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*Original Citation:*

*Availability:*

This version is available at: 11577/3157860 since:

*Publisher:*

CLEUP

*Published version:*

DOI:

*Terms of use:*

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# LANDSCAPE AS MEDIATOR, LANDSCAPE AS COMMONS: AN INTRODUCTION

*Benedetta Castiglioni, Fabio Parascandolo, Marcello Tanca*<sup>1</sup>

*Si el paisaje que estamos construyendo no es satisfactorio,  
entonces es que nos estamos equivocando*  
Javier Maderuelo

## 1. THE LANDSCAPE IS DEAD, HAIL TO THE LANDSCAPE!

In 1982 *Mort du paysage?*, a book that is still largely quoted by people dealing with landscape studies, was published. The book was edited by the philosopher François Dagognet, and collected the proceedings from a conference that was held in Lyon the year before. The main thesis of the book, formulated by the interrogative title<sup>2</sup>, consisted in the realization of the notable transformations that had occurred since World War II in «le paysage rural ancestral», i.e. the traditional rural landscape, due to the social and economical dynamics of industrial society (land revolution, agro-industry, deforestation, urbanization, sprawl, etc.). It is possible to read in its pages passages like the following: «Le paysage – géographiquement et esthétiquement – n'existe plus. [...] Le paysage appartient au passé. La puissance de l'homme le détruit ou le décline, de même que la picturalité l'a relégué au musée ou à l'académie. [...] Nous avons perdu le paysage» (Dagognet, 1982, pp. 32-33). This quotation is taken from a section whose title is *Mort et résurrection du paysage?*, with the question mark used to soften the absoluteness of the affirmation, and leaving the question still open for answering. What is most interesting to notice is that, at the precise moment when the end of landscape is foreseen, there is, contemporarily, speculation about its coming back; the disappearing of the “belle contrade” doesn't imply the death of landscape *tout-court*: «il y a une beauté

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<sup>1</sup> This introductory essay is born of the collective reflections of the authors. Marcello Tanca edited the paragraphs 1, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. Paragraph 2 is responsibility of Benedetta Castiglioni, whereas credits for paragraph 3.4 go to Fabio Parascandolo. Paragraph 4 is the result of shared writings. Translation by Alberto Maffini.

<sup>2</sup> It's not infrequent to find the title of Dagognet's book only partially quoted, with the question mark missing. This way, the essay loses part of its interlocutory aspect. It's easy to understand that “The death of landscape” doesn't mean quite the same as “The death of landscape?”.

des grandes et moyennes métropoles, une unité visible et sensible, qui frappe et marque ses habitants comme ses visiteurs, les seconds plus consciemment que les premiers: ainsi la beauté de New-York stupéfie le Parisien, et inversement» (ivi, p. 34). There is a «harmonie latente» in the new urban landscape that is just waiting to be discovered and deciphered.

Ten years later, in 1992, Lorenza Mondada, Francesco Panese and Ola Söderström published the proceedings from another conference, held in Lausanne, whose title was *Paysage et crise de la lisibilité*. In just a decade the death of landscape (or, better, *the hypothesis* of its death) had yielded to the crisis of its readability. In a fragment from the Introduction, where the editors repeated the *texte de cadrage* of the conference, it is affirmed that: «Le foisonnement des recherches actuelles sur la “fin du paysage” témoigne paradoxalement de son inertie comme mode d’appréhension du réel. [...] En ce sens la crise de lisibilité serait moins une rupture dans les modes de spatialisation du social qu’un aspect des transformations plus générales des médiations symboliques contemporaines» (Mondada et al., 1992, p. 5). Between the “death” of 1982 and the “crisis” of 1992 there is a substantial difference. The first one seems to refer to the material destruction of landscapes, which are contextually replaced by others (so that their disappearance can be theologically followed by resurrection in other shapes); the latter alludes to the landscape as a metacategory, a symbolic mediation, a conceptual instrument that gives some sort of intelligibility to the world. The possibility to refer with a single word to things so different between them reflects that *arguzia del paesaggio* that Franco Farinelli talks about (Farinelli, 1992). That is the tendency to associate in the same referent the thing and its image, signifier and signified; thanks to this hybrid nature, the landscape device can represent – at the same time – what is material and what is mental, what is visible and what is invisible, *come se* they were analogous (Dematteis, 2003).

This ambiguity has a very specific meaning, and it’s useful to spend some words to underline it. Nowadays, the explosion of the concept of landscape and the multitude of discourses that intertwine with it is hard to miss. “Our time – Michael Jakob wrote – is decidedly a ‘landscape time’, at least as far as its verbal and iconic representation are concerned” (Jakob, 2009, p. 7). This landscape vogue is a natural reaction to our aphasia, i.e. to our inability to read the world in transparency, so we can take that veil of ambiguity off things, showing them for what they really are, without misunderstandings. Today’s massive exploitation of landscape metaphors to present contents that are typically outside the dominion of proper landscapes (constituting, thus, extra- or meta-landscape areas, such as ethnoscapas, foodscapes, warscapes, including *paysages de la banalité et du drame*) can be better explained with the urge to give voice to that being that cannot be said (Tanca, 2012) rather than with the sudden spread of a particular sensitiveness to landscape («Plus on pense le paysage, et plus on le massacre» in Augustin Berque’s

own bitter commentary, 2008, p. 10; cfr. the opposition between *pensée du paysage* and *pensée paysagère*). That is what an ambivalent, double, structurally opaque reality claims: to be reproduced by a similar ambiguous and evanescent item. For this reason, Farinelli concludes that “there cannot be a crisis (nor a death) of landscape: because it has been already designed specifically to describe the crisis” (Farinelli, 1992, p. 209).

