Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20

Anna Anzani *Editor*

Conscious Dwelling

For Transdisciplinary Cityscapes

Springer

Springer Series in Design and Innovation

Volume 20

Springer Series in Design and Innovation (SSDI) publishes books on innovation and the latest developments in the fields of Product Design, Interior Design and Communication Design, with particular emphasis on technological and formal innovation, and on the application of digital technologies and new materials. The series explores all aspects of design, e.g. Human-Centered Design/User Experience, Service Design, and Design Thinking, which provide transversal and innovative approaches oriented on the involvement of people throughout the design development process. In addition, it covers emerging areas of research that may represent essential opportunities for economic and social development.

In fields ranging from the humanities to engineering and architecture, design is increasingly being recognized as a key means of bringing ideas to the market by transforming them into user-friendly and appealing products or services. Moreover, it provides a variety of methodologies, tools and techniques that can be used at different stages of the innovation process to enhance the value of new products and services.

The series' scope includes monographs, professional books, advanced textbooks, selected contributions from specialized conferences and workshops, and outstanding Ph.D. theses.
The volumes of the series are single-blind peer-reviewed.

Keywords: Product and System Innovation; Product design; Interior design; Communication Design; Human-Centered Design/User Experience; Service Design; Design Thinking; Digital Innovation; Innovation of Materials.

How to submit proposals

Proposals must include: title, keywords, presentation (max 10,000 characters), table of contents, chapter abstracts, editors'/authors' CV.

In case of proceedings, chairmen/editors are requested to submit the link to conference website (incl. relevant information such as committee members, topics, key dates, keynote speakers, information about the reviewing process, etc.), and approx. number of papers.

Proposals must be sent to: series editor Prof. Francesca Tosi (francesca.tosi@unifi.it) and/or publishing editor Mr. Pierpaolo Riva (pierpaolo.riva@springer.com).

More information about this series at https://link.springer.com/bookseries/16270

Anna Anzani
Editor

Conscious Dwelling

For Transdisciplinary Cityscapes

Springer

Editor
Anna Anzani
Design Department
Politecnico di Milano
Milan, Italy

Translation into English of the Chapters by Anna Anzani

ISSN 2661-8184 ISSN 2661-8192 (electronic)
Springer Series in Design and Innovation
ISBN 978-3-030-97973-7 ISBN 978-3-030-97974-4 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Foreword

[1]Eighty-one years ago, the Swiss historian Siegfried Giedion published the most influential design book of the twentieth century, *Space, Time and Architecture*. The book inundated the reader with proclamations of the new space-time era predicated on theories of relativity and the promise of bridging the psychological divide between thinking and feeling. The Jungian emblem for the new collective age was a dematerialised corner detail of a Dessau Bauhaus building with its "hovering relations of planes"—which he famously juxtaposed with an image of a Picasso painting. His augury did indeed come true, but his vision of modernity has in the years since paled. Building culture today is largely defined by the ubiquitous glass box and Giedion's vision for design, however noble its intentions, has at the same time foreshortened the process and reduced the result to an aestheticised material *object*. The unarticulated dwellers of these artefacts, alluded to in early CIAM efforts, were but abstractions.

Is it not time for architects and planners in the twenty-first century to proffer their own vision of design? One perhaps less focused on the object of design and more on human aspirations and social needs? One perhaps engaging the multiple fields of knowledge at our command? If we have learned anything in recent years, it is the inextricable relationship humans maintain—biologically, ecologically, and culturally—with the built and natural environments. We have made stupendous breakthroughs in understanding our genetic codes, how the environment affects cellular and synaptic development, the workings of the nervous and endocrine systems, and how the built environment nourishes or diminishes our health, social rituals, and psychological well-being. Is it then not time for a new generation of designers to step forth and consider the factors that constitute a good environment?

There is an interesting principle in the field of population biology known as niche construction. It states that just as we design our physical and cultural environments, these environments in turn shape the genetic, cognitive, and cultural patterns of who we are. The twentieth-century belief that architecture was more or less a visual art has today collapsed under the avalanche of newer anthropological models. Architects, by altering the environment in which we live, contribute to making the culture in which

[1] English version of the chapter provided by the Author.

we live. Design, as the etymology of the word "culture" suggests, is the cultivation of the built and social environments in which we dwell. Design should and will always remain a playful and creative exercise of human imagination, but professionally it should also be an informed activity.

Much of twentieth-century design theory was predicated on the utopian belief that the world and human habits could be radically transformed, and that our cities might be stiffened as it were by the new materials of glass, steel, and concrete. We have now seen how this premise has played out, for better and worse. I would like to suggest that what we need is a modified and less expansive strategy—a "garden ethic" as it were. It is an ethic little different from the inspiration that governs all of the arts, the gesture found in a poetic turn of phrase or the musical skill exhibited in a string quartet. It is an ethic that, like the Japanese tea ceremony, should be manifested in the conduct of one's life and the courtesy we pay to ourselves and others around us. The garden ethic concerns itself not with where we live but with *how we live.* It is the making of places both meaningful and beautiful, places that nourish rather than demean the human spirit. It is the softening of the environment with gardens, both literally and metaphorically. Some years ago, the great Finnish architect Alvar Aalto noted that designers should always practice with an ulterior motive up their sleeve—the idea of creating a paradise.[2] It would not be a bad thing to heed this advice.

Harry Francis Mallgrave
Illinois Institute of Technology
Chicago, IL, USA
mallgrave@iit.edu

[2] Schildt, G. (ed.). (1997). *Alvar Aalto in His Own Words.* Helsinki: Otava Publishing Company, 215-217.

Preface

A city has been called the greatest of human works of art, pervaded by an erotic imagination, the place of availabilities, multiplicity, coexistence of incompatible realities and diversity, the place where things happen.[3] Cities can feed old and new racism, violence, and divisions but simultaneously they can promote resistance and new political opportunities, cosmopolitan, and multicultural communities.[4] Cities concentrate three-quarters of the European inhabitants and by the middle of the century more than 70% of the world's population will reside in urbanised settings, whereas the highest level of migration will be due to climatic causes.

Covid-19 pandemic has made clear the vulnerability of cities' infrastructures, the critical condition of existence of our planet, the incompatibility of our model of economic development and organised behaviour with the wellbeing and the health of people. During epidemics, the number of people affected by mental malaise was even greater than that of people affected by the infection itself.[5] Tragically, this virus has shown a crisis of the anthropocentric perspective and the urgent need of considering the city, like its builders, no longer as opposed to nature and above it, but as part of nature, part of a planetary whole. Indeed, in addition to virus, also great health effects of sensory deprivation are a typical phenomenon of the great world metropolises, which are due to the deficit of nature.[6] The extraordinariness of the situation is imposing an indispensable and inescapable change of our priorities, the use of a framework capable to increase the intelligence of our surroundings, based on consciousness, culture, and creativity, favouring a development founded on the reduction of resources waste, sense of belonging, proximity, mutualism, and inclusivity.

---

[3] Hillman, J., & Truppi, C. (2004). *L'anima dei luoghi. Conversazione con Carlo Truppi.* Milano: Rizzoli.

[4] Battiston, G. (2020). La città trincea del futuro. Colloquio con Saskia Sassen. *L'Espresso, 46,* August 23.

[5] Chielli, Chap. "Semantic and Architectural Sound Space. Musical Creativity and Performance" of this volume.

[6] Bonardi and Marini, Chap. "Inside and Beyond the Human City" of this volume.

Design culture, which addresses the relationship between people and their environment to improve the quality of life,[7] is called to play a fundamental role, questioning itself about the main threats to life in urban settings, including poverty, exclusion, and climate change[8] and promoting a holistic approach to designing conscious dwelling. Interior Architecture and Design can reverse the appetite towards overproduction, foster the reuse of existing assets and enhance their stratified memory, acknowledge that urban and natural spaces are part of a single ecosystem, and promote a new urban ecology.

In order to read our complex urban dimension, the book takes human physical and emotional comfort as a reference horizon, integrating a deep sensitivity on relational and cultural aspects, to inspire the design research beyond a paradoxical binary logic that separates public and private, outside and inside, human and nature, mind and places. The cultural paradigm that underlies the whole project is an articulated and multifaceted representation of our contemporary, that can only be comprehended through an eco-systemic approach. Assuming a genuinely transdisciplinary perspective, claimed also by science, allows to bring a focus on the relationship rather than the nature of interacting elements, as highlighted by some authors in this book (Crespi, Crippa, Anzani, Schinco). Besides, it enables to extend the investigation to address a post-human dimension (Leoni), overcoming the binomial of nature and culture (Guglielmi), considering the irruption of animals and plants on the urban scene (Bonardi and Marini), and embracing a shift from the traditional categories of humanism to include the living, in its broadest sense.

The first part of the book deals with built spaces and addresses sustainable strategies not only to overcome an ecologic and systemic crisis but also to improve place liveability in our contemporary city; time and temporariness, in particular, seem to emerge as crucial variables in the design process. The second part deals with our perception of aesthetic spaces, welcoming the stimuli coming from neuro-aesthetics studies, accepting new priorities in preferring audial to visual perception to understand, analyse, and design for urban areas, and encouraging the intersection between interior design culture and arts. The third part deals with relational spaces and how they influence human behaviour, starting from psychological, anthropological, and philosophical perspectives for a no longer anthropocentric world.

Chapters description

In Chap. "Urban Open Space Design: What to Do?", Crespi deals with the redevelopment of urban open spaces and proposes a strategy that can assign them the character of "identity figures", representative of the significance that they preserve in the contemporary world, including the symbolic one. The Author considers that the

[7] *IFI Interiors Declaration*, 2011 https://ifiworld.org/programs-events/interiors-declaration-adoptions/.

[8] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/.

design culture should open a debate between schools of thought, without comfortable tactics and with the aim of clarifying a crucial issue for the future of our cities. The chapter is full of examples of projects and questions the possibility of rethinking open public space as a place able to cope with the radical changes characterising this early century ways of living, even outdoor. Exhibition design is pointed out as a design approach capable of pertinently addressing the issue of regenerating existing environments, both internal and external, in the post-industrial city.

In Chap. "The City Around: For an Urban Space at a Walking Pace", apparently in opposition to space-time categories like liquidity, simultaneity and acceleration to interpret contemporary society and urban life, Di Prete explores the potential and design implications of the recovery of a slow dimension, rediscovering and enhancing neighbourhoods as a privileged sphere of experimentation, understanding how to promote the construction of a city of proximity, to be enjoyed "at a walking pace". A place for promoting a new sociality, an occasion for a group representation and for meeting with "the different", to be rethought in a primarily pedestrian dimension, it proves the ideal territory to be redeveloped through economic, reversible, often graphic and small-scale interventions, but with a profound impact on everyday urban living. The proximity area is where the challenge of the "city around" is played, where people are placed at the centre of the political and design choices and their symbolic-identity needs stand before the stylistic-compositional ones, where the physical, social and cultural factors, but also the psychological and individual ones in which the community identity can be reflected and self-replicated, are taken into account.

In Chap. "Design of the Ephemeral in Urban Spaces", Crippa deals with the design of the ephemeral in urban spaces, highlighting that *time,* as its variable, is the great paradigm through which the discipline of contemporary design should be re-read. The absolute prominence of time is testified by important essays, starting with Sigfried Giedion's historical *Space, Time, Architecture* where the temporal component is introduced to understand the Bauhaus revolution. Many years have passed since Gropius and his colleagues, and according to Crippa time has increasingly acquired a fundamental dimension, supplanting space in interiors and architecture. Immersed in a society that has made change its identifying feature, time is increasingly "relative", to steal Einsteinian intuition, and is transforming the temporary into the only permanence in our lives.

In Chap. "Reading the Current Cities to Anticipate Their Changes", Lonardo presents the changes taking place in cities, assumed in a broad sense, through a design-oriented view that uses the elaboration of scenarios as a key to understanding. The reading approach proposed in this chapter attempts to enter the city genome through a view of the state of fact and by imagining design as an evolutionary factor capable of creating anomalies and dominant variants. As an open-ended guide, on the one hand, the text aims to establishing some design principles, and on the other hand, it hypothesises possible types of future cities based on current trends.

In Chap. "Reuse of Contemporary City: Experience and Ecology", Anzani deals with the emotional relationships between people and their physical surroundings and proposes an eco-systemic approach to design in contemporary cities, where the boundary between reuse and new construction is increasingly blurred. Using the

potential of "the pattern which connects" everything, which was proposed by Bateson and can be applied to read urban leftovers and living organisms, design can gain the ecological aesthetic power of creating stories into an endless weave of themes and inventive ideas.

In Chap. "Atmosphere Design of Urban Places. A Scientific Phenomenological Approach", Sinico explores the concept of atmosphere from a scientific phenomenological perspective and aims to define it in terms that can be operationally used by designers of urban places. The atmosphere of an urban place, as an expressive quality, presents itself as an objective phenomenal property of the field outside the self; but, as long as the users are part of the dynamic ego-environment system, it can both generate contagion effects and activate processes within the users.

In Chap. "Nature and Anti-Nature: Reflections on the Contemporary Cityscape", Guglielmi approaches the birth of modern town planning and the related development of human settlements, focusing on the contradictions they still retain, related to socio-cultural choices which originated from the Western industrial revolution and have never been completely resolved. The need for a new global perception of living spaces finds an evident contrast in the methodologies of traditional design, intended as a generalised three-dimensional occupation of free spaces, with an exasperated emphasis on buildings verticality. The crisis of the Modern Age from the Enlightenment to the present day seems to be summed up in the confrontation-contrast between Nature and Anti-nature in the search for an urgent solution to the needs of all humanity.

In Chap. "Intangible Heritage of Bedouins: Habitat, Habitus and Representations of Nomadic Culture", Amoruso and Conte propose a graphic analysis of the intangible expression of nomadic Bedouin culture, starting from the material equipment of the black tent in relation to its natural ecosystem, temporary habitat, and socio-economic system. Starting from the literature review, mainly of an anthropological nature, the conscious relationship between habitat and dwelling in the desert context is investigated, especially that of the Jordanian Bedouins and their *wadis*. Although this anthropological phenomenon has been widely described in the literature, few contributions highlight the symbolic and visual value of the black tent as a perfect balance between dwelling consciousness and a symbiotic relationship with the landscape adjacent to the domestic interior.

In Chap. "Mapping Beauty: Narrating Relational Crossroads and Interior Pictures", through the lens of systemic psychotherapy and cybernetic epistemology, Locati analyses the key role of the concept of beauty applied to the city and the urban contexts, starting from the view that the observer-citizen has of the outside world. With its crossroads and points of interest, the city is a metaphor for the human life cycle stages. If a descriptive view of the city and its beauty is immediately associated with the space dimension, the time dimension seems to help in a process of learning and relating to never visited physical places, that yet are equally capable of evoking emotionally charged representations of the self.

In Chap. "Semantic and Architectural Sound Space. Musical Creativity and Performance", Chielli addresses the music capacity to make us listen to ourselves and to others. In this difficult period in which, because of the rules promulgated to

fight the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been denied the closeness of friends and loved ones, restricted expression and movement freedom, limited, if not deprived of work activity, music can recompose a worn and lost Self, giving space for creative expression and a renewed awareness. In fact, sounds permeate and characterise the space, outline and decline both our permanence in the environment and the very meaning that we give to that experience, giving voice to that sphere of the Self, often unconscious or subconscious, which only partially and incompletely can find expression in spoken language.

In Chap. "Multisensory Perception: Implications for Architecture and Interior Design", Bruno concentrates on the role of multisensory perception in the design and appreciation of places and buildings, as a welcome and timely departure from traditional approaches focussing on vision ("oculocentrism") to consider how auditory, somatosensory, and even olfactory components may constrain and enrich our experience of buildings. The Author outlines key concepts and terminology that provide the conceptual tools necessary to distinguish between perceptual modes vs. sensory mechanisms, multimodality vs. multisensory integration, and synaesthesia proper vs. cross-modal correspondences. Designing for integration and correspondences is indicated as an especially effective approach, as these phenomena engage obligatory, automatic, and fast cognitive processes that are grounded in the biology of perception, attention, and memory as well as largely independent of cultural factors.

In Chap. "Reinventing Relations: Healing Wounded Spaces and Times", Schinco addresses a deep and desperate malaise that has taken over in the 21st century: the "crisis of the crisis". Having the pandemic urged us to confront with its destructive potential, in order to get out of the "crisis of the crisis" we must stop escaping it, and instead develop the capacity to "live together". By dealing with the pain that the crisis brings, we can enter a real "time of healing", characterised by authentic creativity, concrete caring, the development of new competences and attitudes that reuse what has suffered over time. While relying on memory and re-invention, the solutions we need will be new and will arise from a stormy "urgency of creation".

In Chap. "Living Painful Boundaries", Piselli tackles the more or less visible scars left in specific places and times by bad events that leave memories and condition future choices. When deciding what to do with places so full of history, but also of pain, communities must handle not only tangible material, bricks, and concrete, but delicate and fragile human material, which deeply touches on issues such as belonging, memory and identity. The decision-making processes related to these places should be rethought at a meta-level in a relational, ecological, complex, and creative way, so that borders can become thresholds.

In Chap. "Being Together as a Body Exercise. Ethnographic Perspectives", Briata explores the experience of being together in a multi-ethnic and multicultural city as a body exercise, a habit to different smells, tastes, skin colours, to heterogeneous ways of understanding proximity and distance. The body is one of the means through which knowledge is acquired, and the chapter makes an explicit positioning on ethnographic methodologies to explore the links between spaces and bodies, reconstructing the fundamental moments of the so-called sensory turn in anthropological studies. The pandemic crisis has unequivocally highlighted how closely interrelated spaces

and bodies are, but defending oneself "from the other" may have become an automatism. It is a drift to which we must pay attention so as not to lose the many conquests already achieved in so many gyms of coexistence that we call cities.

In Chap. "Edge-City, Bubble-City, Foam-City", Leoni addresses the constant metamorphosis of the edges of our cities which we have become familiar with for the last century, arguing that this instability of the cities edge, constantly being destroyed and rebuilt, mirrors the changed statute of the city itself. The contemporary city never ceases to redraw its boundaries, to include further territories, wanting to coincide with the totality of the territory. But in this sense the edge of the city is not the threshold through which the city looks out onto something else. The contemporary city is a bubble-city, which does not have a state outside to which it belongs, but a series of other bubble-cities with which it interfaces, in a sort of fundamental autism and equally fundamental hyper connection. In other words, the surface of the planet is a foam of urban bubbles.

In Chap. "Inside and Beyond the Human City", Bonardi and Marini consider the appearance, between 2020 and 2021, of unusual animal species, as well as an increased perceptibility of others that are normally present in cities, due to the lockdown implemented in many countries of the world. Starting from the interest that these presences have aroused, the chapter analyses the possibilities and potentialities inherent in a human-non-human rapprochement, even in its non-domesticated forms, in an environment, such as the urban one, that has been traditionally the exclusive attribution of the former. The Authors also indicate some urban spatial contexts in which a greater continuity with other species is in fact already in place and can be sustained.

Milan, Italy Anna Anzani

Contents

Designing Our Built Space

Urban Open Space Design: What to Do?

Luciano Crespi

Abstract The chapter deals with the redevelopment of urban open spaces, proposing a strategy that can assign them the character of "identity figures", representative of the significance that they preserve in the contemporary world, including the symbolic one. Most texts on this subject merely map the achievements of recent years, demonstrating a renewed institutional interest in the environmental quality of people public lives. Now it is necessary that the design culture opens a debate between schools of thought, without comfortable tactics and with the aim of clarifying a crucial issue for the future of our cities.

Keywords Urban interior design · Design for public spaces · The image of the city · Genius loci · Neuro-aesthetics · Exhibition design · Events

1 Introduction

Four men walk with wide strides through a large square, each one heading towards its centre, none apparently intending to communicate with the others. Figures of a suspended time. In the centre, only a motionless woman, in her detached pride, seems capable of constituting an identity figure. In this 1947 work titled *Piazza*, Alberto Giacometti touches the problem heart of public space in the contemporary city, sensing, with rare acuity, the irresolvable conflict between its potential collective and civil character, inherited from the best tradition of city architecture, and the neurotic, distracted, individual dimension of the contemporary way of "dwelling" in the city (Fig. 1).

"The figures without distinctive features live independently within their casual unity, while their non-converging steps suggest individual ambitions and interests" (Peggy Guggenheim Collection, with no date). The author states: "The man in the street surprises and interests me more than any sculpture or painting. At every moment the crowd flows incessantly to gather and move away again. Ceaselessly,

L. Crespi (✉)
Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: luciano.crespi@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_1

Fig. 1 Alberto Giacometti, *Piazza*, 1947–1948

they form and reform living compositions of incredible complexity" (Peggy Guggenheim Collection 1983). But the crowd can also appear faceless. And the square can become the scene of unheard silences, if its assigned role is to support the impulse towards mass consumerism, today the only one apparently capable of recreating opportunities for collective involvement. Instead, is it possible to try and rethink open public space as a place able to cope with the radical changes characterising this early century ways of living, even outdoor?

2 The New Wave of Urban Space

Much has already been written about the emergence, starting in the 1990s, of a new generation of urban open space redevelopment projects aiming more to give it a hospitable and friendly character rather than to enhance its civil eloquence. A recent, comprehensive survey of this changed attitude of the design culture can be found in Agnese Rebaglio's book, *Interior(C)ity*. Here we read: "People before places - according to Jan Gehl's (Gehl 2010, 2011) happy and famous statement: 'first life, then space, then buildings'". In this sense, design interventions in urban space are aimed at transforming the existing on a scale that we define human i.e., "at eye level". As an example, *The City at Eye Level* initiative, started in 2013 by a group of designers from Rotterdam and then opened to a wide international collaboration, interprets well this idea of proximity intervention (Rebaglio 2020).

In the last lines of the book introduction, I pose a question that I consider crucial: "While convincingly representing a trajectory that the design of urban open space is inevitably destined to follow, many of the illustrated examples, and their accompanying images, seem to be not yet fully endowed with the required symbolic, allegorical, iconological content, which art, for example, has always been bearing, and

which could make contemporary open space not only hospitable and welcoming but also a place rich in meanings to be discovered" (Crespi 2020b). This question is closely linked to the very meaning to be attributed to the notion of design in general and to open space design in particular. In a world characterised by the ideology of the present (Augé 2009) and by the dictatorship of urgency (Finchelstein 2011), open space is assumingly required to comply—above all through reversible and exhibition-like measures—multiple self-consumption modes by the users. This allows each people to prepare a sort of personal palimpsest, on which basis they can establish their own, provisional "consumption" modes of the space and, where possible, they can also interact with the present devices. Modifying it. Adapting it (Crespi 2020a). However, the project cannot fail in its unprecedented task of taking on the provisional and ephemeral horizon as a cultural dimension of place itself, without renouncing to a language capable of exploring depth and to manifest a meaning. Therefore, the exhibition-like approach should be understood as a programmatic choice to position the design of urban open spaces in the track of the exhibition design discipline and the languages it uses (Crespi G 2020) to achieve its objectives, such as tone, allusion, illusion, metaphor. These are linguistic "expedients" that contribute to making an installation an experience endowed with a "subjective time" that goes well beyond its actual duration. In 1941, Giuseppe Pagano wrote that exhibition design has always fought a strenuous battle "against the laws of statics and conventionality in order to obtain surreal effects, to achieve new balances, to dissociate space in lyrical images sometimes full of exasperated dynamism, sometimes immersed in the absolute of a calm solemnity" (Pagano 1941). And that temporariness represents "one of the most favourable conditions for an exhibition to be truly alive and interesting". In his essay *Die Aktualität des Schönen*, Hans Georg Gadamer, one of the masters of philosophical hermeneutics, invites us to rediscover the metaphor of eternity, the value of the symbolic, of playing as a communicative fact, of celebrating, and of experiencing the freedom also of "not being", as a condition of every artistic practice interested in representing life in its own time i.e., subtracted from the empty time of never having time. Therefore, if festival stops time and, in this sense, participates in the same temporal structure as a work of art (Gadamer 1977), we could say that, like festival, also an event, however ephemeral, has the opportunity to escape from the market and fashions seductions and become one of the possible representation forms of temporariness and precariousness which characterise our time. An event is understood here in its most common and popular sense, as a happening for the general public, and not in its philosophical sense, as an interruption of the usual flow of things, to which in 2014 the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek—considered the guru of pop philosophy—dedicated a very challenging book (Žižek 2014).

In the summer of 1976, through the experience of the *Estate Romana* conducted in the Municipality of Rome with Giulio Carlo Argan as mayor, Renato Nicolini as culture councillor had the merit of freeing the notion of *ephemeral* from the limits of an interpretation that downgraded it to a manifestation of a frivolous consumeristic culture (Fig. 2).

He wrote "The sense of the ephemeral does not concern the temporariness of an event, because events are inevitably cancelled. The ephemeral event is the one that

Fig. 2 *Estate Romana*, 1976

leaves marks in our memory, in our emotions, in our passions. I believe we have to accept that our life is ephemeral, that things change, in order to maintain meaning" (Nicolini 2011). That experience introduced a breakpoint at an international level for the project culture, which can be said to have unfolded its subversive scope: from now on, it is the design activity in general that has to adhere to that approach, envisaging interventions whose provisional character turns out to be a far less important feature than their ability to find new forms of depth. Originally conceived as a discipline aimed at showcasing ideas, products, stories and narratives, exhibition design is now a candidate for becoming a design approach capable of pertinently addressing the issue of regenerating existing environments, both internal and external, in the post-industrial city. In the light of this style of thinking, the arguments on which, in the past, theories concerning the identity of urban space have been based need to be re-examined. Not to reset them, but to accept the new challenges of contemporaneity (Crespi 2018).

3 Imageability

Let us start with Walter Benjamin. In his work on Paris, capital of the twentieth century, he underlines the significance of the presence in the city of the boundary: "Nowhere - except in dreams - can the phenomenon of the boundary be experienced in such original forms as in cities. As a threshold, the boundary passes through the streets: a new territory begins as a move in the void, as if we were stumbling on a step that we had not noticed" (Benjamin 2010). Pierluigi Nicolin also dealt with this issue in his *Lezioni di Interior Design* (Nicolin 2020) in which, using images

from the art world, he explores the vast field that lies between the individual and the environment, between the closed and the open. The boundary is an imaginary line that can mark the passage between two phenomenological conditions of the city. The more the elements that distinguish it are endowed with the character of *imageability* i.e., as Kevin Lynch writes, "that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer" (Lynch 1960), the more every trespass becomes like a journey into unthinkable territories. From this point of view, if we think of the city of Milan, few places present the same *imageability* as the system consisting of Foro Buonaparte, Sempione park, piazza and corso Sempione. Therefore, it is easy to see a change in the phenomenological condition between what lies beyond Piazza Castello, where opens up the entrance to Castello Sforzesco, one of the city's symbolic sites, and what lies on this side, towards the historic centre: on the one hand, the first extension of a sort of "landscape *boulevard*", where the courtyard and the castle are located and which anticipate the design of the Sempione park; on the other hand, the eloquent design of the semi-circular blocks facing Foro Buonaparte, with its layout that is one of the most recognisable in Milan.

The project by a group formed by Patrizia Brivio, Luciano Crespi, Marino Crespi, Marco Pozzo and Nicoletta Valentini, which came in second place in the *International competition for the design of Piazza Castello* in Milan in 2017, set itself the task of trying to follow the two city vocations described above and, at the same time, weld them together. The first measure proposed was to duplicate the pedestrian link between Via Dante, one of the busiest pedestrian streets, and the Castle, making the existing underground route accessible from Via Dante at the level of the Metro mezzanine and introducing a ground plan capable of giving continuity to the route of Via Dante itself. The second measure concerned the extension of the current park boundary to occupy a portion of Piazza Castello and the introduction of a *promenade* allowing the passage from the existing park, as a place of contemplation, to the urban life: the boundary becomes a place of exchange, of contamination between the city and the park (Fig. 3a, b, c).

