high level financial services, technology-intensive firms and knowledge-based institutions, and 'creative' urban islands and edges" (Gospodini 2006).

It is the case of activities in which the role of factors tied to "hard" agglomerations weakens, such as the availability of raw material or access to physical infrastructures, and where the role of "soft" agglomeration factors, such as creativity, quality, identity and symbolic values of the place, has increased. The new urban economies and new economic sectors that characterise these places are nurtured by two particular modalities of cluster creation.

a. The service activities of advanced production systems, a third generation of services based on intensive technologies and on knowledge, "strategic sites" (Sassen 1991, 1994, 1998) also called "entrepreneurial epicentres" (Gospodini 2006).[4] These integrated service-technology production systems represent a growing urban economy engine as they are catalysers of new development, renovation and the new image of the city. They are concentrated within or on the edges of large cities, altering spatial organisation and urban structure. Entrepreneurial epicentres become, moreover, the promoters of a new middle class of high-tech staff and knowledge workers (Harvey 1989, Soja 1996, 2000, Burfitt et al. 2003). These

Fig. 1 Entrepreneurial epicentres[5]

clusters also have strong spatial effects on the reorganisation of urban networks in that they become centralities of services that promote an improvement in the role of cities in the global hierarchy (e.g. the projects for Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, the construction of the New Trade Fair Hub of Milan, and the new financial centre in the City of Art and Science of Valencia).

b. The clusters of the culture and leisure industries are distinguished, according to Aspa Gospodini's description, in: *high-culture epicentres* in the situations where cultural activities, such as museums, theatres, concert halls and convention centres, are concentrated; they represent urban islands that are the outcome of significant interventions of regeneration of traditional localised architectures in city centres. Recent examples are the interventions in the Museums Quarter in Vienna, or the Museums Quarter of Rotterdam designed by Rem Koolhaas; *popular leisure epicentres* that present a high concentration of refreshments facilities, cafes, popular music halls, shops, fashion design shops, book and music shops, small avant-garde theatres, usually localised in abandoned, regenerated facilities of the city. The Psiri quarters of Athens and the Westergas-fabriek in Amsterdam may be taken as examples; *culture and leisure waterfront epicentres* which include various coastal cities where a decline in the industrial port activities has favoured the regeneration of waterfront urban edges and abandoned facilities, transforming them into places of culture and leisure (London's Docklands, Barcelona's waterfront, the Bilbao riverside and Melbourne's River Revitalisation).

There are several authors who have maintained that culture is becoming the basis of the attraction and competition between cities, the true business promoted by the action of private entities, also by public initiative (Zukin 1995, Scott 2000, Hall 2000, Hutton 2004).

The growth of cultural consumption, with reference to art, fashion, music and tourism and the activities sustaining it, nurtures the economy of the city, its visible ability to produce both symbols and spaces (Zukin 1991, 1995).

As Scott Lash and John Urry (1994) maintain, culture industries take shape in the interface between global (in terms of global distribution networks) and local (with reference to local distinctiveness) and in this sense they have great potential as the more competitive aspects of cities.

In the new scenario of intercity competition, cities must offer stimuli to capital, modernising their attractiveness both in an economic and in a demographic sense, improving their own urban infrastructures. In this sense, city policies – which compete to become part of the system of localising preferences for the new post-modern society profiles – focus on the development of "attractive" urban structures which involve the creation and expansion of new spaces for culture, leisure and consumption. The creation of epicentres of high culture, of places of leisure in the cities, and particularly at waterfronts, responds to the needs and expectations of this society, more and more characterised by the increase in the new middle class of mobile professionals, by diversity and individualisation of lifestyles and reference points (Ley 1996). Although in European cities there is no authentic "decentring of the centre" and functional differences are still evident between core areas and ring areas (Agnew 1993), the clusters that characterise widespread urbanity landscapes are significant, especially in the extraurban sphere. We are dealing with fragments of city, *splintering urbanism* to use an expression by Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin (2001), and also new centralities, which take shape as mono-functional nodes: shopping centres, business parks, theme parks, hospitals and colleges. These alter urban geographies and increase core-ring competition within the said metropolitan areas.

A significant example of development of new economic centralities in suburban areas is that of the Paris Metropolitan Region, a polycentric regional structure where the service nodes localised in the extraurban sphere have become competitive and complementary elements of the traditional compact city (Bontje and Burdack 2005).

One of the greatest concentrations of research activity and development in France is actually to be found to the south of the city of Paris: the new economic pole of Massy-Saclay, an important infrastructure node featuring public and private research and high quality training institutions.[6] Having taken shape as an element attracting highly qualified jobs, the development of this centrality has radically changed a quiet suburban area into an avant-garde European centre, the outcome of a policy of relocalisation of research facilities from the centre of Paris and market-oriented localisation of private companies operating in the new technologies sector (Castells and Hall 1994).

But the most important fact that has restored localising advantages for the development of the "technopole" is tied to the presence of urban and environmental factors such as the presence of fine areas from the environmental point of view and the possibility of infrastructure connections with the centre of Paris, aspects that have created high standards of life.

The production of these new urban spaces which have meant reorganisation, renovation and regeneration of cities poses various critical questions:[7] on the one

hand, the problems of gentrification (Hamnet 1991, Mills 1993, Lees 1994, 2000, Smith 1996), which include the displacement, social polarisation and social exclusion of low-income population, the absence of real rootedness on the territory.

Referring to the case of mega projects for urban regeneration, in particular those involved in the creation of entrepreneurial epicentres and high culture, some research has highlighted a strong increase in the physical and social fragmentation of cities (Swyngedouw et al. 2002).

Moreover, as John Friedmann (2004) maintains, "globalization obliges cities to reimagine themselves. Most infrastructure projects are on a scale so monumental that they 'drive' urban development more than they are a result of other developments. For better or worse, the very 'grain' of the city is turning coarser, becoming less 'homey', less neighbourly for many. Major interventions give the city a new face that cannot be contained by traditional forms of planning".

Another critical question concerns the lack of multifunctionality of the cluster and therefore the presence of a plurality of activities that characterise the agglomeration, and also the problematic relationship between the idea of the city behind it and the concept of "policy of differences". If, on the one hand, "differences" and "diversity" are recognised as principal components in the new aestheticised urban logic, at the same time, cities want to attract capital rapidly, often emphasising ethnic diversity or local features as a way of competitively marking their distinctiveness.

Actually, this type of diversity is used simply as a *game* of differences, subordinated to the dominant culture of consumption. In this sense, enhancement of the differences is thought of as something that masks what is really global logics (Jacobs 1984). It has been widely demonstrated that monofunctional epicentres (malls, leisure islands, etc.) are exposed to significant risks of recession.