In the essays collected in this book we can find this duplicity, this evocative and mediating ability of landscape, which is constantly suspended between performativity and allusion, materiality and symbolic value, knowledge and action. We want to say that this volume comes from the shared will of its authors to commend some of the contributions presented at the fourth Eugeo (the Association of European Geographical Societies) Conference held in Rome in September 2013<sup>3</sup> and the discussion that followed during the thematic sessions. More precisely, we are talking about session S05, titled *Changes in landscape studies: considering landscape as a “mediator”*, organized by Benedetta Castiglioni (University of Padua), which dealt with the difficulties we have to face when we try to set some key points for a “social” and “democratic” approach to landscape. These considerations can also serve as a starting point to build territorial policies that take in consideration the point of view of local actors<sup>4</sup>. The other session included in this volume is session S18, with the title *Is landscape a common? Geographical diversity of landscape’s perceptions and changes through time*, organized by Fabio Parascandolo and Marcello Tanca (University of Cagliari). This session focused on the necessity of interpreting the landscape not only in terms of commodity or public good, but also as a collective resource, which cannot be reduced to the rules of the market, cannot be expropriated, and is fundamental for the welfare of local societies<sup>5</sup>.

As it is evident from these quick notes, the two sessions do present affinities that go beyond their shared theme, and that call for issues, worries and recurring questions that go from the well-being (or bad-being) related with the landscape experience to ecological sustainability and the role of planning, from democratic

<sup>3</sup> The title of this edition, which was hosted by the Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia of Rome University “La Sapienza”, was “Europe, what’s next? Changing geographies and geographies of change”.

<sup>4</sup> Benedetta Castiglioni, Kenneth R. Olwig, Yves Luginbühl, Theano S. Terkenli, Cristina Mattiucci, Serge Briffaud, Viviana Ferrario, Mauro Varotto, Claudio Cerreti, Loredana Ponticelli, Rémi Berco-vitz, Andreia Pereira, Fernando Paulino, Salvatore Cannizzaro, Gian Luigi Corinto, Monica Meini, Diana Ciliberti, Margarita Vološina, Anita Zarina, Andrea Salustri, Sandra Parvu, Arturo Gallia and Chrysafina Geronta took part in this session as coordinators, discussant or authors. The “call” of this session is available at: <http://www.eugeo2013.com/component/content/article/68-S05>.

<sup>5</sup> The coordinators, discussant or authors of this session were: Ludiger Gailing, Benedetta Castiglioni, Viviana Ferrario, Alessia De Nardi, Guido Lucarno, Raffaella Gabriella Rizzo, Gian Paolo Scaratti, Laura Benigni, Evelien de Hoop, Saurabh Arora, Michele Vianello, Florin Vartolomei, Dimitra Zy-gra, John Sayas, Kenneth R. Olwig, Diana Dushkova, Matteo Proto, Daniela Ribeiro, Nika Razpot-nik Viskovic, Salvo Torre, Gennaro Avallone e Claudia Faraone. The call of the session is available at: <http://www.eugeo2013.com/component/content/article/80-S18>.

participation in the decisional process concerning the landscape to the contribution of geography, and, more in general, of territorial studies to this kind of problems. Further details will emerge in the following paragraphs, which focus on the role of landscape as “mediator” and “public good”. But before we start exploring these points more in detail, the editors want to thank all the authors that gave their consent to the idea of collecting their contributions in a volume, and who made this volume possible.

## 2. THE LANDSCAPE AS A MEDIATOR

### *2.1 The landscape as a tension*

The considerations about the role of landscape as a “mediator” originate in the same essence of this concept.

In fact, the element that unifies, from any possible perspective, the polysemy conveyed by the idea of landscape, resides in the dimension of “relation”.

Just think about the landscape as some sort of synthesis, as a comprehensive picture of natural and anthropic elements like in traditional geographies; or remember the systemic approaches, which read and structure the relations between the different components according to various interpreting keys (cfr. Brossard and Wieber, 1984, or, for an approach to landscape ecology, Ingegnoli, 1993). Even when we consider the “interfaces” of landscape (Palang and Fry, 2003), its relational dimension is intrinsically highlighted: we may be dealing with the interface between natural and human sciences, between different cultural approaches to the same landscape, between past and future, between conservation and use, and so on (ivi, p. 2 and following).

This relational aspect is even more evident when we focus on the double nature of landscape, i.e. its material and immaterial essence, suspended between reality and the image of that reality; the definition of landscape as “area as perceived” that is at the basis of the European Landscape Convention (art. 1, a) adopts this perspective, too. The landscape lies between these two dimensions, belongs to both and links them as a liminal space, constantly on the borders, so it becomes “field of relations”: between subjectivity and objectivity, actuality and potentiality, surface and deepness (Turco, 2002, p. 42). In cultural geography, the landscape is analogously interpreted as a “tension”: between proximity and distance, between the act of watching and the act of living, between the vision of the image and the action on the ground, between culture and nature (Wylie, 2007, p. 2 and following).

