

MIMESIS
INTERNATIONAL

PHILOSOPHY



n. XX





**BEYOND
QUARANTINE**
How Culture Heals the Planet

Edited by
Annamaria Esposito and M. Cristina Vannini



MIMESIS
INTERNATIONAL



© 2021 – MIMESIS INTERNATIONAL (MILAN – UDINE)
www.mimesisinternational.com
e-mail: info@mimesisinternational.com

Isbn: 9788869773891
Book series: *Philosophy*, n. XX

© MIM Edizioni Srl
P.I. C.F. 02419370305



CONTENTS

PRESENTATION	7
<i>Annamaria Esposito and M. Cristina Vannini</i>	
INTRODUCTION	13
<i>Paolo Giovannetti</i>	
THEATRE BEYOND THE PANDEMIC	19
<i>Annamaria Esposito</i>	
THE POST-COVID THEATRE: A REFLECTION BETWEEN PROSPECTS FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY	25
<i>Valentina Garavaglia</i>	
ART, CULTURE, THEATRE AND URBAN REGENERATION	35
<i>Andrée Ruth Shammah</i>	
MEMORY AND MAGICAL PLACES: QT8 YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW	49
<i>Federica Fortunato and Rosantonietta Scramaglia</i>	
WHAT CAN CULTURE DO TO HEAL THE PLANET?	71
<i>Maria Fratelli</i>	
BRAZIL – THERMOMETER OF THE WORLD’S WELLBEING	79
<i>M. Cristina Vannini</i>	



BIODIVERSITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE:
CRISIS, EVOLUTION AND SUSTAINABILITY 85
Stefano Mazzotti

PARTICIPATORY PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN BRAZIL 105
Monica Morazzoni

BEYOND QUARANTINE: HOW CULTURE HEALS THE
PLANET 125
Bruno Brulon Soares

THE MUSEUMS OF TOMORROW 133
Annamaria Esposito and M. Cristina Vannini

A CERTAIN IDEA OF THE FUTURE 137
Patrizia Asproni


THE BEST, YET MOST DANGEROUS, MOMENT 143
Luiz Alberto Oliveira






ANNAMARIA ESPOSITO AND M. CRISTINA VANNINI
PRESENTATION


The idea of this book stemmed from the public international roundtable entitled *Beyond quarantine, how culture heals the Planet* organized by us and promoted by the IULM University – for the ninth edition of the BookCity Milano festival, which took place in November 2020.




After months, the issue is still relevant. For this reason, as editors, we decided to collect the proceedings of that international debate. We wanted to use them as the basis for a broader reflection on the role of culture as a driving force for the restart and as a lens that focuses on the image of the near future. This future awaits us *after the pandemic* and is intended to become the new normal from which we cannot turn back.



This book aims at exploring the contribution of culture to the protection of the planet, also considering the Brazilian situation, which, as M. Cristina Vannini states in her essay entitled *Brazil – Thermometer of the World's Wellbeing*, is “the true thermometer of world trends, from economic and financial to environmental and climatic, social and health”.






The theme is addressed according to the sensitivity and the experience of the authors¹ who took part in this work. Alongside the voices of the leading players of the Bookcity event – Andr e Ruth Shammah (Theatre), Maria Fratelli (Archives), Bruno Brulon Soares (Environment) and Luiz Alberto Oliveira (Museums) – this book includes also those of Valentina Garavaglia (Theatre), Rosantonietta Scramaglia and Federica Fortunato (Archives), Stefano Mazzotti, Monica Morazzoni (Environment) and Patrizia Asproni (Museums). We, as editors, have provided, where necessary, a bridging framework to link the various contributions.

The result is an itinerary divided into four sections with a net-like logic. In the end, all the scenarios converge on a question close to everyone’s heart, namely: how culture contributes to healing our planet.


In the first section – Theatre – the profound sense of an art that can contribute to the diffusion of a new human regenerative culture emerges: from theatre as a public service able to take root in the present and to give shape and meaning to a new time, to theatre as vital resource, able to make culture, beauty and economic vitality flourish, even in degraded suburbs.

In the second section – Archives – the essential cultural and civil role played by these places of preservation, generally considered self-referential and elitist, clearly emerges. Archives are the primary


1 A short biographical note for each author can be found within the respective contributions.



source for reconstructing people's history, imagining the future of communities and the territory. At the same time, they are the expression and guarantee of democratic life. The enhancement of the documentary heritage, properly preserved, inventoried and open to consultation, represents the possibility to reconstruct the historical memory of the relationships between nature, culture, art and society. In the final analysis, archives take us back to our cultural roots, reminding us of who we are, where we come from and enabling us to project ourselves into the cities of the future with the awareness that only shared knowledge is a source of "balance in the universe [...] and a guarantee of survival", as Maria Fratelli states in her contribution *What Can Culture Do to Heal the Planet?*




In the third section – Environment – the Italian-Brazilian debate and the importance of the culture of biodiversity in safeguarding the planet emerge.




It is precisely from Brazil that leaders and intellectuals have launched appeals and indicated new ways of tackling a global debate on environmental issues. In 1992, the first convention on biodiversity was signed in Brazil, followed by those on forests – still focused on biodiversity – and climate. Over time, Brazil's experience has shown that biodiversity influences the structure of human thinking and cultures. Safeguarding biodiversity, therefore, means protecting skills and attitudes that can generate new sustainable societies.

The fourth section – Museums – focuses on the role of cultural institutions and, in particular, again in an



Italian-Brazilian comparison, on the contribution of museums to society.


These institutions play a fundamental role in preparing the community to face the changes to come. One example is the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro, whose mission is to inform about the conditions and characteristics of the Anthropocene, the aeon that will dictate the conditions for living on our planet from now on. It is an intense dialogue that the pandemic, more incisively than climate change, has accelerated, demonstrating with facts that a profound revision of the dynamics that have so far governed our relationship with nature is necessary. The public plays the central role, especially as the inhabitants of this planet. It is up to all of us, therefore, to trace the trajectory towards possible futures.



All the contributions converge in recognising the need to embark on a path of respect and education towards our earth and its inhabitants and the fundamental role of culture in building a virtuous relationship for the conservation of our planet and humanity.



It is a regenerative human culture that can lead us all to new behaviours and a new balance, giving hope for a better tomorrow. The aim is that we do not lose the memory of what happened during this period. In this, too, cultural institutions and policies have a fundamental role that civil society and politics should promote and defend.

Despite the human, health and economic tragedy that we have experienced, no one in Italy has yet



thought of creating a museum, or a memorial, of the pandemic, of staging a show to generate – through the process of cultural processing and the canons proper to cultural events – a collective catharsis making us reflect retrospectively on what happened.

The dialogue on these issues could continue well beyond these pages. We will stop here, but not before expressing our gratitude to all those who have supported this project. Thank you!






PAOLO GIOVANNETTI¹
INTRODUCTION


Colson Whitehead's novel *John Henry Days* (2001) tells the story of an unfortunate museum. One of the main characters, Pamela Street, has inherited from her father a rich collection of objects connected to a legendary figure in the American public imagination: John Henry, a black railway worker, remembered in ballads, oral tales, animation films and much more, for his epic struggle against a drilling machine, which the robust and brave worker is said to have beaten in speed, even though he paid for his victory with death. Pamela has to decide whether to give this collection to the town of Talcott, which was the historical context of John Henry's exploits. Her uncertainty is linked to the memory of her father's life, so fond of his museum that he sacrificed his life, family, and work for it. But, above all, what makes this legacy poignant is the fact that no one had ever visited this wonderful, complete museum. For decades, this black Brooklynite had waited for someone to enter the exhibition rooms he had set up and had always been disappointed. Yet now that private dream, that collecting mania practised

1 Paolo Giovannetti is Professor of Contemporary Italian Literature and Head of the 'Giampaolo Fabris' Department of Communication, Arts and Media at IULM University, Milan.




with admirable documentary rigour, has a positive outcome: an entire community will host and enhance the collection; moreover, following the results of her father's research, Pamela – on her visit to Talcott – will discover the humble cemetery where many black workers like John Henry have been buried, as a fatal consequence of their work in a dangerous and ominous tunnel called Big Bend border.


As is often the case in art and culture, between private and public interest is very uncertain. And the hope that an inherently meritorious activity will gain consensus and kindle virtuous processes can be met with either bitter disappointment or resounding fortune.



Not surprisingly, then, the present book – whose title praises right away the therapeutic virtues of culture in its public settings (museums and theatres) – accompanies the reader through a cultural journey profitably problematic rather than apologetic, aware of the risks that every intellectual endeavour may bring. Conceived by the editors in 2000, the first output of the project was a public conference within the Milanese Bookcity festival, whose contents are still available on YouTube (October 2021) just by typing in the book's Italian title.




Very predictably, the first issues to be addressed here concern the pandemic, with a specific focus on what elsewhere – particularly in Brazil — might be called a *syndemic*. The figures that describe the crisis of theatres, but above all the destruction of entire territories (Amazonia in the lead) and the growing



limitations of biodiversity within the Anthropocene, describe a worrying scenario, to say the least. Although we know all too well that we are living a sort of dystopia, some of the essays in this volume remind us of this with surprising evidence. The feeling that humanity is on the road to self-destruction is disturbing, all the more so when we realise that such iniquity is affecting an area like Brazil, which until a few years ago was at the centre of innovative practices, while nowadays is likely to represent the worst example of authoritarian and corrupt statism.

Yet, notwithstanding this, the book also contains constructive and almost optimistic pages. Surely, theatres and museums are still able to foster human relationships, and such a kernel of (historical) values is a very valid instrument for emancipation. Once again, the case of Brazil bears witness to all this: the assumptions of the ethnologist and museologist Bruno Brulon Soares testify how even sectoral research into everyday objects and their manufacture can promote critical awareness and the possibility of accepting and respecting the existence of different cultures. In fact, the defence of the so-called indigenous populations is also *our* defence.


Even small-scale case studies, such as those involving Milan (its theatres, the innovative management of its outskirts, its archives), show that intelligent cultural activism on the field can produce socially dynamic effects, eventually – almost inevitably – leading to profits and public well-being. To the many examples that are shown in the book,




we would like to add the peculiar results achieved by Barrio's theatre in Barona, the same area as IULM, which has become famous thanks to a Netflix TV series, *Zero*. The virtuous relation between cultural activities, narrative re-elaboration, and their positive effects in terms of socialization and development, is thus perfectly exemplified.

Culture is helping us to live better, to stay alive I would say, and we cannot do without its contribution; indeed, now it is more useful than ever. In the book, however, the director of the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro, Luiz Alberto Oliveira, overtly tackles this issue by grasping the contradiction between the superficial splendour of humanity in the Anthropocene and the ecological and systemic risks that have now become all too visible. How is it possible that – figures in hand – the moment of greatest human progress is occurring at a time when so many aspects of life on earth are being jeopardised?


But we could even go slightly further. As many theorizations (even in the domain of anthropology) have often pointed out, there is a seamless continuity between the splendours of civilisation on the one hand and social and environmental destruction on the other. The latter is a consequence of the former, and the civilisation that achieves knowledge and beauty is the same civilisation that digs its own grave by producing various forms of injustice and pollution. Elegant pianists and devotees of romantic poetry could exterminate Jews, Sinti and Roma without any hesitation or repentance; nor do I believe that



the anti-Westernism and anti-culturalism of Mao and the Maoists can be recommended as a valuable antidote to that kind of process. Culture embodies (allegorizes, reflects, expresses) power relations, and the roses that art chants, with its elegant words, sounds and images, inevitably (I am paraphrasing a poem by Umberto Saba) conceal an abyss. Not only that. The globalising, planetary vision presented by certain systemic analyses is probably bound to lead us to something like anti-humanism, to the idea that humans as such are dangerous not only to themselves but precisely to Life. From their perspective *Sapiens Sapiens* is to Gaia what metastasis is to a living body.



If there is a lesson to be learned from a book such as this, I believe it lies in the possibility of conceiving of a fully realised culture and planetary society *in both the senses* I have just discussed. Blaming humanity and its symbolic production also calls for a proper respect for the beneficial effects that humans and their artefacts continually bring about, the first of which is precisely the fact that civilisation encourages self-criticism. The defence of a “humanistic” point of view and its inherited values should undergo continuous adjustments, if only to remember how often white people’s overwhelming power has destroyed other populations and their activities. And so on and so forth. At this time of pandemic crisis, the fact of suggesting – operationally – such problems may represent a human achievement; it may (should?) invite us to act with greater prudence, but also with a bit of utopian impetus, despite the negativity of the moment.



Thanks, in short, to Annamaria Esposito and M. Cristina Vannini for helping us to access a series of very useful contradictions that every scholar has to deal with every day.


ANNAMARIA ESPOSITO¹

THEATRE BEYOND THE PANDEMIC

“Theatre is the non-place of history, it is that *quid* that history ousts”: quite apart from any theoretical or aesthetic implications, the sentence contained in the first pages of the Carmelo Bene’s book entitled *Teatro senza spettacolo* (Theatre without a Performance)² has perhaps never been so sadly and pragmatically effective. The health emergency and the lockdowns that have followed over the last two years have hit the Italian theatre institution hard – like the rest of the cultural sector, it is trying to look beyond what can hopefully be said *was* the Covid-19 pandemic.


Certainly, the recent reopening of theatres, albeit with many limitations, is a positive sign for a sector of great cultural, social, civic and community importance; a sector which, however, in Italy suffers – and not only in times of covid – from a chronic lack of financial resources. Valentina Garavaglia’s essay *The Post-Covid Theatre: A Reflection Between Prospects for Reconstruction and Fragments of Memory* actually bears the awareness that, at the end of the health emergency, the unfavourable consequences for the

-
- 1 Annamaria Esposito is Associate Professor in Cultural management and marketing at IULM University of Milan.
 - 2 C. Bene, *Il teatro senza spettacolo*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1990, p. 13.





theatre will be (and in fact already are) high, both on the economic and financial front, and on the social one.

As for the first aspect – i.e. the one related to the economic and financial consequences – the negative impact of the pandemic on theatre activities reverberates throughout the theatre chain, from production to distribution and promotion, with a consequent reduction in employment levels; it also affects the local economy, due to the loss of expenses generated by all related activities, upstream and downstream. Starting with the running costs of theatre structures, the impact of the pandemic therefore manifests itself at the box office, as well as in the tourism, transport and related sectors – which, under normal conditions, are capable of tripling basic cultural expenditure.





To face this economic and financial crisis, quality planning is necessary, as well as the development of funding models, including collaborative ones. This means not only, therefore, the classic funding mix, made up of transfers from the public sector and other resources – generated through participation in calls for proposals, public-private partnerships, philanthropic contributions, corporate giving, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising and crowdfunding for culture. Alongside the classic funding mix, non-monetary forms of collaborative funding could be encouraged, along the lines of the *US Material for the Arts*, a creative reuse centre in New York City. By encouraging the practice of sustainability in creative environments, it provides non-profit arts organisations and public schools with free access to valuable objects diverted






from landfills, which have the opportunity to become something new through creative reuse. This would go in the direction of greater sustainability.

The second circumstance relates, instead, to the social aspect, this time with non-quantifiable impacts, and refers in particular to the loss of the contribution that theatre offers to people's well-being in terms of identity values, inclusion, cohesion and – with particular reference to the younger generations – training and emotional and cognitive growth. Aspects that, once again, mediate between the individual and the community, placing the theatre (and its absence), for better or worse, among the nerve centres of human communities. And it is precisely to the role of theatre in the transformation of the cultural landscape of cities and the requalification and urban regeneration of neighbourhoods that Andrée Ruth Shammah's essay *Art, culture, theatre and urban regeneration* is devoted. These elements also bring to the surface other significant challenges that theatre will inevitably have to face in the post-covid era, including the relationship with its audience, content, places and frontiers of theatre.




Indeed, the pandemic has contributed to redefining the traditional paradigms of the theatre ecosystem thanks to technological innovation that inevitably transforms it gradually and continuously, bringing new challenges in making, listening to and enjoying it. At the same time, it has defined new consumption behaviours and purchase models by audiences who are now used to using technology and who may be less





inclined to move to a physical location to enjoy a show in a virtual place thanks to the web – via streaming or theatre web-TV – or listen to it thanks to podcasts or theatre web-radio.

While safely welcoming audiences is now a routine activity, it will be more complex to re-establish the relationship with spectators that has long been lacking and win back audiences who have long been away from the theatre. Who is the new audience? Where is it? How to bring them back to the theatre? How to promote live theatre, which is an experience characterised by uniqueness, non-reproducibility and contextuality between production and consumption?




To ensure that remote and absent experiences become a tool for building audience loyalty, and not a substitute for it, it will be necessary to carefully select the content conveyed through the web. In this sense, an integrative approach to technology can effectively encourage new forms of participation and reach new audiences. The publication on the web of behind-the-scenes footage of the creative process of a performance can be an example of involvement capable of encouraging new audiences to approach the theatre. Of course, it may always be useful to design a show, conceived from the outset for streaming, to reach, in the virtual places they frequent, those audiences who have no interest in or access to theatre. In this case too, the digital production would constitute a complementary offer and would complement live theatre to increase its spread through a channel of fruition entirely consistent with the social function performed by the theatre.






Even though the live experience in a theatre is irreplaceable, the future of theatre also lies in the definition of a complementary offer on the web to extend the artistic proposal to different targets, giving rise to new hybrid forms of theatre.

Innovating and broadening the ways in which theatre is used and produced, over and above issues relating to the digital divide, will enable new ways and touchpoints to come into contact with audiences, expand the audience, and create additional tools for customer relationship management. Theatres will be able to leverage these new digital relationships to bring audiences back to live performances.



The future of theatre is unlikely to be relegated to digital platforms and experiences. Proof of this is the news that, after Netflix with its Paris Theatre in New York, YouTube, Google's platform, will also open the YouTube Theatre in Los Angeles by 2021. With a capacity of six thousand seats on three floors, the theatre has been designed to host its live shows: a shift from digital to physical that represents a significant turning point in the recognition of theatre as a place to meet, compare and share spaces.



In Garavaglia's essay and Shammah's contribution, we will read how theatre can contribute to the spread of a new human regenerative culture in the post-Covid era: from theatre as a public service, rooted in the present to plan the future and restart, to theatre as a vital resource capable of producing – even in places in a state of abandonment and degradation art – culture and beauty.



VALENTINA GARAVAGLIA¹

THE POST-COVID THEATRE A Reflection Between Prospects for Reconstruction and Fragments of Memory

It is clear to everyone how deeply the performing arts sector has been affected by the crisis caused by the Covid-19 epidemic.

According to a survey carried out by Impresa Cultura Italia-Confcommercio in collaboration with SWG, in 2020, there was a 47% drop in the consumption of cultural goods and services, which reached peaks of over 70% in the performing arts sector.²

The pandemic has substantially impacted the entire system, wiping out a large part of live activities and increasing the transition to digital products.

The lockdown and the subsequent containment measures not only reduced the propensity to attend live performances and cultural events but seem to have

1 Valentina Garavaglia is Associate Professor for the scientific-disciplinary sector L-Art/05 Disciplines of the Performing Arts at the Faculty of Communication and Pro-Rector for Teaching at the IULM University in Milan.

2 Indagine Impresa Cultura Italia: covid-19, la cultura si sposta sul digitale, <https://www.agisweb.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/nsmail-16-1.pdf> (last accessed, 12/07/2021).

changed the very way Italians conceive culture and its enjoyment.


Culture far from everyday practice seems, at times, to be blurring its meanings and relevance, with the risk of cultural objects becoming less and less recognisable and attractive and increasingly ephemeral due to the process of digitisation.

According to an estimate by the Italian General Association of the Performing Arts, there has been a reduction in box office in a percentage ranging from 72% to 80%, which has further accentuated the structural vulnerability of the performing arts sector and has shown that there is an urgent need for a profound and organic legislative reform, accompanied by adequate public economic resources, with the aim of redefining the functions of institutions and businesses to improve the cultural offering for the benefit of society as a whole.