Processes of aestheticisation and spectacularising, representing the fundamental attractiveness of these clusters, generate "a proliferation of inauthentic diversity (depthless fragmentation)" (Jacobs 1998), dismantling old urban solidarities which are replaced by new spaces of consumption. For these aspects, too, these clusters tend to show low levels of sustainability.

The examples of clusters that we have seen create innovation processes in cities, but not all are able to make their productiveness reach its maximum; this depends on their capacity for making productive units integrate and interact with the material and immaterial situations present on the territory on which they arise. "More recently multifunctional clusters have emerged which combine intensive technology companies, creative industries, cultural and consumer spaces that have the potential for taking shape as creative places if they constitute a context of relations, of different subjects that promote a dynamic localised process of collective learning" (Tagliagambe 2006).

3 Bypassed Places and Processes of Rescaling

Contemporary landscapes, being complex systems of interfaces at different scales (O'Sullivan et al. 2006), are characterised, on the one hand, by economic and cultural practices conditioned by large-scale transformations with positive and negative

effects on the behaviours and lifestyles of the inhabitants of a territory and, on the other hand, by forms of local resistance to change by what Baumann (1995) defines as "settled and established communities".

In the first case, the places that Friedmann (2004) quotes are recognised as "fully developed market societies", where – as has been emphasised – the most interesting transformations are those referring to new processes of agglomeration; in the second case, as will be dealt with in this paragraph, situations "under transition" are explored, where forms of resistance to transition persist, positions of marginality compared with the dynamics of the flows that are generated by an inability to construct "opportunities for anchorage" to contemporary reality. It is a case of urban situations that do not have a scale, that have lost their role in urban organisation or are weakly involved in transformations fundamentally dependent on different scales.

These external territories (Maciocco 2007), disconnected places characterised by the loss of quality of urban life, Jacobs' bypassed places, the territories whose dominant functions[8] (de Solá-Morales 1996) have lost their value, are still treated with difficulty by the project, also due to impoverishment of creative capacity. Within these differences, however, there is a constant element:

> Urban transition is meant to refer to the socio-economic and cultural transformation of much of the countryside as well, as rural people in even remote parts of the globe gradually adopt urban lifeways and modes of production that are increasingly oriented to profit, more than to subsistence. The 21st century will be the century when the world as a whole will for the first time turn predominantly urban in the sense that we understand this term today
>
> (Friedmann 2004).

To be able to think of a new culture of urban space and to design to overcome edge positions, it is necessary that transformations – operating with logics at different scales – be directed for them to evolve in a coevolutive manner (Jessop et al. 1999). As the concept of scale is strictly tied to the construction of the landscape in space and time, the evolutive processes of a territory may be further studied with respect to reorganisation of spatial structuring of the scale.

In this direction, the reflections of the geographer Theano Terkenli appear interesting; they propose an interpretative scheme of urban dynamics emphasising how certain processes – that are specified as *enworldment*, *unworldment*, *deworldment* and *transworldment*[9] – escape the now consolidated conceptualisations of space.[10] Facing the transformations of the Greek landscapes, from the rural domain to the new forms and styles of life linked in particular with tourism, Terkenli highlights how these landscapes rich in nature and history, which would be able to offer a true alternative to the dense metropolis, are instead the object of changes of scale operating with accelerated modalities, creating transformations and tensions that do not depend on the local scale.

Modernisation and tourist development of the 1980s and 1990s introduced new models of enjoyment of cultural and environmental resources which, on the one hand, led rapidly to higher standards of life in the rural areas and, on the other, created internal conflicts and tensions in the local society (Stefanou 2001, quoted by Terkenli 2005). In particular, strong competition was generated between distinct worlds (process of enworldment): that of the residents (local scale), that of

international tourism (international scale), of visitors within Greece itself (national scale) and that of the tour operators (global scale).

The Greek landscape offers itself to different interpretations which depend on the different spheres of interest: the external point of view that projects an image tied to the places of ancient culture, to places of bi-polar culture, ideologically oriented between east and west; the image reflected by international mass media, nurtured by the tourist industry; the image of tourists for whom the Greek landscape represents an object of desire, which with its fundamental features satisfies immediate "consumption" of all the functions of the local (but also global) scale, such as lifestyles and "tradition", direct relations with the inhabitants and their hospitality and capacity for welcoming. Vice versa, local self-representation of the territory suffers from the image of an idealised past linked with the memory, with rootedness of the family, the traditional relations of neighbourhood, with Greekdom; but it also suffers from periphericity and marginality determined by socio-economic and geopolitical problems, from the attractiveness that one's own territory arouses as a holiday place.

International tourism attracts such a large number of visitors as to generate social tensions in relation to the fact that significant changes are caused in values and systems of local relations.

This creates unworldment processes, in that the economic and cultural practices seem to be conditioned by the large-scale transformations that, from the organisational models of the pre-industrial type with their cyclic rhythm, have moved towards a tourist organisational model founded on seasonalisation.

A degree of local resistance exists, however, to changes induced by tourist consumption, above all with reference to the need to maintain cultural values, social roles and lifestyles.

The rapid evolution of economic activities tied to tourism is a sign of deworldment processes, a form of deconstruction that involves the social dimension in particular: some effects of deconstruction are evident in rural landscapes where the presence of other external cultural models does not permit constructive interaction.

The difference between residents (whose interests and behaviours are locally oriented) and external visitors (people with an orientation towards a wider world) is attenuated with distance from the coast incorporating the two social realities, and is transformed according to precise models that follow the spatial concentrations of tourism and the scales of development required by the demand.

The ways of spreading and communication of Greek landscape tourist destinations, promoted by tourism intermediaries and the travellers themselves (e.g. the exclusive image of the archipelago of islands as a privileged holiday place) and transmitted at an international level, define transworldment processes.

These forms support, on the one hand, the global scale of tourism and, on the other, represent the only prospects for growth and improvement of quality of life for many residents; they are an opportunity to strengthen the sense of local identity and of openness towards the external world.

For the presence of other cultural worlds and the improvement in standards of life of the inhabitants of the rural regions and islands, favour better self-representation,

Fig. 2 Bypassed places[11]

causing a granting of new meanings from the outside, which widens the point of view of the inhabitants, nurtures growth and exchange.

