

## Common Goods from a Landscape Perspective

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### Session 3.

Collective decision-making, governance and non-institutionalized practices

#### Commons/Landscapes beyond the contemporary Crises, toward participatory Governance's processes

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#### Abstract

- Landscapes and Commons have been mutually interacting along the ages and *also* their interactions have been continuously in becoming. Since the year 2000 the Landscapes have been intended as *Life Environments* by the E.L.C. Coherently with the E.L.C. and our metropolitan present condition, we can conceive our Life Environments in a wider perspective and re-consider the Commons both as *material concrete* and *informational web Life Environments*. The contradictions of the *contemporary crises* lead us to the *rediscovery* of Commons in terms of collective values while their destruction is *imminent*. At the present our Landscapes with their social Heritages, Memories, and Habits are *put on sale* as separate merchandises, as it happens with Mediterranean Life Environments, People. and Cultures. Governing *all* these Commons throughout a *wider multiplicity* of not institutional participative processes can be a fundamental opportunity for their maintenance and evolution but also to develop *.new* forms of Participative Governance of our contemporary Landscapes, as a lot of concrete examples of urban and territorial Governance testify

#### 1. The devastation of European and Mediterranean Landscapes!

Help!!! The Mediterranean Landscapes, devastated, fragmented, separated from the original communities who created them along the ages, are now *on the market*, as *merchandises for sale*.

On the African and Asian coastal Countries civil wars and counter- revolutions instigated by external forces, are destroying monuments, territories and populations, who are forced to emigrate across the Mediterranean waters, which often become their cemeteries.

On the European Countries local economies are progressively put down and the populations are impoverished, while their cultural Heritage is going into liquidation.

The responsibility of the dramatic situation -which *today* affect the whole Mediterranean Life Environment- is to be attributed to the global financial powers, the economic and political neo liberalism, the egoistic national trends and to the financial speculation on the Debit, which is going beyond measure of usury, as the conditions of Greece and other Mediterranean Countries testify.

The consequences of such an economic neo-colonialism are the loss of national sovereignties, the destruction of local agricultures and urban activities, the annihilation of human skills and capabilities, the diffused poverty and the destruction of the Landscapes and Common Life Environments .

We can't remain indifferent without risking to become 'confederate ' in this crime! We can instead concretely encourage an *adequate reconstruction* of life environments and conditions of their populations. Day by day it becomes more necessary to resist these attacks and defend Commons Goods, original Cultures and Heritages to cope with these problems and assure an appropriate future to the Mediterranean Life Environment.

Otherwise the European Life Environments could be subverted and the Mediterranean sea and coastal countries could become a *Death* Environment.

All of us have to stop the selling of Cultural Heritage, Public Patrimonies and Commons Goods, and promote the Landscapes as Instruments to resist the crisis and create new Solidarity Economies and Cultures.

#### 2 The link between Landscapes and Commons throughout the history:

Landscapes and Commons have been mutually interacting along the ages and *also* their interactions have been continuously in becoming, everywhere on the planet. The practice of Commons ( in Italy *Usi Civici*) represents the *ab-origin* form of all Human Cultures towards their life contexts, whose characters

have been recognized as cultural social acquisitions which are also the matrices in which the Landscapes have been formed.

In Europe, since the year 2000, the Landscapes have been recognized as *Life Environments* by the European Landscape Convention. This acknowledgement signified a cultural, political and social step which oriented national and local environmental policies and encouraged social experiential achievements.

Coherently with these achievements the ELC affected *all kinds of life environments*, natural, rural and Metropolitan in a wider perspective where the *Commons* play a *key role* both in the traditional *material* sense (as *Collective Territorial Properties*) and in the *informational* sense (as *Web Life Environments*). In this sense the Landscapes/ Life Environments assume new, *wider values* towards the entire range of contemporary planetary phenomena (natural, traditional, technological, informational) <sup>1</sup>.

These new values of Life Environments and their *imminent, frenzy destruction* bring to light the urgency of their *rediscovery* in terms of natural, social and environmental collective inseparable values, since such a destruction hits the quintessence both of *natural environments in evolution* and of the *human cultures involved in an overwhelming becoming*. In ecological terms it signifies that the living cycles and the production of -human/ natural- reciprocal co-elaborations are progressively altered, ripped off, or destroyed. This is a very menace for the survival of the traditional Commons Goods, for the identity of Landscapes, and for any collective control of the informational Web Environments, both fragmented and come up for *sale* as separate merchandises.