The future looks particularly delicate since it is difficult to predict the effects and timing of a real recovery of the offering and, above all, to understand what the public's response will be.


A wide-ranging project will be indispensable, a significant economic and promotional investment aimed at defining actions to encourage the public to return to theatres, to support the restart of activities.

The issue of stimulating cultural consumption will become fundamental in a context of restarting, deeply marked by fatigue, at times lazy, and certainly economically under pressure.




In a framework of a profound revision of prospects, it will be necessary to reflect on which incentives to put in place, which type of technological adaptation and modernisation of theatres to resort to, also for overcoming the digital divide.

The *compulsory* use of multi-channel platforms has allowed many activities not to get frozen up through streaming their artistic proposals. However, this has brought to light the infrastructural difficulties of theatres and the digital gap of organisations that will inevitably have to work to achieve greater digital competence that can expand audiences and encourage hospitality and audio and video filming for distributing the show on the web.



The entertainment sector, however, is more than just one of the many sectors to be rescued from the crisis caused by the health emergency: it can be a lever for restarting on an economic and social level, but above all on the level of reinvigorating the ideal tensions of a community.



We were taught this by the reconstruction following the Second World War: in Milan, for example, the Piccolo Teatro and the Teatro alla Scala were built amidst the rubble.

Today, Paolo Grassi's words are as relevant as ever when, in 1945, in the face of an Italy in need of reconstruction, he reminded the country that culture was an indispensable ingredient for recovery, that it was necessary to think of the theatre as a public service, in the same way as the underground and the fire brigade, and that for this invaluable *public service*

created for the community, the community should be called upon to implement the necessary measures to snatch the theatre from economic hardship, restoring it to its true ancient essence and its wide-ranging functions.³

The theatre, because of its characteristics, substance, intrinsic constitution, and qualities as an art made up at the same time of various determinants, will undoubtedly have a fundamental importance in the new Italy that the insurrection has created. The theatre is the art closest to the heart, to the soul of the masses; it is the most ready to live publicly a fact or a feeling that affects everyone, and it is above all because it is entrusted to the voice and the mystery of a realisation that is renewed every time, the most alive, the most tangible. [...] The people will return, they must return to the theatre, and they will find a new repertoire, in which the classics are tackled with the sensitivity of today and resolved as such, in which the moderns have maximum freedom of life. [...] Theatre, therefore, finally and truly (not with the usual revolting rhetoric) of our time; the theatre of our spiritual youth, of our conscience [...], of our intransigent decision, of our morals as new and free men.⁴

These were the years of post-war reconstruction, in which the intellectuals gathered around the theatre developed a strong bond between political commitment and cultural action, sustained by the conviction that

3 P. Grassi, *Teatro, pubblico servizio*, in “Avanti!”, 25 aprile 1946.

4 P. Grassi, *Teatro del popolo*, in “Avanti!”, 30 aprile 1945.

culture had in itself an enormous potential for social transformation: *culture is a sort of lens through which reality is read, and the more this lens is nourished by experience, the greater our capacity to see reality in depth and therefore our ability to intervene*, wrote Paolo Grassi in the pages of the socialist newspaper *Avanti!*.

Then, as now, in a moment of necessary reflection for a reconstruction about to reopen the theatres after a long period of closure, the idea that

[...] if the evolution of society [leads] to the development of other forms of expression [which threaten] the very existence of the theatre, this does not mean that we should abandon giving it the chance to be better; because as long as the will exists to create those possibilities, it means that the theatre's task is not finished and above all that it is not finished concerning the function that society expects of it.⁵

The theatre is, by definition, in a state of greater or lesser difficulty for an infinite number of reasons, but it is alive in the passion and interest of the public when it sees quality products, and this is a tangible sign of the possibility of changing course, of building a theatre that can once again speak to people.⁶

It is therefore desirable, once again, to renew the theatre from within through a careful examination of

5 G. Guazzotti, *Nascita di un istituto teatrale*, in Id., *Teoria e realtà del Piccolo Teatro*, Milano, Einaudi, 1965, p. 32.

6 *Ibidem*.

its role with other means of communication, as has happened during this period of a pandemic in which previously unthinkable technological experimentation has been used.

In the programme letter for the Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano,⁷ signed in March 1947 by the founders together with Mario Apollonio and Virgilio Tosi, there is a firm idea of a theatre as a place where the community can reveal itself to itself, where the public can become an active protagonist of social, cultural and political life.

We do not believe that theatre is a decorous survival of worldly habits or an abstract homage to culture. We do not seek and do not offer a meeting place for amusements, the creation of a dignified eye, the mirror of a society that adorns itself: we love rest not idleness, celebration not entertainment. Nor do we think of the theatre as an anthology that collects and re-presents the memorable works of the past or the notable novelties of the present, a hasty or curious piece of information.

[...]. The theatre remains what it was in the profound intentions of its creators, what it is in its primordial necessity: the place where the community, freely gathering to contemplate and relive, reveals itself to itself; where it opens up to the greatest availability, to

7 M. Apollonio, P. Grassi, G. Strehler, V. Tosi, *Lettera Programmatica per il Piccolo Teatro della Città di Milano*, "Il Politecnico", n. 35, gennaio-marzo 1947, p. 68, ora anche in AA.VV., *Giorgio Strehler e il suo teatro*, a cura di F. Mazzocchi e A. Bentoglio, Roma, Bulzoni, 1997, p. 34.

the deepest vocation: the place where it tests a word to be accepted or rejected: of a word that, once accepted, will tomorrow become a centre of its work, will suggest rhythm and measure to its days. At the theatre [...] we seek the working law of man: of the poet [...], of the actor [...] and above all of the spectators. [...] Let the spectators be the centre of the theatre, a silent and intent chorus.

*The centre of the theatre should therefore be the spectators, according to the programme, and if the history of the theatre is the story of this conversation between the creator who proposes and the crowd that responds,*⁸ the theatre must find itself in the present through its protagonists, it must dialogue with the present to prepare for the future.

What is alive in the main players in the post-war theatrical reconstruction is the ideological awareness of the function that theatrical communication could take on in the evolution of a society's customs; it is the conviction that the theatre could be an active and working instrument of our democracy. Therefore, the relationship with the audience is the measuring stone of their project, and it is also the ideal explanation, as well as the practical reason for the solution, of having entrusted its fate to its capacity for dialogue based on its real needs.⁹

8 M. Apollonio, *Storia del teatro italiano*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1981, vol. I, p. 7.

9 G. Guazzotti, *Teoria e realtà del Piccolo Teatro*, op. cit., p. 161.

The path to a new theatre, therefore, involves breaking down the

established hierarchies, *a priori* distributions and monopolies. Working with flexibility, opening the windows of that old theatre to new voices, welcoming them and making them heard, since today they are full of energy and fragrant with preparation and enthusiasm, and absent of flaws and jocularity¹⁰

is a necessary leap in the dark *for a more vital existence, a freer and more fervid life of our performance.*¹¹

Grassi does not perceive the relationship between art and business as dichotomous; on the contrary, he reiterates that society must *overcome the need for a detached, evasive art [...] and the quantitative limitation of its users*¹² to reach the objective of a theatre for all, to widen the base of the audience and improve its quality.

This is the economic primacy of the organisation, indicating not the prevarication of organisational and managerial activism but the force of penetration necessary to give solidity and efficiency to artistic work.¹³

10 The quotations are taken from P. Grassi, *Per un nuovo teatro*, in “Avanti!”, 7 luglio 1946.

11 *Ibidem.*

12 P. Grassi, *Teatro e società oggi*, “Civiltà delle macchine”, novembre-dicembre 1964, p. 49.

13 G. Guazzotti, *Teoria e realtà del Piccolo Teatro*, op. cit., p. 51.

Today, as more than half a century ago, to trigger the renewal process that the performing arts and culture in general need, the collaboration of everyone is necessary; everyone has the duty to contribute so that the innovative impulses find solid foundations.¹⁴

[...] it is necessary to agree (even the blind would realise this) that it is only by focusing on another audience, on a new audience, that the problem of the authentic vitality of the Italian show business will be solved. It is not an easy task, but it is an exciting one; in any case, it is such as to instil in us the greatest certainty that in a certain number of years the spectators will be

-
- 14 P. Grassi, *Cinema e teatro*, in “Avanti!”, 2 maggio 1945: “Quello che ci preme fin d’ora di stabilire è appunto che riapertura non significa in nessun caso ripresa sulla stessa linea di prima di un’attività soltanto interrotta per motivi estranei, e che non sono più i tempi oggi, specialmente per gli spettacoli, in cui l’arte possa permettersi di non tener conto della politica. [...] Il rinnovamento deve avvenire anche in questo campo, nelle persone e non solo nelle forme. Non avviliscono i “vecchi” (anche se non vecchi d’anni) del teatro e del cinema, con un penoso attaccamento alla loro seggiola, una morte – morale – ormai segnata.” “What we want to establish right now is precisely that reopening does not in any way mean resuming along the same lines as before an activity that was interrupted only for extraneous reasons, and that these are no longer the times, especially for shows, in which art can afford not to take politics into account. [...] Renewal must also take place in this field, in people and not only in forms. Let the “old” (even if not old in years) of the theatre and cinema not be disheartened by a painful attachment to their seats, a death – moral – by now marked...”

people like us, driven to the theatre by that same love of ours and not wearily brought to the theatres by a thousand reasons, few of which are related to art.¹⁵

15 P. Grassi, *Note di teatro*, in “Avanti!”, 1 agosto 1946.



ANDRÉE RUTH SHAMMAH¹


ART, CULTURE, THEATRE
AND URBAN REGENERATION


In Chile, there is a city called Valparaiso. When the Spanish settlers founded it in the 16th century, they did not choose its name by chance, which means Valley of Paradise.

The place, a large bay on the Pacific, squeezed between the sea and the mountains, climbing up the hills and with a green valley behind it, was a safe harbour, excellent for traffic thanks to its strategic position, which made it a necessary stop on the trade routes. The city's urban expansion, from the port to the hills, was therefore rapid and largely spontaneous.

In the small area on the plain, closest to the port and the hub of all the city's activities, the beautiful palaces of the wealthiest families of shipowners and merchants were built, while the houses perched on the hills were for the less affluent inhabitants.


1 Andrée Ruth Shammah is the director and soul of the Franco Parenti Theatre in Milan. Founded in 1972 as *Salone Pier Lombardo* by Franco Parenti, Andrée Ruth Shammah and Giovanni Testori, Dante Isella and Gian Maurizio Fercioni, together with other artists and intellectuals, the Franco Parenti Theatre was named after the great actor in 1989, following his death. (<https://teatrofrancoparenti.it>)






The opening of the Panama Canal caused the economic collapse of Valparaiso, as there was no longer any need to stop there, and the city, which had lost its primary source of income, began to depopulate. A severe economic crisis followed, and the houses perched on the hills ran the risk of being permanently abandoned to decay.

Today, however, it is precisely the many tiny houses perched on the hills that are the most fascinating part of the city, the one that attracts tourists from all over the world and has become a real jewel that leaves its viewers amazed beyond their expectations. The credit for this goes to the vitality and creativity of its inhabitants, who have started to paint the facades of their houses, creating a veritable fashion.



There is not a house that has not been marked with graffiti, murals, simple writings, even a few poetic words such as those set between the steps leading to the top of the hill, or real works of art, the result of excellent painting skills and famous masters. Valparaiso has become a palette of colours; a thousand brushes have given the city an original and personal form, which UNESCO has now included as a World Heritage Site.



The whole city has become an emblem of imagination in power, an eclectic collective soul that has saved it from its destiny of decay and abandonment thanks to its creativity. The crisis became an opportunity for rebirth; it gave rise to an urban planning project that was never conceived, developed spontaneously and

changed (and continues to change every day) the city's face.


Cultural impulse, art in all its forms, theatre and creativity, in general, can open the way to change, and you don't need to travel halfway around the world to see more examples of this. Cities change; they evolve physically, economically and socially, as do the people who live in them and their needs, requirements, and ability to imagine.

It is precisely that ability to imagine something different, to glimpse, with a bit of imagination, an opportunity for growth where there seems to be only abandonment and desolation that drives people to change. Why? Because a pile of rock ceases to be a pile of rock the moment a single man contemplates it, imagining it as a cathedral inside.²

In my lifetime, I have seen Milan change a lot; I have known people who have seen cathedrals where there seemed to be only piles of rocks. And I myself have pursued and enacted adventures that might have seemed crazy.

Over time, the way of producing and what is produced has changed, and consequently so have the places where production takes place; large factories have been abandoned, leaving huge empty spaces. As is always the case, however, one's imagination is

2 Phrase attributed to A. De Saint-Exupéry, with particular reference to the central theme of Id., *Pilota di guerra. La morale dell'inclinazione* (1942), Milano, Mondadori, 2015.




enough to transform those empty spaces into places for the production of something else: art, culture, knowledge. Bringing a theatre, a cinema, a cultural and artistic centre to an area where there are only factories is not an end in itself. Culture produces change, and even a single theatre can become the promoter of a spontaneous rebirth, redefine the geography of living together and give a new face to a city or part of a city.

Cultural activities, for example, cause people to move away from their usual areas, to see a show, attend a concert or a debate, etc. This migration then makes services that were not there before necessary and indispensable, not only for the new guests but also for those who already lived in the neighbourhood. Thanks to the new opportunities for socialising, entertainment and learning, they find themselves living there in a different way.

Culture and art can generate new business opportunities; for example, if there is a theatre, there needs to be a restaurant where people can go after the show and where actors and other workers can eat during rehearsals.

In the years when the Franco Parenti Theatre moved its activities to Via Cadolini, I witnessed a fundamental transformation of that area of the city of Milan. In 2004, the theatre's headquarters (in via Pier Lombardo) were being renovated, so we had to reinvent ourselves. In the winter of that year, the temporary location was inaugurated in the outer southern suburbs of Milan, in a neighbourhood that boasted a theatrical past, that of the Teatro Quartiere in




Piazzale Cuoco. Here was the glorious marquee where Gaber and Dalla had performed and where Ariane Mnouchkine had presented her legendary *L'Age d'Or* but which was in a state of decay and abandonment in those years. There were only warehouses, abandoned factories and nothing more.

The theatre's temporary home was in a vast industrial complex, a large shed flanked by numerous other sheds in yards where they manoeuvred trucks. There were comforting signs scattered here and there: the atelier of a glass artist, a casting studio, an unflashy disco, a café bar, but the squalor of a 1950s suburb from a Testori story remained. At first, many people who had an annual subscription to our theatre (and until the transfer, they were faithful spectators), precisely because of that squalor, preferred to throw away the money and the subscription rather than have to travel to that area. But there was also all the tension of a people anxious to live and get moving in the neighbourhood. In fact, within just a few years, the industrial complex was transformed into an authentic cultural district.

Marcello Iazzetti and Betta Gabbionera were commissioned to set up the spaces of the new theatre. It was not easy to recreate the atmosphere and spirit of the Franco Parenti Theatre in those warehouses.


The only possibility offered was used to embellish the exterior: the large perimeter wall was painted blue and decorated with an elegant sign that could be seen from afar. All around the ground, a kerb of white gravel detached the walls from the uneven pavement.




Inside, a hall was set up to accommodate one hundred and fifty to two hundred people. The stage, although limited, offered some suggestive scenic possibilities. This room, which was similar in atmosphere to the Sala Pirelli, offered a unique foyer with two squares and a bar with elegant French tables, which could also be used for entertainment and musical performances.

A second space was created on the upper floor: a large room with a singular structure that invited the invention of shows capable of upsetting the public's perception.


The playbill was aimed at a popular audience with the revival of some successful shows, but it did not exclude the search for original quality typical of Teatro Franco Parenti with more refined proposals able to attract spectators from different areas of Milan.



The area thus began to be populated by people, from the neighbourhood and beyond, who actively participated in the life of the theatre and began to welcome other spaces dedicated to culture and socialising. What was once an industrial complex ended up encompassing the Pier Lombardo Dance Academy, the Pim space and a studio for design artisans.




The mere fact that there was a theatre there, such as the Franco Parenti, increased popular interest in the area, turning an abandoned suburban district into an ideal place to start up other cultural and artistic activities: now the neighbourhood is home to art galleries, architects' studios, and the Pier Lombardo Academy's dance department has become a dance




school, the DanceHaus directed by Susanna Beltrami. The theatre has opened up new possibilities for growth, not only cultural but also economic.


It was proof that theatre can act as a stimulus and incentive for change even where the city is deserted. Of course, the Franco Parenti Theatre then returned to its historic location, but bringing a theatre into that abandoned complex, even if not permanently, suggested a possible new life, encouraging the care of those places, thanks to the theatre's ability to be an active and activating place.

This experience also opened a reflection on a different way of living and meeting, which gave rise to the *Tendone CityLife – Luci per la città* (CityLife Marquee – Lights for the City). A settlement in the north-western outskirts of Milan, commissioned by Teatro Franco Parenti and supported by the newly founded CityLife and the Zone 8 local council. For fifty-one days, under a marquee installed in the Gallarate area and then in the Fiera Milano areas, shows, concerts, screenings, training, entertainment and social events were planned from morning to night. There was dancing for the incapable and a club for the elderly where the problems of old age were discussed. Health and prevention were discussed with medical luminaries. Sunday mornings were dedicated to poets, with thinkers such as Carlo Sini, Dario Del Corno and Laura Boella; the book presentations featured critical new works and, in the case of Lina Sotis, the whole of fashionable Milan was moved to the big top.






Once again, theatre became an essential means and tool to tell stories and change the lives of citizens, to get them to participate in initiatives that can change the urban geography and the relationship of its inhabitants with the territory. Today, many other theatres and associations have understood the potential of the interaction between theatre and community. Many projects have sprung up in Milan in recent years concerning participatory urban dramaturgy, which sees dramaturgy as something in constant movement, changing and growing together with the lives of those it narrates, building collaboration in peripheral neighbourhoods that have not been the subject of major cultural interventions. This is the case with *Regenerazione Culturale Urbana*, a widespread cultural project in the Sesto San Giovanni district.



The theatre increasingly seeks to involve realities and subjects in a condition of isolation in its activities; it favours inclusion and the sharing of projects and ideas. And the public does not seek mere enjoyment but shares and inhabits the theatre as a place that changes the perception of the world and is first and foremost a *human encounter*.


A few years after the return of Teatro Franco Parenti to its premises in via Pier Lombardo, I embarked on another adventure precisely because I am aware that when the soul of a theatre offers itself to the city, when it promotes the care and beauty of what surrounds it, it drives all its inhabitants to recreate other beauty.

From the large windows of the foyer, I could see the former Caimi bathing centre, abandoned and




forgotten. This place was just a few steps away with immense potential; an original complex dating back to the 1930s, covering over 9,000 square metres and comprising two swimming pools, changing rooms, and a large building. It could have been wonderfully beautiful with the proper care and attention, but instead, it was there, dying in front of the theatre foyer windows. Wounded, dismembered, vandalised and unused for many years. It had to be brought back to life!

However, the Milan City Council did not have the necessary resources, so collective involvement was mobilised around the Franco Parenti Theatre.



I always say and firmly believe that theatre can do anything, but pursuing an urban regeneration project of this scale and taking responsibility for it seemed crazy at the time. It would have been if we had been alone. Theatre can do anything if it becomes a spark, capable of regenerating people and igniting souls. Because such great works can only be accomplished together.




The redevelopment of the swimming pool was a collaboration: many people did their part to safeguard a heritage that belongs to everyone, and that comes back to life for the entire community. In this sense, the Art Bonus³ (which allows the recovery of a tax credit

3 The Art bonus is an initiative of the Italian Ministry of Culture to encourage cultural patronage. In practice, it allows a tax credit of 65% of the amount donated – and therefore a reduction in the tax burden – to individual

on what has been donated) has been indispensable not only in economic terms but because it is perceived by donors as public recognition of the value of their intervention. Clearly, generosity and participation are by no means taken for granted: courage, initiative, the ability to look up and have a different vision, conquer, infect and show the way.