In general, considering Terkenli's theses, it can be maintained that urban transformations that concern this type of landscape generate *enworldment* processes, when various dimensions are condensed and compressed in the same sphere, and when competitive centralities are created linked with consumption, attraction and recreation. Such processes are the outcome of breaking barriers and boundaries between space and time and between different spheres of reality (home, work, leisure) defined according to different reference scales. In this situation, the geographical properties of distance and difference are eliminated. "*Enworldment* signals the geographical transferability and encompassing world in one (...) the repercussions of processes of enworldment are inscribed in the landscape as a complex and highly attractive mix of old and new, familiar and different, all produced and consumed in situ provided that 'it sells' " (Terkenli 2006).

The creation of a-geographical landscapes, both in forms and in functions, generates unworldment, involving the dissolution of specificities, of distinctive features of place-attachment of the landscape. The loss of sense of place, the objectivisation of space and "inauthenticity" are effects of "homogenisation, standardisation, commercialisation or other such universalising spatial interventions", all concepts developed in many spheres of research on the dynamics of tourism (Urry 1990, Coccossis and Nijkamp 1995, Fossati and Panella 2000). Landscapes are defined at any scale and called up with reference to any geographic or non-geographic context.

Urban experiences become increasingly less significant situations, they tend towards being irrelevant, reinforcing the dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion and upsetting the most intimate scale of definition of the landscape (personal or intimate scale of the landscape).

If the change in the socio-spatial structures of a context represent *unworldment processes,* the progressive lack of unicity of geographic localisation and place represent *deworldment processes.* These processes – which generate deconstruction of the existing conceptualisations and practices of space – are favoured by the redefinition between work dimension, inhabiting and leisure, just as they are favoured by the proliferation of the experiences of virtual landscapes through mass media communication. Unworldment processes may, for example, converge with deworldment processes, in situations in which fictitious, commercialised, fleeting landscapes are created. The most eloquent of examples is the theme park. For the development of thematic environments leads to a de-differentiation of space, functions, styles and symbols and deliberately confuses reality with the artificial and the imaginary. "Deworldment may also come about as a direct outcome of enworldment, as well as of processes of touristification, commercialization and cultural banalization" (Terkenli 2006).

What derives from deworldment processes is a society articulated on the global scale, widely accepted and virtually consumed by everyone in any part of the world. "Its landscapes express a geographical de-differentiation of production, reproduction, consumption and practice of leisure, tourism, shopping, culture, education, eating and so on. It is now possible to experience the world's geography vicariously, as a simulacrum" (Harvey 1989). Through the dominant means of contemporary communication, landscapes are simultaneously and instantaneously replicated, communicated and electronically disseminated around the world. In this sense, landscapes undergo transworldment processes. These dynamics undertake the global dimension (transworldment) in an ever-increasing way, although their manifestation varies in relation to the social, spatial and temporal context.

The evolution of landscapes that show, like in the case of Greece, the dynamics illustrated, is no longer spatially confined, delimited and bound to a limited notion of local. Hannertz (1996) maintains, in effect, that the typical components of local are not intrinsically local, tied to territoriality or to a particular place: "the local social worlds of places cannot be understood apart from the objective macro-order of location and the subjective territorial identity of sense of place" (Agnew 1993).

Contemporary landscapes materialise following new scales that include new spatialities (Friedmann 2004). They may be considered as parts and segments of a network that is increasingly globalised of changing scalar spatialities.

> Both in terms of function and of symbolism, these are increasingly produced, reproduced and consumed through processes involving forms, functions and signs/symbolisms with external, rather than internal, references and connections. (. . . .) Today's landscapes may no longer be viewed as segments of the geographical world but rather as situated images – real, perceived or imaginary – or systems at the interface of different and rapidly changing scales of contact with an "observer". Moreover, in this context, the observer inevitably

also assumes variable, shifting scalar positions of changing situatedness, embeddedness and positionality vis-à-vis the landscape

(Terkenli. 2006).

4 Hybrid Landscapes and Ecologies of Creativity

Simplifications, compressions or elements are often introduced into the space project that arbitrarily distort reality. In this sense, some transformations create a reduction in the plurality of dimensions characterising urban situations, in that they are involved in reasoning following a single scale of organisation of the city, rather than facing complex situations that establish continuous rescaling processes.

Urban landscapes, in terms of both meanings illustrated in the previous paragraphs, though with due differences, show forms of hybridisation in which ways of organisation of the traditional city and innovative processes of the "network society" coexist. The experiences illustrated give life to two distinct behaviours and different interpretations of public space (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001).

On the one hand, the dense city with which a very selective functional organisation is associated. The most significant transformations are represented by the clusters and in particular creative islands, the new spaces created for residence, work and leisure, that tend towards monofunctionality (central places for high finance, culture and leisure) with their specificity depending on their spatial localisation (city centre, waterfront, extraurban space), simulating through consumerism an idea of public space as the place of interaction and exchange. The clusters become part of an urban archipelago *enclave*,[12] "the archipelago is built up from a multitude of different microcosmic worlds that can still be reached via a convenient station or motorway slip-road. (...) Each individual constructs his or her own city from these geographically dispersed *enclaves*" (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001). Margaret Crawford affirms that for these aspects, the city takes on the character of an "ecology of fantasy" defined by the principles of theme parks: thematisation and concentration (Crawford 1990).

The other extreme is represented by urban situations of the extended city, the "bypassed" territories of the dominant culture. In these, the small centres that often exist in "survival" conditions may have urban prospects if it is possible to carry out a reassessment of the local in them with respect to the global, if networks with localising indifference can be promoted (Dematteis 1990), if a reinterpretation in a contemporary key is possible of the specificities of an urban space characterised by the dominance of resources of nature and history.

As emerges in the case of Greece, some contexts, in spite of the important presence of these resources, still appear to be enclosed, tied to a restrictive notion of the concept of local. But the typical components of the "local" are not intrinsically local, bound in general to territoriality or to a particular place.

These forms of urbanity live and evolve only if they manage to constitute a "node" of a global network of connections and reciprocal synergies. It is not a case of functional centralities like that of the epicentres and creative islands, where spatial proximity between infrastructures and productive companies becomes one

of the advantages to establish and determine the development of a particular urban context. This is a case of places where the "passive conception of urban identity, as local rooting of subjects and sense of belonging to a patrimony to protect and conserve is being replaced more and more by an active, creative conception, in the sphere of which the cultural services and resources of cities are seen as sources of competitive advantage, and identity becomes an active operator of connections between subjects for the insertion of urban contexts in the great game of global networks" (Tagliagambe 2006).