Only four years have passed since that competition, yet several questions arise. The requests of the competition call did not leave any possibility of adopting solutions that used transgressive expressive codes, or even just innovative and more consistent with the need of contemporary features, as mentioned above. In fact, unlike what has happened in other cities, which are also characterised by a strong anchorage to their historical origins, Milan has adopted an intervention policy in urban space that is entirely preservative, not to say conservative, that imposes strict rules on the use of materials and furnishings when redeveloping the historic centre. One emblematic example is the question of kiosks and newsstands, for which opposition is raised against any attempt to introduce solutions other than those presented as "respectful" of tradition, the sole guardians of the latter being considered the technicians of the Superintendence for Fine Arts and Landscape. From this point of view, the story of the project for the kiosk in Piazza Cordusio is exemplary. In 2005, together with Fabio Reinhart, I was commissioned to draw up a project in the space in front of the former Stock Exchange Palace, designed by Luigi Broggi and inaugurated in 1901, for a new kiosk to replace the previous that had existed for many years and

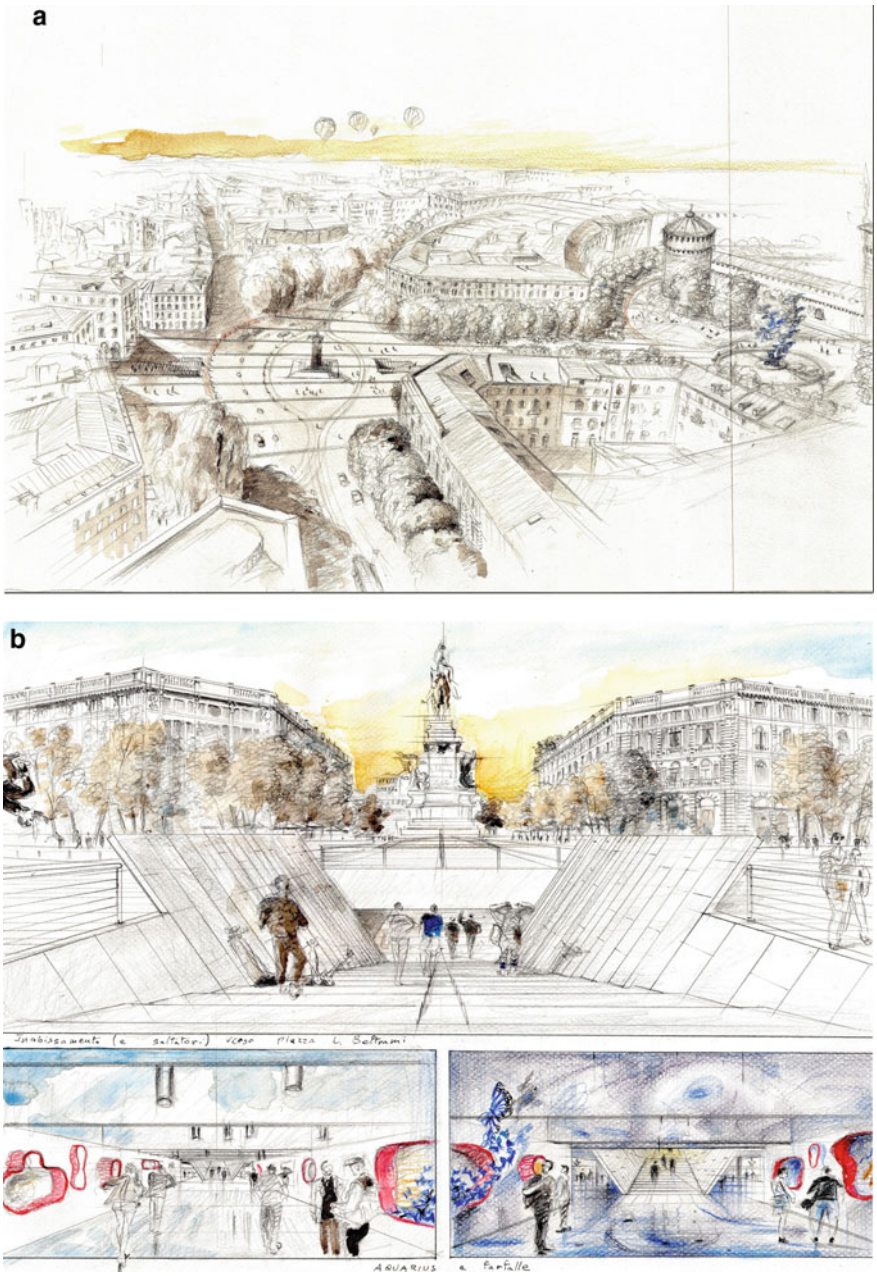

Fig. 3 **a–c**. International competition for the design of Piazza Castello in Milan, project by Patrizia Brivio, Luciano Crespi, Marino Crespi, Marco Pozzo and Nicoletta Valentini, 2017

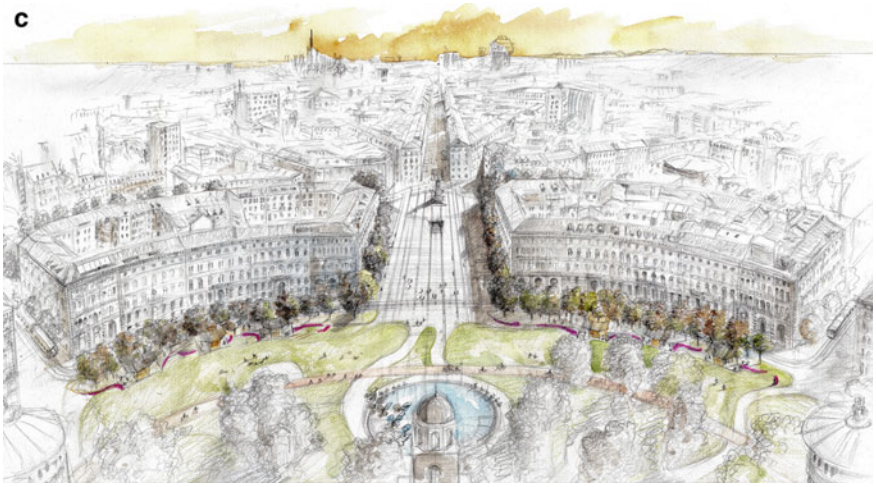

Fig. 3 (continued)

had become inadequate. The kiosk was owned by an association, supporting people with serious difficulties of social and work integration, who wanted to create the first Italian "social kiosk", run by young people supervised by the association. At the end of a very challenging discussion with the Superintendence's technicians, who had previously rejected projects submitted by other professionals, a project was approved that reached a difficult balance between tradition and innovation (Figs. 4, 5a, b).

In an article published in the daily newspaper *La Repubblica* on March 17th, 2010, Italo Lupi, one of most authoritative Italian figures in culture and design, wrote: "…it seems a contradiction that, as part of the plan to save the newsstands, the City of Milan is only proposing nostalgic design models, probably dignified but not very daring… that have nothing to do with the present of one of the modern design capitals". However, the article said that three examples can suggest "relevant design paths, with an eye to the future rather than to the past". The first is represented by two kiosks designed by Ettore Sottsass. The second is the beautiful kiosks/waiting platforms for trams, designed by Norman Foster. The third is the kiosk in Piazza Cordusio, "a model of intelligent flexibility and careful design" (Lupi 2010). To tell the truth, I don't think it was truly welcomed by the public opinion, who was too lazily attached to that nostalgic newsstand iconography evoked by Italo Lupi, of which manufacturers catalogues are full. So much so that, at the first opportunity, represented by Starbucks' purchase of the building, the newsstand was dismantled and sent for demolition, without much public regret. In its place, radical-kitsch style dehors were installed.

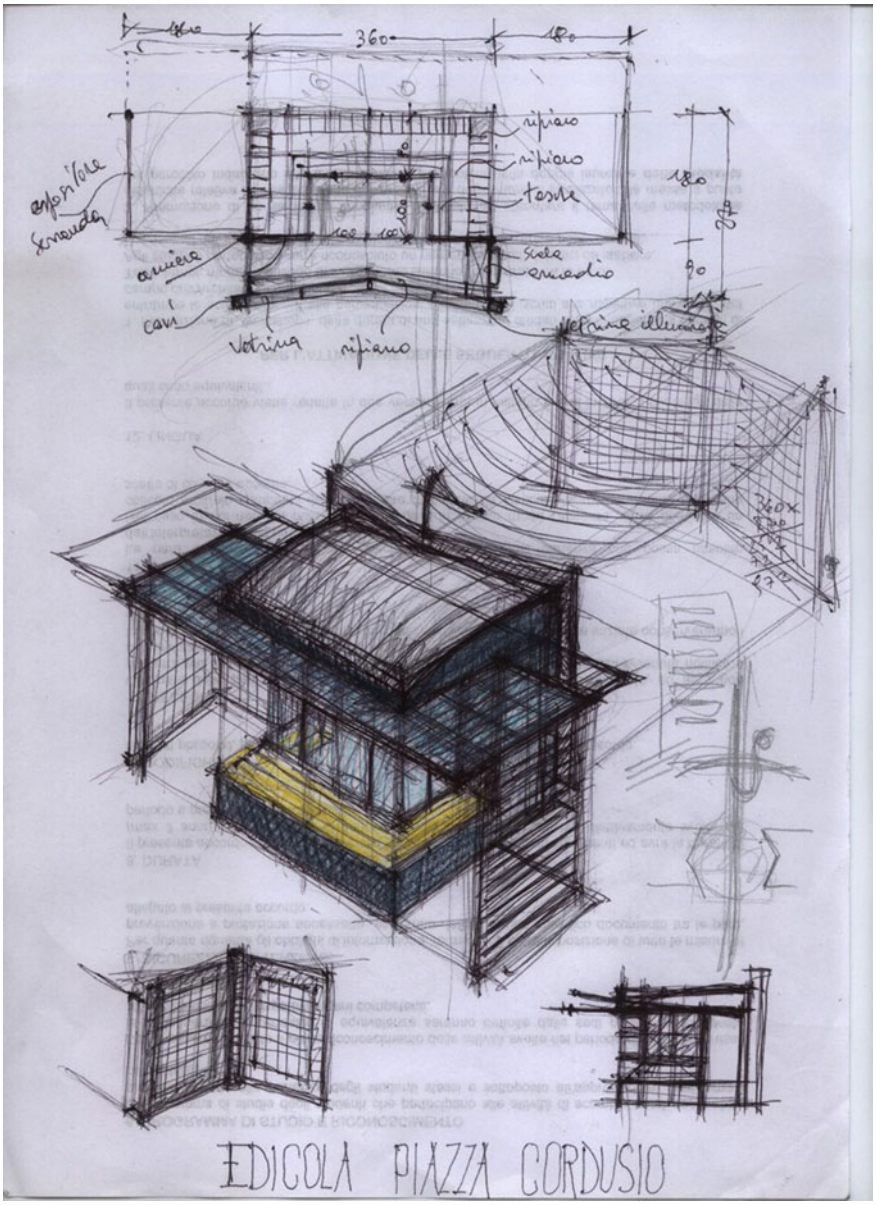

Fig. 4 Project of a newsstand in piazza Cordusio, Milan, 2006

Fig. 5 **a**, **b** Newsstand in piazza Cordusio, Milan, 2006

4 Design and Scientific Thinking

However, another question needs even more answering, away from the competition in Piazza Castello. After what happened with the pandemic, does it still make sense to assign the project the task of designing urban open space that, more than any other place, encourage "social rapprochement", encounters, contact between bodies, overcoming cultural and social boundaries and distances? If we exclude the most bizarre and unsightly proposals, like the introduction of devices putting some outdoor activities "under glass", we are left with the most common-sense ones. Such as Richard Sennet's and others', which go by the name of "15-min cities" and refer to the need for a general reorganisation of services, especially transport. Or Carlos Lahoz Palacio's, lecturer at CEU San Pablo in Madrid, who envisages an increasingly widespread use of private transport, but particularly the bicycle.

Carlotta Caciagli, PhD at the *Scuola Normale Superiore*, in a text on public space at the time of Covid-19 titled *Living without public spaces*, tackles the issue convincingly: "The domestic environment makes us individuals, but it is the public one that makes us subjects. Without a collective space we are only contained and containable bodies". In 1923, in *Essai sur le Don*, Marcel Mauss analysed how crossing a space to bring a gift and the time spent between giving and receiving it were at the basis of the societies' construction. It is from the tension towards the outside—and all the entailed risks—that desires and passions are structured, like everything else we need to be more than our bodies and not prisoners of our contingencies" (*Jacobin Italy*, March 2020). These few lines highlight the real problem beneath the question of the quality of urban open space, which is cultural, even anthropological. Since it brings into play values concerning the way we relate to public space, with its historical stratifications, almost geological eras. From this point of view, Nicolas Bourriaud's recent book, *Inclusions* (Bourriaud 2020), as it is always the case with this art critic, opens up to the need of a shift in thinking, capable of questioning the devastating effects of the "Capitalocene" —a term coined by the Swede Andreas Malm—one of which is the disappearance of the city common spaces. But even more so, the "theoretical separation that human beings have long since erected between their species and their natural environment i.e., the whole non-human life" (Bourriaud 2020).

For some years now, in the *Exhibition Design* Master course at Politecnico di Milano, I have been giving lectures about *Urban Installations* design. In these lectures, I try to underline how the specificity and also the difficulty of this type of design consists in having to insert an installation, in this case aimed at "showcasing", in an extremely complicated container, which is the urban environment. Not so much for the most obvious reasons, linked to light, climate, noise conditions etc., which are far more difficult to control than in an exhibition hall. Rather, because the need to deal with context elements, such as architecture, vegetation, soil, open-air deck, and the public itself, who is more differentiated than that usually attending exhibitions (Migliore 2020), represents a very challenging scenario, in relation to which absolutely pertinent decisions must be taken. We might think that what science, and astrophysicists in particular, claim today, that the world is founded on relationships

before than on objects, on "elementary processes in which the quanta of space and matter continuously interact with each other" (Rovelli 2014), applies even more decisively to the nature of urban public space: objects, architecture, nature, human beings and animals, air and light, cold and heat, sun and rain, constitute a microcosm founded on relationships that the project must be able to understand, in order to make interventions which interpret their meaning. Even if this implies denying their value, introducing elements that disrupt the relationships on which they were based up to that moment, but always starting from an indispensable awareness. In short, among the project activities, the design of urban open space is perhaps the one that mostly requires great sensitivity towards the environment, its specific history, the history of the best experiences in that field, as well as the evolution of rituals of which it was and is the scene. Addressing the design of urban space by referring to what science now asserts about the world knowledge may seem out of place. But it is not. In his book *Helgoland*, Carlo Rovelli, an Italian theoretical physicist, takes his cue from Niels Bohr's research and insists on reminding us that the most recent discoveries in science have significantly influenced the world of philosophy and contemporary thought in general. The fact that all of nature is quantum and that, in quantum physics, interaction is an inseparable part of phenomena, "blows away the idea that the world must consist of a substance with attributes and forces us to think of everything in terms of relations" (Rovelli 2020). If we also think about some aspects of the most recent research in the neuro-aesthetics field, we can see how a better knowledge of the mechanisms that oversee our relationship with the landscape can provide, in turn, a contribution of tools to be used in project actions. In his book *Mindscapes* (Lingiardi 2017), Vittorio Lingiardi, an Italian psychoanalyst and professor of Dynamic Psychology, addresses in particular our relationship with landscape, in the belief that our neurons are pretty interested in landscape and that there is a shared way of looking at it, based on generalisable preferences. What attracts our visual system? His and other psychologists' research demonstrates the existence of objects and landscapes whose structure influences our tastes and reactions. This capacity is not only reserved for landscape in its *naturalis* pattern, as an environment that has formed spontaneously; it is also reserved for what has been shaped by human activity, including what we classify as open urban spaces (URBAN+INTERIOR 2005).

Piazza Castello in Castel Rozzone, a small town in the Bergamo province, is one of the most eloquent projects by Attilio Stocchi, an extraordinarily talented Italian architect (Fig. 6).

The image of spears stuck in the ground, which is evocative of ancient battles and has the same iconological value as Paolo Uccello's canvases, is the result of a completely original process of listening to the "voice" of the residents, which a misinterpretation of the participatory approach very often understands as opinion polling. In reality, the project stems from a form of listening that could be defined as "meta-historical", in that it is linked to reading the time permanence of events that took place centuries earlier. In particular, we are talking about the battle that took place at the end of the fourteenth century between the Visconti, lords of Milan, and the Rozzone, an ancient Ghibelline family, whose echo is still alive in the community of Castel Rozzone and still animates barroom discussions. This is where Stocchi's

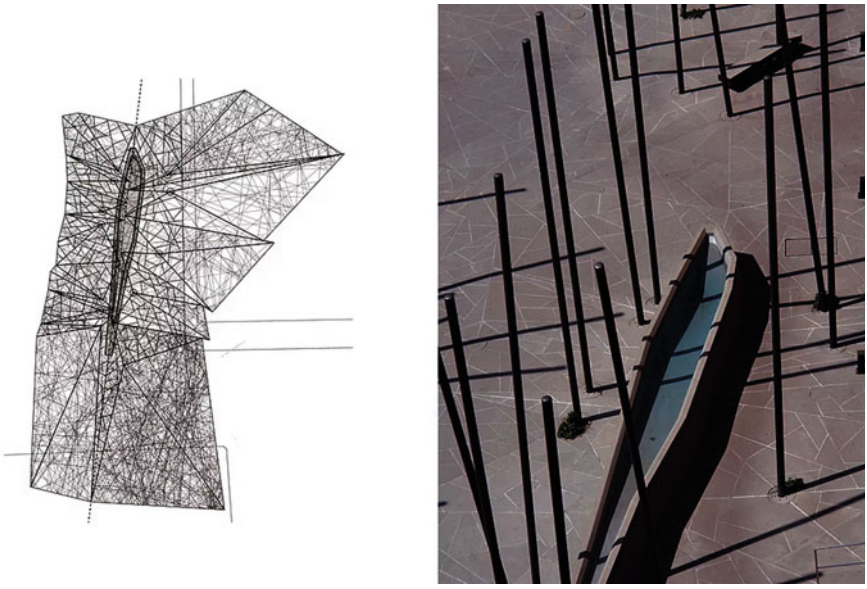

Fig. 6 Attilio Stocchi, *Galaverna*, Castel Rozzone, 2005

project takes shape, in which the clanking of spears emerging from the ground can provoke not only visual, but also "sonorous" sensations: voices that are buried manage to reach us, like those of the now extinct stars that, because of their distance from our planet, we continue to listen to.

5 Conclusion: What to Do?

In recent years, we have witnessed the spread of episodes falling under the umbrella of the so-called *Tactical Urbanism*, a US movement launched in 2012 by the studio Street Plans placed in Miami, New York and San Francisco, and based on the use of short-term, low-cost urban transformation interventions. Then exported with some success all over the western world, supported by guides and manuals, it is called by someone "Polka Dot Urbanism". The issue presents different aspects, but two are the main ones. On the one hand, it can be seen as a reflection of the *one-for-one* ideology, which has inspired many political movements in the last twenty years; it has produced the belief that expertise could be replaced by a misunderstood concept of participation; by its virtue any choice, if participated in, would be able to produce appreciable results, in this case also in the field of urban open space requalification. This has produced, especially in Europe and the Americas, numerous examples of interventions based on the use of coloured patterns on urban land: like going to the fabric shop and choosing between polka dot, striped or diamond patterned

fabrics. Although ennobled by the exhibition *UnevenGrowth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities* held at the MoMa in New York in 2015, the assumption on which the actions of Tactical Urbanism are based—as written on the Italian website *Cielo terra*—is that residents are the experts of their territory and therefore transformations must begin with the identification of talents and resources within the local community. Among the many dramatic effects of the pandemic, one of its positive ones is having restored credibility to the scientists' and experts' role, in the face of the pathetic dissent displayed by the *no vax* and *no mask* sects. Even though it is always better having a portion of the ground drawn in polka dots or stripes, like pyjamas, rather than in asphalt, I believe that cities open spaces need other measures to return to play their role, which is certainly different from that of the past. It must be said that, recently, there has been a positive evolution of this approach thanks to the experimentation of intervention forms involving designers, neighbourhood associations and public institutions, who aim at the temporary reconversion of portions of land, to return them to the citizens use, taking them away from cars and making them safer. It is precisely the reversible and temporary nature of this type of interventions that represents the unquestionable interest element of the manual produced by ARUP on Tactical Urbanism: "This is the benefit of tactical urbanism – designs are not fixed. Installation ideas are not always perfect first time. It is important to take the idea, create it and then to iterate quickly if needed. High quality monitoring and evaluation of the design must be embedded".

On the other hand, the document "A guideline for making space", formulated by Prof. Richard Stiles of the Institute for Urban Design and Landscape Architecture, University of Technology, Wien, and compiled from six separate working papers prepared by Regional Environmental Center (Slovakia), Nadace Partnerství (Czech Republic) and Nadácia Ekopolis (Slovakia), LAMORO (Italy), RiSSC (Italy), FH Erfurt (Germany) and TU Wien (Austria), raises numerous questions. This guideline is part of the project *UrbSpace* (www.urbanspaces.eu) that is implemented through the Central Europe Programme co-financed by the ERDF. The document has the anachronistic ambition to set up guidelines on how to intervene in the urban open space, by proposing not methodological paths but *standard* solutions. As in the chapter "Some examples of possible urban open space patterns", where embarrassing clichés are collected on what is catalogued as behaviours and ways of using space, regardless of its character, context or "soul".

All these are factors that each project, in its uniqueness, has the task of trying to discover. This is what has been attempted in two recent competition projects.

The first one was for the redevelopment of the *Centro Piacentiniano* in Bergamo.[1] The place that was the subject of the competition, a sort of memory deposit stratified over time, starting from an original, cosmogonic act of high symbolic value, is represented by the land strip on which, in the year 889, Bergamo merchants obtained the right to build the "Stone Fair" at their own expense. An act like those that took place in ancient Greece when, with Hestia's favour, a *place* was founded in correspondence

[1] *Competition project for the redevelopment of the Piacentinian Centre in Bergamo*, 2017. Architects: Katia Accossato, Luciano Crespi, Luigi Trentin.

of a crossroads or a spring (Hillman 2004). The project's task was to bring back its represented memory by proposing "relationships plots" and to accept the existing device, characterised by the solemn architecture designed in the 1920s by Marcello Piacentini, future regime architect with the advent of Fascism in Italy. To do this, the choice was made to enhance the pattern of the existing ground, based on stone laid in lozenges, by extending it to pedestrian areas; to assign the latter the role of connective paths of a sort of "open-air museum", whose collection consisted of the existing buildings volumes; but above all, to introduce a system of coloured seats freely arranged in the space—on the model of what was done for example at the Tuileries in Paris—capable of giving the open spaces the character of "urban interiors", hospitable, flexible, reversible: a cheerful invasion of a multitude of disorienting objects, destined to make the place capable of responding to the contemporary ways of using the external environments, as if it were a historical "layer" added to the existing ones, to enhance them (Fig. 7a–d). In a sense, it can also be defined as a form of non-finished work i.e., an intervention capable of leaving to the place various open chances, without taking its identity permanently for granted (Crespi 2021).

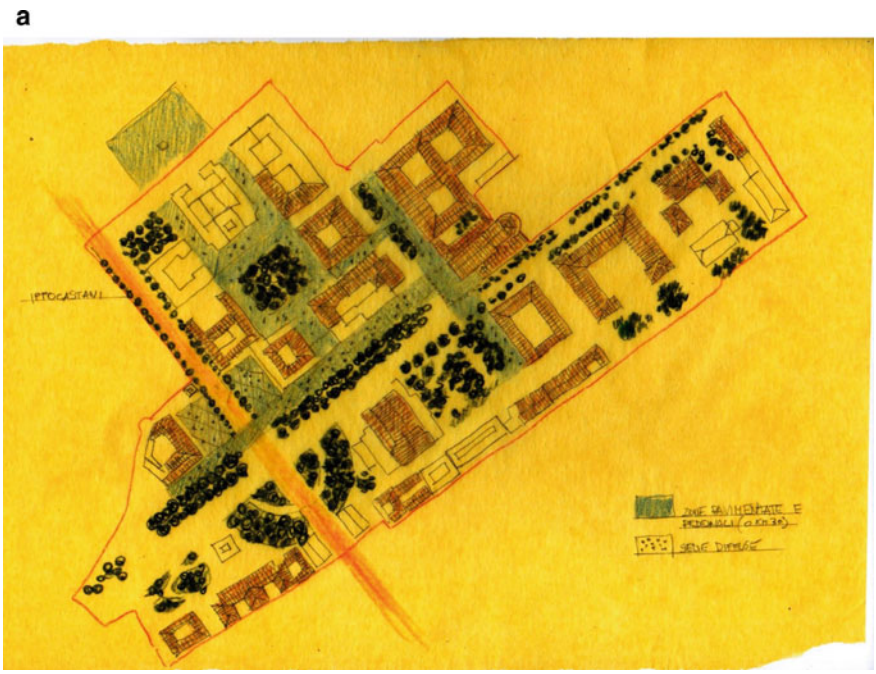

Fig. 7 a–d. *Competition project for the redevelopment of the Piacentinian Centre in Bergamo*, 2017. Architects: Katia Accossato, Luciano Crespi, Luigi Trentin

Fig. 7 (continued)

The second project was the redevelopment of the Waterfront of Lecco,[2] an Italian city overlooking the branch of Como Lake described by Alessandro Manzoni in the *Promessi Sposi* (Manzoni 1827). The new planned cycle path, called *Path of the contemporary wayfarer*, intended to follow the entire lakefront from south to north, takes on the significance of a connecting thread, the plot of a narrative made up of the various episodes encountered along its route. A physical sign, but above all a flow of "sentimental" relationships, entrusted to each place specificity, with its own colours, sounds, with different energy intensities and identity variations. However, all of them bear the stigmata of a special, almost unique condition, due to their being caught between the harshness of the sheer mountain on one side and the gentleness of the lake on the other. The decision to discourage car traffic along the central stretch of about one and a half kilometres along the road bordering the lake and to return that part of the town to its inhabitants was a completely necessary and coherent measure (Fig. 8a–c). Important parts of the project were the proposal to introduce artistic

[2] *Competition project for the redevelopment of the Lecco Waterfront*, 2021. Project qualified at the second stage. Designers: Luciano Crespi (group leader), Katia Accossato, Katia Fucci, Marco Splendore, Luigi Trentin. Consultants: Eng. Giovanni Albertini (lighting designer); Arch. Francesco Jannone (consultant/lighting designer); P.E. Daniele Pessotto (lighting designer); Arch. Serena Tellini (consultant/lighting designer); Eng. Massimo Percudani (traffic study centre); Arch. Henrique Pessoa (landscape project); Arch. Osvaldo Pogliani (cost estimator); Krijn de Koning (artist and artistic consultant). Contributors: Francesco Antonelli, Malda Frei Eman, Lucia Ratti, Massimo Savino, Mirco Sturlese.

Fig. 7 (continued)

installations in the green areas along the lakefront and the regeneration of some architectures no longer used, located along the *Path*, to be experimented according to an innovative approach, defined as *design of the unfinished*.

The image of the pink flamingo, who comes back to owning a road section now reserved for cars, constitutes a sort of symbol of the project. Although not destined to be realised, as it did not win the last stage of the competition, nevertheless it may have the value of a new style of thinking, not standardised, in the search for pertinent ways of intervention in urban open spaces to be regenerated.