I Bagni Misteriosi (The Mysterious Baths) result from a collective effort that has brought together public and private institutions, citizens and businesses to reassemble the pieces of a dismembered and wounded place. They are the destination of a journey full of hard work, obstacles and bureaucracy, mistakes and achievements that have allowed us to give back to the city the memory and identity of a historic neighbourhood of which the theatre is also a part; and which today constitutes a unique project capable of integrating body, emotion, art and thought. In a continuous cross-reference between theatre, music, workshops, sport, wellness and nature, between the inside and the outside, *I Bagni Misteriosi* are transformed according to the seasons. The water in the pools is crystal clear, the flowerbeds are in bloom, the roses dye the spaces red. Under the hornbeam trees,

citizens or businesses that make liberal cash donations in support of Italy's public cultural heritage. Patrons of the arts (citizens, businesses and bank foundations) have the opportunity to contribute, with their cash donation, to preserving the artistic heritage while benefiting from a partial but significant tax reduction.




a continuous wooden seat allows you to rest in the shade. During the day, the floating platform is used by bathers to sunbathe, and in the evening, it becomes a stage for shows, meetings and concerts. You can also just have an aperitif before a show, surrounded by a magical atmosphere or swim in the evening.


In the *Palazzina*, there are exhibition and performance spaces, a library and flats for artists who can immerse themselves in rehearsals for new productions. The water turns into ice for skating between theatrical incursions and performances in winter, while workshops and Christmas stalls enhance local craftsmanship and knowledge.



The Teatro Franco Parenti – Bagni Misteriosi is today one of the most loved places for its beauty. Passing through Via Pier Lombardo has become a visual experience: the lights of the theatre, the young people, the dives in the pool, the audience of the shows having an aperitif, reading a book by the pool or leafing through a newspaper.



The recovery of the unity of the neighbourhood, which is being recomposed around the theatre, now corresponds to new forms of social aggregation, practices and lifestyles that overcome the conventional separations between culture, sport, well-being and nature. Thousands of citizens want to be there in person. But the area has not only benefited from the redevelopment of the pool in social terms. From an economic point of view, the whole area has also benefited from the redevelopment work. Just think of the real estate value of the houses around the




Mysterious Baths, which has increased markedly, especially for the buildings directly overlooking the pools. Perhaps infected by the beauty of the Bagni Misteriosi, they too have become more beautiful and, influenced by the nature that explodes at the edge of the pool, their balconies have also blossomed!



Beauty calls for more beauty, and it doesn't take much to encourage people to participate in a project that improves the city, reclaims its memory and identity, and points the way to a sustainable future.

The Bagni Misteriosi prove that where administrations do not have substantial economic resources available to improve the urban conformation and carry out major renovation work, the so-called creative city policy always finds a place. Its great merit is first and foremost to spread a sense of optimism that pervades the cities we live in, which are increasingly in need of qualitative and architectural rethinking.

Culture and art in all its forms are a resource. The artist knows that any problem is nothing more than an opportunity in disguise. Any weakness has the potential for strength. Even what seems invisible can become something positive, something beautiful. So, from a city in a state of progressive abandonment and degradation, a fresco of a thousand colours can be born, capable of astounding millions of tourists from all over the world. From a desolate warehouse on the outskirts of Milan, a cultural district can be created, and from a forgotten, vandalised swimming pool, left to die for years, an oasis in the city can be born.



Art, culture and theatre are capable of imagining another life for places, and it is not just a question of the aesthetics of spaces, but more generally of the habitability of neighbourhoods; it is a question of imagining (especially in those contexts where there is a total absence of cultural and social centres) a *master plan for the soul* and from there, designing specific development work in the territory.





FEDERICA FORTUNATO AND
ROSANTONIETTA SCRAMAGLIA¹

MEMORY AND MAGICAL PLACES QT8 Yesterday and Tomorrow

In every city, there is, indeed, a close link between culture and nature, between built-up spaces, social life and local politics, just as history and memory coexist on the one hand and a drive towards the future on the other. There are cases in which urban planning manages to reconcile them harmoniously to the benefit of each of those elements. This is the case, for example, of a district in Milan designed from scratch by Piero Bottoni: QT8.

The union between the past and the future, in fact, is in the very idea of the city; it remains in its unique facts, in its monuments, in the idea we have of them.²

-
- 1 Federica Fortunato is currently an adjunct professor at IULM University teaching the courses *Sociology of Change in the Digital Era* and *Sociology of Consumption and Business Culture*. Rosantonietta Scramaglia is Associate Professor of Sociology at IULM University in Milan where she teaches *Sociology of Change in the Digital Era* for the Degree Course in Business Communication and Public Relations and *People and Society in the Digital Era* for the Master's Course in Specialist Translation and Conference Interpreting.
 - 2 A. Rossi, *L'architettura della città*, Milano, Clup, 1978, pp. 177-178.

The collective memory of peoples is linked to facts and places and thus becomes the thread running through the whole complex structure.³ Consequently, respect for the past, even if filled with new content, means respect for continuity and community.⁴

Over time, QT8 has undergone tremendous changes due to social, economic and political-administrative alterations, but the symbolic power of some places endures and, while changing form and function, they continue to present themselves as the vital centre of the neighbourhood and an important reference point for the city and beyond.

In particular, there are two places that are different from each other but have had a significant influence on the residents' lives: Monte Stella and the Indoor Market, which will be the subject of this essay. But let's start with a brief history of the neighbourhood and the idea behind it.

Rebuilding with poetry: Piero Bottoni and QT8

During a meeting with architect Giuseppe Pagano Pogatschnig, to whom a street in the future neighbourhood was to be dedicated, Piero Bottoni recognised the

3 S. Giedion, *Introduzione a Space, Time, and Architecture*, Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press, 1959.

4 B. Lamy, *Aspects symboliques du centre*, in B. Lamy, *Recherches sur l'évolution de la vie sociale en milieu urbain*, Paris, C.S.U., 1969, p. 7.

importance of promoting the initiative for a stable neighbourhood that would serve as a check on the quality of settlement and housing.

The opportunity to achieve his idea presented itself in May 1945, when Bottoni was appointed by the CNAI as Extraordinary Commissioner of the Triennale and was given full decision-making powers. He set the entire event of the 8th Triennale around the theme of housing because it was a heartfelt theme of anguish for thousands of Milanese who, during the air-raids, lost their homes, were displaced, and lived in precarious and unhealthy conditions, often in shacks or overcrowded buildings.⁵

In his vision, the right to housing was not to be translated into council estates lacking in urban quality⁶ but into an organic, autonomous model neighbourhood that would serve as an example for the rebirth of Milan and the reconstruction of other urban centres.

His dual training – a degree obtained at Brera and the another at the Polytechnic – led him to design a project that combined the poetic component (for example, the chromatis of the dwellings) and the rational one (the heliocentric orientation of the buildings) in which the harmony of the whole would prevail.⁷ In short,

5 A. Rastelli, *Bombe sulla città: Milano in guerra, 1942-1944*, Milano, Skira, 2004.

6 J. Foot, *Milano dopo il miracolo: geografia di una città*, Milano, Feltrinelli, 2008.

7 G. Tonon, *QT8: Urbanistica e architettura per una nuova civiltà dell'abitare*, in G. L. Ciagà – G. Tonon (a cura di),

every social stratum had a right to poetry, and unlike the great works in the city centre designed to celebrate the future, such as the Pirelli skyscraper or the Velasca Tower, Bottoni wanted to reconcile the memory of the past with the needs of the present and a view to the future.⁸

Bottoni is aware of the social interactions that take place in streets, squares or public place⁹ and pays particular attention to them. It is his human sensitivity as an urban sociologist that drives him to study the environment because the space of living is not limited to what is inside the home, but involves the outdoors in the relationships between places and places, between people and places, between the green and the built up

Le case nella Triennale. Dal parco al QT8, Milano, Triennale Electa Mondadori, 2005, p. 50.

- 8 Cfr. P. Bottoni, *Il quartiere sperimentale della Triennale di Milano: Q. T. 8*, Milano, Editoriale Domus, 1954; G. Tonon, (a cura di), *P. Bottoni, Una nuova antichissima bellezza: scritti editi e inediti 1927-1973*, Roma, Laterza, 1995.
- 9 J. Jacobs, for example, analyses the social importance of sidewalks/pavements (*The Death and the Life of Great American Cities*, New York, Random House, 1961); G. Simmel analyses the interaction of individuals in cities (*Le metropoli e la vita dello spirito*, 1903, Roma, Armando, 2011); E. Goffman studies the territory and spaces that encourage mutual understanding (*La vita quotidiana come rappresentazione*, (1959), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1992.

areas, between private and family life and community life, thanks also to collective spaces and structures.¹⁰

A culturally constructed space whose meaning is consolidated while in progress and transformed over time. For this reason, a road structure based on the Roman castrum and a building with many services available to the inhabitants seemed indispensable.

The innovative and visionary project envisaged various building types – from a detached house to an 11-storey building – because Bottoni, sharing Wirth's thinking, believed that the presence of socially heterogeneous people defines the city.¹¹ He thinks of displaced persons, workers, the underprivileged classes, but also the middle class.

A second equally important theme in Piero Bottoni's vision is green areas, which should serve as a connective tissue between buildings and have a link of interdependence with the built up environment so giving a high quality of life to the residents'. Even today, taking into consideration how much greenery is now an essential element in design – just think of the success of the Bosco Verticale reproduced around the world, or the more recent project for the botanical

10 F. Fortunato, R. Scramaglia, *Ricostruire con poesia: Piero Bottoni e il QT8*, in *Milano e la memoria: distruzioni, ricostruzioni, recuperi*, a cura di P. Giovannetti e S. Moretti, Milano, Mimesis Edizioni, 2020, p. 84.

11 L. Wirth, *L'urbanesimo come modo di vita*, in G. Martinotti ed., *Città e analisi sociologica*, Padova, Marsilio, 1968, pp. 514-536.

tower in Milan – we can estimate Bottoni’s prophetic and revolutionary genius.


His impressive experimental design for the redevelopment of a then peripheral, semi-deserted, unhealthy area, which – according to the plans of the fascist era (Ventennio) – was to become the sports district, took shape from these premises. This was the birth of QT8 (Quartiere dell’VIII Triennale).

Monte Stella

Bottoni’s creative effort to transform the no man’s land full of gravel pits, located in the north-eastern outskirts of Milan, into a lively and desirable space, is already evident in the initial drawings. That homogeneous, neutral, unattractive and meaningless natural space, a non-place according to Marc Augé’s definition,¹² would become a pleasant, harmonious, meaningful place. The Bossi pit – the biggest of the gravel pits – Bottoni dreamed of creating a lake, where the local people could go boating or sunbathe on its shores.

But when, during an inspection, Bottoni realised that the lake no longer existed, filled with the post war rubble of the city, he transformed the dream of the lake into that of a mountain. With the wartime debris he begins to create, by hand, using the technique of

12 M. Augé, *Nonluoghi. Introduzione a una antropologia della surmodernità*, Milano, Elèuthera, 2009.



dry stone walls, a hill 14 metres high. Later, it slowly reached 60 metres but never reached the 100 metres that Bottoni had envisaged. So, his design skill is shown in his ability to quickly change course and plan the following vision of a hill representing the gateway to the neighbourhood, which, like every gateway, has the dual function of access and closure. The door, in fact, has a dual and contradictory role because it must ensure the entry of people from outside and close to provide security for those inside.¹³ In the case of Monte Stella, it will be a monumental gateway to the city like all the historic ones in Milan and a barrier to protect the neighbourhood from the new arterial road leading to the motorways. In addition, the Monte also provides a service to the city because it is the only point from which one is able to view the panorama from above, a place that allows people to get to know and admire Milan.

This was the intention, but at a certain point, due to a shortage of funds, humus and trees, in the 1960s Monte Stella became a no man's land, a dump. It was even referred to as a dunghill. In the 1980s, Monte Stella was reborn out of a renewed ecological awareness and a revival of memory. Citizens adopted it, taxed themselves to start planting, and slowly the sad hill was transformed into the natural monument we can enjoy today.

13 R. Scramaglia, F. Sidoti, M. Gammone, *Casa, dolce casa? I furti nelle abitazioni e la legittima difesa (dai pubblici poteri)*, Milano, Lumi, 2000, p. 91.

Monte Stella would never have existed without Bottoni's extraordinary vision. Aldo Rossi called it *great architecture*. And so much of its significance is culturally determined: a symbol of the peace found after the great destruction – its transformation from natural architecture to civil monument is linked to the memory of the rubble of the homes of thousands of Milanese. The older inhabitants who still live in the neighbourhood remember the lorries that unloaded the rubble and which, for them as children, became a place where they could go to look for treasures.

In reality, Monte Stella, which the Milanese more often call the Montagnetta di San Siro, is a multi-layered memorial. It was named by Bottoni himself in memory of his wife Stella, who died prematurely. In addition to the wartime debris it is composed of, the victims of the bombings are remembered. It is one of the few war memorials in Milan. In 2003, a space was granted on it for the creation of the *Giardino dei Giusti* (Garden of the Righteous), and in 2019 the landscape and monumental constraint for its protection and for the protection of the entire neighbourhood became enforceable, preventing the implementation of a new shrine project that could have distorted the symbolic meaning of Monte Stella.¹⁴

14 M. Giannattasio, *QT8, il vincolo storico del ministero blocca 50 progetti. L'appello di Segre*, https://milano.corriere.it/19_febbraio_16/qt8-vincolo-storico-ministero-blocca-50-progetti-appello-segre-6b8a6210-31b2-11e9-852c-5b9c9fb7b87c6.shtml?refresh_ce-cp (last accessed, 30/06/2020).

Today, Monte Stella is one of Milan's outstanding features, a large green lung on a par with the great parks of Europe's major cities. It is a destination for botany scholars, architecture students and sportsmen, but above all, it is one of the places of choice for anyone who wants to enjoy a panoramic walk or a day in the park.

Monte Stella is a true ecomuseum, as defined by Annamaria Esposito

represents an innovative tool for the enrichment, knowledge and management of an area – in the perspective of its cultural, social and civil promotion – for the recovery and enhancement of local cultural heritage and support for sustainable development.¹⁵

In 2019 the project *Parco Monte Stella. Nascita di un modello di tutela condivisa* (Parco Monte Stella. Birth of a model of shared protection) started. It includes the idea of tracing a hiking trail on the Montagnetta di San Siro, which passes through the Giardino dei Giusti (Garden of the Righteous) and skirts the Monumento degli Alpini (Alpine Monument) in memory of the donation of a thousand trees made by the latter in 1978 and planted on Monte Stella. After the pause due to the pandemic, in 2021 work started on the first urban trail

15 A. Esposito, C. Fisichella, *Recuperare e restituire la memoria. Temi e trame degli Ecomusei urbani della città di Milano*, in *Milano e la memoria: distruzioni, ricostruzioni, recuperi*, a cura di P. Giovannetti e S. Moretti, Milano, Mimesis Edizioni, 2020, p. 217.

in Europe: it runs from the Duomo to Monte Stella, and was created by CAI Milano (Club Alpino Italiano) with classic red and white signs tracing the 9-kilometre route, and different treks were organised for different targets. While experts tell the story of Monte Stella and illustrate its flora and fauna, you can see from high up the natural heritage of the city's parks and the most characteristic buildings from different eras up to the latest skyscrapers. Descending into the city, one can then observe the marble and stone coverings from the Lombardy Alps commented by experts and under the banner of *slow travel*,¹⁶ allowing one to enjoy details that commonly escape our attention.¹⁷

As CAI itself explains:

It combines two symbols: the Duomo, symbol of the city, and the summit of Monte Stella, symbol of the rebirth of post-war Milan. A route that crosses the city highlighting the stratification of the different historical periods. Just as going into the mountains and observing the rocks reveals the geological eras, walking along this path and observing the buildings reveals the evolution of Milan and the country.¹⁸

16 Cfr. R. Lavarini, *Viaggiar lento: andare adagio alla scoperta di luoghi e persone*, Milano, Hoepli, 2008.

17 G. Ortolano, *Da Duomo a San Siro? C'è il sentiero*, Repubblica, TuttoMilano, 16 giugno 2021.

18 *Dal duomo alla montagnetta il sentiero del CAI* <http://www.caimilano.org/2021/06/10/dal-duomo-alla-montagnetta/> (last accessed, 29/06/2021).

The Indoor market and CASVA

Once the neighbourhood's social fabric had been defined, Bottoni turned his attention to the urban context. He thought about creating two road axes that would represent the *Cardo* and the *Decumanus* of the Roman *castrum*, the presence of a main street that was fundamental to community life. The civic centre, located at the intersection of the two axes, envisaged a system of squares surrounded by porticoes overlooked by public buildings, a cinema-theatre, a restaurant, shops and much more. It was all in his mind, but then it remained on paper because the only completed project for the civic centre was the market, completed by the Technical Office partly to his design, only later, in the 1960s.

The market in Via Isernia, as witnessed by the interviews we conducted in May 2020, has represented for long-standing residents

the real heart of the neighbourhood, along with the church and the schools. [...] There were lots of little shops, from fishmongers to stationers, [...] it was very nice there, and it was convenient. There were craft shops, two butchers, a fishmonger, a milkman, a bar, a greengrocer... it's a shame they've closed it down, yes, that was the heart of the neighbourhood, [...] The market was a meeting place, there was everything you needed, and it was beneficial to social life. It's a pity,

a pity for the shops, but also because where there are shops there are meeting places.¹⁹


From the words of those interviewed, it is clear that the market had played an essential role over the years that was not limited to mere trade but promoted and strengthened sociability, represented a meeting point, and defined the social identity of the neighbourhood.

For years the market has been in disuse, and the building has been sadly deteriorating. Slowly, it has gone from being a centre of attraction and a meeting place to somewhere to be avoided and stigmatised because it is a haunt for prostitutes and the homeless—a dirty, foul smelling, dangerous and unsafe place.

However, for better (nostalgia for the past) or worse (degradation in recent years), the market has never become an empty signifier, a space without connotation. It has always maintained a powerful symbolic value; it has always remained a point of reference in the imagination of the inhabitants of QT8. Hence the Local Council's plan, in accordance with the citizens, to give it a new life both as the CASVA (the archive of the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts directed by Maria Fratelli, currently housed in the Castello Sforzesco) and as a space to serve the neighbourhood.

The choice of the former QT8 market as CASVA's new headquarters was dictated by several factors. First

19 F. Fortunato, R. Scramaglia, *Ricostruire con poesia: Piero Bottoni e il QT8*, op. cit., pp. 96 e seguenti.



of all, the desire to build – almost seventy years later – Bottoni’s great dream of creating a civic centre around which the life of the neighbourhood community could be developed, the vital centre of life. Because, as we will see in the descriptive part of the project, the former marketplace will not be a structure intended only for a small number of scholars interested in the history of architecture and design, but many spaces will be dedicated to the needs of the citizens.

The aim is to operate a cultural syncretism, restoring and upgrading a building of undoubted historical value, reconfirming its primary social functions. But the intention to locate archives, museums and monuments in non-central areas of the city is also a political choice that implies a transition towards a polycentric vision of the city, in continuity with the thinking of Bottoni, who wanted to create an autonomous district, well connected but independent of the city centre. Finally, to enhance a more intrinsically affective and creative memory, represented by its proximity to Monte Stella, an open-air ecomuseum, and to that of an experimental neighbourhood that is now a destination for ever-growing cultural tourism.

During the presentation of the project in November 2019, Graziella Tonon stressed that this experience needed to be safeguarded as it was a way of creating a symbiosis, a strong relationship that gave value to the space and acquired value from it.