So, the landscape “stays in between” and “links”; the main reason of interest towards this concept and its significance in the contemporary debate seems to lie here, whether we consider this evidence from a theoretical or a practical point

of view. Thus Dematteis states: “It [the landscape] always presents itself as an *ambiguous mediator – and at the same time fertile* – between aesthetic and rational, between the world of signs and the world of living things, between local scale and global scale, between individual and collective feeling and acting” (2010, p. 173; italics are a license of the editor).

## 2.2 *The landscape as a “medium”*

But does the landscape just “lie” in the middle or is it a “medium”, too? Could it be meaningful to conceive the landscape not only as an “object”, but also as an “instrument” (Luginbühl, 2004)? And if that’s the case, instrument for what? And used by whom?

The reflection here can develop on different levels.

In the first place, scholars can use landscape as an investigation device. In fact, it can be used to recognize in a sensible form *hints* of unperceivable processes. This is how in geomorphology we can point out, starting from the marks left, the presence of specific morphological agents, today or in the past, and the dynamics that modelled the ground itself: the moraine shows where a glacier had been, the cliff the action of the sea, etc.

Analogously, we can consider the anthropic forms of the landscape as a result – and thus as a hint, too – of economical and social processes, which we can get to know, or, at least, on which we can speculate. In fact, the landscape is an imperfect instrument, which tends to give suggestions rather than assurances (we are talking about hints, and not incontestable proofs). If we consider the plurality and the variety of the territorial dynamics that show up in landscape, and which the landscape itself often synthesizes, this instrumental approach can help us consider it as a “complex indicator” of these dynamics, too. The ability to highlight and put into dialogue a vast plurality of aspects (Castiglioni, 2007) makes the landscape a useful instrument also in the field of evaluation.

Even when the attention is focused, from a geo-cultural perspective, on the immaterial dynamics that regulate the relations between space and society, the landscape can be interpreted from an instrumental point of view as the “key” to understand the “personality of a region”, to proceed “*from the landscape to the values and to the passions of a community*” (Tuan, 1979, p. 93).

More in general the landscape, as a “moment of communication between two systems, the social system and the territorial system”, adopts a “mediation role” (Turri, 1998, p. 18) and thus becomes mediator between the territory and the population that perceives and represents that territory (Castiglioni and Ferrario, 2007). The landscape can also be represented under the metaphor of the theatre, as the interface between acting (which is proper of the actor) and watching what is

being acted (which is proper of the spectator) (Turri 1998). In this case it becomes a useful instrument to investigate the relations that a population interlaces with the portion of territory where it lives, that is modified by its activities and that it connotes with values and meanings, thus shaping its identity.

To this plurality of instrumental uses of landscape – and thanks to it – we can add its use in the educational context. On both levels of a scholastic and a permanent education, educating “with” the landscape implies broadening from the knowledge of single cases to the ability of reading different landscapes. From there different abilities and skills can start to develop: careful observation, analysis, synthesis, and rigorous interpretation. It is also possible to learn to recognize and respect different ways of giving value (for example in an intercultural context, according to De Nardi, 2013), to reinforce the sense of identity, the commitment to the area of living and the sense of belonging to a community, building a harmonic and responsible relationship with the territory, following an approach that can result in the adoption of good practices. Educating with, or through, the landscape, doesn’t mean only to activate simple teachings or isolated bits of knowledge, but to walk on broader paths of *landscape literacy* (Castiglioni, 2011; Castiglioni, 2015) that can lead to a careful and critical reading of the landscape and to the acquisition of an active and responsible behaviour.

### 2.3 *The landscape as an intermediary*

If we switch from the point of view of the investigator and the educator to a perspective that is more representative of the concerns of common people, which role will the landscape assume? Can it play the part of the intermediary?

If we have already mentioned the possibility for the landscape to act as a medium between the territory and the people, here we have to underline the fact that this mediation doesn’t involve individuals only, but it can also apply to social groups, communities, and all the other agents who interact (in a positive or conflictive way) in a territory.

The potential that a landscape expresses is represented, on the basis of what has been said until now, by its intrinsic ability to create synthesis, to raise awareness about dynamics, and to make different points of view emerge in their complexity and variety. This mediation potential can be very relevant during processes that concern management and decision making, and that want to include – directly or indirectly – the active participation of citizens. This is to be considered at least appropriate, if not mandatory, to achieve a greater efficiency of the decisions taken during the planning stage (Ferrario, 2011) in the context of sustainability policies and in perspective of that “democratization” of decisions which is promoted by the European Landscape Convention.

This potentiality has acted as the pivot for specific investigation projects and several experimentations in the European area: projects to raise awareness, to strengthen the sense of inclusion and participated planning, whose aim is not so much to build consensus as to favour a wider discussion on territorial themes that are relevant on a local scale. The landscape adopts the role of a “round table”, where people sit and share their different views on local territorial issues. Contexts, procedures and methodologies can vary. In particular, the effort of conceptual and methodological clarification of the projects of “mediation paysagere” (Fortin, 2007; Joliveau et al., 2008, Bigando et al., 2011) promoted at various levels in France deserves a mention. There, the landscape is considered especially useful for its ability to initiate (facilitate), indicate and integrate (Derioz et al., 2008).