Fig. 7 (continued)

Fig. 8 a–c. *Competition project for the redevelopment of the Lecco Waterfront*, 2021. Project qualified at the second stage. Designers: Luciano Crespi (group leader), Katia Accossato, Katia Fucci, Marco Splendore, Luigi Trentin

b

Fig. 8 (continued)

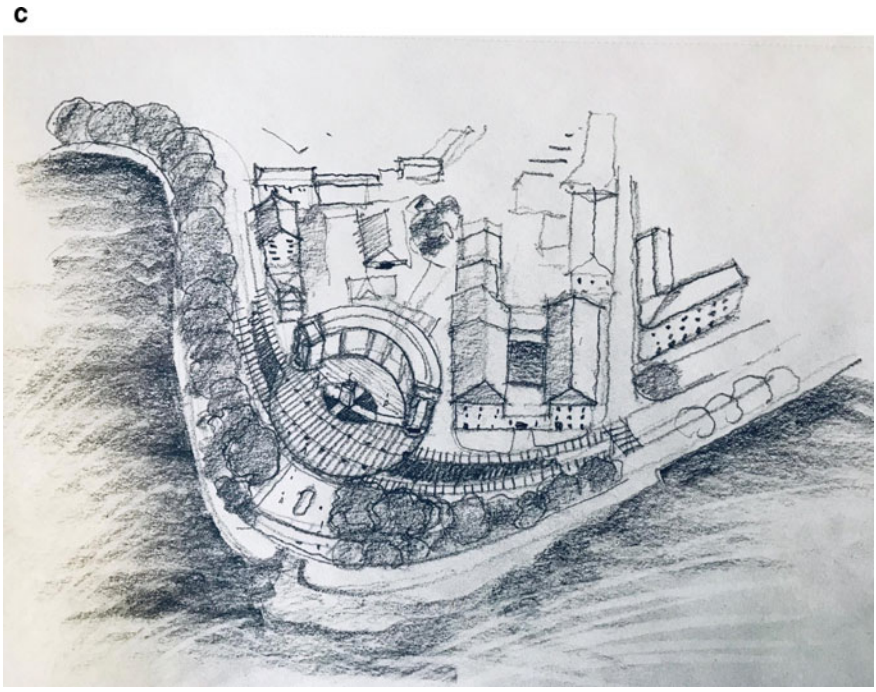

Fig. 8 (continued)

References

Augé M (2009) Che fine ha fatto il futuro? Elèuthera, Milano
Benjamin W (2010) I "passages" di Parigi. Einaudi, Torino
Bourriaud N (2020) Inclusioni. Estetica del capitalocene. Postmedia Books, Milano
Coralli M (2020) Public space "under influence": rewriting in progress in Africa. In: Crespi L (ed) Cultural, theoretical and innovative approaches to contemporary, interior design. IGI Global, Hershey
Crespi L (2018) Da spazio nasce spazio. L'interior design nella trasformazione urbana, 2nd ed. Postmedia Books, Milano
Crespi G (2020) Art and space: new boundaries of intervention. In Crespi L (ed) Cultural, theoretical and innovative approaches to contemporary, interior design. IGI Global, Hershey
Crespi L (ed) (2020a) Cultural, theoretical and innovative approaches to contemporary, interior design. IGI Global, Hershey
Crespi L (2020b) Introduzione. In: Rebaglio A (ed) Interior (c)ity. Politecnica Maggioli, Sant'Arcangelo di Romagna
Crespi L (ed) (2021) Design of unfinished: a new way of designing leftovers regeneration. Springer, Berlin
Di Prete B (2020) Urban interior design: a relational approach for resilient and experiential cities. In: Crespi L (ed) Cultural, theoretical and innovative approaches to contemporary, interior design. IGI Global, Hershey
Finkelstein G (2011) La dictature de l'urgence. Fayard, Paris
Gadamer HG (1977) Die Aktualität des Schönen: Kunst als Spiel, Symbol und Fest. Was bedeutet das alles? Philipp Reclam, Stuttgart.
Gehl J (2010) Cities for people. Island Press, Washington
Gehl J (2011) Life between buildings: using public space. Island Press, Washington
Hillman J (2004) L'anima dei luoghi. Rizzoli, Milano
https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/tactical-urbanism
http://www.cieloterradesign.com/tactical-urbanis-milano-new-york/
Lingiardi V (2017) Mindscapes. Raffaello Cortina, Milano
Lupi I (2010) Design urbano. Serve più coraggio. La Repubblica, 17 marzo
Lynch K (1960) The image of the city. MIT Press, Cambridge
Manzoni A (1827) I promessi sposi. Ferrario, Milano
Migliore I (2020) New narrative spaces. In: Crespi L (ed) Cultural, theoretical and innovative approaches to contemporary, interior design. IGI Global, Hershey
Nicolini R (2011) Estate romana 1976–85. Un effimero lungo nove anni. Città del Sole Edizioni, Roma
Nicolin P (2020) Lezioni di interior design. Postmedia Books, Milano
Pagano G (1941) Parliamo un po' di esposizioni. Casabella-Costruzioni, 159–160
Peggy Guggenheim Collection (1983) Catalogo. Venezia
Rebaglio A (2020) Interior (c)ity. Politecnica Maggioli, Sant'Arcangelo di Romagna
Rovelli C (2014) Sette brevi lezioni di fisica. Adelphi, Milano.
Rovelli C (2020) Helgoland. Adelphi, Milano.
URBAN+INTERIOR (2015) IDEA J
Žižek S (2014) Event. Penguin Books, London

The City Around: For an Urban Space at a Walking Pace

Barbara Di Prete

Abstract Contemporary society and consequently urban life—that is considered one of its most representative manifestations—have often been interpreted through space–time categories: liquidity, simultaneity and acceleration (Bauman 2000; Finchelstein 2011) are considered typical paradigms of our cities. Only apparently in opposition to these readings, today's planners are inviting us to think about urban change starting from the recovery of a proximity and slowness dimension, rediscovering and enhancing neighbourhoods as a privileged sphere of experimentation. A place for promoting a new sociality, an occasion for a group representation and for meeting with the different, to be rethought in a primarily pedestrian dimension, it proves the ideal territory to be redeveloped through economic, reversible, often graphic and small-scale interventions, but with a profound impact on everyday urban living. Therefore, the proximity area is where the challenge of the "city around" is played, where people are placed at the centre of the political and design choices and their symbolic-identity needs stand before the stylistic-compositional ones: "speaking today of a project of the city therefore implies a change of perspective in relation to the traditional urban planning, encoded in the last century, as it becomes necessary to take account of the physical, social and cultural factors, but also of the psychological and individual ones, in which the identity of the community can be reflected and self-replicated" (Di Prete 2016, 159). The chapter will try to explore the potential and design implications of this interpretation, to understand how to promote the construction of a city of proximity, to be enjoyed at a walking pace.

Keywords Walkability · Dwelling proximity · City in 15 min · Slow city · Tactical city · Suburbs regeneration

B. Di Prete (✉)
Dipartimento Di Design, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: barbara.diprete@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_2

1 Introduction: Proximity as a Design Horizon

The chapter's title resumes—literally—an interesting initiative that took place a few years ago in Milan (2017–2019) in the Adriano/via Padova and Corvetto/Chiaravalle neighbourhoods. For a complete illustration of this initiative, see the text edited by Francesca Cognetti and Erika Lazzarino (Cognetti and Lazzarino 2019); here we briefly recall its innovative approach that still instructs many urban regeneration actions and justifies the title choice, "the city around", which many scholars today also call neighbouring city (Manzini 2021; Tajani 2021).

LaCittàIntorno: la cultura rigenera le periferie (*TheCityAround: Culture Regenerates the Suburbs*) is a three-year urban regeneration programme promoted by Fondazione Cariplo, which aimed to structure places for aggregation, training and social cohesion, involving the community on both a relational and a physical level. In fact, the call wanted to trigger engagement and participation, but at the same time did not give up on (re)qualifying public space, with the aim of creating recognisable and recognised places, capable of "expanding the receptive qualities of an otherwise ordinary space" (Boeri 2011, 33).

As one of the project promoters effectively describes, "urban regeneration has been identified as the priority intervention field to reorient development and put back the periphery at the centre of a set of inclusive, innovative and integrated urban policies […] towards the neighbourhood community" (Cognetti 2019, 14). Specifically, through devices and tactics that have been defined from time to time as "sparks, engagements, supports and triggers" (Cognetti 2019, 15), some street art interventions have been carried out to suggest new ways of using pedestrian spaces (think of *Wideopenyourself* by ArtCity-Lab and *The Cut Line* by Asterisma) and, at the same time, to give a new graphic framework to the neighbourhood sports fields.

Since then, many other initiatives acting on the structure, but also on the symbolic and identity material of the city—putting the person at the centre of the investigation and the design proposal—have been activated in Milan. Today, cities are asking for solutions that can make also the public dimension "habitable", enhancing the etymological sense of the term that recalls those concepts of belonging, self-representation and identity relations that are so structuring of the contemporary project (it is not by chance that inhabiting, from the Latin *Habitare*, frequentative of *Habere*, refers to the sense of "having in oneself, possessing").

All this type of proposals, which we could frame in a perspective of social innovation, are designed for social reactivation and urban regeneration of neighbourhoods, so that through the active participation of their inhabitants they become more liveable, attractive, comprehensible and evasive, meaning by this term "the capacity of the environment to evoke a dimension of novelty and mystery, of 'evasion' from the perceptive *routine* through variability and dynamism" (Rainisio 2020, 40). These adjectives refer to categories already enunciated by Stephen and Rachel Kaplan (Kaplan et al. 1998), according to whom, for an environmental pleasantness, the city should satisfy two primary cognitive needs: to make people understand (thanks to

the territory coherence and legibility) and explore (which requires instead a component of complexity and mystery). In any case, placing people and their surrounding world at the centre of the investigation is of primary importance: design cannot only work on the formal-compositional level, but must also necessarily contemplate the symbolic-identity-representational level. There are at least three orders of reasons, intrinsic to the ontological condition of urban living, that underline this urgency:

a. the prevalence of a perceptive and symbolic dimension over the purely stylistic-compositional one requires a people-centered approach i.e., "proposes that we reorder priorities by placing our physical and mental health above traditional measures of efficiency".[1] It is the affirmation of recognised places above measured spaces because, as recalled by Andrea Tagliapietra, "space is thought, places are inhabited. Space is traversed, in places people stop. Space is abstract, places are concrete. […] Therefore, while places are recognised—hated and loved—spaces are simply measured" (Tagliapietra n.d.);
b. the very etymology of the word "urban" refers to an intrinsically human dimension, since the term (from the Latin *urbanus*, der. of *urbs urbis*) also means "polite, courteous, civil" and therefore not only describes what is strictly related to the city, but by extension puts the accent on its inhabitants;
c. the empathic dimension of the contemporary city as the cradle of cosmopolitanism. According to Jeremy Rifkin, "empathy" does not constitute a risk but, on the contrary, is the variable that, more than others, can represent and preserve our civilisation: "being cosmopolitan means being open to 'the other' and being at ease in different cultures" (Rifkin 2009). Chan Kwok-Bun observes that bottom-up cosmopolitanism develops in the course of everyday life through fusion and hybridisation, precisely because of the sharing of neighbourhood spaces, of a history, of a memory that arises simply from living together (Rifkin 2009). Today, with greater awareness than in the past, pursuing this empathy component that a place can establish with its users seems increasingly crucial, encouraging that natural involvement between people and their living environment, with emotional and physiological roots, which acts on the perception and use of the place itself (Mallgrave 2015).

2 Towards a Walking City

Consequently, the theme of the fruition of a neighbouring city leads to reflection on the concept of walkability. Walkability can be interpreted as the extent to which the man-made environment encourages people to use the streets, look at the shops, socialise while walking, visit the city, spend there an apparently waste time.

A great deal of research underlines the importance of walking as a driver of urban change, but also promotes this behaviour as a collective way of life. Many policies

[1] https://popupcity.net/architecture-and-neuroscience-collide-to-design-concious-cities.

already insist on the need to increase the quantity—and quality—of pedestrian journeys, even in large cities. Currently Melbourne, Istanbul, Paris and Barcelona account for 30% to 40% of their total journeys, while Hamburg, Helsinki, Madrid, New York and Los Angeles have also recently invested in car-free spaces or pedestrian-only streets. This is a paradigm shift with impacts not only in terms of pollution, traffic fluidity, and sustainability of the urban organism, but also with clear effects on the individual sphere: the benefits of pedestrianism have repercussions on people's health and psycho-physical well-being, but also include an increase in urban safety, greater social cohesion, a growth in sales for local commerce, and even a marked improvement in personal creativity (Crippa and Di Prete 2020).

An interesting report elaborated by ARUP defines a clear overview on this paradigm of the contemporary city, deepening it in both quantitative and qualitative terms, to highlight "the role that walkability plays in developing more liveable, sustainable, healthy, safe and attractive cities" (Claris and Scopelliti 2016, 11). This research arose from the awareness that "from 70 years of practice we know that a walkable city is a better city" (Hodkinson 2016, 7) and that "with nearly 70% of the world's population set to live in urban areas by 2030, the quality of life experienced by this population will determine our global future" (Claris and Scopelliti 2016, 9). The analysis, carried out to underline the beneficial impact—direct and indirect—of an increasingly slower and more pedestrian-friendly urban perspective, is aimed at directing new policies that focus on the construction of more inclusive and sustainable cities, designed for pedestrians and, through them, for all of us: "having people walking through urban spaces makes the spaces safer for others and, best of all, it makes people happy" (Claris and Scopelliti 2016). By no coincidence, the concept of "happiness" recurs among those who are trying to define a new way of acting on public space (designers, architects, but also exponents of medical and social disciplines), so much so that in Vancouver an urban design and planning consultancy called "Happy City" is working closely with psychologists and neuroscientists to understand the deeper implications of design in its impact on perception and urban liveability (Weiss 2019).

In support of these objectives, the ARUP report identified 50 change drivers and 50 benefit levels organised into 4 domains (social, economic, environmental and political); having an operational nature, it also presented 40 types of concrete project actions, exemplified through 80 best practices, grouped into 5 areas (visions and strategies, safe and efficient transport systems, creating liveable environments, a sense of place and community and smart and responsive cities).

For a detailed analysis of the case studies, which are international in scope and highly heterogeneous in character, please refer to the above-mentioned report; here we would like to focus on some Italian contexts where, albeit with more delay than other municipalities, this same design sensitivity is emerging. One example is the use of "urban games" (real phenomena of "social learning" that influence learning dynamics, relations between strangers, even our lifestyles) designed to facilitate walkability: the project *Metrominuto Advanced Social Games—MetroGames* promoted by the City of Acquaviva delle Fonti (BA) not by chance uses as its payoff "walking is a game with MetroGames" (www. metrogames.it), because a simple app

can be used to promote and monitor sustainable mobility, involving city users in an interactive map that puts them in dialogue with the urban space and its icons. Forms of gamification such as the one proposed in Acquaviva are not new. As an example, in the anticipatory project in Pontevedra, Spain, already in 1999, the mayor Miguel Anxo Fernandez Lores decided to pedestrianize 90% of the city; among the initiatives aimed at increasing liveability, he spread street maps called "Metrominuto", precursor of illustrated maps for interpretating, reading and using urban space.

In Italy, Milan too has taken up the challenge of "slowness" and "walkability", a direction towards which—among others—the research project *LONGEVICITY: Social Inclusion for the Elderly through Walkability* is heading. The project is financed by the Cariplo Foundation[2] and carried out by an international consortium (University of Milan-Bicocca, Politecnico di Milano, AUSER Volontariato Lombardia, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology). In particular, this project aims to develop technologically advanced solutions for pedestrian mobility in the city of Milan, taking into account the needs and perceptions of senior citizens. In this perspective, the evaluation of walkability (that can be translated as the level of accessibility, comfort and safety for pedestrians) plays a fundamental role. It is considered a strategic index to improve the social inclusion of the weakest groups, in the perspective of an increasing presence of active and long-lived citizens in our cities.

Although a widespread awareness of the strategic importance of walkability is relatively recent (think of Jeff Speck's first significant text, *Walkable city*, dated 2012), the statement "Public life is walking", which yesterday was a wish, only today has become an urgent matter of public knowledge. After the pandemic, which necessarily made us rediscover a "proximity" dimension, this sensitivity for the "walking city" is more central than ever.

From the Design for Urban Public Space point of view, it is now necessary to understand how to realise this decidedly contemporary, urgent and commonly recognised need.

3 Tactics for a City at Walking Pace

In the programme *A metropolis for People* (a project launched in 2009 by the Copenhagen municipality in collaboration with the Gehl studio, with the aim of making the Danish capital one of the most liveable cities in the world), the actions proposed to promote the quality of "slow urban life" encouraged the structuring of spaces for shows and entertainment (*the city as stage*), for play and sport (*a city for play and movement)*, or a city for open-air recreation (*pocket-parks, trees and other green areas*). Today, almost fifteen years later, we are called upon to rethink our approach to

[2] Call for scientific research 2017 "*Ricerca sociale sull'invecchiamento: persone, luoghi e relazioni*", for the period between April 2018 and December 2020 (Grant No. 2017–0938) www.sites.google.com/unimib.it/longevicity.

urban design "at eye level"; the design of a more liveable, welcoming, narrative city, to be discovered literally "step by step", in part certainly inherits and consolidates Gehl's strategies, but in part must renovate them, taking into account new instances of contemporaneity.

In this paragraph, some possible design tactics will try to be listed, knowing that each of them would deserve an autonomous and more in-depth study; here, however, the urgency prevails to provide an overview, to give a multiplicity of potential approaches, certainly more effective if integrated.

These are always stories of reconquest of public places, reconfiguration of marginal voids, creation of shared spaces guided by the desire to produce poetic habitats (Lambertini 2013, 15).

3.1 Designing a "15-min City"

"The best places to live in the world have everything within walking distance", says David Sim, Creative Director at Gehl Architects (Sim 2016, 101). This is the context framing the proposal, currently strongly debated and first drawn up by Carlos Moreno, Scientific Director of the Sorbonne in Paris, of the so-called "15-min city", in which all services can be reached by citizens at a maximum distance of 15 min by bicycle or on foot. This proposal has met with great approval due to its obvious ecological opportunities (reduction in pollution), improved life quality (in terms of time gained), the creation of stronger links between people (with repercussions on social cohesion) and spatial requalification of even the most peripheral areas (Luna 2021).

Obviously, it is not a question of creating enclaves, nor of promoting a "village" dimension, which would sound anachronistic in a global world, but of building a more efficient and sustainable urban model, reorganising metropolises into a network of new forms of community. Therefore, this perspective enhances the local sphere as the first opportunity for planning, in the awareness that it is precisely in neighbourhoods that urban ties are most easily consolidated and the identity of a community is built (Borlini and Memo 2008; Castrignanò 2012).

The applications in this sense are already numerous: in New York, the *NYC Plaza Program* is a fundamental part of urban policies aimed at ensuring that all citizens "live within a 10-min walk from a quality open space"[3] and the aforementioned book by Ezio Manzini (2021) reports on the experiences that various municipalities (in addition to Paris, also Barcelona, Madrid, Copenhagen, New York, Shanghai and recently Turin and Milan) are trying to replicate in order to promote short trips and "slow" mobility, bringing services closer together.

It is a question of guaranteeing accessibility, proximity, heterogeneity and the capacity for inclusion, so that the population can find answers to their primary

[3] www.nyc.gov/html/dit/html/pedestrians/nyc-plaza-program.

needs in the "proximity space", both in the practical and in the relational, symbolic-representative sphere.

3.2 Promoting the Event Dimension as a Material of Urban Living

It is an acquired knowledge that the design of urban public space does not end with the design of a container, but it is also strongly expressed through a programme of actions (or events) capable of animating the territory, through the design of the supports (high- and low-tech devices) that allow them to unfold or, one could summarise, in the design of a palimpsest of narratives capable of intersecting with urban living. In fact, more and more frequently we talk about the design role of the events because, although transitory, they are persistent in the traces they leave both in individual and collective memory: "the event, ephemeral by its nature, gives the project a new chance […] to rediscover the metaphor of eternity, the value of the symbolic, of the game as a communicative fact, of celebration" (Crespi 2010, 13; Gadamer 1986). Moreover, the event "is a possibility of change: […] it determines the idealised transformation of public spaces, the rupture in behaviour and habits, the activation of social networks, the assumption of ritual roles" (Bonato 2006).

These categories cannot be ignored by those who deal with the city; on the one hand—as also Augé (1999) reminds us—because design has the possibility of activating an individual imaginary (the dream) but must have the ambition of constructing a collective one (the myth, the ritual, the symbol); on the other hand—and this is perhaps the perspective that most interests this dissertation—because by reasoning on the ephemeral, recognisable and recognised places can be structured even in the most peripheral territories, which encourage a slow, exploratory, shared and community fruition. A fruition made of pauses and not transits, of stops (sometimes unexpected) between daily movements. Therefore, by connecting the physical dwelling space and the symbolic one of experience, events are able to build a multiplicity of cities within the city: not the city in general of all, but the city "of everyone", in a logic of even greater inclusiveness. In fact, the projects and experiments that act in this direction, re-appropriating the city in a continuum of tangible and intangible, facilitate "the transformation of a scattered community into an aggregated community" (Bonato 2006).

Interesting examples are the PAAI—Padiglione Adattabile Autogestito Itinerante (Adaptable Self-Managed Itinerant Pavilion) between Isola, Dergano and Affori, and the UNPark—Urban Nudging Park project, both realised thanks to the Polisocial programme by a group of researchers from Politecnico di Milano. As explained in a text dedicated to the first mentioned project (Di Prete 2020; Di Prete and Mazzarello 2017), the pavilion was certainly "a vehicle of social innovation and cohesion as well as an opportunity for urban regeneration, promoting a participative, inclusive

and collaborative joint planning process. […] In the case of the PAAI, it is a particularly significant example of neighbourhood involvement because it has supported processes of change in vulnerable urban areas (Fig. 1).

However, the pavilion has not only played the role of "social activator" thanks to the contents it has welcomed in more than five months of activity: the PAAI as a vessel, regardless of the events it has hosted, has given the city spaces to rest, meet, shade, to sit down and to communicate. […] So, on the one hand, the PAAI welcomed the "street life", with spontaneous performances and improvised events. On the other hand, it hosted a rich structured programme, thanks to the contribution of the associations. […] Yet within the limitations of resources and in the knowledge of the scale of the operation, the PAAI has thus used a small nomadic space to attain a much fuller space in the shared memory of the community" (Di Prete 2020). Not too different is the very recent UNPark project, also carried out with the double aim of restoring environmental quality to an unresolved, marginal and marginalised peripheral context, such as the Serra Monte Ceneri underpass, and of socially reactivating it to demonstrate its potential also in terms of attractiveness (starting with play and sports functions capable of creating aggregation between different local populations). In this case too, the design team worked both on the physical dimension of the infrastructure, to improve its perception, make it better equipped and therefore more welcoming and hospitable, and also on its symbolic dimension, to build a reference point for the neighbourhood where passers-by could stop, being intrigued by an ever-changing range of activities (Fig. 2).

The pilot project lasted only five days in September 2021, but it was an interesting test because it could be replicated and scaled up in other similar structures. Once again, actions have been put in place which consume a transient image of the city, but build a persistent imaginary in the community memory.

Thus, like many other contemporary projects for the "reconquest" of public space, these act in terms of social reactivation and territorial animation, conveying the ephemeral and immaterial value as tools for urban regeneration.

3.3 Promoting a Graphitized and Prototypical City

A third "tactic" that is increasingly being used to redevelop the city with sustainable budgets and ample reversibility, in the event that the interventions are not "accepted" by the local population, concerns its graphitization. In reality this term, which could appear belittling, is not intended to disregard the importance of more structural interventions, acting on environmental comfort, redesigning the road layout and spatial organisation. On the contrary, working on purely graphic-perceptual aspects and giving prominence to the aesthetic-visual component does not prevent the possibility of acting also on harder place components and in some ways it constitutes even an invitation. As if this type of intervention—decidedly more agile compared to the bureaucratic tasks implied by actions on public space, definitely more economical than those of the "urban tradition", also absolutely more capable of intercepting local

Fig. 1 **a**, **b**. Inauguration of PAAI mounted in the configuration of three single modules, at La Stecca degli Artigiani, and in the configuration of merged modules, Parco Savarino, Milan, 8 May 2016 (*Source* Photo by B. Di Prete)

Fig. 2 **a**, **b**. Moments during the inauguration of the UNPark—Urban Nudging Park project: the conference open to the public to illustrate the programme of events planned and moments of use of the impromptu basketball court "given" to the inhabitants. Intervention under the Serra Monte Ceneri overpass in Milan, September 2021 (*Source* Photo by B. Di Prete)

needs and requirements and making them emerge through processes of participatory graphic design—were declaredly a possible anticipation.

Tactical Urbanism (Lydon and Garcia 2015) acts in this direction, proposing punctual services, weak and provisional actions, often with a strong visual impact; it represents one of the most convincing strategies of temporary micro-actions as test systems capable, in perspective, of driving change: it is an intermediate stage between the unsanctioned and the sanctioned, i.e. a normalized transition from "systems that arose in a non-regulatory and spontaneous way to projects that come to be fully ratified" (Crippa and Decembrino 2020, 108).

In all their most varied forms (this tactical approach to the city is now widespread throughout the world), these projects aim to encourage the dimension of staying and a ludic-contemplative component: a colourful texture like an urban carpet usually accommodates basic but widely usable services such as seats, large vases, ping-pong tables and swings.

After the initial success, such prototypical actions tested on open-air micro-environments often turn into permanent systems; this was the case, for instance, of the well-known pedestrianisation of Times Square in Manhattan, initially preceded by a temporary intervention with deckchairs and folding chairs (Lydon and Garcia 2015, 19). The same happened with the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston, where "demonstration gardens, street art, food trucks, and low-cost movable tables and chairs have breathed new life into the greenway", transforming the Central Artery into a more liveable green infrastructure.[4] In New York, the aforementioned "NYC Plaza Program" envisaged interventions with different time horizons, two of which, since the beginning, were codified as "One-Day Plaza" and "Interim Materials Plaza" and considered possible alternatives for urban regeneration to the more usual (but also costly in economic, constructive and procedural terms) "Permanent Materials Plaza". In Milan too, the *Piazze Aperte*[5] programme has acted in the same perspective: some interventions have actually had a short life, which is not an indication of failure because these projects constitute facilitator seeds of a future change; others have already found a consolidation in the long term, for example Via Toce redevelopment which, due to the presence of the adjacent garden dedicated to Bruno Munari and the nearby kindergarten, has been themed with large drawings on the ground in homage to the famous Milanese designer (Fig. 3).

In any case, regardless of their heritage, all the Milanese episodes provided for light, temporary actions, potentially scalable and replicable at low cost, always with a strong pictorial matrix; in this way, urban fragments often for the exclusive use of parked cars were turned into places "for meeting and socialising, starting simply by redesigning the colour of the ground and by partially [or totally] pedestrianising

[4] https://cspmgroup.com/tacticalurbanism/.

[5] Within the *Piano Periferie* (Suburbs Plan) the *Piazze Aperte* programme promoted, among others, the redevelopment of Piazzale Bacone (2021), Via Toce (2021), Via Serra Monte Ceneri at the corner of Via Plana (2021), Piazza Dergano (2018), Piazza Angilberto (2018) and Piazzale di Porta Genova (2019), carried out by the City Council in collaboration with Bloomberg Associates, the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and Global Designing Cities Initiatives (Crippa and Decembrino, 2020, p. 109).

Fig. 3 **a**, **b**. One of the examples of "tactical" interventions carried out by the Milan City Council's *Open Squares* programme: the pictorial matrix defines a new "urban interior" that hosts events, readings and games. The redevelopment concerns the area of Via Toce near the Bruno Munari Gardens, Milan 2021 (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa and D. Stanga)

[them], a pre-condition for promoting a gradual 'human' re-appropriation of the city" (Di Prete 2020, 245).

3.4 Enhancing the Visual Quality of the Scenic Box

Even more focused on the purely aesthetic-visual component are all those urban redevelopment projects which do not provide for facilities to enable standing or playing, do not reason on the spatial reconquest in favour of pedestrians, but insist on improving the city visual quality starting from the graphic-narrative character of its walls, often perceived as anonymous boundaries that contribute to the overall degradation. In this case too, while using different tools, the final objective is the same: to encourage slow use, giving the streets back to the citizens, making them more pleasant, unpredictable in their content (not only commercial) and safe.

Examples of this come from all over the world: São Paulo, in Brazil, has invested heavily in giant murals, which in recent years have built up a distinctive urban "landscape" thanks to the contribution by Kobra, Apolo Torres and other well-known street artists. Consider that, since 2017, the local government has spent around $1.6 million for signature graffiti, many commissioned even during the pandemic, and in 2020 presented the *Museu de arte de rua 360°*, an online platform that maps and makes virtually usable the more than 90 city's murals (S.a. 2021).

Milan, too, has promoted urban street art interventions on the border between the real and virtual dimensions, funding an augmented museum project located in the city streets: in 2018, thanks to a public call for projects (*Bando alle periferie*) supporting the urban regeneration of Milan's suburbs, the MAUA was created,[6] an unusual museum that works on the urban sign and pictorial component, overlapping with it to augment it with further content; with more than 50 street art works implemented with virtual components, today it turns even the most unfamiliar streets into an unpredictable open-air gallery.

In both cases, art in the service of the city acts on its physical and tangible components, as well as on the intangible ones i.e., on the meaning of the places themselves, enhancing their semantic value and thus telling stories to passers-by. These two examples are representative of a long history, initially the expression of dissident, anarchic or anti-establishment voices, but now widely regulated and consolidated, so that street art is now used as one of the most effective tools for urban regeneration: "urban art becomes the object of a collective demand for improving the aesthetic quality of space, since it is now recognised as an element capable of changing its perception through a connotation inspiring values that combine culture, creativity, research and artistic sense" (Sergi 2020, 215).

[6] www.streetartfactory.eu/maua.

4 Conclusion

All the examples proposed are spaces that intercept passers-by, welcome, reassure and represent them; they are "works which aim to recover that dimension of relationship between man, object and space which is characteristic of the culture of the project of interiors" (Crespi 2018) and which, especially in the suburbs, is fundamental for improving the perceived quality, urban safety, neighbourhood vitality and liveability. It is precisely in the peripheral spaces, often unpopularly described as neglected, that design can find experimentation opportunities and can really get involved to accelerate urban improvement: peripheries "demonstrate growing and promising capacity to look at themselves, to independently organise, and to promote insurgent action. People adopt and transform green space, cultivate urban gardens. Street artists become active. People initiate activities for shared services and solidarity endeavours. Here, more than in other areas, and now more than ever, public space has become a laboratory for innovation, for creating the city" (Moro et al. 2020, 9).