The project for the restoration and expansion of the former market is intended as a careful operation to safeguard both the aesthetics and the history of a

building that once had its own value.²⁰ The building has two existing floors: a basement and a ground floor. In addition to the archive building for the preservation and consultation of over 200,000 documents and archival materials, including the Roberto Sambonet Fund and the Vittorio Gregotti Archive, multifunctional spaces have been designed. The entrance, a space for CASVA exhibitions and events, a space/auditorium intended for events not promoted by CASVA, a small transit depot for exhibits or temporary installations, toilets, a bookshop, an events space, offices, a meeting room for research, teaching and event promotion activities, a cafeteria-bar with a food shop and a classroom for courses and neighbourhood meetings that can be used for games, sports, study-reading rooms or something else according to the needs of the inhabitants.²¹

The new space will reflect the ongoing trend towards the hybridisation of places of culture and consumption. There are many examples of this in Milan, where

20 M. Brenna, E. Gianni, L. Janish – CERCO CASVA AL QT8, 2017, <http://hdl.handle.net/11311/1075079>, (last accessed, 20/06/2021).

21 *Quartieri. CASVA, approvato il progetto definitivo* <https://www.comune.milano.it/-/quartieri.-casva-approvato-il-progetto-definitivo> (last accessed, 30/06/21).

Cerco CASVA al QT8 progetto di trasferimento e ampliamento del CENTRO DI ALTI STUDI SULLE ARTI VISIVE negli spazi dell'ex mercato comunale al QT8 <https://re.public.polimi.it/retrieve/handle/11311/1075079/338779/AIMAC%20POLIMI%202016%2012.12.SALA%20PERIFERIE-compresso.pdf> (last accessed, 30/06/2021).

museums and theatres open up to commercial, sporting, educational and social activities. At the same time, retail spaces share their activities with shows, conferences and exhibitions.²²

The former market project should have been completed by the end of 2021. But the temporary interruption due to the health emergency has slowed down work, with the postponement of its opening. Nonetheless, the expectations and the hopes of having a neighbourhood nucleus remained high amongst the residents of QT8, as shown by the initiatives undertaken. One of these initiatives, which has renewed the momentum of the inhabitants, is the one promoted on the occasion of MuseoCity and postponed from March to May 2021 due to the restrictions caused by Covid-19.²³

In a synergetic way, twenty students from the Accademia di Brera and artists from Teatro Pane e Mate created exhibitions and installations combining fairy tales and reality, cities and forests and Oberon's

22 Cfr. A. Mortara e R. Scramaglia (a cura di), *Spazi ibridi. Nuove opportunità sociali, economiche e urbane*, Milano, Lumi, 2019; A. Mortara e R. Scramaglia (a cura di), *Spazi urbani come nuove opportunità di socializzazione, integrazione e attrazione turistica*, Milano, Lumi, 2020.

23 The following took part in the project: Associazione culturale Teatro Laboratorio di Figura Pane e Mate with Council 8 of the Municipality of Milan, Unità Case Museo e Progetti speciali, CASVA, Politecnico di Milano (Dept of Architecture & Urban Studies DASTU), Accademia di Brera, Ananke Arts with the contribution of Fondazione di Comunità Milano onlus.

Wood (inspired by Shakespeare's famous play). There are sound mobiles, anthropomorphic figures in the trees of the Monte Stella park, zoomorphic sculptures suspended in the former market square and a one per ten-metre white clay bas-relief on the building's balcony indicating the dialogue between the building and the neighbourhood.

In addition, a rich programme of events has been planned for the summer to involve the neighbourhood's citizens, young and old, while waiting for work to begin on the former market building.

As on other occasions, the Milanese have actively participated in cultural events scattered throughout the urban space. In addition to the previously mentioned MuseoCity, other examples are BookCity, PianoCity and, above all, the Fuori Salone during the Salone del Mobile week,

which is not simply a showcase for design companies, but a city that proudly presents itself as the capital of design, which becomes the protagonist not only in the pavilions of the exhibition area, in shops and exhibition spaces, but also *breaks into streets and squares and enters restaurants, clubs and museums. It contaminates places and activates creativity and the desire to participate.* The tension of the museum 'outside the museum' is also evident in some fairly recent experiences in the renewal of the city's museum scene.²⁴

24 G. Nuvolati e R. Capurro, *Popolazioni urbane a spasso negli spazi pubblici. Perdersi tra i musei milanesi, in Spazi ibridi. Nuove opportunità sociali, economiche e*

All the ferment created for years now around the fate of the former market and which, as we have seen, continues and will continue until the inauguration of CASVA, is a further demonstration that urban elements are not a simple organisational fact; otherwise, once they have fulfilled their function, they would no longer have any reason to exist. But they do survive, despite the purely functional vision with which Le Corbusier affirmed that houses, walls and bridges have a purpose as long as they fulfil their function and, when they no longer do so, reason or common sense dictates that they no longer encumber our lives with the weight of their uselessness.²⁵ Houses, bridges, streets and walls shape man's environment and become history. Thanks to them, the city becomes a human thing because it is an immense storehouse of labour, not unlike the cultivated field.²⁶ They constitute a kind of energy reserve, a humus in which social relations can take root. Even, and especially in a globalised world, the symbolic role of identification and belonging of the territory is anything but marginal.

urbane, a cura di A. Mortara e R. Scramaglia, Milano, Lumi, 2019, p. 126.

- 25 Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme des Ciam*, Ascoral, 1942; *Manière de penser l'urbanisme*, in: *OEuvres complètes de 1910-1965*, Zurich, Les Editions d'Architecture, 1946-1965, 8 vol.
- 26 C. Cattaneo, *Agricoltura e morale*, Milano, 1845.

Conclusions

Le Corbusier, bound to the canons of pure rationalism, invited by Bottoni in 1949 to visit QT8, had disdained his project while observing from the top of Monte Stella, the small houses built for war veterans and the terraced houses scattered in the greenery.²⁷ But his painter friend Fernand Léger appreciated Bottoni's work and described him as *Inventeur de montagnes et de magnifiques constructions populaires*.²⁸

Today, half a century later, we can say that history has proved Bottoni right. In fact, as early as the early 1970s, the division of spaces and functions in the new rationalist neighbourhoods led to the dismantling of social relations. In France, where the rationalist model had had more practical achievements, the situation soon appeared particularly serious. In the 1980s, it was realised that, while in Paris, as in all cities, there were points of reference on which the memory of the community was based: the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, the Bastille, the suburbs no longer cultivated this knowledge, they had forgotten the names of places and their history. Memory is lacking and what remains

27 G. Tonon, G. Consonni, *Bottoni e Le Corbusier: nel 1949 sul Monte Stella i nodi vengono al pettine*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2017.

28 F. Léger *Les constructeurs*, Paris, Falaize, 1951; G. Consonni, G. Tonon, *Piero Bottoni: la dimensione civile della bellezza*, <https://www.ordinearchitetti.mi.it/it/mappe/itinerario/40-piero-bottoni-la-dimensione-civile-della-bellezza/saggio> (last accessed, 30/06/2021).

is little valued. Therefore, solutions are being sought to better integrate historical sites, modernise them, enhance them, and open them up. They are trying to solve social, integration and security problems through architectural and urban planning interventions *based on memory, taking possession of complexity, designing mosaics and committing to the future.*²⁹

The mission of the Banlieues '89 group, commissioned by President François Mitterrand himself to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution,³⁰ is to bring about a cultural revolution by overturning the way the suburbs are seen, no longer dependent on and ancillary to the centre, but as nuclei in their own right with something that gives them a well-defined identity capable of creating a sense of belonging in the inhabitants. Forty years later, the same operation that Bottoni had carried out in Milan was carried out in Paris. In particular, Banlieues '89 superimposes a grid on the map of Paris and its surroundings, in the certainty that in each square there was at least one magical place, that is, a place that had the potential to stand out from the rest of the urban fabric and the ability to become a point of reference. This could be a place where memory is rooted (churches, palaces, bridges) and a forgotten

29 H. Bleskine, L. Charre, *Paris est dans Paris*, Murs, Murs, supplemento al n. 14, aprile 1986, p. 40.

30 Banlieues '89, *116 réalisations – manières de dire – manières de faire* –, dicembre 1989, Paris, Ed. Banlieues '89, 1989.

peripheral point valued for its historical, geographical or economic peculiarities (such as rivers, trees, road junctions, shopping centres, skyscrapers, etc.).

An example of this is the Forts Route, built to establish continuity between the forts around Paris, which have been turned into magical places where cultural and recreational events are held to promote exchanges between the different suburbs to combat all forms of isolation and xenophobia. Since these forts have never been used for war, Banlieues '89 argues, they must be converted to peace. No other example is more revealing than the importance of historical memory in strengthening the social sentiment of citizens, even if it is used for different, in this case opposite, functions to the original ones. Banlieues '89 also proposes to open the Pantin Cemetery, to make the Le Bourget airport, which has reduced its activity, a hub of attraction for the neighbourhood by surrounding it with shops, restaurants, etc. These are just a few examples of the many projects completed in those years, as they are culturally very similar to those of QT8: a war memorial hill where nature trails and historical memory intertwine, and a former market that becomes the city's historical archive.

After he was elected president in 2007, Nicolas Sarkozy launched a project called Grand Pari(s), based on the phonetic ambiguity of the sound *Pari*, meaning both 'Paris' and 'challenge', where the ideals and work of the Banlieues '89 Mission are taken up on a larger scale. The underlying desire is still cultural and

social: to eliminate discrimination between Parisians and *banlieusards* (inhabitants of the suburbs) through an architectural and urban planning project that he has defined as *the greatest challenge of the 21st century, aware that France will only emerge from the crisis if it has big projects.*³¹

The President himself said in a speech in 2007:

Therefore, I hope that the rules of construction and town planning leave more room for the choice of the means to achieve the objectives: we have reached the limit of constraint, and this will eventually suffocate any possibility of creation and innovation. The poet does not always have to cancel himself out before the engineer – I have nothing against engineers, of course – but sensitivity can play the same role as reason. [...] it is time to return to a human, sensitive, creative architecture, attentive to the characteristics of each territory, to the way of life of its people, to the particularities of its climate, its natural landscapes... to an architecture that starts from the analysis of reality to arrive at a form, rather than applying a pre-established scheme to reality. We have to be bold, ambitious, determined [...]. We have become conservative, and the multiplication of rules is in some way our desire to have a flattened society, without smell, without taste, and without colour. [...] In *Eupalinos or the Architect*, Paul Valéry said: tell me, since you are so sensitive to the effects of architecture, have you not observed, while walking in this city, that among the

31 R. Scramaglia, *La città: luoghi, simboli, attori*, Milano, Hoepli, 2012 (e-book).

buildings that populate it, some are dead, others speak and still others, which are the rarest, sing?³²

We believe that we can conclude our essay on the relationship between culture, art, and society with this suggestive image.

32 N. Sarkozy, *Discorso del Presidente della Repubblica, per l'inaugurazione della "Città dell'Architettura e del Patrimonio" al Palais de Chaillot di Parigi*, il 17 settembre 2007 (la traduzione è di R. Scramaglia).

MARIA FRATELLI¹


WHAT CAN CULTURE DO TO HEAL THE PLANET?

A healing process that can banish the dystopia generated by the separation of man from nature or heal the conflicts between peoples and religions will only be possible as the shared fruit of a renewed idea of culture.

Culture is the certainty that there is no single reason and that no one can have the truth imposed on them.

Culture is a motion, an attitude of life that generates the need for an uninterrupted search, a continuous comparison and profound attention to the other; it is the renewed wonder for the variety of a planet to

1 Maria Fratelli has worked for over twenty years for the Culture Department of the Municipality of Milan, first as a curator and then as a manager. She is the director of the Casa Museo Boschi Di Stefano, the Studio Museo Francesco Messina, the CASVA project archive in Milan and the manager in charge of Casa della Memoria. An art historian, she has produced research, work and texts on 20th century art, conservation, restoration, museology and museography. She is particularly interested in contemporary art and its expressive and teaching potential, as a link between the museum and the demands of the society in which it operates. Since her appointment as director of CASVA, she has been pursuing the project of an “archive of the project in Milan”, which is currently being built in the QT8 experimental district.





share and not to possess with violence or with the haughtiness to govern environments, elements and living forms, in the name of profit.

Today, greed and covetousness have the upper hand over every other reason for living, so we need to redirect progress towards improving the common good, sharing, happiness and peace.

Our culture has not been able to take its own place, and it too has been transformed into a product to be bought, following the logic of the market.


Fortunately, authentic culture is immaterial; it regenerates from its own ashes like the phoenix. It finds solutions where every future seems precluded.

Even if humans are not immortal, they can be eternal, as the comedian Paolo Rossi says, because culture also lies in the irony of not taking ourselves too seriously but in deep consideration of the immensity of everything.



Archives: with tact, with care


How can it be demonstrated that the content of this short report is not a sum of empty words or purely demagogic precepts, but the experience of the daily work of those who are determined to make museums and archives social presences that live up to these convictions? With concrete examples that derive from everyday experience, with the story of our projects and our attempts.




Proofs from life as everyone lives it, without recipes but with a project that at least wants to make it eternal in the light of a single principle: to leave what is entrusted to us better than we found it. With examples that derive from everyday experience, with the story of our projects and our attempts.

So how can museums and archives be catalysts of possibilities? What can an archive do in a suburb? Actually, it can do a lot as a generator of opportunities, comparison, and knowledge because culture is transformation, passage, and contact.


Museums, archives and libraries come from afar and contain knowledge and experiences which, when investigated, reveal how we came to be the way we are today. Take CASVA,² for example; what does it contain?



It contains the models, drawings, prototypes, correspondence, administrative documents and photographs that many architectural firms have kept over the years and documents how Milan became the city we live in today, with what ambitions, hopes, disappointments, conflicting forces and defeats. The archive is an inexhaustible source of information that becomes culture and, therefore, awareness when studied and compared.




2 CASVA, Centro di Alti Studi sulle Arti Visive (Centre for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts) is a cultural institute of the Municipality of Milan related to architecture, design, graphics and visual arts.



The archive conserves the original idea of every architect, and every project, the infinite variations, the tests, the rejects, the research, the surveys, the measurements, the desires and needs of the client, the competitions won and lost, the greed (that too!), and the gift of their knowledge to the community. It preserves the reason for decisions taken, actions carried out, and ideas left without form or on paper, contributing to the constitution and preservation of individual and collective memory.

It does not deal with things but with people, communities and situations that have survived in those things.


The archives help us read Milan in its modernity, restore its value, and understand how it has been transformed into the city it is today and how to make it the city it wants to become.



Archives contribute to the growth of a responsible society that governs its own future by allowing generations to pass on this expertise: access to sources is a guarantee of transparency and democracy.


The project archives in Milan, gathered in the CASVA collections, preserve the tools for understanding urban reality as it is and how it is transformed in our image and likeness, even when we are unaware of the role played by our will and our actions.

And this is the point: the archive must reveal itself in its simple complexity, involving young people and citizens and raising children, providing them with the tools (the study and processing of sources that translate into exhibitions, texts, stories, meetings, games, walks,




indexes and democratic access to the sources at their disposal), and activities necessary to understand and to know, to form taste and reason, to learn to choose what deserves to be saved from a place, a neighbourhood, an urban reality, what its most representative and identifiable dimension is; what it means for a city to be authentic and unique, and through this awareness of the context, how it can transform itself by becoming more functional and sustainable without elisions and cancellations that could instead impoverish or degrade it.


Archives help us to choose how and why to ask for a desirable and surprising city and neighbourhood, be aware of the need for beauty, and know how to recognise it above all.



The archive is an instrument of protection and a proposal for development. In its work, in that process capable of creating culture, the archive must weave community relations as the primary task of every cultural institution in a territory. Before acting, it must listen and identify needs and shortcomings, clumsiness and naivety, prejudices and greed. It must value the culture produced by the contemporary reality in which it operates and must grasp and defuse the discontent and violence that ensues and that is always the result of segregation, of the useless pursuit of false myths and unattainable models and of real or perceived injustices that are too often the result of ignorance and fear.



An archive must be open, permeable; it must welcome students, old people from the neighbourhood; it must offer a welcoming place in a city where there is hardly any public and accessible space for aggregation




and comparison; it must be inclusive, arousing curiosity and interest, making its knowledge available, sharing it in activities, explanations, exhibitions, screenings and film forums, seminars, games, walks in the neighbourhood to teach everyone how to look at reality. It must dress up the city with its own posters, redevelop degraded spaces, and protect the territory with culture.

The archive is not a repository to be understood as a coffer but a generator of positive energy, constructive criticism and proposals.

CASVA is today a project in progress; it was conceived from the outset as a participatory project because the presence of a cultural institution in an area is not only valuable if it increases the real estate value of the area but also if it is capable of making it liveable for those who already live there; if it is able to involve new energies coming from outside because that area now has an attractor that transforms it from a suburb into a new centre.

The polycentric city, where services are a fifteen-minute walk away, is the solution that will allow large urban agglomerations to survive COVID and the next viruses; hopefully, culture will learn from the contagion.

Culture must once again be spread by contact. Yes, because this is what an archive, a museum or a library must do: be a place where there is contact and touch, where contact means approaching, meeting, gathering; it presupposes a physical transmission of energy – contact highlights attention, delicacy, respect, a caress.




An archive teaches us to find the world's physicality in the things that preserve the memory of the gestures that characterise us as social animals living in a system of relationships. We are complex and extraordinary living beings, forces of nature and elements that are part of the vastness of the cosmos. We are people who have lost their sensitive dimension today, hidden in a dematerialised environment that has led them straight into a dystopia born of the separation of human beings from nature.

'*Con tatto*' is the name of the programme Casa della Memoria³ is planning during the Christmas period for the sixth consecutive year: there will be music, the words of illustrious people but also stories from the human library, children's stories and theatre. Like CASVA, Casa della Memoria is also a place of cultural production.

Everything that seems superfluous today is more necessary than water and food because it is the foundation of civil coexistence. If we cannot meet in person because of the pandemic, we will communicate via the web, but we will hold an exhibition dedicated to the theme of the knowledge of nature as the first single great shared heritage because it contains the paradigms on which the balance of the universe is based, and is, therefore, the guarantee of survival.

Therefore, we have asked an artist to work on our erudition, the one represented by a discarded edition,


3 Casa della Memoria is a public space open to the city of Milan that hosts events and conferences.




because it is too worn, of a Treccani encyclopaedia, an emblematic instrument of study and sum of 20th century knowledge. He, Francesco Panozzo, a shepherd and farmer, decided to have it worked by twenty-eight families of bees, one for each volume. The bees deployed their knowledge on the books in their hives, using them in different ways, ignoring them or including them in their constructions.

The exhibition is meant to be a warning, an excellent metaphor for how all our hubris can only survive in humble respect for the nature of which we are a part.

Without harmony with the planet and the other living forms, all our knowledge is very little.



Let the end of *The Name of the Rose*, Umberto Eco's famous novel, be a warning to us of the imminent apocalypse, the last child of ignorance and presumption.



When people ask me who is the best designer I know, I always answer: an old farmer who plants a chestnut wood.⁴

(Enzo Mari)

4 E. Mari, *25 modi per piantare un chiodo. Sessant'anni di idee e progetti per difendere un sogno*, Milano, Mondadori, 2011, p. 160.

M. CRISTINA VANNINI¹

BRAZIL – THERMOMETER OF THE WORLD’S WELLBEING

For several decades now, if futurologists wanted to predict the world’s direction, they would focus on what is happening in Brazil, the true thermometer of world trends, from economic and financial to environmental and climatic social and health.

Indeed, since the 1990s, Brazil has taken on the not always advantageous role of a litmus test of the dynamics imposed by globalisation on our interconnected societies.

What happens in Brazil often anticipates or amplifies the reactions that manifest themselves in the rest of the world, as we have witnessed from

1 M. Cristina Vannini, by training an archaeologist, museologist, former Director General of INSULA-UNESCO, National Secretary of ICOM Italy and member of the Board of ICOFOM, has been for two terms Trustee of the Board of European Museum Forum/EMYA with which she has been actively involved since 2004 and of which she is now National Correspondent. Lecturer at various institutions, she has been an adjunct professor at IULM since 2016. She currently works as a cultural consultant, is President of the Associazione Porta Romana District and is a member of the Board of Europa Nostra and President of the Jury of European Heritage Awards/ Europa Nostra Awards.

a political point of view, with the rise of ultra-conservative, liberalist and nationalist lobbies that led to the Bolsonaro government in 2019. From an environmental point of view, between 2009 and 2019, the world's green lung began to emit more carbon dioxide than it can absorb due to the depletion of Amazonian soils,² causing a dangerous *butterfly effect* for the rest of the world.