Having conversations about the landscape with locals, or simply promoting through itineraries of *landscape literacy* the consideration of the landscape dimension, produces a greater awareness, an active involvement, and a dialogue between different subjects. Talking about the landscape or looking together at it facilitates the emersion of the points of view of various individuals, i.e. the different ways of giving value to the landscape and its elements, linked to the various fields of interest of the participants in the debate, to their cultural models and to their level of commitment. This way, even potentially antagonistic visions tend to emerge: it's the first necessary step to be taken in order to avoid the degeneration of the conflict.

The landscape, however, should not be understood as a “mediator” in the sense of “composer of conflicts”, nor can it build agreements or make peace. This approach is a little too simplistic, with its roots in a nostalgic and naïf vision of the landscape. As we will repeatedly notice in the essays collected in this volume, the landscape plays its role of mediator when it permits to formulate questions, to present discussions, to promote objectives in planning, to raise awareness as individuals or as a community. Contemporary debate in geographical and territorial studies and in the practices that are being promoted<sup>6</sup> seems to be oriented to this kind of instrumental approach.

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<sup>6</sup> Recent examples can be taken from the session “Bridging people and place through landscape identity” at the *Permanent European Conference on Studies of Rural Landscapes* held in September 2014. The discussion there pointed out the opportunity of considering the landscape in a way that can be functional to the building of an identity for the individuals and for the community. On the other hand, the road map which collects the objects of the Landscape Observatory of Catalonia from 2013 to 2020 is structured in actions “in” and “with” the landscape (concentrating on the relationship between landscape and society) rather than “on” the landscape as it was in the years before, when the knowledge, the mapping and the evaluation seemed to be the priority (cfr. [www.catpaisatge.org](http://www.catpaisatge.org)).



### 3. THE LANDSCAPE AS COMMON GOOD

#### 3.1 *Common goods and the landscape*

If considerations on the landscape as a “mediator” can be seen as the explicitation of properties that are immanent to its concept, that much can also be said, *mutatis mutandis*, about the idea of landscape as a “common good”. As a result of a collective construction, produced by “social and cultural, material and immaterial practices that shape the territory” (Olwig 2007, p. 581) the landscape is the final step of historical processes which were led by a plurality of actors. These actors form a “productive system”, if we follow the terminology adopted by the Besançon’s school, where, provided the different environmental qualities of the landscapes, the joint works of peasants, agronomists and theorists, alongside with the impulse given by the leading class, converge, as it happened to the Tuscan and Venetian landscape after the renovations of the XVIII century.

The landscape then reminds us of a community that forges and models it historically, placing the seal of its identity upon it. Its collective, social, even “public” quality doesn’t rest only on the fact that the landscape is born materially from a collective work, in which the values and aspirations of that collective are reflected. In fact, the landscape is also, and it’s not a secondary aspect, one of the fundamental elements of individual and social identity, regarding even those who didn’t contribute personally in creating it, but inherited it from their ancestors, finding in it a trace of the precedent territorialities and the signifier on which they could project the new values and meanings of contemporaneity. This is how we can speak of a “social request for landscape”, as Yves Luginbühl does when he talks about the interest that populations have in it in terms of preferences, perceptions and representations (Luginbühl, 2001).

So, if the landscape appears as a “theatre” (a recurring metaphor in scholars like John Brinckerhoff Jackson, Denis Cosgrove and Eugenio Turri) where we are at the same time actors and spectators, the transformations landscapes are facing, which imply the irreparable loss of that balance laboriously achieved in time through that domestication of nature made by man, pose use a series of unprecedented questions. According to which criteria, canons and models (not only of aesthetic kind) should these transformations be evaluated? According to which instruments, strategies and institutions could we manage the landscape? Is it licit to state that there is a nexus between landscape, citizenship, participation and democracy? If the landscape is a common good, who has the right to it? We are talking about challenges of practical and theoretical nature that we need to deal with and that we will talk about, without the pretension of being exhaustive on the topic, in the following paragraphs, where we will show some of the most important ideas.

### 3.2 Looking for good landscape practices

If we move from the original production area (specific to economists and lawyers) to the media context, where common goods have started to appear since the referendum about public water in June 2011, the risk is that common goods become a fashionable subject, on which you can build successful slogans. This way, the issue becomes an “axiologeme”, i.e. an abused and very general expression, used to give a name to meanings and claims very different between them (Settis, 2012, p. 61; Antelmi, 2014, p. 53). Truth be said, if we stick to Ostrom’s publications, winner of the Nobel prize for economy in 2009 and author of the essay *Governing the Commons* (1990), the fundamental text to study collective institutions and the new governance procedures, the expression “common goods” has a very precise and limited reference, because it identifies the reality of auto-organized systems for the management of natural or artificial resources. The basic idea is that in some cases, all demonstrated by document evidence – the analysis of the American scholar are supported by continuous references to empirical examples in Switzerland, Japan, Spain, Philippines, etc. – the ability shown by the local communities managing the resources denies openly one of the main dogmas of the “conventional theory”: that the only subjects who could solve problems affecting collective interests would be the “bureaucratic Leviathan” (the control by a central government of the majority of the resource systems) or the market (with the creation of a system of private property rights). According to this conventional way of thinking, *tertium non datur*. On the contrary, the empirical analysis shows that there are concrete situations where, in well-defined spatial and temporal circumstances, users have managed to organize themselves through rules and free institutions, and to have benefits that surpass by far the costs of resource management.