Just as in central areas pedestrian use is commonplace, thanks to shop windows, opportunities for socialising, continuous opening hours, spatial quality and a safety perception, so the challenge is to rediscover the suburbs too as "cities at a walking pace", to be travelled through and not just crossed. Thus, the city in its entirety could rediscover its "cultural attitude […] inspired by the grassroots, by the need for collectivity, sharing, sociality" (Boschetti et al. 2011, 18), finding its best expression in the encounter experience and in the *street* community dimension (quite different from the typical *road* anonymity) as a ground for redemption.

This is how interventions proliferate to define a framework of specific actions to be implemented in the short term aimed at providing a new horizon even for the most eccentric neighbourhoods: *Ripartire, dalle Periferie* (VV. AA. 2021) is just one of the recent initiatives that describes how the neighbourhood dimension, even in medium-sized cities and even in degraded contexts, "can become a model for an incubator of sustainable design practices" replicable in other territories (Fassi 2020, 76).

It is precisely the "city around" that appears to be the privileged field of experimentation, the one in which the challenge of urban liveability is to be played out: in fact, more circumscribed territorial realities, although sometimes in emergency contexts, are more proactive and are those where sociality, search for environmental quality, safety perception, accessibility to services, propensity for innovation and inclusion—as the capacity for group representation and acceptance of what is different—are greater. Therefore the "city around", in its dimension of proximity, works on the small and near, but does not escape the bigger and more distant challenge, to be conquered, obviously, at a slow pace.

References

Augé M (1999) The war of dreams: exercises in ethno-fiction: studies in ethno fiction. Pluto Press, London
Bauman Z (2000) Liquid modernity. Polity Press, Cambridge
Boeri S (2011) L' Anticittà. Laterza, Rome-Bari
Bonato L (2006) Tutti in festa: antropologia della cerimonialità. FrancoAngeli, Milan
Borlini B, Memo F (2008) Il quartiere nella città contemporanea. Mondadori, Milan
Boschetti A, De Lucchi M, Freyrie L, Furlan G (2011) Superurbano: sustainable urban regeneration. International architecture biennial. Marsilio, Venice
Castrignanò M (2012) Comunità, capitale sociale, quartiere. FrancoAngeli, Milan
Claris S, Scopelliti D (2016) Cities alive: towards a walking world. ARUP, London
Cognetti F, Lazzarino E (2019) eds Quartiere Adriano, conoscenza per il cambiamento. LaCittàIntorno, DAStU, Milan
Cognetti F (2019) Ricercare per attivare. Una metodologia per rigenerare luoghi inclusivi. In: Cognetti F, Lazzarino E (eds) Quartiere Adriano, conoscenza per il cambiamento. LaCittàIntorno, DAStU, Milan, pp 14–20
Crespi L (2010) L'interior design nella città evento. In: Fassi D (ed) In-trattenere: design degli spazi per l'evento. Maggioli, Milan, pp 12–17
Crespi L (2018) Da spazio nasce spazio: L'interior design nella riqualificazione degli ambienti contemporanei. Postmedia Books, Milan
Crippa D, Decembrino C (2020) L'urbanistica della gentilezza. In: Crippa D (ed) #regeneration. Maggioli, Milan, pp 95–118
Crippa D, Di Prete B (2020) Il progetto dello spazio pubblico tra transitorietà e persistenza. In: Crippa D (ed) #regeneration. Maggioli, Milan, pp 48–69
Di Prete B (2016) Urban interior design: strategies for public living spaces. In Crespi L (ed) Design innovations for contemporary interiors and civic Art. IGI Global, Hershey, pp 156–185
Di Prete B, Mazzarello M (2017) Towards a new "urban sensitivity". The role of design as support to social innovation. In: Di Lucchio L, Imbesi L (eds) Design for next, proceedings of the 12th European Academy of Design Conference, Università La Sapienza, Rome, 12–14 April. Lecture Notes in The Design Journal, vol 20: sup 1, pp 3.589–3.600. Taylor & Francis Group, Abingdon
Di Prete B (2020) The background of the P.A.A.I.: a research between spatial marginality and social activation. In: Fassi D, Landoni P, Piredda F, Salvadeo P (eds) Universities as drivers of social innovation. Springer, Cham, pp 239–256
Fassi D (2020) Quartieri come incubatori di progettualità di spazi e servizi. In Crippa D (ed) #regeneration. Maggioli, Milan, pp 74–88
Finchelstein G (2011) La dictature de l'urgence. Fayard, Paris
Gadamer HG (1986) The relevance of the beautiful and other essays. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
Garcia A, Lydon M (2015) Tactical urbanism: short-term action for long-term change. Island Press, Washington
Gehl J (2010) Cities for people. Island Press, Washington
Hodkinson G (2016) Foreword. In Claris S, Scopelliti D (ed) Cities alive: towards a walking world. ARUP, London, p 7
Kaplan R, Kaplan S, Ryan R (1998) With people in mind: design and management of everyday nature. Island Press, New York
Lambertini A (2013) Urban beauty! Luoghi prossimi e pratiche di resistenza estetica. Compositori, Bologna
Luna R (2021) La città da 15 minuti, Stazione Futuro. In: La Repubblca, 8 marzo. www.repubblica.it/tecnologia/blog/stazione-futuro/2021/03/08/news/la_citta_da_15_minuti-299511392/
Mallgrave HF (2015) L'empatia degli spazi. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan
Manzini E (2021) Abitare la prossmità. Idee per la città dei 15 minuti. Egea, Milan

Moro A, Concilio G, Tosoni I, Medina T, Longo A, Carli P, Pettinaroli M, Acerbi E (2020) Beyond the city center, beyond centrality. Public space in fragile urban contexts, from research to action, in Playtime. Maggioli, Milan

Rainisio N (2020) Cambiamento, benessere, identità. In Crippa D (ed) #regeneration. Maggioli, Milan, pp 30–43

Rifkin J (2009) The empathic civilization. Penguin, New York

S.a. (2021) San Paolo si è riempita di street art. In: Il Post, 27 giugno. www.ilpost.it/2021/06/27/street-art-san-paolo-brasile-murale-murales-graffiti/#:~:text=Apolo%20Torres%2C%20un%20altro%20noto,momenti%20pi%C3%B9%20critici%20della%20pandemia

Sergi I (2020) Linguaggi urbani e semiotica dell'energia. In: Crippa D (ed) #regeneration. Maggioli, Milan, pp 203–223

Sim D (2016) The walkable future of public space. In: Claris S and Scopelliti D (eds) Cities alive: towards a walking world. ARUP, London, p 101

Speck J (2012) Walkable city: how downtown can save America, one step at a time. North Point Press, New York

Tagliapietra A (n.d.) Abitare la casa, abitare la città. In: XÁOS. Giornale di confine. www.giornalediconfine.net/xaos_archivio/archivio/Lo_spazio_e_il_luogo_andrea_tagliapietra.htm

Tajani C (2021) Città prossime. Dal quartiere al mondo: Milano e le metropoli globali. Guerini, Milan

VV AA (2021). A scuola di periferie 2021. Le periferie generano cultura, conference of a cycle of 12 meetings, Dalle Periferie, per Ripartire, 10 marzo

Weiss S (2019) The psychological tricks designers use to make cities happier places. In: Wired, 30 luglio. www.wired.co.uk/article/city-design-architecture-happiness-wellbeing

https://cspmgroup.com/tacticalurbanism/

https://popupcity.net/architecture-and-neuroscience-collide-to-design-concious-cities/

www.metrogames.it

www.nyc.gov/html/dit/html/pedestrians/nyc-plaza-program

www.sites.google.com/unimib.it/longevicity

www.streetartfactory.eu/maua

Design of the Ephemeral in Urban Spaces

Davide Crippa

Abstract The ephemeral and its variable *time* are the great paradigm with which the discipline of contemporary design should be reinterpreted. The absolute prominence of time is testified by important essays, first of all the historical *Space, Time Architecture* by Sigfried Giedion (1941), where he introduces the temporal component to read the Bauhaus revolution. Many years have passed since Gropius and his colleagues, and time has increasingly acquired a fundamental dimension, supplanting the space variable in interiors and architecture. An increasingly "relative" time (to steal Eistenian intuition) paradoxically transforms the temporary into the only constant of our lives. Lives are immersed in a society that has made change its identifying feature.

Keywords Regeneration · Event · Milandesignweek · *FuoriSalone* · Urban leftovers · Exbihition

1 Introduction

> Nothing is more definitive than the provisional
> (Vitiello 2019)

The twentieth century, with its great discoveries, challenged many scientific and social certainties and laid the foundations for that "fluid" dimension of life capable of moulding itself to contingencies, taking the shape of the moment and of the "container" it passes through. In the society of change, so well described by Bauman in his books *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Bauman 2007) and *Liquid Modernity* (Bauman 2000), one of the few certainties—one of the few permanencies—is precisely temporariness. This is why, in a newspaper's page, we find that Guido Vitiello, in reading politics, coins the phrase that serves as the introduction to this chapter section "Nothing is more definitive than the provisional". This condition is typical of the long century. The twentieth century, with its upheavals and direction

D. Crippa (✉)
Dipartimento di Culture del Progetto, IUAV, Venice, Italy
e-mail: dcrippa@iuav.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_3

changes, sets the basis for the crisis of a project culture grounded on a specific and traditional vision.

A modification of perspective and method in the design discipline is represented by Team X's criticism of CIAM and by the figure of Giancarlo De Carlo, who highlights the transformation and describes it as a change in "the moment of architectural design from an imperative act into a process" (De Carlo and De Michelis 1995, 87). Contemporary design "seems to shift the focus of attention from the definition of unambiguous forms to the definition of 'possibilities of use', modifiable forms, open solutions; it is the affirmation of indeterminate strategies and scenarios of which users are from time to time the 'builders', as opposed to deterministic choices of which the architect is the sole author" (Crippa and Di Prete 2011, 5). The crisis questions the figure of the designer as a great demiurge who reshapes the fate of parts of the city. The project is affected in its ability to anticipate and direct transformations; becoming increasingly rapid, they require lightweight projects capable of adapting to changes that were not initially planned or foreseeable. The project becomes increasingly "processual" in nature, the time variable becomes a functional and aesthetic constant of contemporary design, and the ephemeral (and exhibiting) dimension acquires new dignity and importance.

The project as a "process" intersects with and is linked to the 1968 counter-revolution, which brought into play new tools such as the concept of happenings and performances used by radical architects who were promoting a profound transformation of the discipline. A transformation that promoted the unexpected and momentary use of space and that had one of its main fields of action in the urban environment. From the 1970s actions seeds, we will look at how the temporary use of spaces in the city as well as tactical urbanism are transforming both the dynamics of use and the face of the urban dimension in the city of Milan.

2 The Seeds of Counter-Revolution

1968 Power to the Imagination/2020 The Imagination is a duty
(Ghigos 2020)

The state of permanent metamorphosis that characterises our contemporary society is very closely linked to the concept of *indeterminacy*, which is present in the scientific theories of the twentieth century, in artistic practices and in the entire experience of the 1970s radical movement. An indeterminacy which is not only present in society, but that becomes part of a project that must review its disciplinary tools because the resolving dimension crystallised in a definitive form must give way to a project of denunciation, a project that asks questions (and not only gives answers), that is aimed to search for strategic solutions and quality of processes rather than formal applied results. A focus on relationships and processes can be seen in the

experiments by Gutai (1956),[1] followed by the performances of Western artists, from Allan Kaprow's *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959), to Situationist practices (1959) and the thirty tons of rubbish dumped in the Iris Clert Gallery in Paris with *Le Plein* exhibition by Arman (1960); from Yves Klein's *Antropométries de l'époque bleue* (1961)—a canvas on which naked bodies drenched in colour leave traces as they roll to the sound of music—to the research by the Fluxus group, by Piero Manzoni, to Marina Abramovich and Ulay's memorable performance *Imponderabilia* in 1977 at the Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna in Bologna, where at the gallery door the two artists appear naked, becoming a sort of living door that asks the visitor whether to enter the gallery for the exhibition and if so how. The performative dimension becomes one of the project tools of the Radicals protest which, in the school of *Global Tools,* tries to re-invent the project starting from the body, in an assonance with the artistic movements. In this "non-school" designed between 1973 and 1975, the aim was to re-invent the world and rethink education in order to make it coincide with life, thus giving rise to seminars such as *Il corpo e i vincoli* (*The body and its constraints*) where a "different" ergonomics and a "dialogue between art and design, between the body as a primary tool and the objects as prostheses" was created (Borgonuovo and Franceschini, 2018, 91). In the same direction go the *different walks* of Coop-Himmelblau who continued the Situationist tradition and enriched it with disorientating and destabilising devices (such as the pneumatic spheres they used to move around the centre of Vienna), Gianni Pettena's *Wearable Chairs* performance (1971) or Ugo La Pietra's various unbalancing systems starting with the *Commutator* (1970) (Pettena 1996). All these projects and visions are offspring of the 1968 motto "Power to the Imagination", permeated with the desire to challenge and re-imagine the present and the near future.

This 1970s search for a new vision, this use of the event and the performative aspect can be found in the 1990s relational art and counterculture. A counterculture that materialised in the "upside down world" in the constitution of the TAZ or "temporarily autonomous zone" (Bey 1995, 12), through the raves practice. As described in a recent essay, "in the practice of excess, the rave phenomenon has a subversive and political charge that connects directly to the Hippy counterculture and the Traveller movement, with their big free fairs, and is close to all punk, crew and psychedelic rock countercultures. The direct link with these counterculture movements establishes the basic principles of rave which, however, are determined in their identity by electronic music, the development of musical instruments and equipment for acoustic diffusion accessible to many." (Crippa 2021). Once again, this is a practice that keeps track of the 1970s and that considers the *time* variable and the indeterminacy aspect as founding components of the project.

In the art world, the connection is direct and based on the increasing use of performances, happenings and Body Art which shifts the attention to the public involvement therefore, "the spontaneous participation of people and the setting of works in significant urban contexts transform the city into a theatre of events, open spaces where the interaction between the artist and the public takes place in the gesture; and almost

[1] https://www.shozoshimamoto.org/testi_critici/manifesto-dellarte-gutai-jiro-yoshihara/.

as a game, life is transformed into art. From this moment on, the spectators become the protagonists of the artistic operation, unrepeatable and unmarketable" (Crippa 2021, 53) and the urban space becomes "territory and place of life and art, in which everyday life was the aesthetic reference point for reinventing the world" (Crippa 2021). Thus, the foundations are laid for the 1990s Public Art, whose cornerstone is relational research. This is the direction taken by works such as *Transurbanza* (1995), *Pranzo Boario* (2000), *Immaginare Corviale* (2005) by Stalker/Osservatorio Nomade and artists/architects such as Artway of Thinking, Gruppo A12, Feld72 or Urban Void; in a similar track we also find the works of well-known artists such as Alberto Garutti or Vittorio Corsini who, through the value of relationships and interaction with the public, elevate their works from the status of simple sculptures or paintings. This design revolution is necessary in a society of change and is well understood by authors such as Bernard Tschumi, who proposes a revision of the Vitruvian triad (*venustas*, *firmitas* and *utilitas*) with the triad "space, event and movement" (Tschumi 1994), introducing a dynamic vision into the project and challenging "every idea of form expressed through definitive programmatic tools" (Lo Giudice 2015). Tschumi's triad of values "frees space from the rigid selective procedures typical of design, shifting the centre of gravity from a deterministic design practice towards an evolution of the architecture discipline that finds its fulcrum in indeterminacy" (Lo Giudice 2015), focusing attention precisely to the *time* variable, to which he indirectly dedicates both the event and the movement of his new triad.

This temporal overview, that takes us from the seeds of the 1968 revolution to the 1990s counter-revolution, describes and clarifies how much the current temporary, sometimes unexpected, use of spaces in the city owes a conceptual debt to the past. Milan's *FuoriSalone*, which came into being in the years when the rave movement arrived in Italy, and the various Fashion Week parades launched the temporary use of abandoned spaces (often former industrial or public spaces) to stage events and exhibitions that revitalised and distorted them for a few hours or a week. A practice of temporariness which, however, leads to lasting changes, as in the case of the Tortona district. Now *time*'s variability has also strongly characterised the dimension of town planning, as in the case of tactical urbanism which has recently spread in the city of Milan.

3 The Milan Case

The importance of the ephemeral dimension in urban space can be perceived above all in metropolises. Among metropolises, an interesting case is Milan, which has created a model for the temporary use of spaces throughout the city during its Design and Fashion Weeks. Particularly noteworthy are the actions carried out during the Design Week, which make the city a unique case on a global scale. In fact, Milan presents a new format of trade fair event, exceptional for its extension and ability to generate simultaneous events in several places in the city, absolutely unattainable in terms of quantity and quality of the offer. For these reasons, looking at Milan can be an

excellent parameter for interpreting the temporary/permanent phenomenon in urban space.

In addition to the historical phenomenon of the *FuoriSalone*, now there is the adoption of tactical urbanism, an American practice imported to Italy by the city of Milan. Tactical urbanism has a more social and participatory dimension than the *FuoriSalone* experience. Its objective is to promote urban changes in the city through simulations and applied projects that are built and shared with the citizens, possibly through a bottom-up elaboration and the participation of the resident population.

3.1 FuoriSalone*: The Time Bomb*

FuoriSalone captured the breakthrough power of happenings in the city (such as those of radicals) and temporary events in abandoned places, such as raves, and brought them into an event that, thanks to Gilda Bojardi, in 1991 took the name of *FuoriSalone* and provided itself with a guide to events as an organisational tool attached to the *Interni* magazine. The *Interni* guide, which is still the reference point for events held in the city and outside the Fiera spaces, is one of the fundamental ingredients of the highly successful formula that is today's the Milan Design Week, a fair with an off-fair that every year sees thousands of events in the city and an increasing number of districts and exhibition venues.

In its constitution, the *FuoriSalone* starts by connecting the showrooms of the big design companies already present in the city and then opens the first districts starting from the Tortona. Created around Cappellini's event in the Superstudio spaces, the Tortona district used former industrial spaces that abound in the area, such as those of the former Ansaldo (now Base Milano) and spread throughout the neighbourhood in "warehouses that were then full of rubble and design objects, but are now home to foundations, style offices and famous press offices" (Ferrarini 2019). As Ferrarini describes, in a decade Tortona former factories and disused spaces detonate like a time bomb. The transformation of former Ansaldo into the Mudec Museum and Base Milano has given rise to a phenomenon of permanent redevelopment of the whole district, which today positions itself as the headquarters of fashion and the creativity system (Fig. 1).

From the Tortona district, the *FuoriSalone* model has extended to Lambrate which, thanks to the work of Ventura Project, has had an incredibly successful parable; from 2010 to 2018 the district has characterised itself as the most innovative, having "always focused on giving visibility to international creatives, both new and established, by launching their projects. A catalyst for ideas and projects, as defined by Maarten Baas, among the protagonists of the last edition" (Jonna 2020).

Ventura Project, the company founded by Margriet Vollenberg and Fulvia Ramogida, began in Tortona with a solo exhibition by an emerging Marcel Wanders and then shifted its attention to other spaces in the city, making *Ventura Lambrate* and later *Ventura Centrale* grow for eight years. By moving around the neighbourhood, the Ventura duo brought into sharper focus its peculiarities, which were based

Fig. 1 Marcel Wanders' major monographic exhibition in the former industrial spaces on Via Tortona in 2007 (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa)

on the search for abandoned places with an ex-industrial atmosphere and their turn into places for new ideas. An operation of fascination that played on the contrast between new and old as its narrative code; an operation that left almost no room for setting up and based everything on the quality of the displayed contents (object code) as opposed to the decaying context (background code). It was a highly successful formula that is currently in the spotlight and has a clear debt with the rave system, which in the 1990s promoted temporary use transformations precisely in this kind of contexts (Fig. 2).

The visitors flow introduced into Lambrate district during the Design Week changed the neighbourhood, where real estate investments began to flourish to such an extent that, in the span of a short time, the headquarters of the *Politecnica* university, the *De Carlo* gallery, the headquarters of the *Abitare* magazine and a series of design and photography galleries moved there. Alongside these no longer temporary presences, the landscape of former factories was gradually transformed into a landscape of neo-lofts with a post-industrial atmosphere (Figs. 3, 4).

The aesthetic format of the Ventura Project events is now taken up and carried forward by the *Alcova* project which, first in the *NoLo* (North of Loreto) area, and now in the Baggio district, presents a refined selection of avant-garde design objects to contrast with disused contexts; playing on the fascination of the contrast effect, as Ventura Project already did (Fig. 5).

The formula combines the exceptional nature of the event with the extraordinary opening of inaccessible places and becomes the "detonating fuse" of a change that

Fig. 2 The huge former factory at the end of via Ventura opened for the 2013 edition of *Ventura Lambrate* (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa)

very often becomes permanent. Thus, in two years from the opening of the former Alcova panettone factory in the NoLo district, the area became a well-known cool location for the fashion world and fashion parades, and was subsequently acquired by an investment fund for a real estate transformation. A repetitive mechanism has completely transformed Tortona, partially Lambrate and now begins in the NoLo area. In the 2021 edition, after the sale of the area of the former panettone factory, Alcova moved to a new, very peripheral area. It chose the popular Baggio district that had never been the subject of *FuoriSalone* events and is going to operate inside the large crumbling structure of a former military hospital. This search for unusual,

Fig. 3 The first opening of Magazzini Raccordati by Ventura Project and the birth of the *Ventura Centrale* project in 2017 (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa)

unused spaces on the one hand moves the boundaries of *FuoriSalone* further and further, and on the other, allows the most courageous subjects to transform an area, even a very problematic one like Baggio, for the time of an eight-day event. A result that remains tangible in the suburbs, which see 15,000–18,000 people arrive having different targets and types than those native to the area, and who use the city in a totally different and innovative way compared to its inhabitants (Fig. 6).

Concluding this story of abandoned spaces, of their past and new temporary uses during the Milan Design Week, we would like to focus on some experiments, including the *Repubblica del Design* district and a very recent one at the Arcimboldi Theatre. The focus on these cases is dictated by their introduction of a variation in the model studied, bringing the ephemeral even closer to the permanent.

Repubblica del Design district operates between Bovisa-Dergano-Lancetti; launched in 2019, since its constitution it presents itself by declaring that "The initiative is not about the creation of another district for Milan Design Week, but has a broader and long-term goal: to relaunch the peripheral areas as a territory of innovative, inclusive and collaborative activities, as places in which to experiment with new and different centralities" (Peluso 2019), thus aspiring to become a permanent district. In doing so, the Repubblica del Design district uses the same propensity to make use of little-visited spaces that are off the conventional tracks, even extremely peripheral, but with a different approach to the content production and exhibition. Compared to the Ventura Project and Alcova formula, Repubblica del Design introduces the same ritual of temporary events, but with the idea that the interventions are

Fig. 4 The extraordinary opening of the spaces of the Faculty of Ex Pharmacy with the exhibition *Ventura Future Dome* in the 2018 edition (*Source* Photo by P. Pasteris)

semi-permanent and will modify the urban fabric event after event. This vocation is declined in nine curatorial keys that govern the district and which describe this will in the #regeneration category (Crippa 2020). "Under the category Regeneration, the interventions of the Anonymous Designers Association (ADA), that has designed more or less invasive solutions for the entire neighbourhood, are proposed by activating, thanks to painting, the 'district that never ends' and emphasising the needs and beauties of the area" (Pambianco Design 2019). Interventions are thus created such as the *Ultrapiazza* with the *Energy Wall*, the *Design Customs*, the *Design Monument* or *Poli Urban Color* where, through especially pictorial interventions at the

Fig. 5 The opening of the *Alcova* project inside the former *Alcova* panettone factory in the sparkling *NoLo* neighbourhood in 2018 (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa)

Fig. 6 The opening of the Alcova project inside the former hospital in the Baggio district, in 2021 (*Source* Photo by D. Crippa)

Fig. 7 Repubblica del Design—*Design Monument* in the 2019 *FuoriSalone*. Installation conceived by Ghigos (www.ghigos.com) and the ADA students collective from Politecnico di Milano—School of Design

urban scale, contents are created to be presented during the Milan Design Week but which at the same time tell the design-oriented vocation of the district, triggering a territorial marketing strategy (Fig. 7).

This territorial marketing logic also includes a permanent ad hoc signage, designed in an artistic key to indicate in the streets and roads of the area the events locations, but also specific features, architectural and functional emergencies present in the district, such as the Politecnico di Milano in Bovisa or the area of historic artisans in Dergano (Fig. 8).

These are urban-scale interventions developed in a way that could be ascribed to what has recently been called "tactical urbanism". In the area, in addition to the urban-scale projects, we find other projects such as *In bed with Design*, a set-up that for the 2017 and 2018 editions transformed the former vertical factory in via Cosenz 44/4 into an experimental one-week hostel-exhibition for designers. The project created a new temporary exhibition format trying to enhance the activity of a makerspace/fablab of digital and non-digital artisans, who was re-functionalizing the factory during the rest of the year. In short, the strategy was to transform the space into a hostel-exhibition in order to demonstrate the design and production capabilities of the makerspace; in doing so, a new aesthetic was also created that, unlike the Ventura and Alcova installations, used a very pronounced exhibition code,

Fig. 8 Republic of Design—A system of urban signposts displaying the augmented reality artworks of the circuit designed in collaboration with *Be-Part*

that was capable of disrupting the factory's layout to completely reinvent its use for the short duration of the temporary exhibition (Fig. 9).

Projects such as *Thought in Milan*, *Art 72 room hotel*, *Han Kjøbenhavn—Milan Men FW20* and the recent interventions of *Design Differente* are presented with a completely different aesthetic. In a more canonical way, they play on the contrast between the post-industrial place left in a state of abandonment and the juxtaposition of the exhibition and or the fashion show objects (Fig. 10).

In common with Tortona, Ventura Project and Alcova, the Repubblica del Design district uses little-known spaces that are often disused and, in many cases, post-industrial, while it differs from them in the desire, declared since its constitution as a district, to leave, through the event and the cultural episode, a semi-definitive piece, already part of a vision and a strategy of territorial regeneration for the improvement of the district. An operating model that seeks to accelerate and coordinate the effect of real estate redevelopment that these major events often trigger in the city (Fig. 11).

This desire to invert roles, and a design dimension between temporary and permanent introduced by the Repubblica del Design District in 2019 could be interpreted as an evolution of the *FuoriSalone* system, favoured by two other cases that in the last two editions were moving in the same inverted logic i.e., the temporary in function of a "tactical design" with a permanent outcome.

The first case is DOS (Design Open Spaces), which launched an anomalous district defined by the organisers as "a district spread across different areas of the city and oriented towards the redevelopment of forgotten spaces" (Buzzi 2019); with the collaboration of the Milan Municipality (Area for Social Valorisation of Spaces), it

Fig. 9 Republic of Design—*In bed with Design* 2017 edition, a project by Ghigos for Ideas Bit Factory (www.ideas-bit-factory.it)

had different brands exhibited in various locations with the task of renovating their premises and giving a legacy to the community beyond the time of the exhibition.

The second case is the exhibition *Vietato l'ingresso*, a project where "Art comes in support of Art" (Privitera 2021): design helps relaunching the theatre sector by creating an exhibition in the form of a renovation of 17 dressing rooms of the Arcimboldi Theatre. This project was one of the great revelations of the 2021 edition. 17 interior designers were called in and exhibited 17 interior stories, giving access to an area that normally could not be visited—the dressing rooms of the artists performing at the theatre. At the same time, these installations were an opportunity to donate to the Arcimboldi Theatre new recovered and reinvented dressing rooms, among the most special in the theatre's history.

Fig. 10 Han Kjøbenhavn's fashion show during Men's Fashion Week in the former industrial spaces of the *Design Differente* event location (www.designdifferente.it)

4 The Temporary/Permanent of Tactical Urbanism

In this story on the importance of the ephemeral in the city, we have chosen Milan not only for the creation of *FuoriSalone* in the 1990*s* but also because since 2018 it has imported to Italy the practice of tactical urbanism to redesign the city and rethink it together with its citizens. The term tactical urbanism appeared in 2011 with Mike Lydon and Antony Garcia's book *Tactical Urbanism* (Lydon and Garcia 2012), the first of a series of manuals that over the years have described good practices and defined guidelines to transform the city with a few tools and perhaps a bottom-up participatory way. The Milan Municipality and the AMAT office imported this practice and with the first tactical piazza, Piazza Dergano, experimented with the use of the kits of materials described in the manuals. Then, through the *Piazze Aperte* programme, expanded the experimentation and revolutionised Milan's public space. As described in the manuals, "tactical urbanism demonstrates the extraordinary power of thinking small in relation to our cities. It shows how, with a little imagination and the resources already at their disposal, cities can unleash the full potential of their streets" (Bazzu and Talu 2016). Indeed, Milan also sets free that imagination which, from the first graphic intervention in Piazza Dergano, led to many examples of "open squares" such as the intervention in Via Toce *Giocare è una cosa seria* (*Playing is a serious matter*) built by the Isola neighbourhood committee together with Repubblica del Design. The first "open square" in 2020 was a pictorial design intervention at the urban scale which transformed the street into a large fairy tale in

Fig. 11 Site-specific installation by the artist Gianfranco Basso as part of the programme curated by Repubblica del Design and Enea on the theme #energy in the spaces of Design Differente (www.designdifferente.it)

plaza size, connected two gardens in Via Toce and Via Cusio and created a graphic element that involved the many children who use these spaces.