The development of a brilliant economy, supported for decades by social-reformist policies, ensured Brazil's inclusion in 2001 in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China), considered developing countries. This was despite some of its intrinsic critical points, mainly due to a relatively higher level of debt than the other three members of the group, high levels of corruption, poor education of the population and large pockets of poverty, offset by reformist openings, mixed capitalist formulas and democratic forms that have given hope for the future of human and civil rights.³

The development of populist, ultra-conservative tendencies has been given space by several factors: the extreme economic and social inequalities; the corruptive dynamics – especially in the management

2 Y. Qin, X. Xiao, J.P. Wigneron *et alii*, *Carbon loss from forest degradation exceeds that from deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon*, in “Nature Climate Change”, vol. 11, 2021, pp. 442-448.

3 L. E. Armijo, S. W. Burges, *Brazil, the Entrepreneurial and Democratic BRIC*, in “Polity”, vol. 42, n. 1, 2010, pp. 14-37.

of the raw materials in which Brazil, like the other nations of the Amazon biome, is rich; the complexity and richness of the cultural panorama deriving from the syncretic coexistence, which in some cases is characterised by a genuine opposition between the countless ethnic varieties; and political instability.⁴

In the last three years, in fact, Brazil has not only seen a delay in the post-global crisis economic recovery,⁵ but its worsening into a deep syndrome that, in conjunction with unhealthy policies and the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, has led to the restriction of civil, social and cultural rights of the multiple-rooted populations living on its territory, one of the five largest states in the world, twenty times larger than Italy. The tendency to devalue the concept of the common good – also recently seen in many European countries – or to cover up the scant or non-existent interest in the environment on the part of many nations with greenwashing operations has been evident in the attempt to sell off their natural

4 E.C.B. Bittar, *Challenges to Democracy in the Twenty-first Century: The Current Situation of Brazil — New Variations of the Same Dilemmas*, in “Portuguese Studies”, vol. 37, n. 1, 2021, pp. 32-46.

5 G. Tosi, *Brasile: populismo autoritario e neoliberalismo. L'attacco eversivo di Bolsonaro alle istituzioni democratiche*, in “Parolechiave”, vol. 1, 2020, pp. 215-230; J. C. Adiala, *Cosa sta succedendo in Brasile? Il virus e il dilemma nazionale*, in “Rivista di antropologia contemporanea”, vol. 1, 2020, pp. 187-196.

resources in the form of sponsorship. This process, fortunately, seems to have been averted to date.⁶

In his apostolic exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, Pope Francis, while not referring specifically to any Amazonian state, manages to make a careful and precise examination of the situation in Brazil, referring to

a culture that poisons the state and its institutions, permeating all social strata, including indigenous communities. It is a genuinely moral plague; as a result, trust is lost in institutions and their representatives, which totally discredits politics and social organisations.⁷

This culture, forged on the basis of colonial imperialism, which hierarchically crushes and reduces the rights of the ethnically, economically and socially weaker groups, has affected the exploitation of the natural resources and environmental ecosystem on which Brazil is based.

Even though Brazil has been one of the promoters of policies aimed at encouraging actions in support of a sustainable future,⁸ the most recent choices made by

6 M. Andreoni, *Brazil's Bid to Outsource Amazon Conservation Finds Few Takers*, in "New York Times", May 26, 2021 – <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/world/americas/brazil-amazon.html>, (last accessed, 08/07/2021).

7 Francesco I, (J. M. Bergoglio), *Querida Amazonia. Esortazione apostolica post sinodale al popolo di Dio e a tutte le persone di buona volontà*, Roma, San Paolo, 2020.

8 The 1992 Biodiversity Convention, signed at the end of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, contains the

the Brazilian government have allowed the destruction of thousands of hectares every day of the delicate rainforest in the Amazon Forest, the decimation of indigenous peoples, while denying the danger of the pandemic and thus accelerating the effects of the *Sixth Extinction*⁹ that reduces the variety of species on the planet.

Recent studies have shown how climate change and environmental exploitation could also substantially impact Brazil's economy and social resilience,¹⁰ but the same causes and outcomes weigh on the sustainability of every state in the world.

The contributions and the transcription of Prof. Brulon' speech that follow demonstrate, each in a specific sector, how ethnoconservation guarantees and favours the maintenance of biodiversity also through social values that reveal a particular vision of the world

agreement of world leaders on a global strategy for sustainable development.

- 9 R. Leakey, R. Lewin, *La sesta estinzione. La vita sulla terra e il futuro del genere umano*. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1998; N. Elredge, *La vita in bilico*, Torino, Einaudi, 1998.
- 10 It is estimated that world food production needs to increase by 60% to 110% to meet the growth in global demand and that this will lead to increased soil erosion throughout the century, making the effects of climate change even more drastic if the trend is not reversed. Cfr. A. Almagro, P.T.S. Oliveira, M.A. Nearing, S. Hagemann, *Projected climate change impacts in rainfall erosivity over Brazil*, in "Sci Rep.", 2017, vol. 7, n. 1, p. 8130.

of traditional peoples and communities,¹¹ a concept still well expressed by Pope Francis and applicable not only to Brazil:

And if the [ancestral] cultures of the original peoples were born and developed in intimate contact with their natural surroundings, they can hardly be preserved unharmed when that environment deteriorates.¹²

-
- 11 A.C. Diegues, *The role of ethnoscience in the build-up of ethnoconservation as a new approach to nature conservation in the tropics*, in “Revue d’ethnoécologie”, vol. 6, 2014, <http://journals.openedition.org/ethnoecologie/1956>, (last accessed 08/07/2021).
- 12 Francesco I, (J. M. Bergoglio), *Querida Amazonia. Esortazione apostolica post sinodale al popolo di Dio e a tutte le persone di buona volontà*, Roma, op. cit.



STEFANO MAZZOTTI¹

BIODIVERSITY IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Crisis, Evolution and Sustainability

[...] whilst this planet has gone circling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved.

This is how Charles Darwin concluded his famous work *On the Origin of Species*, first published in 1859, a concluding passage that today appears to us as a tribute to the biological diversity of our planet. Biological diversity or biodiversity is a synthetic term coined

1 Stefano Mazzotti is a zoologist and Director of the Civic Museum of Natural History of Ferrara. He carries out research on the taxonomy, distribution and ecology of communities and populations of amphibians, reptiles and mammals, collaborating with parks, reserves and public bodies for the study and conservation of fauna. In 2016 he launched Citizen Science projects in the Ferrara area. He has published more than a hundred scientific and popular publications in international and national journals. He is a member of several scientific associations, holding management positions in the National Association of Scientific Museums (ANMS) and in the Italian Society of Evolutionary Biology (SIBE).



in the early 1980s by Edward O. Wilson.² The term summarises a concept of complexity, the variety of life forms existing in the world, at any level of organisation: genes, species, populations, communities, ecosystems. The Convention on Biodiversity, drawn up in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, affirms the intrinsic value of biological diversity and its various components: ecological, genetic, social and economic, scientific, educational, cultural, recreational and aesthetic.

The Convention recognises that the fundamental requirement for the conservation of biological diversity is the in situ preservation of ecosystems and natural habitats by maintaining and restoring viable species populations in their natural environments. Biodiversity is, therefore, an irreplaceable value, even more so in the light of the events that have led to the definition of a new geological epoch, the current one, which we now call the Anthropocene and in which humans and their activities are the leading causes of the environmental and climatic changes we are observing on our planet. This epoch has a precise starting date: the fourth quarter of 1965, the period of nuclear testing after the Second World War, the date on which the *golden spike*, the event marking the change from one geological era to another, is set.³

2 E.O. Wilson, Harvard University (eds.), *Biodiversity*, Washington DC, The National Academies Press, 1988.

3 C. S. M. Turney, J. Palmer, M. A. Maslin, A. Hogg, C. J. Fogwill, J. Southon, P. Fenwick, G. Helle, J. M. Wilms-

How many species are there?

The diversity of life is one of the most astonishing aspects of our planet, so the question of how many species inhabit the Earth is one of the fundamental questions of science. Yet, the answer to this question remains enigmatic, as efforts to sample the world's biodiversity to date have been limited, precluding direct quantification of global species richness, and indirect estimates are based on assumptions that have proven highly controversial. One of the first to ask this question was Erwin.⁴ In a study in the tropical forests of Panama, he found that the canopy of 19 trees belonging to a single species, *Luehea seemannii*, contained 955 different species of beetles with a total of 1200 species of insects. Thus, according to Erwin, there are about 50 million species of beetles and 60 million species of tropical insects in the world, an estimate which, if extended to the whole planet, would bring the number of insect species to between 30 and 100 million. Hamilton and colleagues have more recently published an estimate of the arthropod

hurst, M. McGlone, C. Bronk Ramsey, Z. Thomas, M. Lipson, B. Beaven, R. T. Jones, O. Andrews, Q. Hua, *Global Peak in Atmospheric Radiocarbon Provides a Potential Definition for the Onset of the Anthropocene Epoch in 1965*, in "Scientific Reports", vol. 8, n. 1, 2018, p. 3293.

- 4 L. Erwin Terry, *Tropical forests: Their richness in Coleoptera and other arthropod species*, in "The Coleopterists Bulletin", vol. 36, n.1, 1982, pp. 74 -75.

species found in tropical forests around the planet, which should be around 3 to 4 million.⁵ These partial and essentially rough estimates have been updated by the work of Mora et alii, where it is predicted that there are about 8.7 million eukaryotic species globally, of which about 2.2 million are marine.⁶ The authors estimate that 86% of terrestrial and 91% of oceanic species have not yet been formally described. They emphasise that renewed interest in further exploration and taxonomy is needed if this significant gap in our knowledge of life on Earth is to be filled. Biological, environmental and sociological factors influence the probability of discovery and together provide a strong predictive capacity for species discovery. Moura and Jetz developed a model that identifies distinct taxonomic and geographic irregularities in the future discovery potential of new species, with greater opportunities for amphibians and reptiles and Neotropical and Indo-Malayan forests. Brazil, Indonesia, Madagascar and Colombia emerge as

-
- 5 A. J. Hamilton, Y. Basset, K. K. Benke, P. S. Grimbacher, S. E. Miller, V. Novotný, G. A. Samuelson, N. E. Stork, G. D. Weiblen, J. D. L. Yen, *Quantifying Uncertainty in Estimation of Tropical Arthropod Species Richness*, in “The American Naturalist”, vol. 176, n. 1, 2010, pp. 90 -95.
- 6 C. Mora, D. P. Tittensor, S. Adl, A. G. B. Simpson, B. Worm, *How Many Species Are There on Earth and in the Ocean?*, in “PLoS Biology”, vol. 9, n. 8, 2011, p. e1001127.

hot spots with the most significant opportunities for science to find new species.⁷

The sixth extinction

The multiple life forms and countless ecosystems that make up the mosaic of global biodiversity are now seriously threatened with extinction; many species have already gone extinct, and the process is now dangerously fast due to human activities. The state of biodiversity is at such a critical stage that it is being described as a sixth mass extinction,⁸ following the previous five in the history of life on Earth. Although there is still no complete picture of how many animal and plant species there are on Earth, the scientific community agrees that the current rate of extinction is 100-1000 times higher than before the appearance of humans. Many species are threatened, and some scientists claim that 10-20% of those currently living on the planet will become extinct in the next 20-50 years. Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history with likely negative consequences for people around the world, warns the

7 M. R. Moura, W. Jetz, *Shortfalls and opportunities in terrestrial vertebrate species discovery*, in "Nature Ecology & Evolution", vol. 5, 2021, n. 5, pp. 631- 639.

8 Cfr. R. Leakey, R. Lewin, *La sesta estinzione. La vita sulla terra e il futuro del genere umano*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 1998; N. Elredge, *La vita in bilico*, Torino, Einaudi, 1998.

report by the Intergovernmental Platform on Science and Policy in Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the summary of which was approved at the seventh session of the 2019 IPBES Plenary in Paris.⁹ The warning signs are now manifold. Ceballos et alii estimated that during the last century, starting in the early 1900s, numerous vertebrate species have gone extinct at a rate 114 times faster than they would have in the absence of human activity.¹⁰ Between 1970 and 2014, there were average losses of 60% in populations of mammals, fish, amphibians, reptiles and birds.

The scenarios envisaged by the authors show that the number of extinct species assessed among mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and all vertebrates combined has increased sharply since the 19th century. This is particularly evident if the trends are compared with the curve that identifies the estimated extinctions expected with a constant standard background rate (2 extinctions/MSY). For mammals, the background extinction rate is equivalent to 2 extinctions per 10,000 species per 100 years. More generally, the number of species that have gone extinct in the last century should have disappeared, depending on the vertebrate group, over 800 to 10,000 years.

9 *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment> (last accessed, 02/07/2021).

10 G. Ceballos, P. R. Ehrlich, A. D. Barnosky, A. García, R. M. Pringle, T. M. Palmer, *Accelerated modern human-induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction*, in “Science Advances”, vol. 1, n. 5, 2015, p. e1400253.

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, the proportion of species currently threatened with extinction is over 40% of amphibian species, almost a third of corals, sharks and cartilaginous fish and over a third of marine mammals. For insects, there is more uncertainty due to limited knowledge, but available data support an estimate of 10 % of species at risk of extinction. In total, estimates suggest that 8 million animal and 1 million plant species are now at risk of extinction.¹¹

The collapse of biomass

This process of biodiversity erosion is now evident in several animal groups. In the case of insects, an early work developed in the Orbroicher Bruch nature reserve in north-west Germany, Sorg et alii showed that the biomass of insects collected using Malaise traps had decreased by 78% in 24 years.¹²

These results were confirmed using the same monitoring methods by a later and more extensive

11 *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment> (last accessed, 02/07/2021).

12 M. Sorg, H. Schwan, W. Stenmans, A. Muller, *Ermittlung der Biomassen flugaktiver Insekten im Naturschutzgebiet Orbroicher Bruch mit Malaise Fallen in den Jahren 1989 und 2013*, in "Mitteilungen aus dem Entomologischen Verein Krefeld", vol. 1, 2013, pp. 1-5.

study by Hallmann et alii¹³ The study showed a seasonal decline of 76% over 27 years in 63 nature conservation areas in Germany, with a peak mid-summer decline of 82% in the biomass of flying insects. A decline in species populations is affecting pollinating insects (bees, bumblebees and hoverflies) in particular, as highlighted by Powney et alii,¹⁴ who blame habitat loss, climate change and the massive use of pesticides as the main risk factors. Such depletion of entomological populations is not unique to Europe. In research carried out in the tropical forests of Puerto Rico, Lister and Garcia found that since the 1970s, the biomass of insects and other arthropods has decreased by 10 to 60 times.¹⁵ Analyses revealed that corresponding to these decreases were decreases in the populations of lizards, frogs and birds that feed on these arthropods. Over the past 30 years, temperatures in these forests have increased by 2.0°C, and the study

-
- 13 C. A. Hallmann, M. Sorg, E. Jongejans, H. Siepel, N. Hofland, H. Schwan *et alii*, *More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas*, in “PLoS ONE”, vol. 12, n. 10, 2017, pp. 1-21.
 - 14 G. D. Powney, C. Carvell, M. Edwards, R. K. A. Morris, H. E. Roy, B. A. Woodcock, N. J. B. Isaac, *Widespread losses of pollinating insects in Britain*, in “Nature Communications”, vol. 10, n. 1, 2019, p. 1018.
 - 15 B. C. Lister, A. Garcia, *Climate-driven declines in arthropod abundance restructure a rainforest food web*, in “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences”, vol. 115, n. 44, 2018, pp. e10397–e10406.

suggests that climate warming is the driving force behind the collapse of the forest food web.

In a recent review, Sánchez-Bayo et alii quantified the distribution of causes of insect biomass loss globally.¹⁶ Among the groups most affected are wild bees, scarab beetles and butterflies. The main threats come from habitat loss due to intensive agriculture, pesticide use, global warming and urbanisation.

Among vertebrates, the status of inland fish populations is of particular concern. The report *World's Forgotten Fishes*, produced by the coordinated work of 16 international conservation organisations including WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature), Zoological Society of London, Global Wildlife Conservation, raises the alarm: in 50 years, freshwater fish populations have declined by 76%. The situation is no better for birds. According to research by Rosenberg et alii published in the journal *Science*, bird populations in the continental United States and Canada have declined by almost 30% since 1970.¹⁷

16 F. Sánchez-Bayo, K. A. G. Wyckhuys, *Worldwide decline of the entomofauna: A review of its drivers*, in "Biological Conservation", vol. 232, 2019, pp. 8-27.

17 K. V. Rosenberg, A. M. Dokter, P. J. Blancher, J. R. Sauer, A. C. Smith, P. A. Smith, J. C. Stanton, A. Panjabi, L. Helft, M. Parr, P. P. Marra, *Decline of the North American avifauna*, in "Science", vol. 366, n. 6461, 2019, pp. 120-124.

“Behold the Habitat”

The leading cause of this alarming decline in biological diversity is the influence of humans on ecosystems globally. Humans have profoundly altered the environment by transforming land, changing global biogeochemical cycles and climate, directly exploiting many species through hunting and fishing, and increasing the possibility of transferring living organisms from one area of the planet to another. Entire ecosystems, such as rainforests, coastal forests (mangroves), wetlands (swamps, lakes and rivers), and countless species of plants and animals are disappearing forever.

For many species of flora and fauna, a serious threat to their survival is the fragmentation of their habitats caused by the profound changes in land use brought about by humans. This process of land fragmentation often results in isolated areas where the habitats suitable for a given species are scattered all over the place. Fragmentation reduces the size of homogeneous habitat patches and increases their distance from each other, thus their isolation. A fragmented territory is comparable to an archipelago, where the various patches suitable for the species' survival are like islands in the middle of an inhospitable ocean.

A further cause of threat to many species is excessive fishing and hunting, which, in addition to already endangered situations such as habitat degradation, creates bottlenecks in the populations of the most vulnerable species, which often reach the

brink of extinction. In addition to species whose meat is edible (game and fish stocks), those that provide skins, bones, horns, tissues and organs are also of high commercial value. Examples include elephant ivory tusks and rhino horns, which are now two icons of species conservation. Hunting and fishing do not always compromise the diversity of an ecosystem, but they become a severe threat to the extinction of a species when they overexploit it, i.e. when the rate of removal is greater than the rate of regeneration of populations of a given species.

Current climate change has direct effects on biodiversity. Possible future scenarios include changes in the life stages of flora and fauna species, such as latitudinal and altitudinal shifts of plants and animals with substantial changes in ranges, anticipation of flowering, migration, hibernation and reproduction, and effects on the abundance of different species and their interactions.¹⁸ This would lead to the loss of 62% of mountain plant species by 2080 and 20% of those in coastal wetlands. In a territory like Italy, one of the

18 J. Penuelas, *PHENOLOGY: Responses to a Warming World*, in "Science", vol. 294, n. 5543, 2001 pp. 793-795; M. Cristaldi, G. Szpunar, *L'impatto dei cambiamenti climatici sugli animali*, in A. Pasini (a cura di), *Kyoto e dintorni. I cambiamenti climatici come problema globale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2006 pp. 189-212; D. A. Lutz, R. L. Powell, M. R. Silman, *Four Decades of Andean Timberline Migration and Implications for Biodiversity Loss with Climate Change*, in "PLoS ONE", vol. 8, n. 9, 2013, p. e74496.