Notwithstanding the sometimes-great differences that exist between the empirical cases, these have some fundamental traits in common: in particular, the fact that all the systems of use of common goods have relatively small dimensions; the most meaningful case involves a community that is no more than 15.000 units big (more or less like the city of Urbino). The reason is simple: auto-organized systems of resource management have more chances of being successful if the limits of the collective resource and the actors who have the right to access to it are clearly defined (Ostrom, 1990). Local communities of small and middle dimension seem to have an advantage when it comes to communicating and reaching internal agreements, establishing some management rules and observing them. In short, there are no common goods without a shared *common idea*, an agreement that makes the appeal to external authorities for rules observation absolutely superfluous. This common idea can perhaps be identified with one of the two meanings that different authors give to the expression “common goods” (Sgard, 2010, p. 6; Donadieu, 2012, pp. 8 and following; Antelmi, 2014, pp. 55-

59): the Landscape Common Good (singular and with capital letters) designates an ideal shared by a community of local actors, whose individual landscape common goods (plural and non-capital) i.e. the material landscapes, represent the concrete realization.

Another recurring element in systems based on the use of collective resources is the way in which they are organized and enjoyed, which makes them structurally different from any others. In other words, common goods are clearly differentiated from public goods (goods which can be enjoyed by anyone without compromising the utilization by others), from private goods (whose fruition is exclusive and limited to the owner only) and even from the so-called *toll goods*, or “club goods” (whose fruition can be obtained after paying a fee that covers the management costs). So, if we want to legitimate the inclusion of landscape among “common goods” we have to prove that it presents structural characteristics and intrinsic functions that differentiate it from the other three categories of goods and make it not comparable to them. The transposition of the *commons* paradigm in the landscape context is not immediate though, nor is it void of theoretical stumbles. These derive from the fact that Ostrom (but the discourse could be widened to the whole group of scholars who deal with collective goods) refers her analysis to systems like reservoirs, irrigation systems, forests, grazing or fishing areas that a geographer includes among local and territorial resource systems. So, when we apply these ideas to the landscape, we cannot help considering that visual and representational dimension that is excluded by the approach of the American scholar, but the geographer cannot ignore. The duplicity that is integrated in the same concept of landscape (“the thing and the image of the thing”) forces us to reckon –without reducing it just to a shallow scenario, though– that our first encounter with the landscape is provided by our eyes, cannot exist without our stare and implies establishing a distance from the object (Besse, 2012, p. 51). The fruition of the landscape as a common good doubles, on one hand, in the withdrawal of natural resources by the local communities in a space organized by specific consuetudinary and juridical principles (for example the rules that regulate the use of irrigation systems in Nepal, or in Spanish *huertas*, or, in Italy, in the Marano lagoon: cfr. Carestiato, 2012); on the other hand, this space is visible and “public” and can be observed by any spectator without compromising the possibility of fruition by others, or putting at risk the resource existence itself. This means that the landscape can be, at the same time, public and private, a payment good or a common good. For example, a mountain landscape can be a public good for those who contemplate it from the border of the road, without owning it necessarily; it can be a private good for the owners of private houses and their relative investment funds; it can be a club good if there are routes or services that can be accessed only after paying a fee; and lastly, it can be a common good for the community that exploits its resources in a collective withdrawal system (for example pastures and forests, like in the Swiss village of Torbel, studied by Ostrom,

in the Valdotain Consorteries, “Su monte” in Seneghe, cfr. p. 40 etc.). In this case the resource itself appears, with every change of perspective, as a public good, whose fruition is open to everybody, or divided among mixed systems of property: private, fee-based, or common. The landscape, too, can pass from a system to another: a private property, but visible to everybody, can become entirely public, becoming a “pure” public good or, as in the case of those Sicilian lands confiscated to the mafia, it can be administrated through cooperative modalities, like a “pure” common good (Donadieu, 2012, p. 12; Forno, 2012).

### 3.3 *Landscape, citizenship, welfare*

Alongside with the «institutional and social disarticulation brought by the globalization» (Vetritto, Velo, 2006, p. XXXVII), Ostrom’s work has been recognized more and more as a fundamental reference for those who work on themes akin to or regarding the new *governance assets* but also, at the same time, on new paradigms and methodologies of social sciences. That is the case, for example, of the so-called “local empowerment”, i.e. the possibility for local communities to define autonomously the fundamental rules for the usage and the appropriation of the common goods (Ristuccia, 2006, p. XI). Local empowerment is connected with the theme of great works of collective interest, which have a strong impact on the territory and are often fruit of decisional processes that don’t take into account the opinion of local communities (Bobbio, Zeppetella, 1999). This new paradigm, which confers a renewed centrality to citizens, no more seen as passive receivers of public works, but as bringers of interests and promoters of initiatives (Settis, 2012) is centred around the notion of *engagement*, obtained through the systematic involvement of local actors. From this point of view, considering the landscape as a common good means stating that it must not be dominated and manipulated in function of market interest, and that the decisional processes that regard it must be based on inclusive practices of negotiation and participative selection.