Tactical urbanism for Milan, and beyond, is the first full-scale test of low-cost urban transformation that can be carried out quickly, so that the city can be modified relatively easily according to the needs and desires of the people who live there. In a short span of time, this method has made it possible to carry out hundreds of semi-temporary urban transformations, which in some cases have also become permanent, as in the case of Piazza Dergano; here the intervention was first tested

by the citizens and, after the evaluation of the experiment, was transformed into a permanent renovation of the square.

5 Conclusion

We started by trying and understand how much the *time* variable has become fundamental in contemporary society and consequently in the project; we figured out how a conceptual revolution from permanent to temporary, which started in 1968, has come to the present day enhancing ephemeral project practices and how all this process can be read in the city of Milan. By analysing the history of events and weeks in Milan, we have appreciated the dynamics that have allowed temporary events to permanently change the face of some neighbourhoods, such as the Tortona area. In a process, disused neighbourhoods have been selected and temporarily revitalised at the pace of events, then more lasting processes of real estate transformation have been triggered, according to a mechanism that is being repeated in other neighbourhoods such as Lambrate, NoLo and Bovisa. A mechanism that, over the last 30 *years*, has been staged with different nuances and recently has seen the introduction of new logics and modalities such as those performed in the Repubblica del Design and DOS districts or in the *Vietato l'ingresso* exhibition, where the ephemeral becomes at least in part immediately permanent. In these last three cases, the perspective has reversed, and the events have become increasingly definitive thanks to an underlying strategy of spaces and neighbourhoods regeneration, a dynamic in which time becomes increasingly relative, compressing and expanding. These latter experiences, developed in the last few years of the Design Weeks, are linked to an urban planning practice that sees precisely in a temporary, exhibition-like attitude the only possibility for quickly redesigning the city in a definitive way. Re-reading the experience of tactical urbanism in Milan, in the light of the experience of the weeks' mechanism, means highlighting even more the importance of ephemeral actions as an achievement of variable and unpredictable time. Ephemeral actions are becoming more and more like a simulation for permanent transformations; they can last in the urban space for even a couple of years in their temporary form or become immediately permanent, as part of a redevelopment strategy that takes shape precisely thanks to them, as they become fragments in the city's spaces. We can see that even these new urban design tools and the variations in the setting up logic of the exhibition weeks have time as a common parameter, an unpredictable and relative time which we must supervise as a variable of contemporary design.

References

Bauman S (2000) Liquid modernity. Polity Press, Malden, MA
Bauman S (2007) Liquid times: living in an age of uncertainty. Polity Press, Malden, MA

Bazzu V, Talu V (2016) Tactical Urbanism 5 Italia. Tamalacà, Sassari
Bey H (1995) T.A.Z. Zone temporanea autonome. SkaKe Edizioni, Milano
Borgonuovo V, Franceschini S (2018) Global tools: quando l'educazione coinciderà con la vita, 1973–1975. Nero, Istanbul
Crippa D (2020) #regeneration. Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna, RN
Crippa D (2021) Urban remnants become setting for events. In: Crespi L (ed) Design of the unfinished: a new way of designing leftovers regeneration. Springer Nature, Cham, pp 149–162
Crippa D, Di Prete B (2011) Verso un'estetica del momentaneo: l'architettura degli interni dal progetto al processo. Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna, RN
De Carlo G, De Michelis M (1995) Giancarlo De Carlo: immagini e frammenti. Electa, Milano
Ferrarini P (2019) Fuorisalone: una storia fatta di storie - Dagli anni Settanta a oggi: dentro, fuori e attorno al design. Zero. https://zero.eu/it/news/fuorisalone-una-storia-fatta-di-storie/
Ghigos (2020) https://www.ghigos.com
Giedion S (1941) Space, time and architecture: the growth of a new tradition. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.
http://repubblicadeldesign.it/regeneration2019/. Viewed 10 November 2020
https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_party#:~:text=Verso%20la%20fine%20degli%20anni,locale%20da%20parte%20delle%20autorit%C3%A0. Viewed 10 November 2020
https://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/rave-party/. Viewed 10 November 2020
Jonna M (2020) Cosa ci ha lasciato Ventura? Un saluto a uno dei progetti più influenti del Fuorisalone. Domusweb. https://www.domusweb.it/it/design/2020/05/18/ventura-project-arrivederci.html
Lo Giudice E (2015) Intervista a Bernard Tschumi. ArchPhoto, 2015. https://www.archphoto.it/archives/5094
Lydon M, Garcia A (2012) Tactical urbanism, vol 2. Street Plans, New York
Pambianco Design (2019) In Bovisa nasce la Repubblica del Design. February 21 019. https://design.pambianconews.com/in-bovisa-nasce-la-repubblica-del-design/
Peluso S (2019) Design e società: la Repubblica del Design di Bovisa. Domus del 30 Marzo 2019. https://www.domusweb.it/it/pubbliredazionale/2019/03/30/design-e-societa-la-repubblica-del-design-di-bovisa.html
Pettena G (1996) Radicals: architettura e design 1960–1975. Il ventilabro, Firenze
Privitera LD (2021) Vietato L'ingresso, studi di design danno nuova vita ai 17 camerini del Teatro Arcimboldi. Sky TG24. https://tg24.sky.it/spettacolo/2021/09/07/vietato-ingresso-teatro-arcimboldi
Tschumi B (1994) Architecture and disjunction. The MIT Press, Cambridge
Vitiello A (2019) Nulla è più definitivo del provvisorio. Il Foglio 29 Novembre 2019. https://www.ilfoglio.it/il-bi-e-il-ba/2019/11/29/news/nulla-e-piu-definitivo-del-provvisorio-289592/

Reading the Current Cities to Anticipate Their Changes

Emilio Lonardo

Abstract The chapter presents the changes taking place in cities, assumed in a broad sense, through a design-oriented view that uses the elaboration of scenarios as a key to understanding. It is an open-ended guide, which on the one hand aims to establish some design principles, and on the other hand hypothesizes possible types of future cities based on current trends. The scenarios are presented individually but should be read as fluid definitions that can be integrated with each other. The text begins with the drivers of urban space design used as a substrate for observation; they have been divided into two parts, where the first deals with design principles, while the second presents those tangible and intangible elements to be taken into account when designing a public space in the city. The last part of the text explains the type of analysis conducted to generate the scenarios.

Keywords Urban design · Cityscape · Trend · What if analysis

1 Introduction

Reading may seem a simple action, but it can only happen if the rules constructing the object of reading are known. Reading a text, whether paper or digital, is something that most human beings do on a daily basis, from the first hours of waking life until the last; reading other languages than verbal ones, such as music, for example, is a more complex gesture, which is often combined with the reproduction of what is being read. Despite about 55% of the world's population, according to the UN's World Urbanization Prospects 2018, lives in an urban context, only a few have the tools to read cities, and even fewer, not necessarily those who can read them, have the power to make changes within them.

In the complexity of the dramatic and forced urban transformations dictated by the pandemic, there is a growing concern about how to develop a new, lively, engaging

E. Lonardo (✉)
Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: emilio.lonardo@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_4

urban life in which concepts such as well-being and safety become part of the fundamental taxonomy for those who deal with cities. However, the problem for designers is how to represent and give meaning to this urban reality, how to understand it as an artefact that can be shaped and transformed, and how to make usable the physical stage on which urban socio-spatial practices take place. The challenge emerges from the incalculable complexity of what we call "urban", composed as it is of so many different actors, groups and institutions, and so many layers that make up the sites and places of our cities. One of the main issues is precisely understanding some of the fundamental urban processes. In fact, as illustrated by Lefebvre, everyone knows what we mean when one speaks of the "corner" of a street, a "market", a commercial or cultural centre, a "public place" and so on (Lefebvre 1991), but the same place is often the site of antinomic discourses, contradictory and conflicting practices. The urban cannot be defined and understood through its reality as a whole, nor adequately described through its many fragments and parts. It is neither total nor partial, its elements are neither completely intertwined nor totally unrelated. The city is the multiple of its many parts, the whole of its many places and several practices (El-Khoury and Robbins 2013). Cities are living organisms, ecological systems of elements and vectors of which the human being is a part.

In this sense, the contribution of a discipline such as design can be a driving force to produce and organise the understanding and dialogue tools for and between the different cells that compose contemporary cities and make them alive and pulsating. Among these, there is the elaboration of scenarios. They differ from futuristic views, formed by detailing tomorrow world out of the analysis of avant-garde signals of contemporary world. Film and literature are full of this kind of speculations having the city as a background system (Ratti and Claudel 2016). Instead, the reading approach proposed in this chapter attempts to enter the city genome through a view of the state of fact and by imagining design as an evolutionary factor capable of creating anomalies and dominant variants. By adopting "what-if" analyses of some current trends, the chapter proposes five urban scenarios, in which design is employed as a systematic exploration, and not so much to portraying what is to come. Rather, each scenario is presented individually with the aim of opening up possible discussions and debates.

2 Methodology: Reading Drivers

Given the complexity of their structure, different keys can be adopted to read cities. Using design as the main vector, the text discusses the city drivers shaped by society and the economy. In particular, on the one hand some major aspects of Urban Design (Davies 2007) are discussed, on the other hand tangible and intangible elements of urban space are considered.

2.1 Key Aspects of Urban Design

According to Davies, the following principles refer to both the design and redesign of green and built urban areas.

Places for People—For places to be well experienced and loved, they must be safe, comfortable, varied and attractive. They must also be distinctive and offer variety, choice and enjoyment. Vibrant places offer opportunities to meet people, play in the street and watch the world go by.

Enrich the Existing—New projects should enrich the qualities of existing urban places. This means encouraging a distinctive response that arises from and complements its environment, and applies to every scale—the region, the city, the town, the quarter and the street.

Make Connections—Places should be easy to reach, physically and visually integrated with their surroundings. This requires attention to how to get around on foot, by bicycle, by public transport and by car, in this order.

Work with the Landscape—Places should find a balance between natural and artificial environment and exploit the inherent resources of each site—climate, landform, landscape and ecology—to maximise energy savings and amenity.

Mix Uses and Forms—Attractive, pleasant and comfortable places satisfy a variety of demands from the widest possible range of users, services and social groups. They also mix different forms of buildings, uses, estates and densities.

Manage the Investment—For projects to be developable and well cared, they must be economically viable, well managed and maintained. This implies understanding the market considerations of operators, ensuring long-term commitment from the community and the local authority, defining appropriate delivery mechanisms and seeing them as part of the design process.

Design for Change—New development must be flexible enough to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle and demography. This means designing for energy and resource efficiency; creating flexibility in the use of property, public space and service infrastructure; introducing new approaches to transport, traffic management and parking.

2.2 Design Layers

Tangible and intangible elements of cities should be considered as overlapping layers that contribute to generate their identity.

History—The history layer includes everything that we can define as the city culture i.e., what has been handed down, explicitly or implicitly, up to the present time: particular stories, typical events, important personalities, peculiarities born in the past and endured, remaining contemporary.

Geography—The geography of a city is represented by its physical components, the orography, the presence of green or water elements, the distance or height above the sea, basically everything that characterises its territory.

Path—Paths are all the infrastructures that connect to each other the parts of the city and the empty spaces. Therefore, to analyse this layer, we need to look at pedestrian and cycle paths, carriageways, tree-lined avenues, footpaths, squares, open spaces and so on.

Landmarks—An urban landmark has been defined as an item that provides external points of orientation, usually a physical object easily identifiable in the urban landscape (Lynch 1960). The map of landmarks, which can also be natural elements, is important for a city as it can also help to generate sub-territories.

Equipments—The presence of equipments in a city and its places corresponds to the catalogue of everything that enables the best performance of planned and non-planned activities, including seats, playgrounds, kiosks, lighting fixtures, litter bins, signage.

People—The last level, the main one for a city and its spaces to exist as places, is people and their relationships. At this level, the dual relationship between spaces and people is concretely manifested in a continuous whirlwind of changes and more or less slow happenings.

All these levels are not to be considered perfectly adjacent but, as in a spinal column, they present small spaces with a myriad of hidden stories, that designers can read as project opportunities to give shape to the expectations of the city's inhabitants.

3 Analysis: What if…

"What if" analysis is applied in design thinking contexts whenever we want to explore the complexity of events and actions which characterize future contexts that are not yet fully identifiable in the current reality, on which projects want to be carried out, so to define the key components to be designed in all their facets (Stickdorn and Schneider 2012).

By identifying current trends in city change, clusters have been identified which, once taken to extremes, resulted in five city scenarios that can be told starting from the present situation. A "background noise" attempted to be codified for the elaboration of the scenarios, which was divided into different categories.

Urbanization. The future of the world population is urban. The global population is increasing, and more than half of the world's population now lives in urban areas. By contrast, the global rural population is decreasing. In 1950, only 29% of people lived in cities, while in 2040 the world's urban population is expected to increase 1.5 times to 6 billion, reaching 68% of people.

Social life. Recent years have seen a sharp contrast between rich countries affected by recession and emerging "giants". Estimates from Asian and African development banks, using a broad definition of a middle class living on $2–20 a day, confirm this. Based on this assumption, Asia and Africa saw the largest middle class increase from

1990 to 2008. However, evidence that this progress will lead to policy demands that will reshape the developing world is mounting.

Technology. Emerging technologies raise discussions between two extremes: the focus on potential gains and the focus on potential dangers. The real challenge lies in thinking between these two poles. This intermediate approach is becoming more pressing as technological change deepens and accelerates, and as the web becomes more aware of the delayed social, political and even geopolitical impact of previous innovation waves. Nevertheless, concerns about technology and new conflicts should be taken into account.

3.1 What if We Shape Cluster Cities?

In 2016, Professor Carlos Moreno proposed a new, more ecological, sustainable and identity-based city model. Moreno's *15-minute City* introduced a concept of chrono-urbanism, proposing that every city should be organised in such a way that its residents should be able to meet most of their needs by walking or cycling from their homes.

Following the pandemic caused by Covid-19, the way we live and will live in cities has already begun a change process in the increasingly tangible direction of organic models, available and ready to open and close, change their boundaries and those of their places. The issue of health and well-being, both physical and psychological, is at the centre of debates, both of policy makers and of other professionals, such as doctors, economists, philosophers and, not least, planners. In the last year and a half, this model has been revived and proposed as an answer to many of the problems aroused from lockdown periods as well as socio-economic and health crises. In the wake of this proposal, embraced by the mayors of many cities, similar but different concepts have emerged around the world. From Stockholm, which has implemented the 1-Minute City experiment through the adoption of movable parklets called Street Moves, equipped in various ways. To Vancouver and Brussels, where ideas respectively consistent with the concepts of 5-minutes and 10-minutes cities have been developed, while in Sydney, the Greater Sydney Commission, the region's planning agency, has proposed the 30-Minute City model. Unlike Paris, where the focus is on strengthening neighbourhood life, Sydney's planners want to improve connectivity between the three major metropolitan centres—Western Parkland city, Central River city and Eastern Harbour city—so that citizens can get to their nearest metropolitan centre, strategic cluster, or major local centre by using public transport and/or walking within thirty minutes. In concrete policy terms, this means that the city is investing additional money to increase the frequency of public transport connections and the percentage of residents working in strategic centres.

The idea of enhancing the identity and services of individual city neighbourhoods has been taking place for several years and at different scales; just think of the rise of neighbourhood services such as Social Streets, or NextDoor, or the renewed denomination of some neighbourhoods being redeveloped (e.g. *NoLo* and *SouPra*

in Milan). At the same time, some research groups promote the development of placemaking through a design-oriented approach. As an example, since 2015, *Project for Public Spaces* has proposed a toolkit including the *Power of Ten+*, according to which each city or region should have more than ten destinations, and each of them should have more than ten places to go, with more than ten things to do in an interconnected way.

The concept of clusters can already be found in some theories conceived between the 1950s and 1960s. In 1957, in *The Architectural Review* appeared *Cluster City*, a short article by Alison and Peter Smithson; the article subtitle is quite significant: "A new shape for the community" (Smithson and Smithson 1957). In spite of what can be elaborated with a careless glance, the spatial translation of a cluster is a space modulation that rejects separations, borders between public and private, between outside and inside, in order to offer opportunities, taking advantage of interstitial spaces. In a hypothetical configuration of Cluster City, there are specificities and gradients, control nodes and more or less dense meshes that reveal a sequence of courtyards, streets, patios, galleries, where people are the glue and the seeds, and where it is possible to return to tradition with new tools and new awareness, rewriting the territory through the reinvention and rediscovery of urban places that had been lost.

All these elements have an objective but also a subjective value; thus, for each city there are several cities, equal to the number of people who live or have lived in it or, simply, have passed through. In this regard, the example given by Ugo La Pietra is useful. In his research work on urban analysis and decoding, through overlapping different levels, he proposed that one could identify the city of one's own monuments, the city of one's own information and the city of one's own itineraries, thus composing, as a final type of cluster, the city of one's own mind.

3.2 What if We Shape Branded Cities?

In such a context, which involves both people and places, the concept of brand i.e., that set of intrinsic and signal elements that define a value, originally linked to a product, is becoming increasingly important. However, it is now commonplace to come across definitions such as self-branding or territorial branding, that precisely highlight how the obsessive and necessary search for an identity depends on understanding and communicating the values brought by both a person and a geographical context. Given the importance of communicating a clear image that can be used in terms of touristic-commercial appeal, just like a company, some administrations are adopting innovative tools aimed at conveying (and sometimes building) the lost identity. The urban branding, or territorial branding, is one of the most effective tools to achieve this goal, stimulating interest in the peculiarities of one's own city and enhancing the local, in opposition to the centrifugal pressures of globalisation.

Territorial brand is defined as the production of a new face or a dress, a gesture, a constructed city mimicry, suitable for the times, appropriate, a sort of etiquette

towards the citizen/user (Bonetti and Pastore 2006, 83–84); in other words, it can be considered as a continuous and dynamic construction process in the mind of the territory user who, therefore, is influenced by the experiences, memories and judgements expressed by other users he comes into contact with (Bonetti and Pastore 2006).

To create the identity of a place, the identifying elements that essentially characterise a given area, city or neighbourhood should be understood, both for those who live there and for those who visit it. In fact, the image of each city and territory has a dual nature: one turned inwards and perceived by the resident inhabitants, another turned outwards, and corresponding to the point of view of the people who visit the city i.e., tourists and investors. Consequently, "The object of city branding is not the city 'itself', but its image" (Kavaratzis 2004). Both images are important for the correct development of the city's communication and promotional strategy. In his description of what a territorial brand is, Kavaratzis dwells above all on its importance for the destination community residents, analysing how the way a city brand is managed can lead to influencing the spatial behaviour of people and society, placing the city within their mental maps and enforcing a positive perception of it. In fact, although city branding operations were initially aimed at attracting mainly the attention of potential tourists, recently, administrative policies are more and more aimed at retaining residents and individual talents in order to concretely develop the territory and its possibilities, as well as arousing cultural and economic interest. A correct city branding strategy must take both images into account. To this purpose, various tools can be used, such as conceptual maps, events useful for conveying the perception of the city, representations of the city in items or cultural works such as news, films and novels. One of the most widely used tools for detecting the characteristics useful for the construction of a territorial brand is the Anholt's hexagon, which indicates the persistence level of some elements in people's imagination:

1. *Presence*—Based on the value of the city in terms of national and international recognisability.
2. *Place*—Explores people's perception of the physical appearance of each city in terms of pleasantness of its climate, cleanliness of its environment and attractiveness of its buildings and parks.
3. *Pre-requisites*—Determines how people perceive the basic qualities of the city, whether they are satisfactory, affordable; assesses the level of public services such as schools, hospitals, transport and sports facilities.
4. *People*—Reveals whether the city's inhabitants are perceived as welcoming, whether visitors fit into a community that shares their language and culture, and whether they feel safe.
5. *Pulse*—Measures perceptions of the offer of activities to fill free time and new things to discover.
6. *Potential*—Measures perceptions of economic and educational opportunities within the city, such as how easy it might be to find a job, or to pursue higher education (Anholt and GfK 2011).

Among the most famous and successful examples of city branding that have made the most of the opportunities that such a policy offers in order to reach different targets are undoubtedly the cases of New York and Amsterdam.

The *I Love New York* brand is probably the most successful city branding operation in the world. The key to the brand's success is to merge in a single image a combination of factors that tell the story of what New York is all about: an eclectic mix of people, regardless of gender, age or religion, with the potential to realise their dreams, with a typical "can-do" attitude.

In the case of Amsterdam, the brand *I amsterdam* is used with the aim of communicating the advantages and cultural offers in the area, but above all the sense of belonging to the city (I am Amsterdam).

Two other less famous, but equally successful, cases of city branding are the operations in Bologna, Italy and Göteborg, Sweden.

The first project, which aims to increase the effectiveness of Bologna's territorial marketing policies, has been developed both by defining the positioning that the city wants to achieve and by subsequently identifying the most appropriate strategies to communicate this positioning at local, national and international level and to different target audiences. The objective was pursued by creating a specific identity of Bologna, that was perceptible to tourists but with which the citizens could recognise themselves too. The *è Bologna* project provides the communication plan with a guideline to be applied to various promotional supports (e.g. specific communication campaigns aimed at well-defined targets, production and distribution of Bologna Brand merchandising, etc.).

The creation of the logo was the subject of a competition, which was won thanks to the design of a flexible image adaptable to different communication systems, an alphabet of signs capable of composing any word, because everything can be and is Bologna.

On the other hand, the territorial brand for the city of Göteborg follows a simple as well as effective principle. As a first step, the values expressed by the city were summarised and translated into experiences such as "explore", "shopping", "together", "make memories", "be amazed", "feel the vibe", "discover" and "enjoy". Then, the graphic device of rotating by 90° the *ö* of the city name of Göteborg was used, turning it into *Go:teborg* and declining each category into go:explore, go:shopping, etc. An effectively applied city branding policy holds enormous potential for a community or a city to benefit from it, both in terms of strengthening its image in the eyes of potential tourists fascinated by the possibilities offered, and in terms of reinstating an identity value for all inhabitants who feel the need to search for and recognise their own deep-rooted belonging to the territory.

Without venturing into dystopian scenarios similar to the one imagined by David Foster Wallace in his *Infinite Jest*, in which individual years would be sponsored by brands, a Branded City may also mean a new relationship between Private Companies and Institutions, which could configure a new model of cooperation, with society and private individuals that once again take possession of public space in a light-hearted manner, and with communication be whispered through the creation of place projects

(e.g. IBM's 2013 campaign *Smart Ideas for Smarter Cities*), rather than shouted through large posters and traditional advertising campaigns.

3.3 What if We Build Event Cities?

In 1973 Ettore Sottsass Jr., imagining the *Planet as a Festival*, denounced those "involuted thoughts about cities" according to which people must live to work and work to produce and then to consume, and proposed to react so that people can instead live to live and, if they want, work to know with their body, with their psyche and with their sex that they are living. Sottsass' considerations reveal a lucid reading of the transformations that were affecting the increasingly global society of his time. As capitalism and the process of urbanisation took root, the exchange value of an "object" replaced its use value, depriving citizens of the fundamental sense of urban life and of the city as a place of participation, encounter and interaction, thus changing the very meaning of the urban place. The combination of these factors with the economic crisis, the technological advancement that has allowed people to have complete and instant access to an enormous number of resources, including mobility, and the reduction in the time and cost of medium and long-distance travel, is redesigning the way of life of the people, who tend to be nomads, reconfiguring the cities themselves as nodes in global networks.

By definition, an event is something geographically confined in space and time; in urban areas, communities used such occasions to perform rituals, escape from the restrictions of everyday life, and celebrate anniversaries. Examples can be found in the rites of *Saturnalia*, where social roles were reversed, carnivals, and festivals linked to fire and destruction. Events are also the expression of some of mankind's basic needs. In an event-driven city, relationships between built and temporary environment which are necessarily triggered, if correctly managed, can create interesting scenarios in the urban environment. In fact, events have the characteristic of being flexible and adaptable with respect to the static nature of the built environment, making it possible to differentiate, even only temporarily, some anonymous elements. Events are also an exchange opportunity and a fertile ground for new initiatives and partnerships that can bring social and economic benefits.

A theme closely linked to the events, and also of interest to the world of design, is experience. In the editorial of *Abitare 568*, Silvia Botti states that in the space of three generations a revolution has taken place: possession has ceased to be the main route to personal fulfilment, leaving room for experience. Design has taken the consequences. Today we are talking about a complex field that is not limited to the conception and realisation of consumer goods, but includes the immaterial sphere, acts on the meaning of the contact experience with an object, with a company, an institution or between people. For a designer, it means changing the perspective and putting oneself in the shoes of the user even before those of the client. It also means considering one's own limits and accepting the interdisciplinary dimension of an

action that must necessarily combine tools and notions from very different fields (Botti 2017).

Being able to design experiences means adding a level of sophistication to the design of a space, and to do so it is necessary to know the main characteristics of the dynamics that are triggered when living any kind of experience. First of all, experiences are personal, they take place within the individual who is involved emotionally, physically, intellectually or even spiritually. The result? Two people cannot have the same experience. Full stop. Each experience results from the interaction between the staged event and the individual's previous mental and existential condition (Gilmore and Pine 2013). We can divide experiences into four main clusters which we can identify as aesthetic, entertainment, educational and escape experiences.

Aesthetic Experiences. In an aesthetic experience, the individual is immersed in an event while remaining passive. An example of this type of experience is the installation *The Weather Project*, which Olafur Eliasson created for the first time in 2003. The work, designed for the Turbine Hall of the Tate Modern in London, aims to bring sunshine to a grey city like London. Upon entering the Hall, visitors were suddenly immersed in a sunset formed by a semi-circular screen radiating the sun's luminous frequency. The experience was further enhanced by the idea of mirroring the entire ceiling, thus completing the circle representing the sun and doubling the height of the space. While preparing the exhibition, Eliasson also developed a questionnaire for the employees of the Tate Modern, which included questions such as: "Has a weather phenomenon ever drastically changed the course of your life? Do you think tolerance towards other individuals is proportional to weather? To what extent are you aware of the weather outside your workplace?" In addition, there was a panel discussion on art communication, meteorological reports on abnormal weather events, meteorological statistics and a series of essays on time and space.

Entertainment Experiences. In entertainment experiences the individual passively absorbs what happens through the senses. In this sense, the *GAT Fog Party* designed by Martí Guixé originally for the CASCO space in Utrecht in 2004 can be considered explanatory. The project, playing on the borderline between watching and consuming, immerses visitors in a vapour cloud generated not by water but by Gin And Tonic (hence the meaning of the acronym GAT).

Educational Experiences. When an individual participates actively, absorbing the event with body or mind, we can speak of an educational experience. *Dialogue in the Dark* is an activity that can be tried at the Institute of the Blind in Milan, where the visitor, immersed in total darkness, has the opportunity to walk for an hour in the total absence of light. Experiencing at first-hand what means living everyday situations, deprived of the sense that we consider the main, a new way of "seeing" can be learnt.

Experiences of Escape. Finally, if during an event, the individual is totally immersed in it and participates actively, then we speak of escapist experiences. The Globetrotter chain, specialised in outdoor products, has been pursuing this philosophy for years. As an example, its Munich location, opened in 2011, is designed to engage customers in a range of outdoor-related activities, such as experiencing the rain chambers, paddling in a canoe, or testing high-altitude equipment and clothing

in the 125 square metre cold chamber, which simulates the weather conditions one would encounter during a trek.

Over the last decade it has become increasingly clear that a designer must also take into account the experiential component of the spaces he or she designs. Thus, part of the design process also involves the positioning of experience. Therefore, imagining a four-quadrant diagram, it is possible to try and understand which type of experience to stage, whether to lean just towards one or to create a balanced experiential project. In this scenario, the material component can also be questioned, in favour of introducing a dimension that is present in our daily lives, but often not taken into account in the design phase: time.

An Event City is a city open to transformation and welcome, malleable and ready for staging. It is also a city made up of audiences and stages, of palimpsests and rhythms within which to make things happen, a city in the making.