The hybrid landscapes, strongly rooted in the place on the one hand and constantly exposed to transformation, act according to different geographical scales and are subject to complex political and ideological rules and repercussions, which include geographical movements, differentiation and connectivity, and involve the sphere of consumption, leisure, etc. Precisely for this reason, places for the project are interesting which cause us, as Sassen (2004) maintains, "to understand the particularity of world economy as a terrain for social relations".

Tagliagambe introduces two fundamental concepts on this subject to be able to project landscape regeneration as a regenerative structure in fragmented situations of the city: *geographical proximity* and *socio-cultural proximity*. He maintains that in the epoch of global knowledge, local knowledges have not been mortified: networks favour the transfer of knowledge and "the possibility of extending interaction between communities to limits that were before unthinkable, creating a network which enables local contexts to communicate, allowing the latter to interact and look for common solutions together, or pinpointing in a community manner how to have the respective cognitive basins communicate best" (Tagliagambe 2008).

It is therefore a question of thinking of the new spatial modalities of the city in terms of *milieu innovateur,* in the sense that Tagliagambe himself gives to it in this book.

> To be able to speak of *milieu innovateur* we need to add a socio-cultural proximity to these elements, definable as the presence of shared behaviour models, mutual trust, common language and representations, and common moral and cognitive codes. Geographical and socio-cultural proximity create high probability of interaction and synergy between economic agents, repeated contracts tending towards informality, absence of opportunistic behaviour, greater division of work and cooperation within the milieu: what we call its relational capital, consisting of propensity for cooperation, trust, cohesion and a sense of belonging
>
> (Tagliagambe 2008).

Geographical proximity and socio-cultural proximity are therefore two fundamental features of the new emerging spatialities, the elements that attract the creative class, that draw localisation of intelligence and competence to the city. The availability of a common context, the sharing of a background of knowledge, interests and expectations characterising a particular landscape, favours the increase in connective intelligence and local identity. Some important questions that, as we have seen, do not find answers in the experiences quoted in the previous paragraphs become priorities for understanding the new landscapes: how and where is the system of new centrality of collectivisation processes formed? How is urban space constituted nowadays and who works for it to be constituted?

5 Experiencing the Urban: the Category of Space Pioneers

The evolution of the new generation of cultural entrepreneurship in large European cities is an interesting example for interpreting the new spatial strategies and social microformations. Cities like London and Berlin already had an important role in this direction at the beginning of the 1990s for their strong impulse towards the professions of the economy based on information, creativity, knowledge and innovation (Grabher 2001, McRobbie 2006). For the "creative industries" promoted a new generation of forms of work, new places of work and of the innovative market.

In Berlin, "the labour market for artists and their related professional fields is considered one of the most dynamic ones" (Wiedemeyer and Friedrich 2002, Lange 2006a,b). On this subject, the experiences illustrated by the geographer Bastian Lange offer the chance to interpret new urban practices that take shape in this fragmented, busy city thanks to the so-called *Culturepreneurs*,[13] hybrid subjects between culture and entrepreneurship, usually young professionals in the field of cultural production and knowledge-based economy.

The empirical materials used by Lange to study entrepreneurial and artistic activities and in particular the new urban categories are based on a series of interviews carried out in Berlin between 2002 and 2003.

The survey focuses particularly on the socio-spatial implications supplying an explanatory basis for the urban behaviours of these agents, the respective professional groups and their networks. This research "does not provide information about an individual case but about the specific *milieus*, scenes and social arenas, institutional local, regional and supra-regional intertwining, and structural situations, which are articulated in the sequences of the case" (Lange 2006b).

The city, within its apparent disorder, offers ideal places for the development of creativity of these social types; at the same time, it is the place to acquire personal knowledge for the creation of future experiences (individualised entrepreneurial strategies). Nevertheless, the places of the Culturepreneurs are not places of self-celebration and self-representation of the individual, but platforms for social interaction and for movement, rather than permanent, structured places.

It is a case of platforms on which, using the urban materials present, new relations can be experimented between the subject and the context, between the different subjects and the context they create together. For these experimental laboratories are important and have great urban relevance, where Culturepreneurs propose, supply and invent new urban narrations, after selecting distinct localisations and specific places of the city. The places are those of the post-industrial city; in Berlin, this kind of cultural initiative takes over the open spaces of the city, obsolete buildings, unplanned situations that suggest different, heterogeneous scenes.

Culturepreneurs are an important category in this sense for interpreting new urban forms and also social regeneration processes. Their creative and innovative activities and practices in art combine local abilities with creative knowledge and new ideas.

One of Lange's experiences concerns two young Swiss graphic designers whose work fits into the different professional modalities of creative design production. In Berlin, they took over art direction for a magazine entitled *Berliner* and became

Fig. 3 Urban landscape of the Culturepreneurs[14]

integrated in the management of a project in a residential quarter, having opened a studio in Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain, in the eastern part of the city.

Through their creative activity, they have taken on the role of ethnographers and are redefining and reassessing the social relationship between residents and foreigners in the quarter, between the old and new, internal and external.

> What is striking is their approach – to 'move something with a company formation'. This moment of movement and moving in space presupposes a space that is not pre-moulded, or better, it presupposes 'space' per se. This sense construction of a space that is, in their view, not pre-moulded, forces the agents to develop strategies of self-assertion in space, to quasi discover their own territory, and to symbolically occupy and re-code it. The counter-horizon of Berlin, formulated and stylised in the process as a terra incognita or a 'no land', consists of the morbid charm of the former workers' borough of Friedrichshain, cultural artefacts in the form of East German residents, their hidden leftover stocks of cultural knowledge, socialist practices and behaviours
>
> (Lange 2006b).

The symbolic space of Berlin is like a project for these agents, a space for movement that seems suitable for their current professional and social life. With *Berliner* they represent their way of perceiving the city, producing "social and psycho-geographical orientation, knowledge that is distributed to a fluid community of temporarily like-minded people". The spheres of the city not yet involved in transformation are identified as stimulating *milieu*, a moving event space.

The initiatives and practices promoted by these agents in the quarter were subsequently accompanied by structural changes at the business structure level. The

ability of these creative agents who are taking shape as artists and entrepreneurs of culture lies in having created strong interaction between the socio-spatial potential of a quarter of Berlin and the capacity for economic use of artistic practices and initiatives at an entrepreneurial level. "In their self-stylisation, the agents produce a social arena, a mental territory within which they relish re-coding the social hardships, deprivations and situations of stagnation, as potential for subtle stimulation" (Lange 2006b).