It’s not a coincidence that one of the “rules” Ostrom extracts from the analysis of the empirical cases is that users must be put in condition of establishing rules for the access and the withdrawal without any imposition by external authorities, and that national, regional and local governments need to commit themselves in granting this right. This principle has something in common with the new paradigms for the management and the organisation of resources of collective interest, where the systematic commitment of local actors plays a prominent role. If Italy, as Salvatore Settis reminds us constantly (2010, 2013), is one of the few countries in the world that have put the safeguard of landscape in its Constitution<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Art. 9 in fact states that: “The Republic promotes the development of culture and scientific and technical resource. It safeguards landscape and the historical and artistic heritage of the Nation”.

as a fundamental principle, the European Convention affirms that the landscape cannot be the result of technical and economical evolutions decided without consulting the citizens; and for this reason, it must be handled “in a democratic way”, acknowledging the same citizens an active role, most of all at a local and regional level (cfr. points 23-25 of the “Explanatory Report”). It’s on premises like these that the nexus landscape-democracy has become, also in Italy, an object of reflections and investigations in the geographic area, where it is analysed from different perspectives and points of view (Zerbi, 2011; Castiglioni, De Marchi, 2009; Dumont, Cerreti, 2009; Castiglioni et al., 2010; Aru et al., 2013). In the variety of the jargons and the approaches that are peculiar to them, all these analysis agree when they point to the same direction, suggesting that the landscape is *a political object*, in the noblest sense of the word (politics as “the government of the polis”) and that for this reason it’s the crossing where the roads of what is existent and what is yet to come, the forms of associated life which we inhabit and those where we would like to dwell meet (or more often crash). As we will see in the following paragraph, the sensitization, the formation and the education to the landscape acquire, from this point of view, a central role. If it’s true what Bas Pedroli and Jan Diek Van Mansel write: “The landscape of today reflects the way society has taken care of the landscape” (Pedroli, Van Mansel, 2006, p. 121), then a very strong bond exists between the perception and the awareness people have, on one hand, of landscapes, and the good practices that are (or that aren’t) adopted to safeguard and protect it: “Only personal connection with the landscape can allow people to know their landscape in depth, including its opportunities and threats, and base their actions and activities on knowledge of the landscape in all its complex relationships. Personal commitment or engagement with a specific landscape can guarantee the sustainable development of the old landscapes into new living ones, taking into account the values of the former ones”.

### *3.4 Landscape and systemic connections between human and natural communities*

No special clairvoyance powers are needed to understand that the conception of landscape as common good will play a crucial role in the future if the *democratisation of landscape* – i.e. the pursuit of good practices and decisional instruments that permit to democratically face the changes our landscapes are going to meet through the involvement and the active participation of citizens – keeps engaging the analysis of social and territorial science. Nor can it be overlooked the fact that the European Convention, picking up the inheritance of lines of thought that refuse to reduce the landscape to an aesthetic dimension only, defines the landscape “as a key element to social and individual wellbeing” (cfr. again Besse, 2012). In other words, we cannot elude anymore an in-depth study of

the relationship between landscape and welfare, perceptive qualities and beneficial virtues, qualification of emarginated spaces and social wellbeing. We refer thus to social and individual wellbeing connected to the presence on the territory of quality landscapes (Anguillari et al., 2011). The discourse we have followed until now results into the opportunity to reach a unified approach that, starting from the landscape values illustrated in the previous paragraphs, could highlight the characters of interconnection and communication between worlds and dimensions of what is real (among *different* realities but not for this reason *unrelated*, which the landscape participates of and puts into dialogue). At the same time, it will be necessary to evidence the notable political implications of “commonality” that the reckoning of landscape issues has on territory and landscape governance. We are still far from an exhaustive theoretical systematization, but we can already foresee promising fields for the elaboration of ideas and interpretative models. These manifest an opposed trend, though, to that expressed by the recent economical strategies of privatization and commodification of common natural goods (and, more than often, of artificial goods too) adopted in a context of integral environmental reprogramming in function of market interests (Shiva, 1993, Goldman, 1998, Ricoveri, 2013). In order to build the “sustainable future” that we need instead (cfr. Spangenberg, 1996), we necessitate of theories and practices *to return to the territory and to the landscape*. In these practices we could and we should build again those material basis and social relations that can foster a new “metabolic civilization”, which results from bringing into play co-evolutive relationships between human settlements and environment (Magnaghi, 2013). This civilization model should be configured as a reasonable answer to present difficulties and to the structural character of the current crisis. Considerable opportunities could rise from the maturation of more “inclusive” approaches in our way of conceiving and transforming the non-human world. Since the XIX Century proposals by eminent figures have been formulated, even though they have most often remained isolated – as in the case of George Perkins Marsh (1864) or Elisée Reclus (1905-1908). Recovering these lines of thought we could maybe come out of the dangerous aporias where Illuminist – and intrinsically colonialist and reductionist – models of “nature management” by human societies seem to have stranded (cfr. Torre, 2013).