Performances & Rituals. In urban rituals and performances there is a direct relationship between the urban body (places) and the human body (behaviours) in which the latter tends to reappropriate, even if only temporarily, the former, in a process of symbolic mediation (Lenzini 2017). Turner (1979) popularised the idea of legitimising the invention of rituals through the concept of a liminoid phenomenon—a phenomenon that does not necessarily have a collective origin, can be originated, developed and completed by known or unknown individuals, and then be shared with others to produce collective effects of inclusion. Therefore, actions such as flash-mobs, parades, clandestine dances and secret concerts reveal a new map of relationships between cities and individuals, and between individuals and individuals, which highlights a symbolic-expressive nature compared with the city's history (Sennet 2006) as well as the normative power of rituals, which Durkheim considers as a mechanism of group consolidation (Durkheim 2013).

Festivals. Festivals influence people's idea of a city. They provide many points of identification and contribute to the emergence of non-traditional urban identities. They consolidate subcultures and create unions among fans of a common field (Silvanto and Hellman 2005). The slogan "festival city" or "city of festivals" has become a popular choice as part of a city's brand image. Culture, in a broad sense, is the main theme of most urban festivals, and cultural events have become central to the processes of urban development and revitalisation, as cultural production is an important element of the economy, and cultural consumption can dominate both the image of places and urban life in general (Richards and Palmer 2010). Just think of how some festivals, one of the characteristics of which is to be recursive, lead to be identified with the city itself, as is the case of *Milan Design Week* in Milan; or think also of the great international festivals such as *Burning Man*, which brings back some of the primordial behaviours and relationships of man with his environment, such as that with fire.

3.4 What if We Build Social Cities?

We no longer dwell purely physical spaces. Our everyday lives now cross territories designed by the web and, above all, follow paths marked out by social networks. The latter are a stimulus and experimentation for new social dynamics and collective experiences. In this sense, social life is often no longer physical but virtual, and the digital element could be a driver of progress also from the urban point of view, requiring a shift from traditional Co-urbanism to an updated E-urbanism (Di Prete et al. 2015). Our increasingly ethereal relationships draw new spaces. They are fluid entities, subjective and changing geographies that sometimes cancel and sometimes amplify real distances, spaces of the mind rather than physical, seemingly scattered points on per-personal maps that exclude each other and mix with others.

Social networks and urban realm. Initially, the diffusion of social networks led each individual to extend his or her own "habitability radius" but now, thanks to the evolution of some "location-based services", people's personal movements and mutual connections have also become visible. The geo-social-network *Foursquare*, for instance, stores personal information to create intersecting maps that can be consulted online. On the other hand, *Livehoods* analyses users' behaviour according to their check-in areas and, by identifying connections between the places they visit, highlights unexpectedly hybrid spaces whose core is defined by people's everyday use. However, a stochastic leap occurs when these social networks turn from simple habits' and routes' indicators into collectors of physical spatial actions.

Streetbank, for example, is a London-based project in which the inhabitants of a neighbourhood can exchange both objects and simple favours, considering material and immaterial values as equally important both to enhance the intangible structure of the community and at the same time to improve the tangible one. In Italy, a phenomenon similar to *Streetbank* has exploded thanks to the *social street* movement, born in Bologna from a group of people who started to organise via Facebook a series of small events to be held at the local theatre, as an opportunity for mutual sharing of knowledge: if in our anonymous contemporary neighbourhoods we live close to each other but do not know each other—and in the social networks amplified relationships we become friends with strangers—in Bologna's *social streets* the digital medium has paradoxically allowed the restoration of neighbourhood ties and facilitated a wide range of activities.

Crowdfunding. Another feature of Social Cities is the use of crowdfunding campaigns for the fulfilment of public works. By crowdfunding, we mean an instrument for raising resources, historically used by public and religious institutions and based on small donations: as an example, think to the system of religious offerings or the more sophisticated mutual aid initiatives, which already in the nineteenth century enabled workers and farmers to protect themselves through collective guarantees. While in the past this technique was based on door-to-door and limited-scale recruitment, today the use of the web allows this phenomenon to become viral and de-territorialised. In recent years, many cultural and artistic projects and initiatives

have been realised thanks to crowdfunding campaigns. The first examples of crowdfunded projects can be found in the United States and the Netherlands. The best-known example in New York is the *Plus Pool* floating pool on the Hudson River, which raised $41,647 for its construction. A similar initiative, *Make Rotterdam*, was launched in Rotterdam by the Interna-tional Architecture Biennale Rotterdam (IABR) together with the ZUS studio, which allowed to build a bridge to connect the central station with one of the main sites of the exhibition. In this case, each individual contribution can be seen in the boards of the bridge, marked with each donor's name.

Sharing Economy. In a historical moment of distance and closure, sharing is positioned in a mixed territory, made of hope and recovery. In the pre-Covid era, sharing was considered a practice capable of revising future economic scenarios; everything could be shared, and many services seemed to prove the validity of this approach. Over the years, many curious services related to sharing have emerged from neighbourhood services; thanks to *Pumpipumpe*, all the useful things that are seldom used and hidden in the house can be shown to the neighbourhood by means of stickers to be put on one's mailbox; debates on the potential of neighbourhoods as real active networks can be opened; finally, larger scale services such as car sharing services can be activated, that provide a fleet of cars for the use of citizens.

Mud Jeans offers the possibility to rent a pair of jeans and possibly return it in exchange for another, generating a circular and sustainable process in the field of fashion. On the other hand, in Philadelphia, for some years now, Drexler University has been offering the possibility of renting computers and other devices, exploiting the cloud potential and thus reducing economic disparities in terms of purchasing expensive high-performance equipments.

To understand the potential of Social Cities, first a debate should be opened on what public, and consequently private, means today. Under current circumstances, with a period of total lockdown behind us, the Internet and social networks have enabled us to bridge physical distances. However, at the same time, they are increasingly undermining the boundary between the public and private spheres, which in some ways is the same boundary that exists between the domestic space and the city public space. In this sense, what might seem to be a criticality, constitutes a great design opportunity to elaborate new types of spaces and relations within the cities that are defined as new public spaces or functional hybrids between public and private.

3.5 What if We Build Augmented Cities?

The city has an impact on our mind and our mental and emotional space affects the city. In this panorama, no longer man can be seen as an extraneous and apex presence in a relational hierarchy with the spaces he inhabits, but rather as an integrated element that should act through ecological processes and ecosystems. No longer designers can ignore these aspects. At the same time, we cannot stop designing for people's wellbeing, which must be not only physical, but also psychological and emotional.

Thus, a new scenario is being configured in which new needs and new possibilities are emerging in the design of urban public spaces: man's psychological wellbeing and, at the same time and in relation to it, that of his habitat. To face this challenge, it is necessary to rethink the approach to the project, starting from the relationship between all the elements in play, man and environment; the move towards a new animism is facilitated by new technologies, according to an augmented habitat approach with deep ethical and narrative bases. In this context, urban elements could play an important role in promoting people psychological well-being and mental health, especially in urban interiors. Thus, designers will be able to create real interactions between people and artefacts, interactions that could also involve the psychological sphere, making objects and the built environment capable of recording and measuring some parameters, then of reacting and adapting to the condition of the involved individual or community. Scholars from different fields, from computer science to environmental science, have developed numerous scenarios on how technology will change life in the city. One of the most interesting among these is the one that follows the path of creating "virtual" parallel cities which improve, rather than annihilate, the physical dimension (Cindio and Aurigi 2008) precisely because it does not create dichotomies and denies none of the two dimensions, but makes them collaborative. Despite the growing interest in totally virtual worlds such as in the videogame *Fortnite* (and before that in *Second Life*) by public figures and brands, and the increasing potential offered by virtual reality, entirely digital and totally exclusive lifestyles do not yet exist; but at the same time, most people's lifestyles are digitally empowered. In the augmented city, "virtual" and "physical" spaces are no longer two separate dimensions, but part of a continuum that has given rise to expressions such as "third place" (Cindio and Aurigi 2008), "phygital" and "extended reality".

In this context, inevitably the city spaces are influenced by augmented approaches too, and consequently so is public participation in them. Therefore, it is evident that the taxonomy and vocabulary also needs updating. If in 1960, in his studies collected in *The Image of the city*, Kevin Lynch (Lynch 1960) defined some of the physical characteristics of the city, today terms such as boundaries, presence, connection evidently take on new meanings.

Besides, the assumption of new technologies, especially if in an integrated way, can give rise to new communication grammars concerning the relationship between man and habitat. With the first re-openings after the lockdown needed to cope with the health emergency caused by Covid-19, many people have begun to familiarise with QRCodes, a technology that originated in the 1990s and is now increasingly used to provide more information on products, places or any other element, creating a bridge between physical and virtual worlds. During the Milano Design Week in October 2020, this kind of tool was used by D.O.S. as a bridge, an activator for Pixel City, an open-air exhibition spread through the streets of Milan that allowed brands and designers to display their products in augmented reality, in response to the impossibility of setting up a classic exhibition due to the limitations caused by Covid-19. Similarly, many other technologies can generate this new relationship between man and the environment, such as NFC, high-frequency devices that allow

data exchange through contact, or haptic devices that reproduce tactile sensations and stimuli.

4 Conclusion

Cities are the place where the citizen's and the community's life go on, where personal individuality is created and collective individuality is generated, and where today the most significant cultural, environmental, political and technological challenges are played out. At the same time, cities are singular and plural, defined and in progress, immobile and changing. For this reason, learning how to read them is important, so to interpret them and the constant changes that periodically generate different states of facts; in Buckminster Fuller's words, to be "the architects of the future, not its victims" (Fuller 1969). Therefore, this contribution does not aim to outline clear and definite situations, but rather to stimulate reflection and discussion on the urban quality, on its importance for our well-being as citizens, and as designers, key figures in the future of cities.

References

Anholt S, GfK (2011) The Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index. https://www.gfkamerica.com/practice_areas/roper_pam/placebranding/cbi/index.en.html
Bonetti E, Pastore A (2006) Il brand management del territorio. Sinergie 23:79–99
Botti S (2017) Editoriale. Abitare Magazine, 568.
Cindio FD, Aurigi A (2008) Augmented urban spaces: articulating the physical and electronic city (design and the built environment). Routledge
Davies, L. (2007) Urban design compendium, 2 vol. Urban Design Alliance
Di Prete B, Crippa D, Lonardo E (2015) E-urbanism. Idea Journal 15(1):14–27. https://doi.org/10.37113/ideaj.vi0.46
Durkheim É (2013) Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse: Le système totémique en Australie. Préface de Jean-Paul Willaime (Quadrige) (French edition) (PUF ed.). PUF.
El-Khoury R, Robbins E (2013) Shaping the city: studies in history, theory and urban design, 2nd ed. Routledge.
Fuller BR (1969) Utopia or oblivion: the prospects for humanity (ed: Snyder J), 1st ed. Lars Müller Publishers
Gilmore JH, Pine JB (2013) L'economia delle esperienze. Oltre il servizio. Rizzoli Etas.
Kavaratzis M (2004) From city marketing to city branding: towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. Place Branding 1(1):58–73. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.pb.5990005
Lefebvre H (1991) The production of space. Blackwell Publishers
Lenzini F (2017) Riti urbani. Spazi di rappresentazione sociale. Quodlibet
Lynch K (1960) The image of the city (paperback)—by Kevin Lynch [1960 edition]. Kevin Lynch
Ratti C, Claudel M (2016) The city of tomorrow: sensors, networks, hackers, and the future of urban life (the future series) (Illustrated ed.). Yale University Press
Richards G, Palmer R (2010) Eventful cities: cultural management and urban revitalization, 1st ed. Butterworth-Heinemann
Sennet R (2006) The open city. Published, Urban Age

Silvanto S, Hellman T (2005) Helsinki—the festival city. In: Lankinen L (ed) Arts and culture in Helsinki. City of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, pp 4–9
Smithson A, Smithson P (1957) City: a new shape for the community. Archit Rev 122(November):336
Stickdorn M, Schneider J (2012) This is service design thinking: basics, tools, cases, 1st ed. Wiley.
Turner V (1979) Frame, flow and reflection: ritual and drama as public liminality. Jpn J Relig 6(4). https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.6.4.1979.465-499

Reuse of Contemporary City: Experience and Ecology

Anna Anzani

Abstract The recent pandemic has turned a public health emergency into one of the worst international crises of our lifetimes, bringing people apart due to contagion risks. Nevertheless, physical places continue to play a fundamental role on the most significant human relationships, the emotional bonds between people and their surroundings being a powerful aspect of human life. In the contemporary city, where the boundaries between reuse and new construction are becoming increasingly blurred, architectural and interior design projects should assume an eco-systemic perspective, focusing on the relational aspects of space, allowing people to benefit from memory and engaging experiences.

Keywords Places · Reuse · Experience · Memory · Corporeity · Ecology

1 Introduction

Today, more than ever, our perception of the world is affected by variations resulting from scientific acquisitions which show reality based on constantly evolving schemes, characterized by an increasing complexity. Turning a public health emergency into one of the worst international crises of our lifetimes, the abrupt spread of Covid-19 pandemic has changed the world as we know it, involving all population segments, all economy sectors, and all world areas. The development of information sciences, systems theory and cybernetics, which started after the Second World War, shifted the attention to the relationship rather than the nature of interacting elements (Schinco 2020). In present time, we deeply understand the crucial meaning of this achievement and realise very clearly that our focus should not be brought on individual parts, but rather on the connections and interactions within systems, between local and global scale, individual and community level, beyond a discrete division between matter and mind. An overall ecological perspective should therefore be assumed when dealing to every aspect of our daily life and research activity, as

A. Anzani (✉)
Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: anna.anzani@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_5

indicated by UN conferences for sustainable development.[1] Within this framework, the design culture can play an important role for the re-signification of the urban space, accounting for the relationship between people and built assets, as well as of the environmental effects on the individual emotions and behaviour. Overcoming a paradoxical binary logic that distinguishes between public and private, outside and inside, far and near, mind and places, the role of professionals in the discipline of Interior Architecture/Design is that of determining the relationship between people and their environment according to psycho-physical parameters to improve the quality of life.[2]

The recognition of a failure of humanism in the way the built environment is designed is leading to refocusing priorities in the industrialized world, where human beings are spending almost 90 percent of their lifetime inside buildings (Bessoudo 2017). Many of modern society's chronic health issues, both physical and mental, related to lack of physical activity, stress, and poor diet, can be directly or indirectly related to the architecture of buildings and cities. And while health and wellness considerations have informed building codes that dictated performance requirements related to indoor air quality, ventilation rates, thermal comfort and material selection, the impact of people space interaction on mental and psychological wellbeing is still underestimated.

Exploring our relationship with the landscape, Lingiardi describes it as something that does not end with the gaze and contemplation. It involves the body and its sensory participation; it is charged with affect and memory and becomes an element of identity (Lingiardi 2017). The importance of a holistic or, using Bateson's words, a cybernetic point of view, as described below, can also be drawn by considering the application of neuroscience to architectural theory, where the crucial role of the body in shaping reality is highlighted. Perception always involves both an active extraction of configurations from the surroundings and the perception of the self, therefore the cultural environment cannot be separated from the natural environment. One of the reasons why contemporary architecture has failed to design buildings on a human scale resides in the suppression of the senses other than sight and more generally of corporeality, resulting in an exaggerated dominance of formal and visual criteria. Conversely, the quality of spaces can be revitalised by recognising the social nature of human creative expression, as a manifestation of intercorporeality.

[1] 2030 Agenda is the new global framework for national and international efforts to find common solutions to the major challenges facing the planet, such as extreme poverty, climate change, environmental degradation and health crises.

[2] *IFI Interiors Declaration*, 2011. https://ifiworld.org/programs-events/interiors-declaration-adoptions/.

2 Consciousness and Ecosystems

British anthropologist, sociologist and psychologist Gregory Bateson gave a particularly original definition of ecology and aesthetics, related to the loss of an idea of neutrality which, after Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, is perhaps one of the major scientific revolutions of the twentieth century. According to Bateson, when observing something, every boundary we trace is partial and relative since we are part of the regarded scene, which changes when it is looked at. Adopting a cybernetic model, which considers a circular rather than a lineal vision of the events, he identified an irreducible intertwining between thought and evolution and proposed a new approach to exploring the indissoluble relationship between organism and environment, including the relationship between humans and the built space. His point of view, which found the complexity and diversity inherent in the urban fabric as a necessary condition for the system to exist, can be reconsidered today to enhance a design approach that addresses urban spaces in a cybernetic way. According to this approach, now more topical than ever, in a truly ecological urban context, humans are not at the centre of the system, but are part of it and the mind is ecologically intertwined with the environment (Bateson 1972). To understand the meaning of consciousness in a cybernetic system, it worth referring to Bateson's explanation that every species has a primary Malthusian capacity, governed by an exponential curve, which is the curve of demographic growth. Any species that does not produce, potentially, more new individuals than the individuals of its fathers' generation is doomed to extinction. It is absolutely necessary that every species and every system have components with a potentially positive increase in the population curve. But if this is true, then achieving stability is very complicated: all kinds of equilibria and interactive dependencies come into play, and these processes have a kind of circuit structure. On the other hand, in a balanced ecological system of this nature, any interference is likely to cause a breakdown of the system's equilibrium: exponential curves will begin to show; some plants will become a scourge; some creatures will be exterminated; and the system, as an unbalanced system, is likely to fail.

The problem in decision making is that, in the individual organism, there is a degree of semi-permeable division between consciousness and the rest of total mind; any increase in consciousness, driven by specific goals, will necessarily take the system further away from total consciousness. Basically, conscious finality can only see partial sectors of the arches that compose the complex cybernetic system, and the consequent rational decisions may not achieve the desired results because they neglect the overall more complex picture. The risk for a cybernetic system (an oaks forest or an organism) when it selectively responds only to finality requirements is that it loses systemic wisdom, leading to a pathological threat, to a loss of equilibrium. According to Bateson, it is possible that the remedy for the ills of conscious finality is to be found in activities in which the whole individual is engaged, in which human beings can feel themselves as a cybernetic model: dreams, creativity and the perception of art, poetry, the best of religion are possible useful fields. We can add a design approach which incorporates a humanistic, ecological dimension.

3 Experience of Places

Reflections on the relationship between people and the built space have developed across different research fields, from urban planning to architecture, sociology, psychology and interior design. Criticizing contemporary urbanism for not being able to result into concrete operational solutions, Kevin Lynch (1960) outlined ways to define a new image of the city, inspired by Gestalt psychology and American pragmatism. Based on perceptive experience, beyond the rational threshold, Lynch captured "an existential meaning for the shape of the city" (Lynch 1960) and thus seeked to give to the urban space forms able to satisfy the human life, drawing also from the knowledge acquired in the field of biology, physics, sociology and psychology (Giannattasio 2017).

In 1971, Christian Norberg-Schulz highlighted the relationship between human beings and their "existential space", made of many elements—physical, psychic, social and cultural—which correspond to objects, the home, the city, the landscape (Norberg-Schulz 1980). More recently, cognitive neurosciences are carrying out interesting experiments in the architectural field as widely reported by Mallgrave in his volume *Architecture and Embodiment* (Mallgrave 2013), where the relationship between senses and art/architecture are brought into focus. According to the use of the most innovative technologies, such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), this relationship turns out to ground primarily on an emotional and multisensory experience (Anzani and Caramel 2020).

According to Pallasmaa, the system we use to experience our surroundings can be defined as a simultaneous perception which is, however, the way we normally observe, with all the senses at once. "As we enter a space, the space enters us, and the experience is essentially an exchange and fusion of the object and the subject (…) In the fusion of place and soul, the soul is as much of a container of place as place is a container of soul, both are susceptible to the same forces of destruction". Buildings and cities, instead of creating mere objects of visual seduction, relate, mediate through the senses and project meanings (Pallasmaa 2014).

3.1 Attractive Spaces

For understanding people's engagement with spaces, a perspective is needed to capturing engagement as a product of relations between physical, cultural, social, and content-related elements. Our existence in the world as physical beings is central to the ways in which we make sense of the world and how our engagement with spaces unfolds in practice. Our physical presence in a given setting implies that we are affected by our surroundings even before we consciously enter into sense-making processes, which is the basis of *affective engagement* (Fritsch 2009). When we make sense of things, reflect upon, analyse, and make plans for our actions in the world, these processes are often supported by physical actions or manipulations,

and this highlights the important role of *physical materials* in our interaction with our surrounding environment (Dalsgaard et al. 2011).

Environmental psychology, that studies how both natural and man-made environment influences our psychic processes and, on the other hand, how our mind perceives and experiences it, has developed precise and well-established models and theories on environmental pleasantness and preference (Inghilleri 2021). There are characteristics of a place, of a part of the city, of a building, of a house, of a room, which in themselves facilitate pleasant experiences and generate good emotions. Among the characteristics that generate positive feelings there are not only light, colour, size or aesthetics, but also relational attributes, which allow us to develop a psychological relationship with space and to feel it attractive, rich in stimuli, able to tell something new about the environment and about ourselves (Inghilleri 2021).

Ellard monitored the biological responses of people walking two nearby streets. In walking past a monotonous glass façade, people walked faster and reacted with a sensation of boredom and an increasing stress level. In the other street, with an abundance of small shops, open doors and street wares, people slowed their pace and felt lively, social, and eager to participate in the activities. According to E. T. Hall, who in 1966 raised the issue of "tactile spaces", the failing of modern architecture was its lack of scale and tactile stimulation. In 1979 J. Gibson introduced the idea of "affordance" i.e., the notion that we perceive the world not as entities (objects) to which we assign a name, but more primordially as the uses offered to us, such as warmth, shelter, and carrying out a task (Inghilleri 2021; Anzani et al. 2022). Translating this into architectural terms, the built environment becomes the very mean through which our body's neuronal mechanisms explore and appraise the emotional value and affordability of our surrounding environment, the embodied simulation of materials, patterns, spatial relationships, sounds, smells, tactile qualities, scales, textures, pattern and atmosphere (Mallgrave 2019).

3.2 Fractals Appeal

An interesting suggestion to the interpret people engagement with spaces can be collected by analysing Guglielmi's reflections on the decay of urban peripheries. In his view, in the continuous quarrel between Nature and Anti-nature, the Enlightenment concept of order, which still pervades our ideal of a city, continues to condition and limit the choices aimed at its development and transformation. Conceived according to two-dimensional perceptual schemes which derived from an Illuminist spatial composition that represented objects on a flat surface, our cities have become the result of hierarchies essentially based on contours and patterns, aimed at satisfying our sense of symmetry and mental order, without allowing a real direct experience of the third dimension.

Opposite to that, in their unfinished dimension, urban leftovers can be considered no longer as chaos objects but as real models that integrate and better define the living

space, making it re-convertible to countless new social and aesthetic perspectives, in a system of socio-cultural networks, different from traditional engineering solutions.

The peculiarities of these areas, mostly "frayed" compared to the regular urban extension proper to Euclidean geometry, is that they can be described in terms of the rules of self-similarity. Derived from fractal mathematics, as a recurrence of similar forms on different scales, they are present in Nature and Art as well as in Architecture and in the territory (Guglielmi 2021).

The idea that our attraction to a natural scene is related to its fractal properties has been suggested also by other scholars. To understand what a fractal is, think of a fern frond. The shape of the frond can be viewed at a number of scales—beginning first of all with one entire branch of the plant and gradually descending to the level of its tiny individual "frondlets." This is what mathematicians call self-similarity. It is seen in many different aspects of nature—from the branching patterns of trees to the shapes of coastlines—as well as in human-built artifacts in architecture and art. Indeed, Jackson Pollock's paintings, when subjected to mathematical routines, reveal strong underlying fractal properties (Ellard 2015). "What's interesting about this is that psychological studies, some using a variety of scenes of nature and others using more artificial images (fractal art, abstract patterns, and even Jackson Pollock paintings), have shown that people prefer to look at images that have approximately the same range of fractal dimension as that found in nature (Fig. 1). This correspondence between the fractal properties of images and our preference for them, and even in some cases our physiological responses to such images, which can resemble the restorative response to natural scenes, has given rise to the idea that the way that the brain actually recognizes nature is by means of this mathematical property" (Ellard 2015).

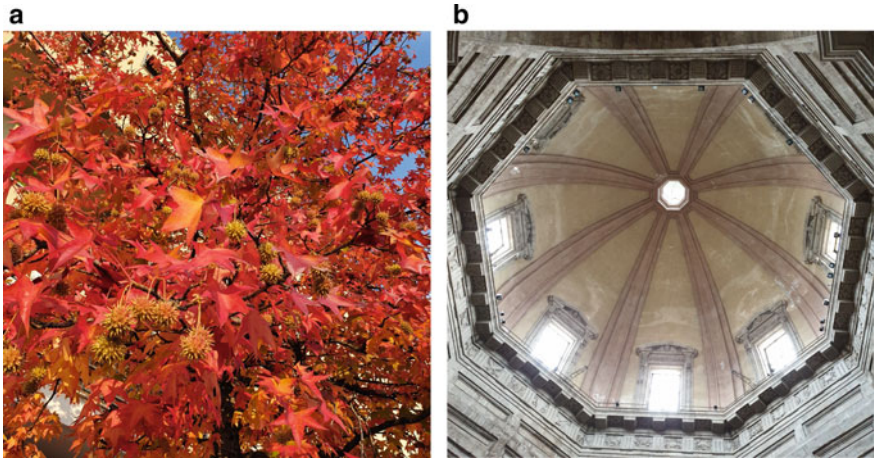

Fig. 1 Attractive (complex) patterns in nature (**a**) and ancient architecture (Milan, S. Lorenzo) (**b**) (Photo by A. Anzani)

Interestingly enough, Guglielmi considers that self-resemblance characteristics contain a great potential through their possible application to study and control the most advanced and complex urban systems. In contrast to rational, logical, ordered and ultimately sterile patterns, which provide little visual excitement or variation (Fig. 2) a growth governed by self-resemblance characteristics and by the Malthusian capacity mentioned above, is typical of a living organism, is intrinsically powerful and aesthetically captivating. At a different scale, it can be applied as a design tool to create engaging interior places (Figs. 3 and 4) offering a repertoire of kinesthetic experiences.

4 Reuse Design in Contemporary City

The ways in which we live, coexist and evolve as a society arise from an unresolvable, uniquely human tension between nature and culture and the way we shape our living space is also a cultural act.[3] There is an urgent need to approach the built space from a holistic, culture-centred point of view and to take a humanistic view in collectively shaping the places where we live, so they can respond not only to functional, technical and economic requirements, but also to the social and psychological needs of the population.

In the contemporary city, where the boundaries between reuse and new construction are becoming increasingly blurred (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel 2019), architectural and interior design projects should have a constant dialogue between past, present and future, a focus on the relational aspects of space and to the preservation of the links with places. To face the ecological challenge, adaptive reuse is becoming an essential part of the design practice and a sustainable strategy to the recovery of urban areas. Stratified memories should be visited with contemporary eyes and interpreted to discover hidden potentialities for the future. Traces of the existing architectures have been used in new design for centuries, incorporating previous structures and reinterpreting their meaning. This accumulation of references creates a historical fabric full of tangible knowledge and intangible associations. Incorporating these traces of the past can reanimate a collective memory, a local atmosphere, or even a *genius loci* (Fig. 5). There is an intimate relationship between a given context—with its layered meanings, spatial conditions, morphology, materials, etc.—and the creative moment to transform it. It is precisely this performative relationship between tradition and creation that is of interest to design (Plevoets and Van Cleempoel 2019).

Reuse design of urban abandoned spaces can allow people to benefit from memory, engaging atmospheres and synaesthetic experiences to prevent stress and restore attention, promoting urban regeneration and improving individual and community wellbeing, extending our environmental commitment to all the sensitive data of our bodily relationship, not only visual, with space.

[3] https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/.