As Lange maintains, these situations can have a decisive role as incubators and attractors for the formation of new, creative knowledge *milieus* (Lange 2006b). The constitution of new urban practices involves the crucial role of space and of the aspects tied to localisation. In this sense, he refers to the hypothesis that these new professional intermediaries may be considered *space pioneers.*

These new profiles of innovative work require, moreover, systematic integration into cultural aspects linked with the new communications and learning strategies. In the geography of the different cultural niches, the spatial practices of these space pioneers enable new urban behaviours to be perceived, the development of the formation of new urban codes, and the features of "cultural individualisation" to be observed, i.e. playful (self)-production and performance tactics of the individuals in the urban scene (McRobbie 2004).

These spatial practices and the entrepreneurial activities are considered significant changes in reshaping work organisation with respect to space and place, and highlight how these situations operate often in precarious existential life situations.

It is interesting to understand who the actors are, what effects there are on the constitution of urban form, what type of network they construct, to organise meetings, to establish new urban laboratories where new productions can be tested and where experiences and knowledges may be shared. What urban places do they need? Do they create their own spaces and landscapes in the absence of spaces already existing?

In this direction, a variety of research is investigating localisations and spatial material used by Culturepreneurs, so as to grasp their role in the reconstruction, reform and performance of the new social formations, their role in the urban context and in the development of cultural clusters, or local cultural industries.[15]

Spaces are not always visible formations but may be perceived materially. Space is described as potential characterised by the term "atmosphere". Urban experiments are both subjective, for research on "workable spatial contexts", and collective, in that localising strategies and urban atmospheres are invented and created on purpose to create shared experiences. "Culturepreneurs' locations are part of a highly individual and, at the same time, playful practice of (attracting) attention. (...) They embody a highly ambivalent relationship: the catchword 'new entrepreneurship' demonstrates individualised marketing strategies and social hardship. It also indicates the temporarily skilful alternation between different modes of institutional integration" (Lange 2006b).

The new creative agents do not acknowledge themselves as belonging to predefined professional categories, but invent and constantly find new niches of work and social interaction; they move from one project to another, from one geographical

location to another, construct heterogeneity of styles and social groups. Their environments in this sense define new *ecologies of creativity* (Grabher 2001); they are the emblematic places of contemporaneity open to forms of re-socialisation inherent in the small scale, which enrich the cities with new references for the forms of interaction they establish between global network and novel creative place-making methods.

These interactions have great importance in redefining the ecological organisation of a city and the new forms of relationship between networks and places, between tradition and innovation and above all between inhabitants and the space in which they live.

Notes

[1] Quoted by Terkenli (2005).

[2] Cf. R. Florida, *The flight of the creative class. The new global competition for talent*, Harper Business, NYC, 2005.

[3] "A complex system has no *a priori* scale levels because it does not result from superposition (that is, additive effects of system components), but from interactions among components dynamically giving rise to higher level structures. (...) These structures, which define scale levels and thus appropriate scales for analysis, can be difficult to identify except by iteratively assessing relationships between lower level elements and higher emergent levels. Further complicating identification of scale levels is the potential for the system to shift scale levels or to create new emergent structures through complex processes of self-organization and bifurcation" (O'Sullivan 2004).

[4] A first generation in the 1950–1960s concerns service activities that have mostly been localised in the Central Business District. In economic terms, the services have always evolved within the Fordist industrial production model. In spatial terms, these models leave the spatial structures of the city unchanged in spite of the significant growth of the CBDs. In the second generation of the 1960–1970s, services have economic and spatial importance above all with reference to some new sectors (involving management, marketing and engineering consulting, commercial and industrial real estate). The productive effects on urban economy rearrange urban networks instituting world cities like London, New York and Tokyo. A third generation, since the 1990s and in the globalisation era, has meant a greater change in society and in the spatial structures of the city; it has produced new specialist services linked with informatics and information technology, innovation and design, cultural production, global financial intermediaries and international consortiums for the mega projects (cf. Gospodini 2006).

[5] Image: City of London from the top of Monument. Under "Creative Commons" http://flickr.com/ photos/84806883@N00/315699287. "Llyods Building Designed by Richard Rogers Partnership; 30 St Mary Axe aka the Gerkin Designed by Foster + Partners; Aviva Tower Designed by Gollins Melvin Ward and Partners. Note in the corner is of a future development" Photo by: Martin Pearce.

[6] The Massy-Saclay sphere extends for 140 km^2 and involves 20 council administrations with a population of approximately 200,000 inhabitants (cf. Bontje and Burdack 2005).

[7] "As negative impacts, Atkinson (2004), refers to community resentment and conflict, loss of affordable housing, unsustainable speculative property, price increases, homelessness, greater draw on local spending through lobbying by middle-class groups, commercial/industrial displacement, increased cost and changes to local services, loss of social diversity (from socially desperate to affluent ghettos), increased crime, under-occupancy and population loss towards gentrified areas, displacement through rent/price increases, displacement and housing demand pressures on surrounding poor areas, psychological costs of displacement. As positive impacts, Atkinson (2004), refers to stabilization of declining areas, increased property values, reduced vacancy rates, increased local fiscal revenues, increased viability, reduction of

suburban sprawl, increased social mix, decreased crime, rehabilitation of property both with and without state sponsorship" (cf. Gospodini 2006).

[8] The dominant functions are organised in networks pertaining to a space of flows that links them up all over the world, while it fragments subordinate functions and people in the multiple space of places constituted by localities that are more and more segregated and disconnected one from the other. The social construction of new dominant forms of space and time develop a meta-network that disconnects non-essential functions, subordinate social groups and devalued territories (cf. Castells 2002).

[9] "The ending 'worldments' has been selected in order to expose and emphasize the broad and increasingly globalized scope of ongoing change through processes of the new cultural economy of space. The coinage of these terms aims at the creation of a more geographical terminology that addresses contemporary spatial change. The term globalization appears too generalized, its meaning too fuzzy and highly contested for our purposes: lacking in nuance and detail as to geographical scale and dynamics of change" (Terkenli 2006).

[10] These concepts may be applied at all levels of geographic analysis, such as "cultures, landscapes, life spheres (work, home, leisure), lifeworld realm (public, private), social grouping (on the basis of class, race, ethnicity, and so on), and other frameworks of analysis" (Terkenli 2006).

[11] Image: Lefkes, Paros Island, Greece. Under "Creative Commons". http://www.flickr.com/photos/teo58/756195750/ Photo by: Theophilos Vossinakis.

[12] The gated communities, business parks and theme parks in general (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001) are part of this archipelago, as well as the clusters illustrated in this article.