Mediterranean areas with the highest concentration of species, global warming could lead to a significant loss of biodiversity.¹⁹ Some predictive models have shown that in the Mediterranean area, many endemic species will be strongly threatened by future climate change. This will significantly affect the specific richness and composition of the biocenosis.²⁰

The results are already evident for several vertebrates, particularly amphibians, which show worrying extinctions caused by sudden changes in climatic conditions in the tropical belt,²¹ but the

-
- 19 O.E. Sala, F.S. Chapin, J.J. Armesto, E. Berlow, J. Bloomfield, R. Dirzo, E. Huber-Sanwald., L. F. Huenneke, R. B. Jackson, A. Kinzig A., R. Leemans, D. M. Lodge, H.A., Mooney, M. Oesterheld, N. L. Poff, M.T. Sykes, B. H. Walker, *Global biodiversity scenarios for the year 2100*, in "Science", vol. 287, n. 5459, 2000, pp. 1770-1774.
- 20 L. Maiorano, A. Falcucci, N. E. Zimmermann, A. Psomas, J. Pottier, D. Baisero, C. Rondinini, A. Guisan, L. Boitani, *The future of terrestrial mammals in the Mediterranean basin under climate change*, in "Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences", vol. 366, n. 1578, 2011, pp. 2681-2692.
- 21 C. Parmesan, G. Yohe, *A globally coherent fingerprint of climate change impacts across natural systems*, in "Nature", vol. 421, n. 6918, 2003, pp. 37-42.; T. L. Root, J. T. Price, K. R. Hall, S. H. Schneider, C. Rosenzweig, J. A. Pounds, *Fingerprints of global warming on wild animals and plants*, in "Nature", vol. 421, n. 6918, 2003, pp. 57-60; C. D. Thomas, A. Cameron, R. E. Green, M. Bakkenes, L. J. Beaumont, Y. C. Collingham, B. F. N. Erasmus, M. F. de Siqueira, A. Grainger, L. Hannah, L. Hughes, B. Huntley, A. S. van Jaarsveld, G. F. Midgley, L. Miles, M. A. Ortega-

scenario is also very bad in Europe. Recent studies have shown that over the last thirty years, some species are changing the start of their breeding season, anticipating or postponing the onset of reproductive activities by several days.²² Increased temperatures also affect the development time of the larvae, reducing the metamorphosis time and consequently reducing their size.²³

In 2008, a study by more than 650 experts from over sixty countries contributed to the Global Amphibian Assessment. It reveals that almost a third (32%) of the more than 6200 known species worldwide are threatened or extinct: of these, 475 species are

Huerta, A. Townsend Peterson, O. L. Phillips, S. E. Williams, *Extinction risk from climate change*, in "Nature", vol. 427, n. 6970, 2004, pp. 145–148.; J. M. Kiesecker, A. R. Blaustein, L. K. Belden, *Complex causes of amphibian population declines*, in "Nature", vol. 410, n. 6829, 2001, pp. 681- 684; J. A. Pounds, *Climate and amphibian declines*, in "Nature", vol. 410, n. 6829, 2001, pp. 639-640; E. Stokstad, *ECOLOGY: Global Survey Documents Puzzling Decline of Amphibians*, in "Science", vol. 306, n. 5695, 2004, p. 391a.

- 22 B. D. Todd, D. E. Scott, J. H. K. Pechmann, J. W. Gibbons, *Climate change correlates with rapid delays and advancements in reproductive timing in an amphibian community*, in "Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences", vol. 278, n. 1715, 2010, pp. 2191-2197.
- 23 A. R. Blaustein, S. C. Walls, B. A. Bancroft, J. J. Lawler, C. L. Searle, S. S. Gervasi, *Direct and Indirect Effects of Climate Change on Amphibian Populations*, in "Diversity", 2010, vol. 2, n. 2, pp. 281-313.

classified as critically endangered (the highest threat level predicted), and more than 120 have not been observed in the wild for several years, indicating that they may already be extinct. In addition to habitat destruction, pesticide pollution, climate change and invasive alien species, another threat factor is the increase in pathogens affecting amphibians. In particular, populations of anuran amphibians (frogs, toads) are reported to be affected by the microscopic fungus called *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, which induces high mortality in tadpoles and metamorphosed young.²⁴

Climate change is also heavily affecting birds by altering the migration of many species. Increasingly early springs in Europe mean that migratory species returning from Africa are seasonally behind the peak food availability. This is what emerges from a study conducted by the Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (Ispra) based on data collected in 30 years of monitoring migratory species. Thanks to the Institute's ringing work, the routes of six species of long-range migratory birds have been traced: the

24 C. Scoccianti, *Amphibia: aspetti di ecologia della conservazione – WWF Italia, Sezione Toscana*. Edit. Guido Persichino Grafica, Firenze 2001; G. Stagni, R. Dall'Olio, U. Fusini, S. Mazzotti, C. Scoccianti, A. Serra, *Declining populations of apennine yellow-bellied toadbombina pachypus in the northern apennines (italy): Is Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis the main cause?*, in "Italian Journal of Zoology", vol. 71, n. suppl. 2, 2004, pp. 151- 154.


data show that two of these, the Pied Flycatcher and the Redstart, are responding very quickly to climate change, bringing forward their spring migration date by one day every three-four years.

As Weeks et alii point out in a study on the morphological consequences of global warming in North American migratory birds, almost all bird species are becoming smaller.²⁵ Although the species studied are very diverse, they respond similarly with a surprising homogeneity of data. Studies of animal responses to climate change almost always focus on the effects of changes in geographic distribution (altitudinal and longitudinal) or species' activity, reproduction, and migration rates. But this study suggests that changes in bird body morphology are a third crucial aspect of species evolution in response to climate change.



Conserving biodiversity

In 1872, US President Ulysses Grant signed the Yellowstone National Park Act. According to the Act, it was the first institutional act taken by man to protect nature and conserve habitats for the benefit of future

25 B. C. Weeks, D. E. Willard, A. A. Ellis, M. L. Witynski, M. Hennen, B. M. Winger, *Shared morphological consequences of global warming in North American migratory birds*. in "Ecology Letters", vol. 23, 2019, pp. 316-325.



generations. As well as playing an indispensable role in protecting the environment, national parks offer considerable economic resources thanks to the influx of tourists. In Italy, the system of parks and reserves results from a process that has lasted several decades and has been carried out in an unplanned manner. In fact, environmental systems, such as the mountains, are very well represented in protected areas, while other systems, such as the coast, are very poorly represented. It is precisely the system of protected areas that *conservation in situ* is based on, which is undoubtedly one of the essential actions for biodiversity conservation. It is only by having vast areas of natural and semi-natural land available that species conservation can be guaranteed, and this conservation is linked to the full functionality of the habitat and landscape. The great ecological variety of the Italian territory represented in the National Parks is evident in the characterisation of habitats of Community interest: 42% of their territory is, in fact, identified as a habitat of community interest.



A new concept for safeguarding ecosystems was developed by Myers and colleagues in an article published in Nature magazine in 2000. The proposal is to identify global biodiversity hotspots to direct political and conservationist action to those areas of the planet where most biodiversity is found and on which priority conservation action should be directed. Some environments around the world are particularly rich in biodiversity: for example, tropical forests, coral reefs and wetlands are home to more than half of the

planet's living species. Many of them are already severely compromised and have lost more than 90% of their original extent. The identified Earth's hotspots, distributed in various parts of the globe, represent different habitat types, cover 2.3% of the Earth's surface and are the remaining habitat for 50% of known vascular plant species and 42% of known vertebrate species.

The main instrument of European Union policy for the conservation of biodiversity is the *Natura 2000* network. It is an ecological network covering the entire territory of the EU, established under the Habitats Directive to ensure the long-term maintenance of natural habitats and species of flora and fauna that are threatened or rare at EU level. The *Natura 2000* network consists of Sites of Community Interest (SCI) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) established under the Birds Directive on the conservation of wild birds. The aim is to conserve purely natural habitats and semi-natural habitats such as areas of traditional agriculture, utilised woodland, pastureland, etc. The percentage of land covered by SCIs and SPAs is currently very high. Currently, the percentage of land covered by *Natura 2000* sites in Italy exceeds 21% of the national territory.²⁶

26 P. Genovesi, P. Angelini, E. Bianchi, E. Dupré, S. Ercole, V. Giacanelli, F. Ronchi, F. Stoch, *Specie e habitat di interesse comunitario in Italia: distribuzione, stato di conservazione e trend*, ISPRA, Serie Rapporti, 194/2014, 2014.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) with its Aichi Biodiversity Target 12 (<https://www.cbd.int/aichi-targets/target/12>) aims to prevent the extinction of threatened species. Bolam et alii²⁷ with their study assessed the actions of various states to safeguard endangered bird and mammal species. Their survey revealed that conservation has prevented 21-32 bird and 7-16 mammal extinctions since 1993 and 9-18 bird and 2-7 mammal extinctions since 2010 in various parts of the world. Many remain highly threatened and could still become extinct in the near future. However, given that ten bird species and five mammal species have gone extinct (or are strongly suspected of having gone extinct) since 1993, extinction rates would have been 2.9-4.2 times higher without conservation action. Acting on the estimated causes that lead mammals and birds to extinction can identify key steps to save species from extinction.

-
- 27 F. C. Bolam, L. Mair, M. Angelico, T. M. Brooks, M. Burgman, C. Hermes, M. Hoffmann, R. W. Martin, P. J. K. McGowan, A. S. L. Rodrigues, C. Rondinini, J. R. S. Westrip, H. Wheatley, Y. Bedolla-Guzmán, J. Calzada, M. F. Child, P. A. Cranswick, C. R. Dickman, B. Fessl, D. O. Fisher, S. T. Garnett, J. J. Groombridge, C. N. Johnson, R. J. Kennerley, S. R. B. King, J. F. Lamoreux, A. C. Lees, L. Lens, S. P. Mahood, D. P. Mallon, E. Meijaard, F. Méndez-Sánchez, A. R. Percequillo, T. J. Regan, L. M. Renjifo, M. C. Rivers, N. S. Roach, L. Roxburgh, R. J. Safford, P. Salaman, T. Squires, E. Vázquez-Domínguez, P. Visconti, J. C. Z. Woinarski, R. P. Young, S. H. M. Butchart, *How many bird and mammal extinctions has recent conservation action prevented?* in "Conservation Letters", vol. 14, n. 1, 2020, p. e12762.

Putting a price on nature may seem like a daunting task. To tackle this problem, Bradbury et alii used TESSA (Toolkit for Ecosystem Service Site-based Assessment),²⁸ which BirdLife helped develop over the past decade, to analyse 62 sites classified as biodiversity hotspots on six continents. This standardised system helps researchers measure and assign a value to the ecosystem services provided by a site in its current state (clean water, nature-based recreation, crop pollination, etc.) and compare them with the values provided in an alternative scenario. The research team, led by RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) and involving the University of Cambridge, BirdLife International and other institutions, assessed the value of ecosystem services provided by each site, such as carbon storage and flood protection, in a scenario where it is conserved or restored. They compared this with the expected benefits if the site were converted to human use (e.g. agriculture or logging). In the vast majority of cases, conservation or restoration of the site was found to offer greater economic benefits. To protect our planet's biodiversity, research must be stepped up to gain more knowledge about the

28 R. B. Bradbury, S. H. M. Butchart, B. Fisher, F. M. R. Hughes, L. Ingwall-King, M. A. MacDonald, J. C. Merriman, K. S.-H. Peh, A.-S. Pellier, D. H. L. Thomas, R. Trevelyan, A. Balmford, *The economic consequences of conserving or restoring sites for nature*, in "Nature Sustainability", 2021, pp. 1-67.

components and functioning of ecosystems. As Wilson states:

Unfortunately, biodiversity research has been abandoned by universities in favour of studies at the molecular and cellular level of a small number of model species. Museums around the world with exceptional collections have not been able to increase their curatorial staff to compensate for this. [...] Our incomplete taxonomic knowledge hinders our attempts to protect biodiversity. A renaissance in the classification of species and their interactions is needed to guide conservation priorities.²⁹

29 E.O. Wilson, *Biodiversity research requires more boots on the ground*. in “Nature Ecology & Evolution”, vol. 1, n. 11, 2017, pp. 1590–1591.

MONICA MORAZZONI¹

PARTICIPATORY PERSPECTIVES
ON ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AND CULTURAL
HERITAGE IN BRAZIL

Several factors, aided by the Covid-19 pandemic, are changing the global system: political factors, which could re-establish the Westphalian order of *cuius regio eius religio*, but also technological and social factors that lead us to ask ourselves to whom it is more advantageous to produce, organise and decide the fate of the economy, the environment, health... New processes of global governance – reversed from those of the 1990s – are outlining investment flows that are returning to developed countries or at least to geographical sub-regions that respond to the globalisation of demand and initiate the construction of a regional welfare state to support domestic demand and address the long-standing local social and environmental issues. We can perhaps think of

1 Monica Morazzoni teaches Geography at the Faculty of Arts and Tourism, IULM University, Milan. She has published numerous essays on regional, urban and tourism geography. She has been working for years on regional planning and projects for the enhancement and redevelopment of tourism, particularly in mountain areas. Her main region of study is Central America.

the profiling of a new Keynes-Beveridge consensus but at a different geographical and conceptual level: from the Fordist society to the digital society in which, hopefully, digital smartness should be used to initiate actions of economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability through practices of local community participation.

In this scenario, Brazil is also facing contingent health, social and political problems (April 2021) due to the spread of Covid-19; these are layered on top of the already long-standing issues of protection and use of the natural and cultural heritage, as well as the rights of the indigenous community, whose conservation in special reserves has acted (in part) as a limit to the deforestation of large areas of the Amazon forest. In response to the issues of sustainability, climate change and global warming, the federal government invites people *to ask Brazilians in the favelas or Maré whether they prefer to listen to speeches on climate change or on their own health and wellbeing* and emphasising the need for

an indigenous demarcated land industry, because there is a lot of Amazonian land for the few indigenous people who live there and the current [indigenous] reserves are ‘offensive’ to the inhabitants themselves, who must be treated like everyone else [...] and the [Amazonian] assets must not remain hidden there forever.²

2 L. Burocco, *Il Brasile sull'orlo della rivolta*, in “Il Manifesto”, 5 giugno 2020, <https://ilmanifesto.it/in-brasile-la-situazione-e-esplosiva/> (last accessed, 02/07/2021).

The issues of the environment, of the indigenous minority and of social inequalities lead to some reflection on the use of Brazilian territory, emptied of its social content and filled, over time, with multiple reasons for tension due also to development practices that are not shared and not co-participated in by local representatives.

Pandemic, syndemic, spillover

An initial reflection is prompted by the pandemic itself,³ undoubtedly one of the most critical economic,

-
- 3 Richard Horton (R. Horton, *Offline: COVID-19 is not a pandemic*, in “The Lancet”, vol. 396, no. 10255, 2020, p. 874) argues that it is incorrect to call the spread of Covid-19 a pandemic, as the situation caused by Covid-19 was aggravated not only by biomedical dynamics, but also by specific economic, social, and cultural conditions. It would therefore be more appropriate to speak of a syndemic, as the result of the synergy of several pandemics, in which the social component exacerbates the biomedical situation in a mechanism of continuous worsening of the overall situation. On the concept of syndemics, see also M. Singer, *Introduction to syndemics: a critical systems approach to public and community health*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco 2009; B. A. Swinburn, V. I. Kraak, S. Allender, V. J. Atkins, P. I. Baker, J. R. Bogard, H. Brinsden, A. Calvillo, O. De Schutter, R. Devarajan, M. Ezzati, S. Friel, S. Goenka, R. A. Hammond, G. Hastings, C. Hawkes, M. Herrero, P. S. Hovmand, M. Howden, L. M. Jaacks, A. B. Kapetanaki, M. Kasman, H. V. Kuhnlein, S. K. Kumanyika, B. Larijani, T. Lobstein, M. W. Long, V. K. R. Matsudo, S. D. H. Mills, G.

social, and cultural shocks of the 21st century. Its global impact has been such that it has not only called into question institutions and infrastructures consolidated during the 20th century but is also calling for a new approach to global and local problems, as demonstrated by the use of substantially new words: emergentism, resilience, spillover...

The pandemic itself – from now on, referring to the specific case of Brazil, a syndemic⁴ – will not be solved by a vaccine alone but rather through targeted interventions aimed at reducing social inequalities. But the syndrome has also sharpened the issue of the environment, which is composed not only of the biosphere (animals, plants and living organisms) but also of the sociosphere (social, economic, political and cultural systems): two spheres that interact so well that a disturbance in one of them affects the other

Morgan, A. Morshed, P. M. Nece, A. Pan, D. W. Patterson, G. Sacks, M. Shekar, G. L. Simmons, W. Smit, A. Tootee, S. Vandevijvere, W. E. Waterlander, L. Wolfenden, W. H. Dietz, *The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change: The Lancet Commission report*, in “The Lancet”, vol. 393, no. 10173, 2019, pp. 791–846; E. Mendenhall, *The COVID-19 syndemic is not global: context matters*, in “The Lancet”, vol. 396, no. 10264, 2020, p. 1731.

- 4 According to the American researcher Mendenhall (E. Mendenhall, *The COVID-19 syndemic is not global: context matters*, op. cit.), the transformation of the pandemic into a syndemic depends heavily on the socio-cultural context of location, as a variable that can slow down or accelerate the process of Covid-19 spread.

in a system of reciprocal effects.⁵ In this systemic framework, communication finds its place as the third sphere in which challenges are faced, but, as with the previous spheres, it is not exempt from the risk of pollution (fake news, conspiracies...).

A healthy world is one in which the environment, society, and communication cooperate virtuously, but everyone is called upon to play their part for this to happen. And this is where the second reflection linked to the effects of the processes of territorial reification comes in: while it is true that we are in the midst of the knowledge economy, countries that do not produce it and do not provide the local community with the tools to grow and participate in the development dynamics of their territory are destined to social, cultural and environmental impoverishment.

There is no doubt that providing everyone with the best possible knowledge is not only a matter of moral duty and educational training but also an economic necessity and for the growth of the territory itself, since the living being, if involved and provided with adequate tools, should be able to produce knowledge and ideas. In Brazil, citizen participation in public decision-making processes is still below the average

5 M. Singer, *Introduction to syndemics: a critical systems approach to public and community health*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2009; B. A. Swinburn *et alii*, *The global syndemic of obesity, undernutrition, and climate change: the Lancet Commission report*, in "The Lancet", vol. 393, n. 10173, 2019, pp. 791-846.

of OECD countries,⁶ and civil society activists are almost entirely excluded from any decision-making, especially regarding economic and environmental issues.⁷ On environmental issues, particularly, there is a clear contrast between the network of civil society organisations – which includes indigenous people, *quilombolas*,⁸ scientists, environmentalists and researchers working to enhance the local cultural and natural heritage – and the federal government, which carries out agreements and negotiations behind closed doors.⁹

Within this context, which is characterised by the now endemic opposition of losers (including the environment) and winners, it becomes necessary to build collective knowledge to redesign the sharing of information and the participation of the Brazilian

-
- 6 OECD, *How's Life in Brazil?*, 2018, <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/Better-Life-Initiative-country-note-Brazil.pdf> (last accessed, 02/07/2021).
 - 7 J. Watts, '*Negotiating with your worst enemy*': *Biden in risky talks to pay Brazil to save Amazon*, in "The Guardian", 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/apr/11/negotiating-with-your-worst-enemy-biden-in-risky-talks-to-pay-brazil-to-save-amazon> (last accessed, 02/07/2021).
 - 8 Descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves.
 - 9 D. Mastrogiacomo, *Brasile, le proteste degli indios: 'Biden non paghi per salvare l'Amazzonia'*, in "La Repubblica", 15 Aprile 2012, https://www.repubblica.it/green-and-blue/2021/04/15/news/amazzonia_indios_a_biden_non_paghi_per_salvare_la_foresta-296563053/ (last accessed, 02/07/2021).

community as promoters of its own development through the existing heritage and the opportunities for better use of local knowledge.¹⁰ Thus, to trigger virtuous sustainable growth processes, Brazil needs action programmes that are targeted, specific, but above all shared and co-participated.