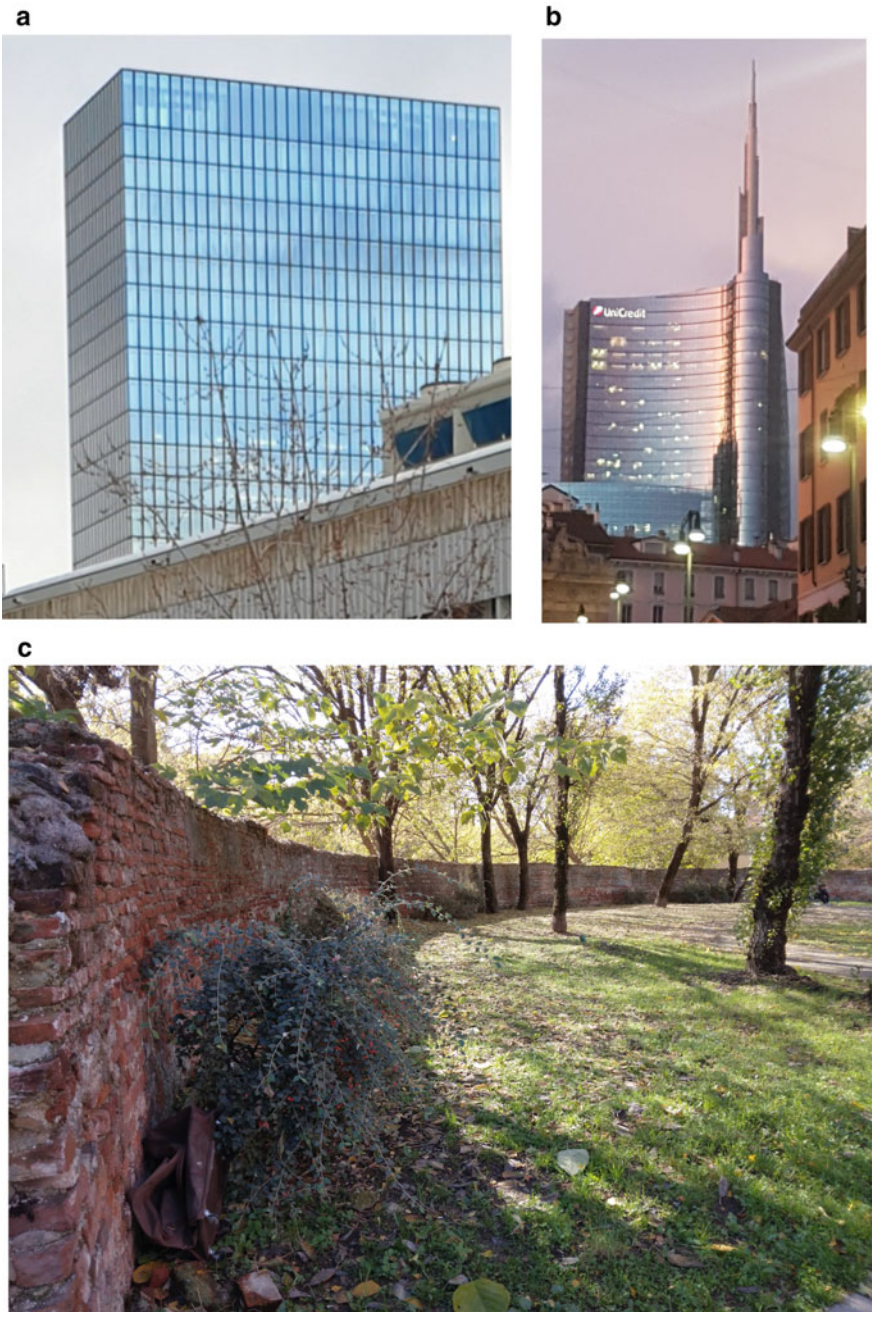

Fig. 2 Contemporary architectures in Basel (**a**) and Milan (**b**) compared with remains of a rural building in Milan (**c**) (Photo by A. Anzani)

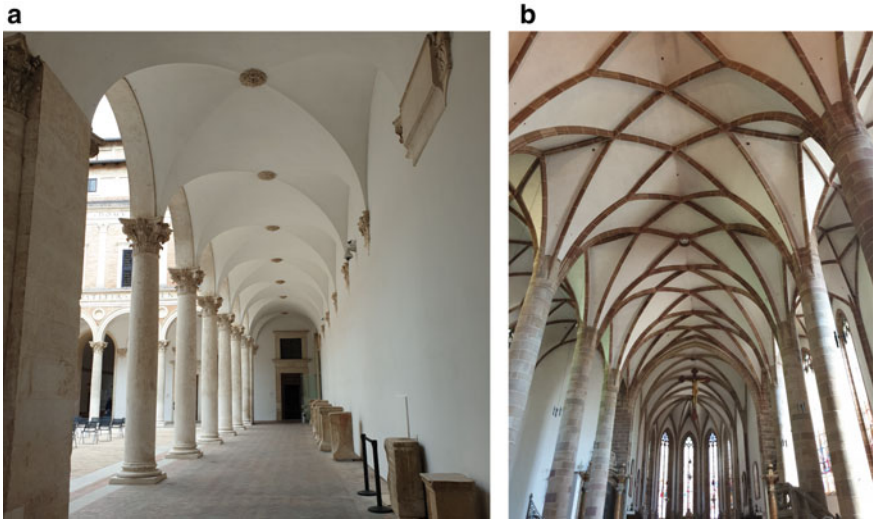

Fig. 3 Attractive spaces in Italy: Ducale Palace, Urbino (**a**), Merano Cathedral (**b**) (Photo by A. Anzani)

Fig. 4 Tactile characters of ancient architecture: Lateranense Palace in Mortara (Pavia, Italy) (Photo by A. Anzani)

Fig. 5 Different visual stimulation offered by a contemporary built facility in Milan (**a**) and by a natural view in Sardinia (**b**) (Photo by A. Anzani)

5 Conclusion

Covid-19 pandemic, one of the worst international crises of our lifetimes, has changed the world as we know it. To grasp the systemic connection between planet and people health, which is critically influenced by the natural and built environment as well as by social relationships, a transdisciplinary ecological perspective should be adopted.

Gathering new tools and insights from different fields (psychological investigation methods; experimental studies on visual attention, emotional and cognitive state; immersive digital systems) the design culture can rethink some of its priorities and build a new sort of cultural ethos which is mainly focused on the human experience of spaces, on an emotional and perceptual level, aesthetically and socially (Mallgrave 2019).

According to Bateson, many epistemologies in the world, even diverse and contrasting, support the idea that the mind is immanent in organism-environment relations, that what we define "mental" is inextricably intertwined with environmental ecology and that reality is characterized by an underlying unity consisting of a fundamental unifying beauty, which he calls the "pattern of patterns". Using the potential of "the pattern which connects" everything, typical of urban leftovers and living organisms, design can gain the ecological aesthetic power of creating stories into an endless weave of themes and inventive ideas. Like the oriental tradition of the framed fantasy novel that mixes history, legend and myth, design can "tell a story that will grow like a climbing lotus, wrap around itself and expand without end, until each of you becomes part of it, and the gods come to listen, until we all speak in a harmonious confusion that contains the past, every moment of the present, and the infinite future and with these words we shall begin all over again" (Kelly 1985).

References

Anzani A, Caramel C (2020) Design and restoration: an ecological approach. In: Crespi L (ed) Cultural, theoretical, and innovative approaches to contemporary interior design. Advances in media, entertainment and the arts (AMEA) Book Series, IGI Global, Hershey, PA, pp 68–84

Anzani A, Lonardo E, Schinco M. (2022) Reusing the built space: atmosphere and human experience. In: Camocini B, Dominoni A (ed) Engaging spaces. How to increase social awareness and human wellbeing through experience design. Franco Angeli, Milano

Bateson G (1972) Steps to an ecology of mind. University of Chicago Press

Bessoudo M (2017) Health, wellness, and experience in thebuilt environment: from green buildings to conscious cities, Conscious Cities Anthology 2017: Bridging Neuroscience, Architecture and Technology, Conscious Cities Journal No. 2. https://doi.org/10.33797/CCJ.02.02

Dalsgaard P, Dindler C, Halskov K (2011) Understanding the Dynamics of Engaging Interaction in Public Spaces, pp 212–229. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-23771-3_17

Ellard C (2015) Places of the heart. The psychogeography of everyday life. Bellevue Literary Press, New York

Fritsch J (2009) Understanding affective engagement as a resource in interaction design. Engaging Artifacts, Oslo. www.nordes.org

Giannattasio C (2017) Memoria e psiche. I valori invisibili dell'architettura storica e lo sguardo avanguardista di Roberto Pane. In: Anzani A, Guglielmi E (eds) Memoria, bellezza e transdisciplinarità. Santarcangelo di Romagna. Maggioli Editore, Italy, pp. 139–163

Guglielmi E (2021) Nature and anti-nature. The fractals of the unfinished. English translation by Anzani A. In: Crespi L (ed) Design of the unfinished. A new way of designing leftovers regeneration. Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland, pp. 175–193

Inghilleri P (2021) I luoghi che curano. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano

Kelly R (1985) A transparent tree. McPherson & Company, Kingston

Lingiardi V (2017) Mindscapes. Psiche nel paesaggio. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano

Lynch K (1960) The image of the city. The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, UK

Mallgrave HF (2019) The culture of design. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRvLrUkl7Yk

Mallgrave HF (2013) Architecture and embodiment: the implications of the new sciences and humanities for design. Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames, UK

Norberg-Schulz C (1980) Genius Loci. Towards a phenomenology of architecture. Rizzoli

Pallasmaa J (2014) Space, place and atmosphere. Emotion and peripheral perception in architectural experience. Lebenswelt: Aesthetics and Philosophy of Experience. https://doi.org/10.13130/2240-9599/4202

Plevoets B, Van Cleempoel K (2019) Adaptive reuse of the built heritage: concepts and cases of an emerging discipline. Routledge, Abingdon-on-Thames, UK

Schinco M (2020) Dreams. The relational link between nocturnal and diurnal creativity. In: Anzani A (ed) Mind and places. A multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer Nature, Cham, Switzerland, pp 39–53

Perceiving Our Aesthetic Space

Atmosphere Design of Urban Places. A Scientific Phenomenological Approach

Michele Sinico

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to deal with the concept of atmosphere from a scientific phenomenological perspective, and to define it in terms that can be operationally used by designers of urban places. Within the theoretical context of Gestalt psychology experimental phenomenology, atmosphere falls into the category of tertiary-expressive qualities. Atmosphere is an expressive quality of a higher order, in the sense that it assimilates in a structure the expressive qualities of a lower order, but it does not unify them. The atmosphere of an urban place presents itself as an objective phenomenal property of the field outside the self; but, as long as the users are part of the dynamic ego-environment system, it can both generate contagion effects and activate processes within the users.

Keywords Atmosphere · Perception · Tertiary-expressive qualities · Design · Urban places

1 Introduction

As a guiding concept for design, atmosphere is often part of the reflection on the characteristics of urban places. One for all, Walter Gropius, in order to set up a scientific design approach, wrote: "Vague phrases like 'the atmosphere of a building' (…) should be defined precisely in specific terms" (Gropius 1947). This is also the aim of this paper: to treat the perception of atmosphere in scientific terms to be used operationally by designers who want to enhance the expressiveness of design artifacts in function of the urban context.

There is a rich speculative literature on atmosphere which, however, has never led to a satisfactory operational definition. The difficulty in defining atmosphere lies in the fact that, on the one hand, it is not an abstract concept, like virtue and justice. On the other hand, it is an obvious immediate experience, that everyone is intimately familiar with, but it lacks a material empirical counterpart, or at least a

M. Sinico (✉)
Department of Architecture and Arts, IUAV University of Venice, Venice, Italy
e-mail: sinico@iuav.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_6

possible reduction in terms of a physical description. Atmosphere is not quantifiable with a measuring device, like the size of a park which can be reduced numerically, or the colour of a building façade which can be expressed in wavelengths units. Atmosphere falls into the conceptual category of tertiary qualities, for which no physical measurement is given in multiples of a measurement unit. There is no "cheerfulmeter" to measure the number of "cheerfulness units" and obtain the amount of cheerfulness of a landscape. Yet, the perception of a landscape character is as evident as it is influential in the perceiver, as Solomon E. Asch states:

> Sky, mountain, sea, land possess cheer and sadness, power and threat. These qualities lend a character of dramatic reality to our experience of the surroundings and determine our approach to things. It would seem that the properties we call expressive are among the first we note and respond to. Objects are friendly and forbidding as directly as they are tall and elliptical. The disappearance of the sun behind a cloud can mean more than a change of illumination; the scene takes on a sombre aspect, and we rejoice when the sun again floods the surroundings with light. (Asch 1952)

The belonging of atmosphere to the category of tertiary qualities has confined the atmosphere studies, starting from Gropius' appeal, both to philosophical reflection (Schmitz 1980; Knodt 1994; Böhme 2006; Hasse 2012; Griffero and Tedeschini 2019; Griffero 2020a, 2020b) and to suggestive speculations in the architecture field (Norberg Schulz 1979; Zumthor 2006; Omland and Tonning 2010; Gandy 2017), however not always directed towards an operational definition concretely aimed at design. The aim of this paper is to place the concept of "atmosphere" within a scientific theoretical context, so to define it and make it practically useful to designers. Therefore, I will outline the theory of tertiary qualities first, then I will elaborate a definition of atmosphere and finally, in the logic of human dynamic systems, I will examine the influence of atmospheres on users of urban places design.

2 Atmosphere Is a Tertiary Quality

A number of scholars have addressed the issue of tertiary qualities (for a review see Sinico 2015) but, above all, Gestalt psychology has laid the epistemological foundations of this concept. In fact, when Gestaltists posed the problem of perceptual organisation, i.e., the laws by which objects appear unitary, they found that the emerging Gestalt unit is qualitatively different from the sum of its constituent elements. A melody, emerging from a sequence of notes, is a different entity from the individual tones that compose it. So much so that the melody always remains the same, even when it is played in a higher or lower key, with completely different notes. Melody, as Gestalt, or Ehrenfels quality (from the name of its discoverer), is an emergent quality that cannot be reduced to the elements which compose it and is not even detectable by means of a physical measurement unit. Therefore, recalling John Locke's famous classification, we speak of "tertiary" to refer to those qualities that are not directly reducible to the physical datum (primary) or to physiological detection (secondary).

The category of tertiary qualities includes tertiary-expressive qualities. The latter are a kind of tertiary quality that express a meaning. As an example, the sadness of a minor chord is not reducible to a physical or physiological measurement unit, but immediately it expresses sadness. This tertiary-expressive quality is intrinsic to the musical chord: therefore, it is an intersubjective experience. Within a shared reference musical system, a minor chord is perceived as sad by all. A first theoretical systematisation of tertiary-expressive qualities was advanced by a second generation Gestaltist, Wolfgang Metzger, who specified that tertiary-expressive qualities are objective properties in these terms:

> Expressive properties are neither subjective as regards their location nor as regards their cause: they are not experienced as properties or states of the self the same way as feelings (which, on the contrary, can be regarded as *provoked* by them), not even (...) depend on the characteristics of the individual who observes the expressive properties. (Metzger 1963)

Unlike the subjective relation between a sign (which by definition is always a cross-reference) and a meaning, the relation between expressive qualities and their meaning is univocal because they are given in presence, as an immediate phenomenal reality, with no cognitive integration or intellectual alteration. Obviously, this does not imply that an expressive quality, presented as objectively belonging to the phenomenal field outside the self, excludes impressions due to subjective associations reinforced by past experience. To the perception of a happy expressive quality of an urban view, a gloomy impression due to the memory of a crime that took place in those streets may add. The levels of perceived expressivity and that of expressivity as a subjective association of a value (or as a cultural association of a value by means of a sign) are independent; therefore, they can either converge and reinforce a meaning, or be opposed and generate ambivalence (Sinico 2019).

Thus, the phenomenological approach of Gestalt psychology has isolated the object of scientific investigation in the exclusive reality of the phenomena field. All knowledge mediated by a measuring device, as physical recordings, or derived from sensory reactions, as physiological findings, is considered an interesting level of epi-phenomenal knowledge, but not the primary source of knowledge. The primary, and reliable, source is the apodictic datum of the immediate experience. Once intellectual knowledge is excluded, the phenomenal entities normally experienced perceptually are either individual object properties (shape, weight, colour, timbre, etc.) or global objects (a face, a building, a landscape, etc.) or relations between objects. Each of these three entities carries expressive qualities. A colour may be cold or warm, a face sad or cheerful, a skyscraper facing a smaller building may convey an expressive relationship of impending threatening challenge. In all three cases, the tertiary-expressive quality is a property of a distinct entity. However, Köhler's following passage extends the cases:

> Few people can hear the rumbling *crescendo* of distant thunder as a neutral sensory fact; it sounds to most of us "menacing." As a matter of perception, various kinds of weather appear similarly imbued with psychological characteristics. Thus we speak of "calm" and "restless," of "morose" and "friendly" days. Such terms are also used with reference to landscape, to the appearance of streets in cities and villages, and so forth. To repeat. It would be surprising, and it would constitute a serious objection to our general argument, if only living creatures

> and their pictures exhibited Ehrenfels characteristics of this sort. (…). Modern man does not attribute such experience to a thunderstorm or to a landscape; and yet he hears menace in thunder, and sees friendliness in certain landscapes. (Köhler 1947)

Therefore, within Gestalt theory, not only tertiary-expressive qualities, such as the threat of a thunderstorm, appears to be an objective fact, but also events articulated in space, such as a landscape, or in time, such as an entire day, are referable to the same category of Ehrenfels qualities, i.e. tertiary Gestalt qualities. A landscape, as Georg Simmel (Simmel 1913; see also Sinico 2020) had already theorised, can be distinguished by a *Stimmung*: a whole phenomenal perception that is not reducible to physical or physiological data. For this reason, a poet, wishing to precisely describe an atmosphere, uses the analogy of another tertiary-expressive quality: "It was an atmosphere of luxurious exhaustion like a ripened shedding rose" (Capote 1986).

3 An Operational Definition of Atmosphere

Whether tertiary-expressive qualities emerge from an objectual property, or from a global object, or from a relationship between objects, they are always specific to a distinct entity: the warmth of *one* colour, the cheerfulness of *one* face, the sense of looming in *one* relationship between two buildings. On the contrary, when a tertiary-expressive quality is not confined within a single gestalt unit, when it pervades an articulated structure of entities, we speak of "atmosphere". The warm atmosphere of an environment is not localised on a single colour or a single object: it is an overall quality. By ensemble quality, here we mean a structure that has no distinct spatial–temporal boundaries, that does not stand out as a gestalt unit. In contrast to Gestalt, which is unified by famous unification laws such as proximity, similarity, good continuation, etc. (Wertheimer 1923), atmosphere is a structure without parts unification. In a landscape, a tree, a house, a field, a hill, the sky, etc. are structured without forming a distinct unit.

But atmosphere is not simply an articulated structure of objects; as a resultant property, it is structured by the multiplicity of expressive qualities conveyed by lower-order objects (QE_1, QE_2, QE_3,... QE_n). If, for example, a landscape is made up of trees, houses, fields, hills and sky, the atmosphere of the landscape is the result of the multiplicity of expressive qualities of each tree, house, field, hill and sky. Therefore, I define atmosphere as *an expressive property, resulting from the set of expressive qualities carried by lower-order objects, which assimilates the latter qualities into a structure but does not unify them.*

Giving an example by a narrator, when in *Three Soldiers* Dos Passos writes: "Downstairs in the office where the atmosphere was stuffy with a smell of varnish and dusty papers and cigarette smoke" (Dos Passos 1921) he indicates the objects that give life to the atmosphere but refers to them as bearers of expressive qualities. The stuffy atmosphere results from the expressive qualities of the varnish smell, the

dusty paper, the cigarette smoke, certainly not from the smell as a physiological reaction, as a secondary quality.

Atmosphere has an assimilative function. I prefer not to adopt the traditional Gestalt locution "perceptual totalization" (see Metzger 1936) because the result of assimilation is not a Gestalt unit. Rather, the atmosphere vertigo is given by its being clearly perceptible, without its being possibly grasped as a unitary entity. As consciousness tries to fix it in a distinct unitary form, the atmosphere slips away because its contact with the lower-order expressive qualities that structure it gets lost. The assimilative function consists in giving perceptual salience to the lower-order expressive qualities that contribute to the same atmospheric value. In this regard, it worth mentioning that the literature often confuses the consequence with the cause of assimilation. In fact, some perceptual properties do have an assimilative function, such as fog, a chromatic filter, a musical background. Music, for example, enhances the visual landscape, highlighting expressive qualities consistent with the expressive musical tone. Thus, the atmosphere of a photographic landscape can be identified with fog. In fact, the fog homogenises colours and assimilates the expressive qualities of the landscape. Fog assimilates and facilitates the emergence of an atmosphere but fog is not the atmosphere.

As mentioned above, atmosphere, as an expressive quality, expresses meanings. The resulting atmospheric expressiveness is given by three possible interactions between the expressive qualities conveyed by lower-order objects. These three possible interactions are also the same as the resulting expressivity of a plurivocal entity, i.e., an object that carries multiple expressive qualities (Sinico 2019). A face, for instance, can convey both joy and perplexity, or disappointment and pride; a musical chord can express sadness and solemnity at the same time; an urban place can be both sweet and melancholy. What are the rules by which, when looking at those expressive plurivocal entities, a single expressive quality appears? Or rather, how do the multiple expressive qualities of an environment result in a defined atmosphere?

Objects that bear the same expressive qualities reinforce a resulting atmosphere, in a kind of forces summation concurring in a state of poignant balance. In a funeral procession, sober, dull colours (as an anonymous Italian Gestaltist get Wertheimer to say: "black is gloomy even before it is black"—a joke which means that the first black, as an expressive quality, has a logical and chronological primacy over the second black, as a secondary quality), slow and solemn movements, sad and resigned faces, soft and waning voices are assimilated into a general funereal "atmospheric" structure. If someone, in the same funeral procession, were to wear a yellow shirt, the expressiveness of this would contrast with the overall result, and would compromise the coherence of the atmosphere, generating both contrast and disappointment. The psychology of perception has extensively studied the effect of a whole on the parts (Metzger 1963), whereby an atmosphere can induce some behaviour choices by assimilation into the context. As in the case of a funeral ceremony, this induction can have a recognised social value due to the respect of suffering and of death sacredness. The cheerful atmosphere, which can be found in a tavern on holiday, can induce expressively cheerful behaviour, unless a patron, in the social context, wishes to be the object of attention by contrast.

In fact, an environment may be composed of objects which carry different and contrasting expressive qualities. In such cases, the resulting atmosphere may not have the strength to assimilate the different and contrasting element. Therefore, at this point in the review, the degree of atmosphere can be introduced. When the individual expressive qualities of an environment are many and very contrasting, the atmosphere loses its distinctiveness, to the point of bringing its degree of "poignancy" to a minimum value, almost to neutrality.

In the third and last case, in which there are contrasting expressive qualities, the resulting atmosphere may be the consequence of the integration of lower order expressive qualities, originating a qualitatively different expressive quality. An example can be done by imagining a hall where a solemn rite is being celebrated but, at moments, it is disturbed by inexplicable sinister noises. The overall atmosphere will be one of uneasy solemnity. In cases like these, it may be difficult to categorise the resulting atmosphere, or even impossible to identify a known verbal label to designate it.

Since an atmosphere may be qualitatively perceived as a different resultant, a significant operational limitation arises. The atmospheric outcome cannot be established a priori, as a calculation based on the values of lower-order expressive qualities. However, though a physical or physiological measurement of lower-order expressive qualities cannot be given, still a psychophysical quantification can be obtained through a metric anchored to subjective evaluations. But even through this quantification the emerging atmospheric outcome cannot be predicted. Ultimately, the atmosphere must be investigated from the whole structure. In this way, an exact determination can be made. In the field of social psychology, as early as 1939, Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939) experimentally investigated different atmospheres, such as different types of teaching climate, and compared them to measure the impact on students.

4 Conclusion: The Self in the Atmosphere of Urban Places

Urban landscape design necessarily requires the analysis of several factors, the importance of which vary according to the type of project. Among these factors, communicative-expressive values are often of primary importance. Paying greater attention to the perceptive-expressive communicative mode, rather than to the sign mode—which is always interdependent on the personal knowledge of the recipient—is a design choice that has firstly the advantage of universalising the message—since, in the perceptive-expressive communicative mode, the universality limits coincide with the extension limits of the self to the intersubjectively perceived datum. Thus, the perceptual-expressive communicative modality has the advantage of transculturality (Sinico 2020).

Secondly, the study of the perceptual-expressive factor allows to design atmospheres, and atmospheres can have a significant effect on users. It has already been observed that an atmosphere, as well as an expressive quality, can belong exclusively to the external ego field. As Wolfgang Köhler points out:

> Qualities belong where we find them. And no explanation or theory can convince us that they were not where we found them, - even if it should prove possible to shift them (…). The charm, womanliness and loveliness which may be found in certain objects are qualitatively altogether different from the present striving of the (male) self, but also from all other interests or connotations which he may have at other times. (Köhler 1938)

Nothing—need to say?—would change if the interest were the feminine one to male fascination. As Köhler himself has made abundantly clear, the self can be a source vector, i.e., it can be the origin of a value determination (Köhler 1938). The economic value of a coin, seen at the edge of a pavement, or the mortuary value of a cross, in the middle of a wood, are originated by the ego. But when the value is not determined by the ego, the expressive value resides entirely in the external field, in the structure of expressive qualities composing the leaden atmosphere of an imminent storm, in the affliction of a willow due to its languidly sagging branches. The atmosphere of an urban place can thus be perceived as something objective, completely independent of the subject's mood and state of mind. This independence is also a common experience. When we attend a party full of joy, but we are deeply sad, the expressive values of the festive atmosphere are not disturbed by our mood. We continue to perceive the festive atmosphere as an ego-dystonic perception and, because of this, we feel a sense of friction to the point of irritation.

Therefore, the atmosphere of an urban place can have considerable effects on those who participate in the climate of that space, both as an oppositional, ego-dystonic effect, and as a concordance effect. Consider the penetrating observation of Max Scheler:

> We all know how the cheerful atmosphere in a "pub" or at a party may "infect" the newcomers, who may even have been depressed beforehand, so that they are "swept up" into the prevailing gaiety. (...). Even the objective aspects of such feelings, which attach to natural objects, or are discerned in an "atmosphere" - such as the serenity of a spring landscape, the melancholy of a rainy day, the wretchedness of a room - can work infectiously in this way on the state of our emotions. (Scheler 1923)

The fact that an atmosphere belongs to the ego's external field does not exclude the external field, as an external force, from exerting an effect on the ego, hence a contagion. On the other hand, the ego does not lie in a state of stable immutability; rather, it is subject to constantly changing processes. Insofar as the ego is part of a dynamic ego-environment system, it can be perturbated by external forces. Therefore, the atmosphere has an assimilative effect not only on the expressive qualities of lower-order objects, but also on the ego of the people who share the atmosphere. If the designer can objectively define the atmospheric value that will affect the users, he cannot foresee their possible internal concordant or oppositional force. This is certainly an insurmountable limit of design, which stops at the boundary of private subjectivity.

But the atmospheric factor, in a design project, goes far beyond the merely concordant or oppositional influence on the users' ego. Let's consider an acute observer such as Giuseppe Giacosa who, in front of the Trinity Church in New York City, notes: "In the midst of such buildings dryness, it [the church, ed.] expresses a relaxing grace, which puts peace in the mind" (Giacosa 1908). Architecture enters the internal

processes of the subject, as an open system, by means of a determining force: an external expressive quality reorganises an internal condition of instability. But at this point, I ask the reader to take one last step backwards, to briefly clarify what an "open system" means.

The term "open system" (von Bertalanffy 1951) refers to living beings that need a constant flow of matter and energy to maintain an internal dynamic equilibrium (think of the metabolic system). If, in an inanimate system, the soap bubble needs to achieve equilibrium at rest with its spherical shape, an open system, such as an animate one, often needs external energy for internal activity. An example for all: a project that originates and develops in the designer's mind activates actions through its being in-complete, i.e., in an internal state of imbalance. Similarly, an open psychic system, that is characterised by having multiple processes, is influenced by external force fields that can bring one of these processes to life and leave the others in the background of inactivity. This is what Adolf Loos may have had in mind, more as an intuition than as a well-founded theoretical connection I think, when he wrote:

> Architecture arouses moods (Stimmung) in people. So the task of the architect is specify these moods (Stimmung). (Loos 1931)

In the external environmental field, the ego can find its own internal values. This process has nothing to do with empathy—a mode proven to be a vicious circle (Koffka 1935); rather, it represents a process in which an open system "specifies these moods" in the sense that it dynamically attracts quotas of determinations from the environment to develop ongoing internal processes.

Among these, the atmosphere of an environment also activates and reinforces certain ways of being, some aspects of the persons' self. From this comes pleasure or rejection, as far as a way of being of the self is activated and strengthened that is desired or rejected by the person her/himself. And this is why the atmosphere of an urban place attracts or repels us because, in those external structures, we find specific determinations of our own that we approve or disapprove, that we discover for the first time or from which we are crushed into a rejected identity. We can be thrilled to discover in ourselves a regenerative process triggered by the atmosphere of perpetual renewal in Manhattan, as well as a gentle melting process of the self boundaries in the placid and nuanced atmosphere of the lagoon. Or vice versa, we can feel a sense of rejection to the intrusive commercial atmosphere of mass tourism in Venice, which activates schematic mechanical and un-intentional processes in us, generating that typical sense of regrettable rebellion, as when we discover in our interlocutor eyes what we never wanted to be.

Acknowledgements I would like to thank Angela Demma for her helpful suggestions on the manuscript.