[13] "The term *Culturepreneur* – so it is assumed – describes an urban protagonist who possesses the ability to mediate between and interpret the areas of culture and of service provision. The empirical material will demonstrate that there is as yet no professional category for the 'curator', 'project manager', 'artist', 'website designer' who is transparently multi-skilled and ever willing to pick up new forms of expertise. He may then be characterised, first and foremost, as a creative entrepreneur, someone who runs clubs, record shops, fashion shops and other outlets, who closes gaps in the urban with new social, entrepreneurial and spatial practices" (Davies and Ford 1998, quoted by Lange 2006).

[14] Image: dogmaRT:Destination 06.30.2007. Under "Creative Commons". http://www.flickr.com/photos/nkoravos/682419876/in/photostream;http://www.flickr.com/photos/nkoravos/682420114/in/photostream/Photo by: Nikos Koravos.

[15] The term "local cultural industries" reflects the importance of knowledge- and information-based service providers within an urban post-Fordist service economy, which has increased over the past ten years (Zukin 1995). It is from these innovative and flexible industries that cities are drawing their hope for economic growth and symbolic image gains. In this context, the so-called local cultural industries – expressions of an ever-growing urban cultural sector – are increasingly becoming the focus of attention.

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Three Metaphors for the Next Landscape

Basic Items to Transgress It

Ignasi Pérez Arnal

When I was a student, one thing I used to really like was when my teacher, a very kind woman, would say firmly before we started work on a formula or an exercise: "and now we're going to analyse the environmental conditions"; in Spanish, the words were "*y ahora vamos a estudiar las condiciones de entorno*". I particularly enjoyed this moment as each one of us in the class had to understand what was happening around the numbers. And this way of approaching a mathematical problem, I believe, should also be applied to any landscape project. What we have to do is to study the context, even if our projects, in their aims, are going to be in contrast with the existing landscape.

Context has been one of the most frequently recurring topics in valid criticism of architecture. Several approaches have been used – putting into context, integrating with context, autism in context – since the first moment someone began to work on a project mentally or with his pencil or computer. Location was the first thing to be dealt with, then *Bauhaus* hygienisation gave the first standards for the correct location of a work; later, critics like Kenneth Frampton defended the idea of *regionalism* as a differential element of architectural production, and finally, we have British contextualism, as defended by HRH Prince Charles (The Prince's Foundation for the built environment, http://www.princesfoundation.org/index.php?id=8).

Recently, new strategies have been discussed for placing constructed parts in the right position with regard to tactics in response to attitudes. Attitudes[1] in the sense of scale, imitation, camouflage, prostheses, colonisation, infiltration – to use Manuel Gausa's terms, one of the most influential minds in new, progressive production in Spanish architecture.

The two ways of understanding any project – be it in terms of production or in terms of sensitivity – face a rival, when an attitude is defended as an operative process to develop landscaping projects and works.

Now is the moment when a war without mercy has been established between local and global powers, and we should maybe therefore change the paradigm.

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The time has come to talk about the environment instead of context. We are trying to make a stand on which parameters should be taken as a starting point in contemporary architecture and landscape architecture, to be explored on the basis of three metaphors – one taken from mathematics, one involving an object, a submarine, that becomes its own landscape while it is deep under the sea, and the last concerning an attitude not properly understood in Europe, but very commonly displayed in the United States, something we will define as Venturi's effect.

1 Outline Conditions: First Metaphor

As explained in my first paragraph, I remember that when we studied formulas at school, every little complex mathematical operation was congruous with the so-called environmental conditions. Environment and not outline. They were referred to in this way to set the requirements of a specific situation related to certain parameters which limited the scope of the formulas and applications of a problem. Perhaps this process is the equivalent of what the architect is forced to do during the development of a project: if the development fails, only the outline is affected.

The use of mathematical knowledge has been helpful to interpret, assess and produce information and messages about understood phenomena, and we have appreciated the role of maths in daily life for a long time in order to recognise the value of attitudes such as the exploration of different options, the coexistence of precision or perseverance in seeking solutions. In the development of creative processes, there are four conditions when we face a new environment – a new landscape: creativity as a way to create problems, as an integrating factor, as a multiple phenomenon and as a fact in itself (Caillé 1999; Frampton 1983).

1.1 Approximation to the Maths of the Natural Environment

Nature is the ambience where many polygonal and fractal shapes can be found, and techniques can even be applied for solving problems concerning the geometric plane. It is therefore easy to represent the elements of nature using bare formulas, such as the theorems of Thales or Pythagoras, in order to find surface areas. But the development of observation, perseverance and creativity is more important at the moment in which we face the environment.

In our natural ambience/environment, we are surrounded by objects, shapes, designs and transformations (Fig. 1). Nowadays, geometric properties are more and more accessible – they are in our daily life, culture and technical field. We are gradually taking possession of natural space, finding our bearings, analysing shapes and looking for spatial relations between situations, functions or simply contemplation. We thereby obtain direct knowledge of our spatial environment through what we might call the spatial geometry of the environment.
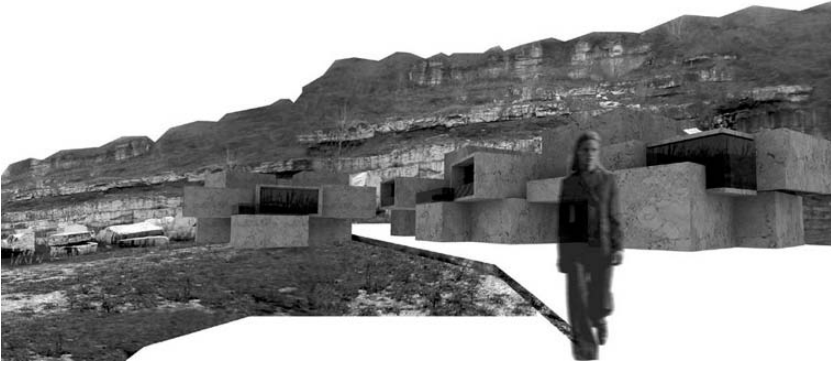
Fig. 1 Built natural environment. Houses made with marble from the site, a quarry in the city of Chiampo (Italy). Winning project in Europan 7 Competition

We need to distinguish between two kinds of understanding and expression in the knowledge of geometric space: a direct kind, corresponding to geometric intuition, which is of a visual nature, and another kind, based on meditation, i.e. logic, which is of a verbal nature. These kinds of knowledge, despite being very different, are complementary. Putting into practice the necessary intuitive procedures to explore and build its mathematical knowledge is a way to help make future architecture play a principal role in the experience/induction of its own knowledge.