How could we compose in an equilibrate scenario and converge in a unified perspective both the objective and the subjective components of landscape? How can we avoid that the economical and social use of material and energetic resources conflict with the opportunities of subjective maximization of freedom, autonomy and wellbeing for the living beings (humans and non-humans) that inhabit the Earth? How can we bring back the usage of common natural goods that are essential to living to a social and political perspective of safeguard of the civic rights of the citizens? The unresolved questions and the decisive challenges of

present time are played on numerous tables at a time, and it is necessary to develop and compose them in more games, at the same time socio–ecological, intercultural and intersubjective (cfr. Weber, 2013). If we are open to these new study and investigating horizons, we could give substantial contributions to the recent and contemporary debates that aim to transcend the traditional epistemological dualism that has unduly separated for too much time history and human communities on one hand and nature and ecological communities on the other (cfr. O’Connor, 1999, Moore, 2011 or also Bookchin, 1982). We could then play our part as geographers to escort, and, for what is possible, solicit, change processes that aim to solve the systemic crisis that are acting in today’s world.

#### 4. RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES: THE ESSAYS CONTAINED IN THIS VOLUME

The two conceptual categories of landscape as “mediator” and as “common good”, in the different meanings that we have examined above, are the scenario of this volume and intersect in the essays that compose it. The arguments of the contributions can vary, from theoretical insights to applications and analysis of particular types of landscape, from field research in direct contact with the population to reflections on the practice of use of the various instruments. In these essays therefore we can find good examples of how, if we put the landscape and territorial issues at the centre of our considerations, we can trace constructive paths for the interpretation and the governance in the actual crisis phase.

Advancing and going deeper inside the reflection on landscape as a common good, Fabio Parascandolo and Marcello Tanca’s essay tends to outline the pros and cons of this definition. In the first place, the visual-only conception of the landscape as a background scenario in people’s life seems to draw the most criticism. This way we can see the paradoxical divarication that shows how the more the landscape experience, confined in a passive contemplation of the world, becomes unproblematic, the more many of today’s forms of territorialisation seem to be characterized by forms of appropriation (privatization and commodification) of space. To get out of this impasse it can be useful to re-think the landscape as a common good in metabolic terms, i.e. as the product of material and immaterial practices that satisfy human needs, preserving at the same time the metabolic fitness of the natural world.

Yves Luginbühl’s and Theano S. Terkenley’s essays deal both with the theme of the relationship between landscape and “crisis”, under two different perspectives. The first one historically interprets the great crisis of the past (political, ecological, demographical) and attributes to them some epochal changes both in the physical landscape as in the cultural models that read and interpret it. Even in today’s

crisis, which is also proposing epochal changes, we can recognize the presence of different landscape models: among these, the “daily life” landscape proposed by the European Landscape Convention – even with the risks that it may contain – can be an instrument to anchor to the territory the great challenges posed by the crisis itself.

Theano S. Terkenly’s essay reflects about the relationship between landscape – in its immaterial dimension – and quality of life and analyses the “crisis landscape”, focusing especially on the Greek case. There, the current economical and financial crisis is producing important changes: on one hand, forms of land exploitation without a long time strategy and in the prospect of a mere commodification of the territory are developing – and the author underlines the risks hidden in this option. On the other hand, the necessity of more sustainable development models is deeply felt, and the conservation of the landscape for a higher quality tourism can also help to find a sense of balance and spiritual values in it that favour a deeper sense of well-being. The strategy to promote these opportunities is based, according to Terkenly, on an integrated approach to the landscape, and a more widespread awareness.

Salvo Torre and Gennaro Avallone’s essay centres on the problems of landscape safeguard in Italy, a country where hundreds of conflicts between local committees and associations and the central government or other authorities have taken place. The recurring occasion for these contrasts is, in a way or another, the edification of new infrastructures in the territory. The local communities involved often oppose this change, for reasons that can vary, but among which dangers for local health, opposition to the excessive soil consumption and worries for the worsening of the quality of life predominate. The authors make use of interpretative instruments that had already been designed for other areas of the South of the world by post-colonial studies. The association is considered plausible; more so if we keep in mind the strong private interests at stake (sometimes also involving criminal organizations, as in the case of hazardous waste dumps). They notice cases of suspension of popular control on the choices of environmental transformations. Some communities and local administrations in fact have suffered a kind of territorial militarization, so that they have been deprived of the possibility of deciding on the destiny of the areas where the infrastructures should be built, areas that were deemed “strategic” by government decisions. Torre and Avallone detect in these processes the occurrence of a crawling socio-political transition, which shows a crisis of democratic practices.

Serge Briffaud and Viviana Ferrario deal with energy landscapes and – presenting the results of an international research project on “hydroelectric landscapes” – propose to give landscape a “mediator” role in the process of energetic transition, in order to “conceive the project of the development of renewable energies in a more democratic context” and “integrate more effectively



the development of renewable energies in the territory project”. The instrument of the «scénario paysagère» shows how the complex relations that hydroelectric energy has interlaced since the XIX Century with other activities and dynamics in mountain areas (forests, agriculture, tourism; protection of natural areas; management of the water resource) can come to light and be communicated, and it’s a chance to re-think the actual energy transition in a “territorial” and democratic key.