Digital networks and collaborative culture: participatory perspectives for new forms of sociality

Starting from the four pillars of smart development (Innovation, Technology, Universal Accessibility and Sustainability),¹¹ Brazil, faced with increasingly pervasive technology, is lacking in terms of its inclusive management, sustainability and the accessibility of the local community to control its territory (land use, arson, deforestation, alteration of aquatic ecosystems, massive collaborative culture, etc.). In addition, many social technology projects are still in the pipeline (partly because of the country's well-known political and economic problems), which are indispensable for improving personal services and creating digital platforms for social interaction.¹² In

10 E. Rullani, *Economia della conoscenza. Creatività e valore nel capitalismo delle reti*, Roma, Carocci, 2004.

11 M. Lazzeroni, M. Morazzoni, (a cura di), *Interpretare la quarta rivoluzione industriale. La geografia in dialogo con le altre discipline*, Roma, Carocci, 2020.

12 In Brazil, the constitutional principle of citizen participation has been in place since 1988 and, in

short, there is a lack of bottom-up environmental conscience, a co-creation of the cultural value of one's own territory and, last but not least, there is a lack of awareness of the need to initiate new relations between resource and inhabitant through training courses also aimed at integrating the potential of experts with local knowledge.

As Friedland, Hove and Rojas state,

the transformation of traditional civil society and institutions (schools, community associations and even the family) into networked environments has created realities in which the media are the primary source of socialisation. [...] Working alone and in cooperation with others, everyone can ultimately participate in public arenas and participate in an overall and cumulative cultural process of preference and belief formation.¹³

particular, the Statute of the City (which came into force in 2011 to regulate urban policies in the Brazilian Constitution) establishes the fundamental principles regarding participatory planning and the social function of property. However, the means proposed to implement these principles (publication of documentation, public access and public hearings) have proved insufficient, not least because in most cases the studies on which technical and political decisions are based are not made public, and even if they are, few are able to discuss them. Hence the low participation of the population (G. C. Pereira, P.V. Florentino, M. C. F. Rocha, *Accesso alla città tramite nuove forme di sociabilità – esempi di uso dei social network in Brasile*, in "Territorio Italia", vol. 2, 2014).

- 13 G. C. Pereira, P.V. Florentino, M.C.F. Rocha, *Accesso alla città tramite nuove forme di sociabilità – esempi di uso*

The actions of Brazilian citizens, both as individuals and as participants in civil society, have taken concrete form, especially in the last decade, through digital projects that have involved scholars,¹⁴ private actors and organisations. Through the opening of digital platforms and social pages, forms of interaction have been initiated to support socio-cultural practices aimed at giving new meanings to physical, social and political contexts. These platforms – which are not valued by local public administrations¹⁵ and in which participants can only access information and express opinions, but not decisions – have often created forms of sub-activism.¹⁶ Generally, only part of the local community has been involved in expressing evaluations, judgements, and considerations. As a result, initiatives for civic participation, mobilisation

dei social network in Brasile, op. cit., p. 74.

- 14 Among the third mission projects launched in Brazil, those at the Federal University of Bahia are worth mentioning – UFBA: “From consumer to information producer: the citizen in the context of digital culture”, developed as a doctoral thesis in Culture and Society through the PosCultura Programme, and “Digital Social Networks and their impacts on urban space in Brazil”, developed as a doctoral thesis in Architecture and Urban Studies at PPGAU. Cfr. G.C. Pereira, Vieira Florentino, Furtado Rocha, *Access to the city through new forms of sociability – examples of the use of social networks in Brazil*.
- 15 G. C. Pereira, P.V. Florentino, M.C.F. Rocha, op. cit.
- 16 M. Bakardjieva, *Internet Society. The Internet in Everyday Life*, New York, Sage, 2005.

and collective action have been patchy, fragmented and often unfinished.

An example of the use of social networks on urban issues occurred with the establishment in 2012 of the Desocupa movement in Salvador (Bahia) through Facebook (later with the help of Twitter and a web page, <http://movimentodesocupa.wordpress.com>) (figs. 1 and 2). Started to question the occupation of a public square by a private company during Carnival, the movement generated the creation of a social network of citizens interested in keeping alive discussions and demonstrations against political actions in the field of urban planning and management of public spaces in Salvador.¹⁷ In the long run, however, this and similar online social practice initiatives end up accommodating the voices excluded from the dominant public sphere, the counter-public¹⁸ which in turn deploys discursive practices generally distant from the rest of the community. This creates a vicious circle, or even an exclusionary process, in

17 Today the social and web pages, although not deactivated, appear to be inactive: the last posts, statements, and debates date back to 2015.

18 D. Lazzarich, *La democratizzazione della sfera pubblica al tempo di Internet*, in A. Arienzo, D. Lazzarich (a cura di), *Vuoti e scarti di democrazia. Teorie e politiche democratiche nell'era della mondializzazione*, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Studi Politici e per l'Alta Formazione Europea e Mediterranea "Jean Monnet" della Seconda Università degli Studi di Napoli, Quaderni 41, Napoli, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 2012, pp. 211-239.

which antagonistic political cultures excluded from the space of representation give rise to other public spheres with conflicting outcomes.¹⁹

Therefore, digital technologies, on the one hand, contribute to creating preferential virtual environments for sharing opinions and initiating actions that reshape the territory and its use; on the other, they can amplify resilience, social conflict, and divisions within the civil community. To facilitate the achievement of social inclusion objectives, technologies must not only be guaranteed to the broadest possible number of citizens but must also be managed so that they become a medium of proactive participation and attention to the territory as a common good.²⁰

-
- 19 Striking, for example, is what has happened with the Zapatistas of Mexico and their national and international civil society supporters: today through social media, once with other discursive practices, they have constituted their own autonomy, separate and distinct both from the public sphere and from a part of the local community (M. Morazzoni, *Geopolitica dell'America Centrale. Le inquietudini, l'eredità, il futuro*, Bologna, Archetipolibri, 2010).
- 20 E. L. Gomes, J. M. Gândara, J. A. Ivars-Baidal, *É importante ser um destino turístico inteligente? A compreensão dos gestores públicos dos destinos do Estado do Paraná, "Revista Brasileira de Pesquisa em Turismo (RBTUR)"*, São Paulo, vol. 11, n. 3, 2017, pp. 503-536.



Fig. 1. Opening image of the Desocupa website
Source: <https://movimentodesocupa.wordpress.com/> (last accessed, 26/04/2021).



Fig. 2. Post of the Desocupa movement. The old centre bleeds! We will not accept to see black people expelled again, Salvador 2 July 2015.

Source: <https://movimentodesocupa.wordpress.com/> (last accessed, 26/04/2021).

Community maps and ecomuseums: participatory perspectives for a collective design of interaction with the territory

Attention to the territory as a common good is not merely a rhetorical device but should instead serve to draw the inhabitants' attention to a fundamental fact: by inhabiting one's own land, one experiences oneself, becomes aware of oneself, discovers one's responsibilities, one's creativity and, at the same time, the communality, the common character, the network (social and plural, cooperative and public) of inter-subjective relations that ensure sharing.²¹

Territorial intelligence²² lies precisely in the territory's ability to interfere in the decision-making processes that affect it through practices of inclusion and participation. However, if the territory, with the cultural and natural stratifications of which it is composed, is not considered as a common good, its own inhabitants achieve neither individual nor collective wellbeing, and the territory is charged with conflict. This is the context of Brazil today, exasperated by a social, political and health crisis, in which concerns and hopes, conflicts and potential coexist on a horizon with an uncertain and dysphoric future.

21 A. Turco (a cura di), *Paesaggio, luogo, ambiente. La configuratività territoriale come bene comune*, Milano, Unicopli, 2014.

22 *Ibidem*, p. 39.

Suppose the territory is a common good and the inhabitants are the repositories of knowledge, memories, and community ties. In that case, the type of information that is not the result of professional expertise alone but of experimentation formed and articulated in the territory thanks to the habits of frequentation, intergenerational transmission and direct experience of the contexts of life is of increasing importance.²³ If, therefore, the territory is not only the place where people live and work but also the place that preserves the memory of humans and the signs that have characterised it, the local community, as a consequence, is the bearer of information and dense networks of interrelationships that can be ascribed, moreover, within a cartographic representation with which the community itself can identify.

In this perspective, community maps²⁴ become the tool for drawing the contours of one's own territorial heritage (which is not a simple inventory of tangible and intangible assets) that also includes, however, a

23 Cfr. T. Banini, *Geografie culturali*, Milano, FrancoAngeli, 2019; A. Magnaghi (a cura), *Il territorio bene comune*, Milano, Hoepli, 2012.

24 About the topic of perceptual maps please refer to D. Murtas, *Il carattere dei luoghi tra consapevolezza e rappresentazione: ecomusei e mappe di comunità*, EGEA, Milano 2013; M. Carta, *Rappresentare nel progetto di territori*, Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2011; A. Magnaghi (a cura di), *Montespertoli. Le mappe di comunità per lo statuto del territorio*, Firenze, Alinea, 2010.

set of invisible relationships. Therefore, drawing up a community map means implementing a process aimed at obtaining an archive of people, places, actions, relations, values, and collective memories of the territory.

The community map, representing the components of collective identity, is above all a cultural process;²⁵ to produce it, the inhabitants of the territory are called upon to participate in informal meetings in which a series of activities leads to the development of an awareness of their territory's value and the importance of protecting and enhancing it.²⁶ With the perceptive map, the community concretises *the internalisation of the territory's characteristics, resulting from a co-evolutionary relationship in which experiences, skills, and knowledge are continuously accumulated to form its own identity.*²⁷ The creation of community maps predisposes to constructing a network of local actors, bearers of initiatives for the development and promotion of the territory. Moreover, the action of drawing or approaching the images is a necessary step that marks the various stages of a participatory process

25 D. Murtas, *Il carattere dei luoghi tra consapevolezza e rappresentazione: ecomusei e mappe di comunità*, op.cit.

26 S. Clifford, M. Maggi, D. Murtas, *Genius loci. Perché, quando e come realizzare una mappa di comunità*, Torino, 2006. Ires Piemonte.

27 G. Reina, *La "Mappa di Comunità": strumento rigenerativo delle identità locali per una visione condivisa dello sviluppo ecosostenibile dei territori*, in A. D'Urso, G. Reina, B. Reutz-Hornsteiner, F. Ruiz Peyré (a cura di), *Urban Cultural Maps*, Catania, C.U.E.C.M., 2013, p. 116.

leading to the creation of the map itself. As stated by Zuccoli, De Nicola, Pecorelli et alii

Using graphic signs in different forms became a means of researching, knowing, synthesizing, exploring, documenting, designing, and it assumed an essential value to give shape to an articulated and complex vision of knowledge.²⁸

Community maps are often a tool used in the processes of creating ecomuseums,²⁹ in which Brazil has a vital position in the South American context compared to other countries. Maps and ecomuseums,

28 F. Zuccoli, A. De Nicola, V. Pecorelli, L. Carriera, A. Costa, *Rethinking Local Heritage Through Graphics in Mantua and Sabbioneta. Images, Maps, Fanzines for Narrating a UNESCO Site with Students During School-Work Internship*, in E. Cicalò (a cura di), *Proceedings of the 2nd International and Interdisciplinary Conference on Image and Imagination*, in “IMG 2019 Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing”, vol. 1140, Cham, Springer, 2020, p.140.

29 The most common types of ecomuseum location in Brazil, according to a survey conducted in the early 2000s (A. Primi, *Identità culturali, sviluppo locale, tutela e educazione ambientale attraverso esperienze ecomuseali del Brasile e del Venezuela*”, in I. Luzzana Caraci, A. D’Ascenzo (a cura di), *Mundus Novus. Amerigo Vespucci e la sua eredità*, Roma, CISGE, 2007, pp. 316-317), concern areas in or near territories under protection or of environmental value; inland areas with little or no tourism; established tourist areas; large urban areas; hydroelectric power stations, in operation or disused; coastal islands.

in fact, have as their objective the recovery and enhancement of local culture and the protection and safeguarding of the environment.³⁰ This aim is brought about above all thanks to educational activities and interventions to protect the environment, such as reforestation and fire-fighting campaigns. Both tools allow the territory to be interpreted in the light of many direct experiences in the field. They are a hypothetical magnifying glass and, through the exercise of abstraction, facilitate the identification of elements, activities, processes (natural, anthropic, economic) of the territory.

Maps and ecomuseums are, therefore, a mirror in which people seek to explain their environment.³¹ They are, in fact, read directly by the population and secondarily proposed to visitors to the ecomuseum and/or readers of the community map to document the cultural heritage and the relationship between human activities and the territory.³² Among the natural elements characterising the different territories perceived by Brazilians is mainly water (channelled in

30 A. Primi, *Ecomusei: memoria e identità territoriale*, in G. Cusimano (a cura), *Luoghi e turismo culturale*, Bologna, Patron, 2006, pp. 223-236.

31 G. H. Rivière 1985, *The Ecomuseum: An Evolutionary Definition*, in "Museum", vol. 148, pp. 182-244.

32 A. Primi, *Identità culturali, sviluppo locale, tutela e educazione ambientale attraverso esperienze ecomuseali del Brasile e del Venezuela*, in I. Luzzana Caraci, A. D'Ascenzo (a cura di), *Mundus Novus. Amerigo Vespucci e la sua eredità*, op. cit., p. 329.

hydroelectric plants, waterfalls, rivers, the sea), as the environment in which local civilisations and traditions developed and through which the colonisation of the country was achieved.³³

There is also a focus on specific natural ecosystems and their biodiversity: wetlands, coastal islands, the Amazon rainforest... On the other hand, concerning the human-made processes that are most frequently recorded in the community maps and enclosed in the ecomuseums, everything has left significant traces in the settlements: artistic and cultural traditions, both through Portuguese colonisation and the presence of Jesuit missions and European immigrants. Of no less value is also the perception that local communities have of disused settlements and activities, the reconversion of particular sites to new use and the illustration of traditional activities relating, for example, to plantation production. The cultural product thus becomes a factor in the promotion of the territory while avoiding the risk of cultural homologation, to which the communities react with a strong demand for identity, which can sometimes take on reactionary attitudes or local closure.³⁴

33 A. Vitale, B. Dendena (a cura), *10 idee per comunità sostenibili. Buone pratiche per una gestione intelligente della risorsa acqua*, Milano, Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 2019.

34 A. Primi, *Identità culturali, sviluppo locale, tutela e educazione ambientale attraverso esperienze ecomuseali del Brasile e del Venezuela*, in I. Luzzana Caraci, A. D'Ascenzo (a cura di), *Mundus Novus. Amerigo Vespucci*

Brazil, however, has moved towards good participatory practices of collective interaction with the territory, thanks to initiatives for the rediscovery of local culture, which are concretely manifested on a local scale and take root in contained territories through the establishment of ecomuseums.

e la sua eredità, op. cit., p. 313; see also R. Riva, (a cura), *Ecomuseums and cultural landscapes. State of the art and future prospects*, Santarcangelo di Romagna, Maggioli Editore, 2017.







BRUNO BRULON SOARES¹


BEYOND QUARANTINE

How Culture Heals the Planet²

I think the question about how culture heals the planet is a very necessary question, and I would try to describe a point of view of the Brazilian current context in 2020.

First of all, it is important to remind ourselves that in 2012 the UN has considered Brazil an example to the world on sustainable development. As already remembered, the 2012 Rio event on sustainability was perceived as, and I quote here the UN, *humanity's chance to commit to a transition to a green economy*.



-
- 1 Bruno Brulon Soares is professor of Museology at the Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – UNIRIO (Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro – UNIRIO), with a Master degree in Museology and Cultural Heritage and a PhD degree in Anthropology. Coordinator of the Course of Museology (2014-2015) of UNIRIO. Coordinator of the Research Group Experimental Museology and Image – MEI. Coordinator of ICOFOM Special Research Project *The History of Museology*, created in 2014. Author of several papers in the area of Museology Theory, Reflexive Museology, Museums and Museology History and Cultural Heritage. President of the International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM) since 2019.
 - 2 The text is based on the transcript of the speech of Bruno Brulon Soares in the panel Bookcity 2020.
- 

In 2019, at the General Conference of the International Council of Museums held in Kyoto, the Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado gave a keynote speech³ illustrating some of his works and denouncing what was at risk in the Brazilian Amazon rainforest.

Now in 2020, Brazil is again an international case study but this time it is a case study on sustainable practices and an example of national destruction of the environment in the name of a new conception of development and progress aligned with neoliberalism and the global market.

Salgado's accusation from the 25th ICOM General Assembly in Kyoto highlighted that the destruction of the environment is directly connected with the precarity of human life in the Brazilian territory. This statement is not surprising, considering the current situation in Brazil and the threats to its environment. In specific, Brazilians are not surprised of it because, as we know, the Bolsonaro government and the current policies that threaten the environment were already very vocally expressed by the president even before he became president. So, this is something that we were very much afraid of, but now we must deal with the consequences of this scenario. For this reason, we have to ask how the country that was considered as an example of sustainability a few years ago according to the UN, has now turned into the greatest example

3 <https://youtu.be/0hDO5UCHhZ4> (last accessed, 08/07/2021).

of necropolitics at the beginning of the XXI century, above all in the difficult year of 2020.

From the point of view of state policies for the preservation of cultural heritage, which is the field of my professionalism, since I work with museums and cultural heritage, I have recently emphasised how the ethno-preservation of indigenous culture in Brazil should be directly connected to the preservation of the environment and human rights.⁴

That is the reason why I would like to answer the question of how culture can heal the planet by presenting a pair of indigenous objects displayed in the Brazilian Indian Museum (Museu do Índio, MI), located in a colonial mansion dating back from 1880, in the neighbourhood of Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro. I explored this museum on the occasion of a recent study with a student of mine in order to analyse the acquisition of two indigenous Waurá masks by the Museu do Índio, a very important ethnographic museum in Rio de Janeiro. These two ritual masks were produced in the Xingu – indigenous park, a reserve established in 1961 in the state of Mato Grosso in Brazil, and their production depends on natural resources that are

4 B. Brulon Soares, L. Guedes, *Four Waurá masks in the Indian Museum: a decolonial way to conservation practice and theory*, in Mairress F. *What is the Essence of Conservation?*, an ICOM-CC and ICOFOM joint session at ICOM Kyoto 2019, in “Proceedings of ICOM 25th General Conference”.

sustainably extracted by the indigenous group Waurá, currently living in this preserved land.

The Park of Xingu is a demarcated land in the middle of Brazil where currently lives different indigenous groups, among which the Trumai, Hitten, Kamaiurá, Kuikuro, Matipu and the Waurá. These groups are interconnected through a network of specialised trade, marriages, and inter-tribal rituals and each of them cultivate its own ethnic identity that is very much connected to this land as well as their tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Officially, this Xingu Park was established in the Sixties in the central west region of the country as a natural reserve where the principles of environmental preservation are combined with the preservation of the living population and their cultures.

When it was first conceived, the definition of this land had in mind the protection of a natural environment from which indigenous people extract the means of their existence.

Following a curatorial direction in 2015, the museologists in the Museu do Índio initiated a commercial transaction with an indigenous association for the production and acquisition of a set of masks, a total of four Waurá masks.⁵ It was usually through a market transaction with the association that the contact with the craftsmen in the tribe was made to check their availability to respond to the museum order, and they

5 Report on the Waurá masks, 2015, Archive of Museu do Índio – FUNAI, Rio de Janeiro.

then set a price. Actually, it is a market transaction directly with the indigenous, not like it used to be in the colonial past or even when anthropologists went to the field. It is a little bit different nowadays from what it used to be. And it was the way the Museum acquired these objects. Beyond their apparent beauty and huge dimension (the masks measure around fifteen inches to eight inches of depth), the masks are considered rare because, as ritual objects, they can only be produced in a certain period of the year, regularly around June and July, and the season for the manufacture of ritual masks coincides with the period when natural resources are available in the preserved environment. Obviously, indigenous people live sustainably in this environment, and they cannot extract certain resources all the times of the year.⁶ Such a difficult production increases the value of rarity invested in these objects for the museum to acquire them.

As we have observed in this study, the indigenous craftsmen have participated in the museum process and have not only brought the masks but also brought knowledge about their production in the Park of Xingu.