2 Datascape or Nature Statistics

Statistics, as a quantitative expression of knowledge, give the correct shape to scrutiny and analysis. Biometrics arise from their relationship with nature and can be defined as the study of living creatures through statistics. It has been widely established that creativity is a variable that can be identified as a process, a product or a personality characteristic. Moreover, a good number of tools, techniques or strategies actually exist whose authors state that they develop creativity.[2] It is not possible, however, to find in our everyday surroundings those elements related to creativity that are the product of the procedures that state that they increase originality, that is to say, those products resulting from the explicit use of the techniques.

2.1 First Condition: How to Create Problems to Involve the Environment

The capacity or ability to establish, identify or propose problems is a necessary condition for creativity. Most techniques are based on proposing strategies to solve problems, not posing them. This statement forces us to be creative in the answer, that is to say, at the end of the process instead of at the beginning. It is as if scientific method was based only on observation procedures.[3] Odd things provoke odd

questions: problems are created where there is no basis for them. We could call this condition the "infiltration process" (Gausa 1999).[4]

2.2 Second Condition: Creativity Uniting with the Environment

Creativity is a process, a personality characteristic and a product. People who make creative things (products) make them following certain procedures (processes) and act in a certain way (personality characteristics). Here, the problem is that there seems not to be any common element among creative people. But there are some common elements – intelligence, for example. Intelligence in the sense of the continuous recurrence of combinatorial facts in the environment. We cannot avoid the definition given for intelligence by UNESCO (1990): the ability to adapt to the environment. The more easily someone adapts to a certain environment the more intelligent he/she is. Can we conclude, then, that those badly adapted buildings, in a certain context, are not very intelligent?

On the other hand, persistence and tenacity are, undoubtedly, other common factors in creativity. These can be called, let us say, motivation, or any other term meaning a constant force that makes us pursue the fulfilment of an objective. Fluency, flexibility, development and originality are unavoidable elements as well. We could call these conditions the "camouflage process".[5]

2.3 Third Condition: Consecutive Approaches

Organisms tend to increase rewarded behaviours, leave aside behaviours that are not gratified and show behaviours which avoid pain. To include this in the development of a creativity programme would mean that the programmes would be organised on the principle of consecutive approaches, in which progress advances in short steps and every step is reinforced (rewarded), avoiding the following step if the previous step did not maintain success. What can we call this condition? I suggest: outline condition.

The change in movement of an object is proportional to the force applied and inversely proportional to the mass. This means that in order to enforce changes in present architectural production, we must apply double the pressure and creative energy to move half the built mass in our enclosed territory.

Every movement is relative, regardless of the reference frame chosen; there is no immobile reference frame to define absolute movement. Because of this, intelligent points of contact are better than careless evaluations of division.

When accelerated, electric charges produce electromagnetic waves in their surroundings. This is an incredible phenomenon: if there are advanced forces trying to promote a change in the sign of what is being produced in a particular sense, then magnetising influences are generated which begin a process of increase in social mass.

3 The "Watertight Compartments" Submarine: Second Metaphor

Objectives in the appropriation of the environment may incorporate regular ways of presenting arguments into the language of architecture but with different ways of expression, in order to communicate in a rigorous and precise way (Gausa 2001). Using different forms of logic thought up to formulate and verify conjectures, making inferences and deductions and organising/relating different data connected with everyday life, leads to arranging elements in different compartments, as if they were the independent spaces that make up a submarine, the architect's instrumental baggage.

Compartment 1. Here we will put those aspects of reality which allow us to interpret it in a better way, using data gathering techniques, measuring procedures, different kinds of numbers (remember Cecil Balmond's – member of Arup and Partners – great book, "Number 9, The search for the Sigma code").

Compartment 2. In this compartment, we will establish the personal strategies for analysing actual situations and identifying problems using different resources and tools, and evaluating the linking of the strategies carried out on the grounds of the analysis of the results.

Compartment 3. In this one, we will collect the knowledge of reality as varied matter and as something susceptible of being explained from opposing and complementary points of view: deterministic/random, finite/infinite, exact/approximate, etc.

Compartment 4. This compartment is for identifying forms and spatial relations which appear in reality, analysing the properties involved and the geometric relations and showing awareness of created beauty.

Compartment 5. To act, in daily situations and in problem-solving, according to the principles of scientific activity, i.e. by systematic exploration of alternatives, precision in language, flexibility to change viewpoint and perseverance in the search for solutions: these are the provisions we will place in this compartment.

Compartment 6. To know and value own skills in order to face the situations which require their use or allow creative, manipulative, aesthetic or useful aspects to be enjoyed: this is the work of a Dutch architect – Willem Jan Neutelings (2004) – who has developed ideas and theories from laziness to composite recycling. This attitude has to be taken into account when stress and anguish lead to unpleasant results – creative ones, apart from physical.

An essential element of each compartment is the fact that it has to be watertight, i.e. if one is perforated, we must be sure the whole is not affected, polluted or occupied by foreign elements, defending but not changing its general behaviour.

3.1 Possible Distinction

Waves can overlap each other, they can move around objects, reflect from their surface, be absorbed by materials as they touch or change direction when they collide with another object.

Compartment 7. Treatment of chance by using random phenomena and new terminology to describe the unforeseen and regularities in phenomena and experiments.

Compartment 8. One of the most difficult concepts to be found in contemporary landscape intervention is proportionality relations; it is also one of the most important. Perhaps the most usual concepts derive, firstly, from the use of additive strategies to solve proportionality problems, i.e. the belief that if you add the same quantity to two different ones, the proportion between them will remain the same and, secondly, to the abusive use of these relations in situations where they should not be allowed. Proportionality is used in a wide range of situations and in very different contexts. It offers an excellent opportunity to put geometric, functional and graphic contents into a relationship with others of the numeric type. The importance of proportionality relations forces us to include this element in priorities wherever there is organisation of contents. It welcomes the use of very diverse contexts – the public context as well as the private one. It is important to show the situations obtained from different sources and from different areas of knowledge (sociology, economy, psychology, biology, anthropology, etc.).

Compartment 9. Procedures and chance have their foundations in the use of different languages[6]: proper vocabulary to interpret and transfer information on the size of objects, the use of scale representations to measure real magnitudes, to limit mistakes when estimating, measuring or approximating a magnitude and by general strategies estimating the size of objects, times and distances, and individual and collective plans for it, envisaging the resources needed.[7] The treatment of chance, as a random phenomenon that describes the unforeseen and random experiments, provides the ability to foresee the possibility of an occurrence taking place. Many IT companies approach the term "environment" from a resourceful perspective. Linux, the alternative open language, describes itself like this: "...scientific language for numeric computes in a friendly environment".