### **3 From the entirety to the fragmentation of the living phenomena: the philosophical approaches<sup>2</sup>**

Along the ages the philosophical approach to the nature acknowledged the *wholeness of the living world* and the *secret of its creativity* enlightening its intrinsic *Virtual/Actual* cyclical dynamics, which has been recognized as the inexhaustible source which nurses all living phenomena, from the *molecular* to the *social scale*.

According to these approaches, we can realize that the *virtual /actual* dynamics can expand to the social political scale and can reach a political concrete effectiveness *if* they are translated into a new dynamics *tension/facts* to become a *very* political activity. In this way the dynamics *tension/facts* expands its *virtual and actual unity*, its continuous *invention of the new*, its endless, vital, inseparable exchange between *tensions and facts*, and pervades the social /life environmental contexts. <sup>3</sup>

All these philosophical approaches, in contraposition with the dominant tendencies-of western cultures, have constantly balanced their increasing influence (cultural, political, economic) expanded everywhere on the planet, till the present global crisis. Along the ages the *Virtuality* and the *Virtual /Actual* dynamics have been progressively *abstracted from the nature* and today have been trivialized by the informational technological powers, to become a controllable phenomenon and a tool of global dominant powers, out and beyond the individual and social responsibility. Informational technologies burst into the living world, occupy every place of it, breaks the natural wholeness of its cyclical dynamics at any level, again *from the molecular to the social scale*, till the very sense of the *Virtuality* has been forgotten or misunderstood.

The recent *Web 2.0 interactive technologies*, originally aimed to amplify the natural capabilities of their users, have been propagated within the social living systems, to constitute a *whole artificial world*, called *virtual*. This world attempts to substitute the natural one by imitating its behaviors, so that the intrinsic prerogatives of the social living world are at risk. The *wholeness* of the *virtual-actual*, the natural fuzzy source of the creative dynamics is progressively annihilated by a crisp mechanical *cause/effect* interaction, while the *social and natural environment*, the very *womb* of the social *learning processes in becoming* is substituted by a simplified *on line Landscape/Environment* where new *on line Communities* operate in the illusion of being the new *knowledge citizens*"<sup>4</sup>

In spite of these attempts, the very living world maintains its autonomous creative prerogatives, keeping the inextricable secrets of its becoming as its very quintessence, and is still ready to manifest its *Potency* in our lacerated contemporary conditions, again in contraposition with the dominant phenomena.

### **4-Autonomy, social consciousness, adequate knowledge- and interactive informational activities, toward new perspectives of a participative Landscaping Governance<sup>5</sup>,**

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<sup>1</sup> E. Ostrom, [6]

<sup>2</sup> In particular the complexity of this approach has been dealt with by many philosophers along the ages of western culture (Aristotle, J.P.Olivi, Spinoza, till K. Marx ,G. Deleuze, G. Bateson) and artists as P. Klee, who interpreted the evolution of nature, as an indissoluble tangle of phenomena that can't be completely submitted to the human control.

<sup>3</sup> These approaches have been recently elaborated by M.Pascucci

<sup>4</sup> .see, L. Maiorfi [ ]

<sup>5</sup> The contribution of M.Pascucci [1,2] and L.Maiorfi [8] played a fundamental role in our theoretical /experiential research

The quintessence of natural /human/social vital creativity, brought to light by the philosophers who *passed by* the classical sciences, illuminates on the *Potency* of the *virtual/actual–tension/facts* dynamics in contraposition to the linear *cause/effects* mechanisms of the *Powers*. This kind of *Potency* can expand at different dimensions and contexts and can be translated into a number of concrete experiences throughout a *multiplicity* of autonomous/ not institutional participative processes.

Such processes become urgent in our present crisis, where the Landscapes, Heritages, Memories, and Habits are destroyed, abandoned or *put on sale* by the dominant Market, expanded everywhere, as it occurs to many Life Environments, Peoples and Cultures.

## **5- Separation, abstraction of *plus values* against cyclical wholeness and *plus life renewability* of nature: Market Values Vs Use Values**

On the fragmentation of the Life Environments, Territorial Goods and Societies develop the *market values* and increase the dynamics of financial enrichment, in spite of the impoverishment of the whole planet by the destruction of the local environments and cultures.

In contrast to these phenomena a new tendency is raising towards the recovery of these fragments in terms of *Use Values* manageable by new *Communities in becoming*. On these bases renewed cycles and renewed life environments can be *conceived and built*, as unexpected conditions of *adequate knowledge* and solidarity raise from these *Communities*.

The theoretical elaborations can help us to understand the contraposition Market Value/Use Value with reference to the cyclical dynamics of living nature and their alteration attempted by the dominant Powers<sup>6</sup>.