We have also observed that the process of preservation in the museum is a process extended to the market, to the indigenous village where they were produced and to the environment where the materials

6 M.L. Menezes, *Parque Indígena do Xingu – A construção de um território estatal*. [Indigenous Park of Xingu – The construction of a state territory.] Campinas, Brasil, Editora da Unicamp, 2000.

were extracted. So, there is a whole chain of production that is preserved and that obviously will maintain the production and the people who produce. Thus, the authenticity depends also on the preservation of human life and culture on a territory that is constantly disputed between indigenous people and the nation-state. As we know, this dispute has become even more stressed in this current scenario.

This example demonstrates to make my argument clearer, since this kind of operation has helped to preserve the land of Xingu, where the Waurá and several other indigenous groups live. This piece of land has been untouched by the destruction that has been affecting all the Brazilian territory, and it is a clear demonstration that by preserving indigenous land we are also preserving the natural environment where they live.⁷

I would add that the respect of the bonds among the conservation of heritage, the preservation of the environment and the subsistence of the indigenous life is, therefore, a priority for cultural institutions

7 M. Carneiro da Cunha, *Povos da megadiversidade. O que mudou na política indigenista no último meio século*. [People of megadiversity. What has changed in the indigenist policy in the last half century] in “Piauí”, vol.148, 2019, pp. 36-39.

M. Carneiro da Cunha, M. Almeida, *Populações tradicionais e conservação ambiental*. [Traditional populations and conservation of the environment]. In M. Carneiro da Cunha, *Cultura com aspás e outros ensaios*, São Paulo, Cosac Naify, 2009, pp. 277-300.

dealing with life even when preserving collections of material objects. Therefore, we should understand that cultural objects are not detached from their original environment and their original location of production, and that they are not detached from the people that produce them. In this sense, sustainability should be perceived in an integral way: as a notion that guarantees the preservation of life in all its forms against the predatory policies and the necropolitics that define the Brazilian state at the present time. All forms of preservation should aim to the ultimate preservation of human life and the integral existence of all living beings.⁸

That is the message that I would like to give by looking at these objects more carefully.

8 E. Ireland, *Noções Waurá de humanidade e identidade cultural*, in B. Franchetto, M. Heckenberger (Eds.), *Os Povos do Alto Xingu*, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, Editora UFRJ, 2011, pp. 254-305.




ANNAMARIA ESPOSITO AND M. CRISTINA VANNINI
THE MUSEUMS OF TOMORROW

The following essay – *A Certain Idea of the Future* by Patrizia Asproni and the transcription of the speech *The Best, Yet Most Dangerous, Moment* by Luiz Alberto Oliveira – are a stimulus to reflect on the role of cultural institutions in the post-pandemic era.

It is no coincidence that in their contributions, the director of the Museum of Tomorrow¹ in Rio de Janeiro and the president of the Museo Marino Marini in Florence urge us to take possession of the future and of the awareness that tomorrow's living conditions depend on our actions today.

Everything has changed dramatically in the *Coronacene* era. This reminds us of the fragility of humanity and that there is a close connection between



1 The Museum of Tomorrow is a science museum that focuses on ecology, sustainability and the future of our planet and explores the opportunities and challenges humanity will face in the coming decades. Opened in December 2015 in Rio de Janeiro, the Museum of Tomorrow is a cultural facility of the Department of Culture of the city of Rio. The Museum of Tomorrow is also active internationally and is the centre of a global network of Museums of the Future, through MOTI – Museum of Tomorrow International – based in Amsterdam, which works to develop international cultural projects in line with the museum's values.




the health of the planet and human health, as Luiz Alberto Oliveira points out.

The economic, social, geopolitical, climatic, environmental spheres have been affected by an acceleration of technological innovation driven by science, and the sphere of cultural production is no exception.

The core business of museums, understood as the characteristic and prevailing activity of museum institutions, has not changed and is still concentrated around the educational and social mission of the museum. However, what has changed is the way of relating to its audiences and the importance attributed to audience development which, even in cities rich in art, returns to be the resident and local public. And it is this change of perspective that has encouraged the transition from a collection-centred model to an audience-centred one, with a focus on production rather than conservation to dialogue with the public in a relationship that has become almost affective. In fact, there has been a greater awareness that the public is no longer a passive recipient, but a party intimately interested in the museum, and that museum spaces, even in their open-air annexes, are safe, reliable places to stay well.




This period has confirmed that museums, finally in Italy too, are centres of cultural production or creative industries, despite the difficulties often imposed by the lack of adequate equipment, professionalism and resources.




The museum transforms into an *atelier*, becomes a living cultural space and a powerful communication tool that must pursue its institutional mission in an increasingly engaging way oriented towards the future, without losing sight of its cultural and scientific heart. This is so true that during a pandemic, despite the reduction in working hours to which many museum workers have had to submit, the work of reorganisation, study, research and communication of the collections and museum spaces have continued for the renewal of the digital offering and its communicative languages.

Museums have therefore had the opportunity to demonstrate their relevance within contemporary society.² They have shown an unexpected speed in adapting to new needs.




Today, the greatest challenge for museums is to maintain the role and image they have demonstrated during the pandemic: bringing culture into the homes of all those who are the least bit interested in it, offering content for reflection, contributing to literacy about possible futures.³





What is needed is a new culture that democratises the ability to know and imagine the future, to link awareness with action so as not to be unprepared to face the changes that will come.

2 In Italy, many museums have made themselves available to host vaccination centres, such as at the Capodimonte Museum in Naples or the Hangar Bicocca in Milan.

3 According to UNESCO, Futures Literacy is an essential skill for the 21st century.



If this is true for people, it is probably also true for the museums of tomorrow. The ability to imagine the future and the changes (demographic, educational, environmental sustainability and protection, technological innovation) that will have to be governed can be the lever for transforming museums. But the future is today, says Patrizia Asproni in her essay, and therefore it is necessary to come to terms with the present by imagining the future. In the world, the museums that manage to overcome the pandemic crisis must immediately equip themselves to monitor and understand the cultural, social, technological, political and economic trends on the horizon to help society face the challenges of tomorrow.





PATRIZIA ASPRONI¹

A CERTAIN IDEA OF THE FUTURE

Even if the future seems far away, it is
actually beginning right now

Mattie JT Stepanek – Poet – age 13


The future is the new challenge.

The Covid-19 pandemic has, in fact, led to a rethinking of certainties and ways of approaching the globalised world that we took for granted.

Therefore, the post-CoronaVirus theme offers us the opportunity to draw attention to the necessary connection between the future of cultural institutions and that of society as a whole, which involves overcoming the static-conservative vision for a

1 Patrizia Asproni has been involved in cultural management and the creative industries for over fifteen years. Since 2001 she has been president of Confcultura (the Italian Association of Enterprises for the Enhancement and Promotion of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Tourism and Technological Innovation) and since 2006 she has been president of the Industry and Culture Foundation, set up with the aim of creating a meeting place to help businesses use culture as a lever for economic and social development. She is chair of the Marino Marini Museum Foundation in Florence. She is also chair of the European Cultural Heritage Technology Platform IPOCH2 and co-chair of the Joint Commission Italy-USA Cooperation on Science and Technology on Cultural Heritage.







new concept that could be defined as dynamic-transformative.

This reflection, therefore, focuses on the *presentification of the future*, on the speed with which profound and unexpected changes are taking place in our world that we can no longer ignore: changes in the climate and the Earth's energy structure, geopolitical transformations, continuous revolutions in communication systems, in techniques and technology, and not least the trends affecting cultural production.

More and more, in fact, the prediction of possible future scenarios questions and solicits creative elaboration.




The way of looking at the future has changed and is changing, no longer the prerogative of fantasy exercises projected into an indefinite and distant time, but finally perceived as the result of creation, research and experimentation conducted in the present and as a necessary dimension of today's political choices.



It is now an accepted fact that culture is one of the cornerstones of the actual progress of societies, but this is confirmed by the various reports analysing indices and rankings, including the UNESCO report dedicated explicitly to the relationship between culture and sustainable development. The document aims not to record a fact but to offer concrete guidelines that can be used as a basis for equally concrete policies at the international and national levels.

The prospect is 2030, the horizon to which the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development looks. A




very near future, which the UN Agency for Culture looks at with appropriate urgency, noting that if the discussions of the last three decades have led to a consensus on the need for mainstreaming culture in global development plans (as well as on its intrinsic value), it is time for good intentions to be transformed into action. Not in a hundred years, but tomorrow, as a direct consequence of culture's certified capacity to be a driver of economic development and social inclusion today, and to be an instrument of peace, dialogue and security – challenges the world demands a response to in the short, very short term.

Profound changes are, in fact, underway: generation and exchange of content, immaterial use, multiplication of platforms, globalisation of the audience. Everything leads to an evolution, above all, in languages, now the functions of the medium – the net – and that temporal acceleration that Bauman calls *nowism* and that dictates *stay connected*.

For this reason, the future is happening now and is becoming more and more concrete on the global agenda of individual states, cities, and even, coming to us, cultural institutions.

And here, the quantum leap concerns the challenge of putting this type of creativity, which is increasingly *scientifically contaminated*, at the service of development, public policies and renewed, winning business models.


So what will happen on our side? Will we succeed in breaking the unequivocal relationship that has linked culture for so long to the concept





of the past (preservation) rather than that of the future (creation)? We will also begin to ask (and try to answer) questions about the role of cultural institutions in the future – looking a decade ahead – beyond the worn-out relationship between protection/preservation and enhancement/use that still occupies much of the Italian debate, to a perspective that will soon revolutionise everything: that of integration. In other words, the reinterpretation of natural assets and ecology as cultural assets (and values), biodiversity as wealth to be protected and promoted, the landscape as infrastructure, and innovation as a resource for growth.

Italian cultural institutions are an immense database unique in the world; at a time when big data and data mining are the gold standard of the 21st century, Cultural Data will be, for centuries to come, like water: a right for all, indispensable for life, accessible and usable for all. Therefore, using this resource for the country's entire development should be an axiom for our economic and social policies.

Let's suppose it is certain that audience engagement, the mantra of cultural policies in the new millennium, is based on a relationship between the actors that is almost peer-to-peer. In that case, tomorrow's user-generated approach takes cultural institutions towards a new dynamism, accentuating the dimension of knowledge workshops that are unique because they are built on an unparalleled historical and artistic heritage, and assigning the public the role of the leading player, propeller and generator of knowledge.



In this way, in an era of maximum homogenisation of the existing, in which globalisation has led to the systematic erosion of differences, the commodification and devaluation of cultural traditions, cultural institutions can represent real barriers to fading, places where consciences are drawn to knowledge as the primary means of building human capital, a sense of belonging, social inclusion and even health care. The future is already here – let's go inside.





LUIZ ALBERTO OLIVEIRA¹

THE BEST, YET MOST DANGEROUS, MOMENT²

How does culture heal the planet? This is a very interesting question. I will try to share with you some concepts that we've been considering recently in the Museum of Tomorrow, the science museum in Rio de Janeiro.

The first one and perhaps most important insight is that we live in a very, very special period of humankind's history. Steven Pinker, the well-known neuroscientist, affirms that this is in fact the *best* moment of the history of humanity.³ The best moment because we have never been healthier, wealthier, more free and more pacific, although, if you are in Brazil, especially in Rio, this last statement is bound to be troublesome. But Pinker puts together solid evidence

-
- 1 Luiz Alberto Oliveira is a physicist, PhD in Cosmology, former researcher at the Cosmology, Relativity and astrophysics Group of the Brazilian Center for Physical Research (CBPF / MCTI), where he also served as a professor of History and Philosophy of Science. Professor, lecturer and consultant for several institutions, he is currently the Chief Curator of the Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro.
 - 2 This text is based on the transcript of the speech of Luiz Alberto Oliveira in the panel Bookcity 2020.
 - 3 S. Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, New York, Viking, 2011.

that today we do live longer, and have more resources, artifacts and products at our disposal, globally. Also, almost all the governments in the UN Assembly declare themselves democracies, whatever that may mean, and if furthermore you compare the relative lethality of violence today, with respect to other epochs, you find that indeed it is just a fraction, in spite of the fact that this last century has never seen a day without an armed conflict, somewhere. Anyway, perhaps the most significant aspect of this best moment is pointed out by the French philosopher Michel Serres when he observes that recently, for the first time in history, there are more alphabetized people than not.⁴ Due foremost to the spread of public education in the last decades, about 70% of mankind today is alphabetized in some language, and the yet most important aspect is that, of this majority, more than half are women. If we recall no further than the beginning of the 20th century, the number of literate women throughout the world was close to nil. Clearly, this is a huge psychosocial transformation taking place now, that shall enable us to become the necessary bridge between past and future, between what came before us and what will come after us.

So, this indeed seems a very special moment, from this point of view – but, on the other hand, Stephen Hawking, the late famous astrophysicist, stated that

4 M. Serres, S. F. Glaser, W. R. Paulson, *The troubadour of knowledge*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press, 1997.

this is the *most dangerous* moment in the history of mankind, because we have reached an unprecedented, and mostly destructive, alteration of the biological, ecological and cultural bases of our own existence, and yet we do not have the means to leave the planet.⁵


So, this is the best moment and also the most dangerous. Why? Because as Hawking points out, we are globally changing the composition of the atmosphere, altering the rhythms of climate, degrading biodiversity at a rate that approaches a sixth great extinction – we already have, for instance, more than four hundred deserted regions in the oceans, mostly due to microplastic pollution –, we are erasing the fertile superficial layer of the soils throughout the continents, putting down forests, which are the best ways to pull out carbon from the atmosphere, and we live in a deeply, obscenely, unequal society. And soil and water exhaustion, combined with a large social inequality, seems to be a sure indication of failure, according to the history of many collapsed past societies. When the environment resources are stretched out too much and the inequality within the society is too large, then the historical record of previous civilizations show that these critical factors, often, become predictors of a probable collapse, either surmountable or irreversible.

5 S. Hawking, *This is the most dangerous time for our planet*, The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/01/stephen-hawking-dangerous-time-planet-inequality> (last accessed, 12/07/21).

Therefore, this is the best moment of human history, and on the other hand this is also the most risky time ever. One way of synthesising these contradictory images is observing that we live in a new civilizational epoch, the Anthropocene,⁶ that is a stage where our culture becomes increasingly aware of a decisive fact – that we have turned into a planetary shaping force, meaning that our collective actions overlay and affect the entire planet, and these actions will have long-range consequences. There are many debates among scientists if this is a new age in a canonical geological sense. For us in the Museum of Tomorrow, this is an important question, but what really matters here is that all data available imply that we are certainly living in a new *civilizational* age. So, the Anthropocene is above all a civilizational issue, a new time where we come to understand that our actions are changing and reshaping the very support of *all* earthly beings – us included. That is, we are now in a non-linear existential trajectory, in the sense that each step we take now changes the possible characteristics of all further steps in the future.


The Anthropocene concept can thus be understood as a means for a *cultural* diagnosis about the current state of our world civilization. Using it, it is straightforward to realize that indeed we are now a

6 W. Steffen, P.J. Crutzen, J. R. McNeill. J. Crutzen, *The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?*, in “Ambio”, vol. 36, n. 8, 2007, pp. 614-621.





planetary civilization – for there are no regions, no places in the whole world, which are not affected, directly or indirectly, by our actions. So, in the full sense of the word, the decisions we make today will shape the world. Our grandsons and their grandsons, as well as almost every other living species in the planet, will share this world we are now taking part in the making. This is indeed a very significant realization. For instance, the predicament we are passing now, the Covid-19 pandemic, can be conceived as a prelude, a first movement, of this anthropocenic set of global changes. We decided, in the Museum, to call these troubled times the *Coronacene*, to properly highlight the fact that we are being introduced to the global character of our collective behaviour, in an unequivocal way, by the emergence of a biophysical agent – something of the size of a hair string split into 20,000 parts – that was nonetheless able to, all of a sudden, halt the workings of the capitalist modern civilization and, in a few weeks, put some four billion people into quarantine. The main aspect regarding this huge transformation is that the pandemic started as a disruption, but the Covid-19 agent, being now distributed to all regions, will stay with us for a long time. Furthermore, other pandemics are on the horizon. For instance, the Amazon region, from the putting down of the Amazon Forest is a potential nest for the spreading of other pathogens. The *Coronacene* is thus a stage of a whole, continuing process.


What is, then, the role of cultural institutions, of culture itself in the broadest sense, given this



scenario? In the Museum, we believe that one very important mission of cultural equipment today is to inform people about the conditions and features of the Anthropocene, that is, the circumstances for living on the planet from now on. So, we have to be able to perform an intense dialogue not only with ourselves as peoples and societies, but with non-human assemblies as well – that is, with constellations of beings operating processes that may well encompass ourselves and our livelihood, but displaying scales, ranges and durations very untypical for us, whether too large or too small, too fast or too slow.





One of the most striking consequences of such a state of global affairs is the nature of the required adaptive measures that should be taken up in order to make our enduring presence here on the planet viable. A profound change in the basic economic dynamics we have been applying up to now is on the horizon: since the very dawn of the Industrial Age, our production efforts have been focused on growth, on expanding the economy in space. The aim of capitalism has always been to involve the whole planet, exploring maximally all sorts of resources and converting all people, from mere citizens, into consumers. It is crystal clear today that capitalism has achieved that goal. It succeeded in expanding globally, so now our activities do indeed wrap around the whole planet. But to thrive – or even to survive – in the Anthropocene, an entirely different challenge must be met – not to expand further in space, but to extend our actions in *time*. The quest now is not to just progress onward but becoming



sustainable in the long run. For that, at the very core of the drive that has been organising our societies since the last centuries, the capitalist enterprise, a deep dynamical change must take place. This new, more resilient system shall display features like less resource consumption, more efficient conversion of resources into goods, a fairer distribution of these goods, less generation of residues, and intensive residue recycling. Therefore, the very central engine of the contemporary civilizational project will have to adapt; in other words, *we* will have to change.



To carry out a transformation of such magnitude, the tools and endeavours of Culture are indispensable. Culture is the means with which we *talk* to each other, that is, it is the foundation of all communities. It is also the means through which we talk to everything else, to all other beings and systems. Through art, we can dialogue with the unknown depths of our own souls; through science, we are able to speak with far away stars, tectonic plates, extinct dinosaurs, atomic nuclei, and with invisible viruses – we are currently in a very thorny exchange with one such entity. As we converse with such strange partners, they become knowable, and acknowledgeable, that is, they become (partly) human, and we ourselves become different than we were before the interplay – we renew ourselves. We can remind the ancient wisdom of original peoples when they say that a mountain is an ancestor, a river is a relative, and animals are brothers, because the people speak with them, and they speak back. Culture is the means of speaking with each other, with the





humanity that we are, but also with the humanities in differentiation, that are still forthcoming upon us; and with all the vast non-humanities of this world. It comprises the very heart of the human experience.

In conclusion, I would like to say that cultural institutions, in the *Coronacene*, must help people to become aware that *today* is always the place where we build tomorrows. From each opportunity, there are many paths for diverse tomorrows, that is, many possible tomorrows may open and develop from each day. The reason is that today is the stage for action, and taking action is in itself the opening of new paths towards new tomorrows. We look around, listen to people, consider what we achieved up to now, and realize how far we must yet go – but we also understand that we *already* have, in our hands and spirits, the required means to turn many possible futures into *desirable* ones. The necessary assets to become such a bridge connecting what came before us and what will come after us are already in our possession, within our cultures. We just have to recognise this, breathe deeply, and proceed to reinvent ourselves and our relationship with nature









MIMESIS GROUP
www.mimesis-group.com

MIMESIS INTERNATIONAL
www.mimesisinternational.com
info@mimesisinternational.com

MIMESIS EDIZIONI
www.mimesisedizioni.it
mimesis@mimesisedizioni.it



ÉDITIONS MIMÉSIS
www.editionsmimesis.fr
info@editionsmimesis.fr



MIMESIS COMMUNICATION
www.mim-c.net

MIMESIS EU
www.mim-eu.com





Printed by
Digital Team – Fano (PU)
November 2021