This environment will possess those products that aim for improvement in quality of life by being designed as millennium products. Innovation and creativity will pay attention to regeneration – health and housing, consumption – energetic resources, and communication – logistic and communication progress, beyond aesthetics and good taste, because they can provide functionality and quality of life, also in the landscape.

4 Venturi's Effect: Third Metaphor

Robert Venturi (1966) and Denise Scott Brown[8] claim that their love for different artists and things could be understood if taken one at a time, but all put together might be seen as too strange a package: Michelangelo, ketchup, Beethoven, Tokyo, Rome, bungalows, Borromini, Los Angeles, Parma cheese, service stations, original but good things, Morris, the Baroque, La Scala Regia, grapefruit, Lutyens and

Mackintosh, Tex-Mex food, Japanese gardens, mosaics, pixels, etc. This is an example of how a vital context is transformed into a heroic environment admitting the value and inspiration that American vernacular commerce gives. And thus could an American landscape be interpreted. Do we, as Europeans, have something to learn from this situation? I think we can certainly learn something from everything, but more from the way the landscape is obliged to provide a performance, some objectives and a mission.

But from physics theory, the Venturi effect – it is nice to use an analogy between the two Venturi – is based on the law that defines the action of an external fluid which causes suction of a liquid or gas as it passes. This is easy to prove when observing the reason why a car with a boot at the back does not need wipers, whereas a car without a boot does. The fact is that if a fluid is canalised with a certain speed over another, the first creates a vacuum by vacuuming the other. Few architects have this ability, but Robert Venturi and his partner in the studio and in life, Denise Scott Brown, are a good example. Works showing a more direct, easy, playful attitude towards landscaping are possible.

But why are this seventy-year-old couple so important? Robert Venturi was born in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) and he is a polemic theorist and architect, avid for new adventures and exemplary in visual treatment, rather than formal, in his work (Venturi et al. 1972). If the United States is the paradigm of evocative advertisements and the capitalist market for its products, Robert Venturi has become the architect who has given those marketing principles to architecture.

First he concentrated on explaining why he disliked incoherence and arbitrariness so much, why he could not understand the picturesque or expressionism. After that, he learnt from the *ex novo* city Las Vegas in the American State of Nevada. Its iconography, the life of its people was a model representative of the middle-class American that has its main image in how a monument can be made: all is needed is to install a big advertisement over it saying "I am a monument". And that is what new cities in a no-landscape site are provoking.

Trained by Louis I. Kahn, Robert Venturi has objective clarity into which he incorporates a large quantity of acute artistic vein; at the same time, he respects, as a good professional, deadlines, obeys developers' economy, something so typical of his country. On the other hand, his talent and easy reading of what happens in the society around him let him say things like "More is not less", clearly hinting at the Miesian sentence "Less is more", and yet again at the slogan recently written for the first Architecture Festival in Barcelona, in one way very similar to a music or theatre festival organised by Metapolis: "more for less", or to place a giant apple on the Flammarion building like an "APPLE" – the typical sign identifying the city of New York – in order to resume his project for Times Square. But we would certainly have to find a sentence like these to talk about landscape. Because otherwise we are creating "inutil paisagem".

With the help of his wife, Denise Scott Brown, Venturi (1996) has investigated the reason for electronics, the image deriving from its products and the incidence in cities. This is one of the infrequent introductions to advanced architecture within cyberspace, in the digital atlas. We could now speak about the economy of attention,

about serendipity – the art of finding useful things by chance – or about the creation of emotions, but we will talk about those some other time.

Once I was listening to something that drew my attention: it was talk about how the environment influenced literary production. It went something like "There are two types of literature: one fed on literature itself – represented by Borges – and one fed by life – represented by writers like William Faulkner."

And what I would like to discover is whether the landscape is fed by the landscape itself, or by the life that it can generate around and inside it.

Notes

[1] Journal Lurzer Archive. Page 166. The environment becomes the context:

The environment becomes a context through an accurate "morphing". The advertising agency Leo Burnett, in its branch in Bangkok, proposes to fight against the construction of roads, relating them with the killing of the environment in which they are placed.

Herbrich Thomas: I'm the environment. Excellent appropriation of the landscape, without the need of falsifying the context. Its own image is its reflex.

[2] Journal Lurzer Archive. Page 92. The informational environment

The creation of images through the random use of the same contextual components suggests future ways for advanced architecture.

Mutsoe Merriman Herring Levi, London.

[3] *World War II*. RBA Editores, Madrid. Page 68. Datascapes for the war

To plan actions on the spot is not easy. The strategies and occupation practices of territories are explained in battle maps, as if they were datascapes.

[4] Lewis, Duncan. page 102. When the environment is there. "If a project must be built, there is no need to invent anything, the project exists. To look for, to identify, to impregnate, to communicate and to make is enough".

In order to sympathise with the environment, the links between nature and architecture lead us to explore the origins of the building. Is it possible to build into nature, as an environment, without destroying or defacing it?

[5] *World War II*. RBA Editores, Madrid. Page 97. Camouflage to confuse with the environment

World War II was when the art of being unrecognisable was developed. Arms painted pink for the desert, gloves and masks to change the colour of soldiers' skin or "zebra camouflage" in a US PT ship were usual practices. These images were chosen due to the great cleverness of the artist: the best way to be confused with the environment in the sea is to be painted as a zebra. The image of the shape of the ship breaks even optically in order to not recognise the whole ship.

[6] The transfer from the formal symbolic world to the digital environment is promoting an increase in interesting proposals. Internet has some environments which, I would say, have not needed an architect to create them, but nonetheless each of us would have liked to have designed them.

The following are websites to be watched as if they were TV:

Cities for pets http://www.sony.com.sg/postpet/postpet/monthly/0519997index.html

Places with interactive action http://www.superbad.com

Pixel-art and "fonts" or typographies created by all kinds of landscape and city landscape http://www.eboy.com/pages/works/ecity/ecity index.html

The creation of cities and surroundings by icons http://www.icontown.de

Or even those where the city is surpassed by information territory that could rise from the accumulation of writings, tags and documents

http://www.cartia.com

http://demo.cartia.com/technews/map1024.html

[7] Mijksenaar and Westendorp 1999.

In 1930 when the company Marklin commercialised its toy trains, they did it without thinking of the landscape. The context was the technique, the image scientific and it responded to the pre-established idea that the train was only an artificial means of transport, located on the territory it crossed, without any other relationship. Its final image was only focused on the techniques.

[8] I have always wondered why we architects do not do things like this; even I think that we are not able to do them yet.

http://www.vsba.com/projects/index.html

http://www.vsba.com.whoweare/indexphilo.html

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