## **6- The renovation of in Life Environments Communitarian Use Values, toward contemporary Common Goods -**

The re-discovery and consequent re-covery of the resulting parts of fragmented cycles by social groups throughout experiential learning processes can foster and nurse a very *adequate social knowledge*<sup>7</sup>. Such kind of knowledge ,whole, autonomous, rose and completely rooted in their contexts, can produce *new social, cultural* Life Environments and *different bases* on which participative modalities of Governance can be developed for *all* contemporary Life Environments.

Many attempts are in course and develop as social processes practiced by different kinds of Communities. All of them are based on the consolidation /acquisitions of common capabilities (knowledge, consciousness, effectiveness) towards different Life Environments: concrete (natural, rural, urban), technological (metropolitan, industrial) and informational (web environments). These communitarian activities are often mutually interacting towards the reconstitution of *shared, autonomous and responsible conditions of life* that are *based on and managed as* Common Goods

In this way a new dynamics tensions/facts can concretely become a *molecular revolution*<sup>8</sup>, in a continuous *counteroffensive* towards the global dominant powers.

## **7 Experiential examples in becoming**

### ***Kenia, Nairobi: The voice of Kibera***<sup>9</sup>

By using a free software Wiki for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping produced by the no-profit firm Ushahidi as a Platform, the Voice of Kibera slum, close to Nairobi, mapped and monitored the daily life environment of its population, invisible and not represented in official cartography. Through the website created by this no profit association, the users (inhabitants of Kibera, humanitarian associations and NGO, journalists, etc.) became contextually able to *perceive* and *represent* their life environment, *report* on the map events, emergencies and facilities, even *localizing* the different ethnic groups that live in the slum and their own activities.

The Community achieved three different levels of "knowledge": territorial knowledge, ability in representing the ground, technical competences and acquisitions. The share of information and levels of knowledge, the dialogue among the subjects established in such a re-awakened condition allow every user to reach new level of consciousness, in terms of acquisitions of information and competences in each level. Among the subjects, equally referred to the *life*

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<sup>6</sup> M.Pascucci [2]

<sup>7</sup> M. Pascucci, [1]

<sup>8</sup> With the words of F.Guattari

<sup>9</sup> Studied by Maiorfi

environment and the on line environment, a dynamic exchange improves and increases the quality of contributions, while the whole process rewards the best practices and the contents, appreciated by the users as the quality of their contributions, continuously improving.

### ***Palestine, Occupied Territories: a pacific Counter Village***<sup>10</sup>

A theoretical-concrete innovative participative research-action, developed by a Palestinian group as creative-happy initiative in contraposition to an unaesthetic and trivial domination. An example of the participative methodology could be the actions of the popular committees of non-violent struggle in Palestine: building a Palestinian village where Israelis are putting a settlement is happiness for the Palestinian people, who choose daily non-violent actions. Happiness within the context of non-violence is to be satisfied inside, a satisfaction which is the consciousness that one is doing something which affirms-within him or her that non-violence is *Potentia*, is an *unlimited power*<sup>11</sup> which makes you feel internal joy.

The philosophical thinking and the in becoming social experience are very tangled, so that the thinking is a fertile humus from which the happiness –becoming experience- can continuously raise to the surface and manifest through concrete actions.

### ***Italy, Tuscany : the Common Goods Municipalities***

The Rebeldia Group, is working in Pisa, to imagine and practice in concrete a new management of public /private abandoned properties through the participation of experts, students, workers, unemployed young citizens. They occupy these properties to attract collaborations, innovations and initiatives aimed to a rehabilitation /restoration of spaces and buildings,at disposal for social activities and unexpected kinds of jobs.The management of these *occupied properties* develops to create new conditions of social life and testify the enormous opportunities which can flourish in these new contexts,going to a progressive constitution of contemporary life styles, effective, attractive and spatially adequate, able to concretely create the in becoming Context as a Common Good, where People, Spaces, Competences, Economies, Management, meet to guarantee a different quality of life within the urban areas.

### ***Italy Emilia Romagna Region: The Panaro River-Landscape Contract as a Governance of a Common Good***

The art of renewed fluvial landscape and the promotion of its **participative Governance** has been practiced by local groups of citizens, associations, public bodies, schools, territorial museums and entrepreneurs, with an interdisciplinary staff.

This Group has been involved in a *creative process towards the participative democracy of the fluvial landscape*, which evolved in the form of Landscape River Contract, ratified by the Region, the Province, and the local municipalities and today in progress.

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<sup>10</sup> Studied by M.Pascucci

<sup>11</sup> With the word of B.Spinoza, by M.Pascucci