Dimitra N. Zygra and John Sayas are also interested, like Terkenly, in touristic uses of the landscape, but they focus more specifically on the topic of second houses of temporary occupation. In Southern Europe, Greece has been maintaining for a long time an exemplary role in the development of gated communities, especially with touristic purposes. This is even more certain if we refer to the intensively globalized economical context of this country, where the forms of seasonal living proposed in areas affected by elevated numbers of visitors are centred on “picturesque” landscape schemes. The real world of these places is continuously reinterpreted according to consumerist models of fruition of living spaces. The constitution of a fragmentary and iconic imaginary is thus privileged, while the touristic landscape itself, with all its peculiar annexes (natural environmental of high visual quality, shopping malls and leisure infrastructures) eventually becomes another high profit commodity for those who sell it. Conspicuous socio-spatial problems derivate nonetheless right from the overwhelming irruption of a model of space utilization that can be accessed by paying clients only.

Guido Lucarno, Raffaella Gabriella Rizzo and Gian Paolo Scaratti describe in their essay some urbanized areas in Milan province, focusing their attention on the important role played in these places by the building of a railway (the building of a motorway is also on the way). These projects imply notable consequences on the collective value of specific portions of land, in function of the forecasted and realized transformations. This happens in the shared perception of the population, but it also implies inevitable effects on the market value of the portions of land affected. The authors have dealt with the forms of alteration, in most cases irreversible, of these landscapes (originally agricultural). This phenomenon can be connected with other trends of territorial and landscape deterioration, like the consumption of natural soil and its impermeabilization. The processes are observed in relation to other two case studies, where the inefficiencies and the limits of a project approach that didn’t take into account the environmental complexity of the territory emerged, generating social issues related with the abandonment of the places that had been transformed.

Cristina Mattiucci’s essay focuses on the relationship between population and landscape, and explores widely the importance of knowing the perceptions of the local communities about their territories and how they attribute value to them. Using her fieldwork in a Trentino village as a reference, the author offers to the reader the

instrument of the “kaleidoscope” – a sort of composition of different landscapes taken in consideration because of their physical aspect and the meanings attributed to them – in order to represent the polyhedral array of stases and propose for discussion the several facets of local landscape, with special attention to daily life landscapes and to the role practices can play in their perception. The instrument is also recommended for its utility whenever the analysis of the perceptions of a territory are inserted in a process of territorial planning: this way, the landscape itself becomes an instrument that enables to raise and discuss the most relevant issues and put the planner’s proposals to test.

Benedetta Castiglioni, Alessia de Nardi, Viviana Ferrario, Chrysaфина Geronta and Chiara Quaglia’s essay also refers to a fieldwork about landscape perception, and examines the landscape representations of the living space for a small sample of people in Vigorovea, a little village near Padua, in the North-East of Italy. The visual characteristics of the places as well as the corresponding qualitative judgements have been emphasized. At the same time, investigations have revealed various types of living experiences that had deposited there, and that those places transmitted. They were analysed paying a special attention to their affective dimension and to the population’s emotional attachment to them. This centre is in fact rather anonymous: an area like many others, characterized by an intense urban sprawl, forming part of an ordinary suburbia in the widespread and extensive conurbations of Northern Italy. Nevertheless, the authors have proved the great importance in identity terms of daily life places for the local population, especially those where collective frequentation is most intense (independently from the juridical state of these areas, public or private, and despite the scarce relevance of “strong” and quality landscape signs that could somehow include them in the category of cultural heritage). Working on a variety of acquisitions perfected and legitimated by the institutional acknowledgement of the European Landscape Convention, the authors make reference to categories elaborated back then by the Italian geographer Eugenio Turri, and reinterpret them while they investigate on controversial aspects of the aesthetic and experiential transformation of urban and periurban contemporary landscape.

The role of landscape representation is the object of Monica Meini and Diana Ciliberti’s contribution. They take a special interest in the photography issue, making reference to rural landscape in Molise. Combining in an original way the question of touristic development in rural areas and its sustainability with how landscape photography should be used, Meini and Ciliberti offer the first results of a fieldwork aimed at confronting photographic representations with the auto-representations made by local communities and the symbolic readings of the landscape produced by tourists. Apart from the specific results of their investigation, which highlight the differences in cognitive representations when these are performed by different social actors, the methodology they used could

open a new path for the “realization of an innovative platform of image sharing”, aimed at “integrated and sustainable actions for the development of the territory”.

Lastly, Sandra Parvu’s work is similar, in its approach, to Meini and Ciliberti’s, but it is more concerned with drawing and how to use drawing in landscape representation, focusing on architecture landscape and taking advantage of some professionals practice in France. The author develops her investigation starting with some interesting considerations on the role of the images and the modalities of their construction, apart from the knowledge and understanding of the landscapes that generate from them. Drawing images seems more appropriate than maps and technical representations in those processes where the “mobilization” of the actors around a common project is requested. In any case, the contribution suggests a precise consideration on the way landscape representations are used, now and in the past, making special reference to their value for political power, even in the contexts of more recent democratization and participation practices.

We are especially grateful to Kenneth Olwig for his relevant contribution to this volume, in all its phases: for taking part actively as a discussant during the conference session in Rome where the book was conceived, for the advice he gave us during the planning of the publication, and most of all for the conclusive notes that end this volume. In those notes we can find a critical reinterpretation of the relationship between the two main themes of this volume (the landscape as an intermediary and the landscape as a common good) that provide the basis for a new reading of some of the contents of the book, and that contain at the same time some fundamental reference lines that shall be used to identify new investigation issues on the landscape theme.

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