References

Asch SE (1952) Social psychology. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ
Böhme G (2006) Architektur und Atmosphäre. Fink, München
Capote T (1986) Answered prayers. Hamish Hamilton, London
Dos Passos J (1921) Three soldier. George H. Doran and Company, New York
Gandy M (2017) Urban atmospheres. Cult Geogr 24(3):353–374
Giacosa G (1908) Impressioni d'America [America impressions]. L. F. Cogliati, Milano
Griffero T, Tedeschini M (2019) Atmosphere and aesthetics. A plural perspective. Palagrave Macmillan, London
Griffero T (2020a) Emotional atmospheres. In: Szanto T, Landweer H (eds) The Routledge handbook of phenomenology of emotion. Routledge, Abingdon and New York, pp 262–274
Griffero T (2020b) Introductory remarks. Where do we stand on atmospheres? In: Scassillo F (ed) Resounding spaces: approaching musical atmospheres. Mimesis International, Milano-Udine, pp 11–24
Gropius W (1947) Is there a science of design? Magazine of arts. In: Scope of total architecture. Collier Books, New York (1962), pp 30–43
Hasse J (2012) Atmosphären der Stadt [Atmospheres of the city]. Jovis Publishers, Berlin.
Koffka K (1935) Principles of gestalt psychology. H. Harcourt Brace, New York
Köhler W (1938) The place of value in a world of facts. Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York
Köhler W (1947) Gestalt psychology. Liveright, New York, NY
Knodt R (1994) Ästhetische Korrespondenzen. Denken im technischen Raum. Stuttgart: Reclam. English trans. (2004) Correspondence and atmosphere: towards a philosophy of correspondence in the field of communication. Cengage, Boston, MA
Lewin K, Lippitt R, White RK (1939) Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. J Soc Psychol 10:271–299
Loos A (1931) Trotzdem. Brenner Verlag, Innsbruck. English trans. (2002) On architecture. Ariadne, Riverside, CA
Metzger W (1936) Gesetze des Sehens. Kramer, Frankfurt. English tran. (2006) The laws of seeing. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA
Metzger W (1963) Psychologie Die Entwicklung ihrer Grundannahmen seit der Einführung des Experiments [Psychology. The development of basic principles since the introduction of the experimental method]. Steinkopff, Darmstadt
Norberg Schulz C (1979) Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of architecture. Rizzoli, New York
Omland I, Tonning L (2010) J Urban Des 15(3):423–441. https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2010.487813
Scheler M (1923) Wesen und Formen der Sympathie. Cohen, Bonn. English trans. (2008) The nature of sympathy. Routledge, New York
Schmitz H (1980) Neue Phänomenologie. Bouvier, Bonn. English trans. (2019) New phenomenology: A brief introduction (atmospheric spaces). Mimesis, Milan.
Simmel G (1913) Philosophie der Landschaft. In: Georg Simmel gesamtausbage, Band 12, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, (2001), pp 471–482
Sinico M (2015) Tertiary qualities, from Galileo to Gestalt Psychology. Hist Hum Sci 28(3):68–79
Sinico M (2019) To communicate without signs through expressive qualities. Gestalt Theory 41(1):47–60
Sinico M (2020) Landscape. Expressive landscapes, perception and design. In: A. Anzani (ed) Mind in places. A multidisciplinary approach
to the design of contemporary city, Springer, Cham, pp 81–91
von Bertalanffy L (1951) Theoretische biologie. A. Francke, Bern. English trans. (1952) Problem of life. New York, Wiley

Wertheimer M (1923) Untersuchungen zur Lehre von der Gestalt. II. Psychologische forschung, 4, pp 301–350. English trans. (1938) Laws of organization in perceptual forms. In: Ellis W, A source book of Gestalt psychology, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, pp 71–88

Zumthor P (2006) Atmosphären. Architektonische Umgebungen. Die Dinge um mich herum. Birkhäuser, Boston, MA. English trans. Atmospheres architectural environments. Surrounding objects. Birkhäuser, Boston, MA

Nature and Anti-Nature: Reflections on the Contemporary Cityscape

Eugenio Guglielmi

Abstract The birth of modern town planning and the related development of human settlements still retains the contradictions of socio-cultural choices originated from the Western industrial revolution, which have never been completely resolved. The need for a new global perception of spaces for living finds an evident contrast in the methodologies of traditional design, intended as a generalised three-dimensional occupation of free spaces, with an exasperated emphasis on buildings verticality. The latter are now being considered self-referential "dwelled objects" that are less and less manageable and functional to social and civil purposes of good architecture, that was an offspring of our humanistic theories in pursuit of a human-sized city. Thus, the crisis of the Modern Age from the Enlightenment to the present day seems to be summed up in the confrontation-contrast between Nature and Anti-nature in the search for an urgent solution to the needs of all humanity.

Keywords Environment · Urbanism · Archistar · Mega-sign · Anti-humanism · Eco system

1 Introduction

"The Republic of Equals, this great hospice open to all men"
The Manifesto of the Equals, 1796

Our current crisis has deep roots. In particular, it has manifested in man's relationship with nature and his artificial habitat, which over time has reinterpreted the planet. The last century can be considered the iceberg tip of the extreme consequences of a point of no return, originated with the industrial revolution. Today, these aspects are only discussed in historical terms, or rather not discussed at all, as a sort of psychological and material removal of our past collective faults which, in the name of progress, are difficult to accept. Nevertheless, the events that affected Europe between 1760 and 1830 were at the origin of the contemporary world and

E. Guglielmi (✉)
Design Campus, Università degli Studi di Firenze, Calenzano, Italy

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_7

its sometimes tragic conflict with the modern.[1] Today, the formation process of the great industry based on mechanical friction and on the disproportionate use of fossil energy is still considered a "living episode in the history of European civilisation and of the ruling classes that managed gigantic transformations, in the social history of great masses that paid the highest price, together with Western scientific tradition that, like other productive forces, determined its forms and times" (Ashton 1948).[2]

The most direct response to all this corresponds to the birth of modern urban planning and its solutions to the industrial city, in its desperate conflict with the agricultural world which for four thousand years had managed the rhythms of life and nature as a true civilisation (Benevolo 1972). In the 1970s, the relationship with other disciplines, such as perceptual psychology related to the manifestation of the living environment in large urban agglomerations, brought man back to the centre of the design research as an interdisciplinary model. The environment is no longer considered in its physical relationship between "outside and inside" but as a relational "continuum". There is no longer a front or a back, but a total immersion of the individual at 360 degrees in its surrounding space, where the five senses are expanded and sometimes replaced by sophisticated artificial systems.[3] This global perception, already intuited by the relationship between psychology and physiology together with philosophical symbolism, can be considered the true meeting point between empiricism and rationalism, which has always studded human knowledge with doubts.

A space understood in this way as a living entity, where any influence exerted on it changes the relationship of the whole, poses serious questions on having conceived the city, up to now, only as a random relationship of full and empty spaces. Paradoxically, an answer to all this, which concerns a large part of our future survival, seems to be found by walking among the "cities of the dead" of a people like the Etruscans. In fact, just entering the silent necropolis, along the funeral routes once travelled by carpenters, in their tomb architectures you will find real living models that, even in

[1] The Modern Era is usually intended as the period from 1492, the year of the so-called discovery of America, to 1810/19, dates linked to the European geopolitical organisation conceived by Napoleon who led to its reorganisation through Restoration. A more correct critical tendency argues that the limit of the Modern Era should be appropriately moved to 1968 instead, a period of changes in socio-cultural values that affected the whole world, thanks also to the spread of mass media as they are used and known today (Guglielmi 2010).

[2] Robert Owen (1771–1858), the founder of the thought in which the modern urban planning finds its roots, spent his whole life trying to create a model of productive society, capable of improving the conditions of the working classes most subordinate to the industrial process. For a broader discussion see also (Cattaneo 1974).

[3] Physiologically, the reality we are used to consider through our senses is partial and incomplete. In fact, our senses give us a limited knowledge by accustoming us to always consider "what we see", within our visual angle, excluding what we "do not see" i.e., the back, the unthought reality that always exists, even if we are not "thinking" about it at a perceptual level. Therefore, we can deduce that we do not completely control our space since, although our body is completely immersed in it at an epidermal level, it is not able to perceive it entirely. The research of the new cybernetics addresses these limits in particular.

Fig. 1 Cerveteri, Banditaccia necropolis, IV–V century. Internal dimension ratios

their details, recall the poignant daily memory of the "city of the living" (Figs. 1 and 2).

This close relationship, this inescapable continuity between life and death establishes hierarchies and parameters that give man his true dimension, the one we have now forgotten. Spontaneous architecture made up of organic forms, interwoven paths adapting to the environment, creating natural community pitches, osmosis between used local materials and nature, all recalling the topical ancestral requests of human needs, been lost in our cold design geometries, in too much reason applied to a future city of only form without content[4] (Fig. 3).

[4] It worth recalling that the city of ancient foundation was born physiologically i.e., adapting to the needs of its inhabitants, in direct contact with the surrounding space. In fact, the Greeks used the term Polis to identify both the physical city and the organised human presence that expressed it.

Fig. 2 Pietragalla (Potenza) settlement The Palmenti, ancient caves for wine storage. Internal dimension ratios

Thus, the ideological and economic crisis that has particularly affected Italian society has sharpened in dramatic terms the break with our truest autochthonous tradition: the relationship between city and territory in relation to its history (Guglielmi 1993, 1994).

The diffuse city, where the urban boundaries were cancelled, with no solution of continuity between industrial and civil settlements, the horizontal city with its parcelled out development which, however, still maintained traditional dimensional ratios, was contrasted by the "mega-structural" urban dimension[5] favoured by the

[5] The term Megastructure was first used in 1960 by the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki (1928) who defined it as a "Framework", i.e. an interchangeable buildings system capable of constant extension. The same term is also used today to refer to recent architecture and in general to all large-scale constructions of any age.

Fig. 3 Delphi, harmonious integration between artificial form and nature

surprising use of technological research and building industrialisation.[6] A session of the Venice Biennale in 1978 was addressed to this subject in particular (Vinca Masini

[6] Let's not forget that the subject is not new to our country. In fact, at the beginning of last century, it was Futurism that spread the great design themes of the vertical city, right up to the tensile structures of the 1930s that even interested Le Corbusier in his Algiers plan.

1978; Crispolti 1979). The attempt was to deal with the topic from a semantic point of view, highlighting the forcings, or rather the aberrations, that arose from the anti-nature utopia and the consequent crisis (Guglielmi 2021). The city itself became a "technological structure"; indeed, in the proposals by the architects Aldo Loris Rossi (1933–2018) and Donatella Mazzoleni (1943) it took on the cold and disturbing term of "habitable material" (Vinca Masini 1978, 120–122) (Fig. 4).

In this climate, for instance, the term design begins to take on a completely different valence, detaching itself not without resistance from the "product design"—which addressed the object alone and was contested as a methodological inheritance of neo-capitalist evolution derived from the Bauhaus—to oppose a kind of "anti-design" i.e., "the recomposition of contradictions at a formal level, destroying the usual product image, denying the bestowal of a formal correctness capable of satisfying in the obsolete terms of 'good taste'" (Raggi 1973).

2 Power to the Creativity

Looking at and experiencing our contemporary cities, we realise that physically and psychologically we are missing something. We are disoriented, without visual references, the quality of details that contributes substantially to forming the urban image is tarnished, dispersed on large glass surfaces, as in the anonymous concrete orthogonality, mistakenly believed to be "functionalist".

But what is that magnetic force, that desire which attracts us to the urban centres of ancient memory, to our past? The answer may lie around the corner in more recent history.

In the cities of the 1930s and 1940s, there was a return to the global project of a civic space, a great ideal dream of integration between the arts, which culminated in Rome with E 42, the Universal Exhibition, celebrating the primacy of Italian creativity in the world (Fig. 5). It was a return of the art social function as a norm, for the recomposition of the life space inherited from our tradition, also mending the romantic divide that saw craftsmanship playing a subordinate role to art, then thwarted by the dramatic break during the war.

The situation left few alternatives: on the one hand, the constant need for "preservation" (which, used in a maniacal way, has mostly led to the sclerosis of our historic centres); on the other hand, building projects passed as popular, a characteristic of urban concentration that over time proved a trap for a disconsolate humanity.

Thus, the use and respect for nature, space, sun and light remained documents of our best rationalism, the manifestation of a twentieth century that had not yet been able to come to terms with its history, because it "belonged to years to be forgotten"[7] (Fig. 6).

[7] The cultural aspects of the 1930s and 1940s, which can be linked to Fascism, were approached in Italy from an essentially ideological rather than an anthropological point of view. This tendency, only partly revisited today, has created a lot of critical confusion, dividing the twentieth century into

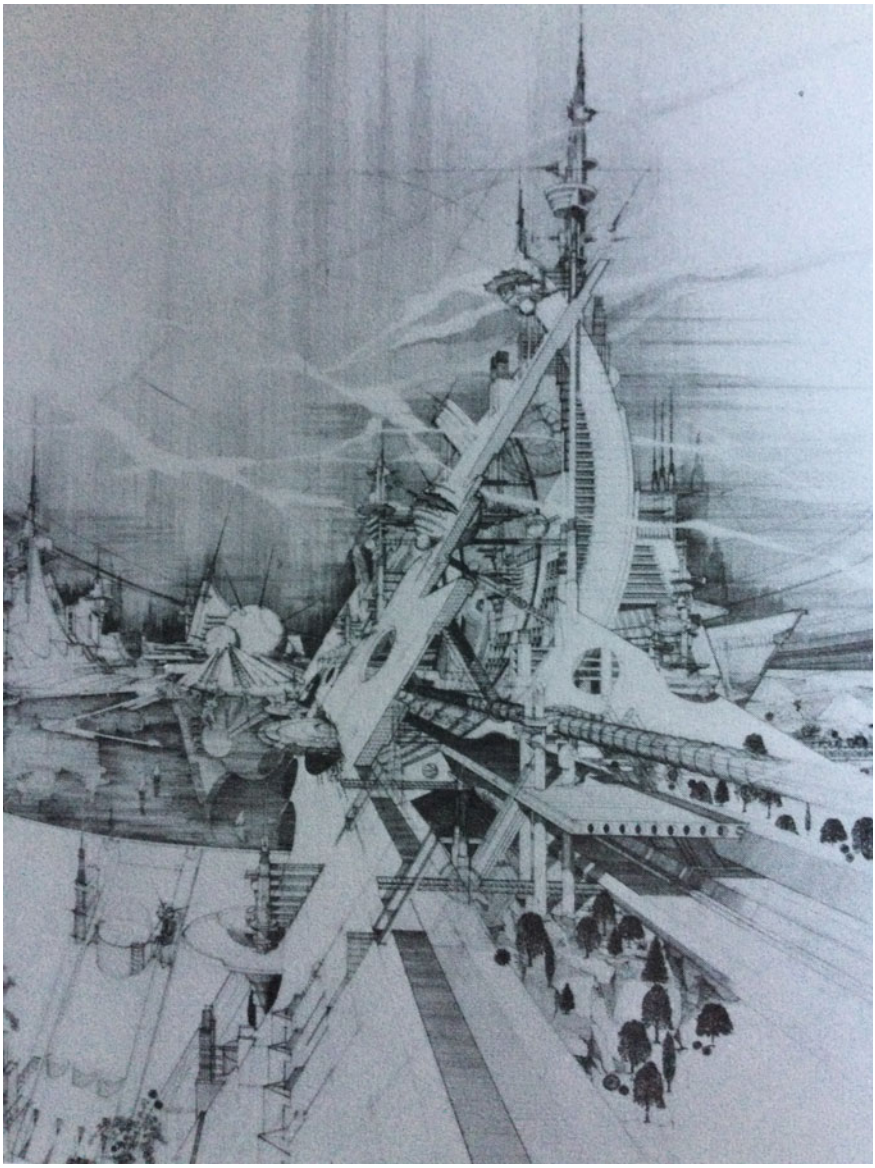

Fig. 4 A. Loris Rossi, Donatella Mazzoleni, *Materiale abitabile (Città-Struttura)* 1976–1978, (credits *La Biennale di Venezia* 1978)

Fig. 5 E42, detail of the exedra and the large arch, Rome 1939–1942

This void, unique in Italy with respect to other European nations, was occupied in the 1960s by utopia, as a provocative design response to the neo-capitalist crisis, without however succeeding in recovering a true socially oriented design culture, contributing to the creation of today's "no man's land" with no values and traditions to defend (Guglielmi 1980). Today, it is interesting to discover that Marco Zanuso (1916–2001), who throughout his professional life played a special "technological" role between design and architecture, defined the latter as an ineffable reality that must be experienced, inhabited, travelled through, seen in its three dimensions; he also believed it was a great cultural opportunity, in which symbologies dictated by the times can be insert, where space has a didactic nature, a place of collective learning

two sections: the first irrational, resulting from the Dictatorship, the second from 1945 onwards, when a new Italy would be born, completely disconnected from the past. In truth, our post-war years are indebted to the 1930s, even their offspring, which in the field of art and architecture can be considered a true second renaissance (Guglielmi 2010, pp. 243–251).

Fig. 6 Integration between the Arts. Ravenna, Casa Littoria, 1938–1939, Arch. Emanuele Mongiovi

and creative growth. Therefore, it was about a return of interest in "the art of the city" for a new enlightened policy, capable of overcoming the ambiguous implicit proclamations in the overused generic term of "urban furnishing" for the aesthetic upgrading of civic spaces.

Thus, in this climate, architects, painters, sculptors and craftsmen would find a new centrality in the redesign of the future city, harmonising with the great ineluctable technological progress (Guglielmi 2005).[8]

Was this not perhaps the socialist dream of a thinker like the Czech Karel Teige (1900–1951), told through a vast cultural legacy that is now almost forgotten? An art theorist and artist himself, he advocated the total liberation of "all the virtualities of the human person". What is interesting is that Teige formulated the ideal of an art capable of freeing itself from every moralistic limitation and every ideological overlay, to become "a game with the fire of life" and determine the free development of each individual's humanity as a condition for the free development of the humanity of all (Teige 1973).

3 A Question of Terms or of Content?

The concept of Nature and Anti-nature expands with regard to the different meanings of Cityscape and Urban landscape, as a representation in time of the spaces inherent to a complex human presence, restricted within social rules, at the basis of the urbanisation of vast areas.

The aspects involved by psychological approaches to our daily living of these realities refer instead to Urban design, which represents the configuration of buildings shapes and the special relationships with their surroundings.

The old town, as an urban centre populated by an anonymous proletarian mass of Dickensian memory, evolves into a more sophisticated and extended city, which can be administered according to its own local laws, even if there are no substantial differences between the two physical entities, apart from a different extension. Unfortunately, the urban planning science has been limited within these lexical models of Anglo-Saxon origin that were born out of purely economic needs.

In the Seventies, Ignazio Gardella (1905–1999) had already decreed the inglorious end of a certain urban planning practice, imagining the rules for resolving the harmonious relationship between architecture and the land: "The settlements growth must not be regulated with the equivocal instrument of masterplans, as they are currently understood, but with programmes and projects, because there is no reason to distinguish between architects and town planners. While projects fall within the specific field of architecture at different scales, programmes require a range of skills that go beyond that of architecture, but also that of town planning in its current form, affecting the whole framework of human activity, then resulting in an essentially political act".

[8] The designer Pio Manzù (1939–1969) had also shown the same interest in urban space by collaborating with artists such as Lucio Fontana (1899–1968) and Giuseppe Capogrossi (1900–1972) on a "study of facades for a chromatic city". Documents of these contacts are deposited in Bergamo in the Archive of the *Fondazione Manzoni arte e design*.

In recent years, the architect figure itself has undergone great transformations, at times both actor and victim of the same necessary technological and communicative processes. Much has been said, for instance, about his role as the heir of our best tradition, codified from Vitruvius and Alberti and substantially preserving the characteristics of this professional attitude until the 1950s. However, its radical transition between the 1990s and the new millennium has been little discussed. In fact, the breaking down of cultural barriers with the consequent loss of identities, the improper use of land, the access to sophisticated innovative tools linked to globalised messages and ideas, have created deep rifts towards the peripheral presence of a profession no longer able to take part in the great societal changes, immense revolutionary challenges towards the future. Thus, architecture has become an elitist fashion, an object of consumption, and the city a product based on spectacular suggestion rather than on correct planning. It is the nefarious "archistars" era, a definition corroborate by superficial advertising, prone to those famous world brands that are the main clients of design and economic studies; sought after as an image and not as solver of social problems, because of their conflicting results in relation to the community, they would be better defined as "anarchistars".[9]

However, few people ask themselves about the real problem of these metropolises, of which the extravagant works are no more than ephemeral embellishment, about their weakness, which is in fact their underservice. A tangle of cables and endless pipes stretching for hundreds or even thousands of kilometres, connections that are now obsolete, rusty, disjointed, overlapping in time since the nineteenth century. A forgotten double city that, in the abandoned undergrounds, sees spectral environments where colonies of gigantic rats live and proliferate. This problem was discussed for a while in cities such as New York and Bucharest. A crisis in this system, which is now out of control, as the relevant management offices are well aware, would lead to the very collapse of the cities.

And yet, people continue undaunted to build, to superimpose housing blocks on the same land, which is now incapable of reacting to decontamination, favouring an extreme form of useless vertical architecture, excluded to most persons.

Architecture, the first human expression for its best survival, has slipped into the paradox of its opposite. And it is no coincidence that the biggest sounding boards of the most famous "archistars" are precisely the journalists who are now *know-it-all*; not the architecture historians, theorists of beauty and manuals, but the editorial offices in the pay of fashion multinationals, investment banks, insurance companies, etc. Thus, the anti-nature crisis corresponds to the crisis of human society itself, concentrated in today's megalopolises designed to look like amusement parks glittering in the night.

[9] A crude yet effective reflection on this topic is provided by (La Cecla 2008). According to the author, architects take refuge in an artistry that excludes them from any responsibility and entrusts them with the transformation of entire parts of the city, often carried out with incompetence and superficiality, in the assumption that it is a formal game.

4 We Are the Cities We Dwell

Thucydides (460 B.C.–390 B.C.) reminded us that "Men, not walls, make cities", a concept later echoed by the great William Shakespeare (1564–1616).

In the past, the urban examples attributable to the great civilisations, such as the fluvial civilisations of the so-called Fertile Crescent, up to Rome, were essentially anthropological outcomes. Even though it was said that the entire city of Nineveh took three days to be crossed, man was always at the centre of a hierarchical and technical system where community, mythical and religious life could be accommodated (Fig. 7).

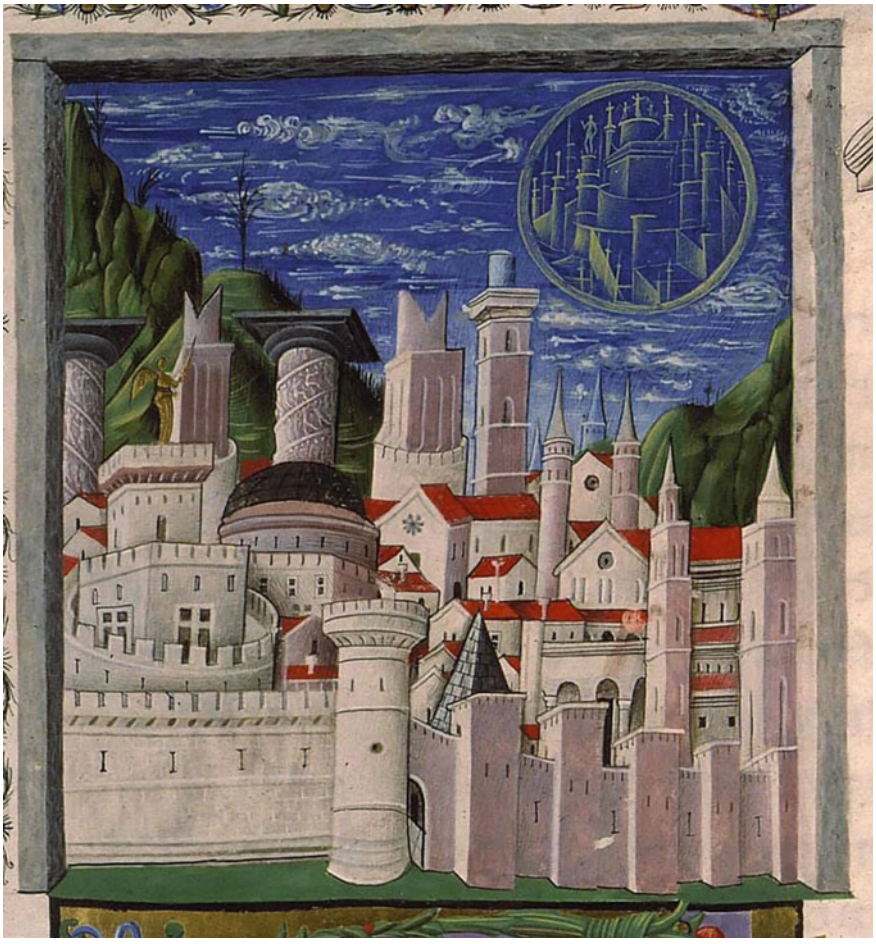

Fig. 7 Martin de Lachâtre, *Rome, cité de Dieu, et cité terrestre*, XVI cent

Yet, this dimension of control loss over nature had already been experienced and, unfortunately, we have not taken advantage of it. This is echoed in the stories of ancient cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah, is recalled in the Tower of Babel myth where human arrogance was miserably defeated by its challenge to nature, in the biblical story represented as incommunicability between the races previously united in the Golden Age harmony (Calabrese 1985).

It is a distant anticipation of what, in the Enlightenment world vision, will become the empirical-materialistic knowledge theory and the utilitarian morality; it will be translated into the relationship between arts and technology where "Architecture was born out of necessity and perfected by luxury: gradually revealed from huts to palaces, in the philosopher's eyes it is nothing more, so to speak, than the embellished mask of our most urgent needs" (Vitale 1998).

Thus, the artificial world around us has conformed according to the Cartesian geometric model, as a codification and a norm, in the search for better spatial and functional relationships, the ultimate synthesis of which is perspective. Curiously, we do not reflect enough on how the physical reality that surrounds us corresponds to the manifestation of a never fully resolved representational conflict between two- and three-dimensionality. Our metropolises, the great centres where most of the people on the planet are concentrated, are basically "meta-design" spaces, apparent realities conceived within the limits of two-dimensional perception; that's why they are hostile to people themselves and cause of incongruities and discomforts, in a tragic dichotomy between "mind and places",[10] where the collective unconscious and identities are at play (Fig. 8).

The futurist imagery "drawn" by architects such as Antonio Sant'Elia (1888–1916) and Mario Chiattone (1891–1957) is no stranger to this debate; in their dizzying metropolises, they chased the dream of a nature subjected to the exaltation of the form-function relationship, "envisaging a second, artificial, mechanical, intimately unnatural nature"[11] (Figs. 9 and 10).

But it is in the mid-1970s ideological crisis that the definition of "megastructure" was better clarified by Reyner Banham (1922–1988) as the result of a technological development that conditioned the city functions into the summation of minor individual structural units[12] (Fig. 11). In fact, the initial megastructural meaning implied a substantially urban aspect, which Ralph Wilcoxon (1968) had described as an extension of artificial modular elements, capable of unlimited occupation of the ground and typical of the so-called "tentacular city" (Wilcoxon 1968).

[10] This contrast of terms formed the subject of the volume *Mind and Places* (Anzani 2020).

[11] The characters of contemporary "fantastic" architecture are already related to the "figurability" of megapolitan magastructures: structural transparency, suspended architecture, constructive utopianism, futuristic city, verticalism (Crispolti 1979, p. 5). Among the proponents of these models, I remember Tullio Crali (1919–2000) who in the Thirties had proposed megastructures and urban interconnections that were unique in their creative exuberance.

[12] According to Banham, the system should have adapted to the individual needs of its inhabitants, as flexible structures to new needs (Banham 1976).

Fig. 8 Urban aberration. *The complex* flats, Hong Kong, 1970s

5 Conclusion: A New Icarus

This analytical programming aspect was interpreted in subsequent years with the "Mega-sign" paradox i.e., the design of vertical architecture oversized in comparison with the urban fabric as a totalising "megapolitan" image. Super-skyscrapers and

Fig. 9 Mario Chiattone, *Modern Metropolis* (detail), 1914

science-fiction towers, of which the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, built in 2010, with its 829.80 m in height, is the most striking and at the same time disturbing example[13] (Fig. 12).

In this sort of global "anti-humanism", architecture has lost its measure, whereas man must always have the possibility to reach the places dedicated to him with his

[13] It would be interesting carrying out a study in opposition to the theories on the privileged choice of vertical architecture beyond the mere technical achievements that have favoured its development, in relation to the real needs of the common good and the morphological aspects implicit in their uncontrolled diffusion.

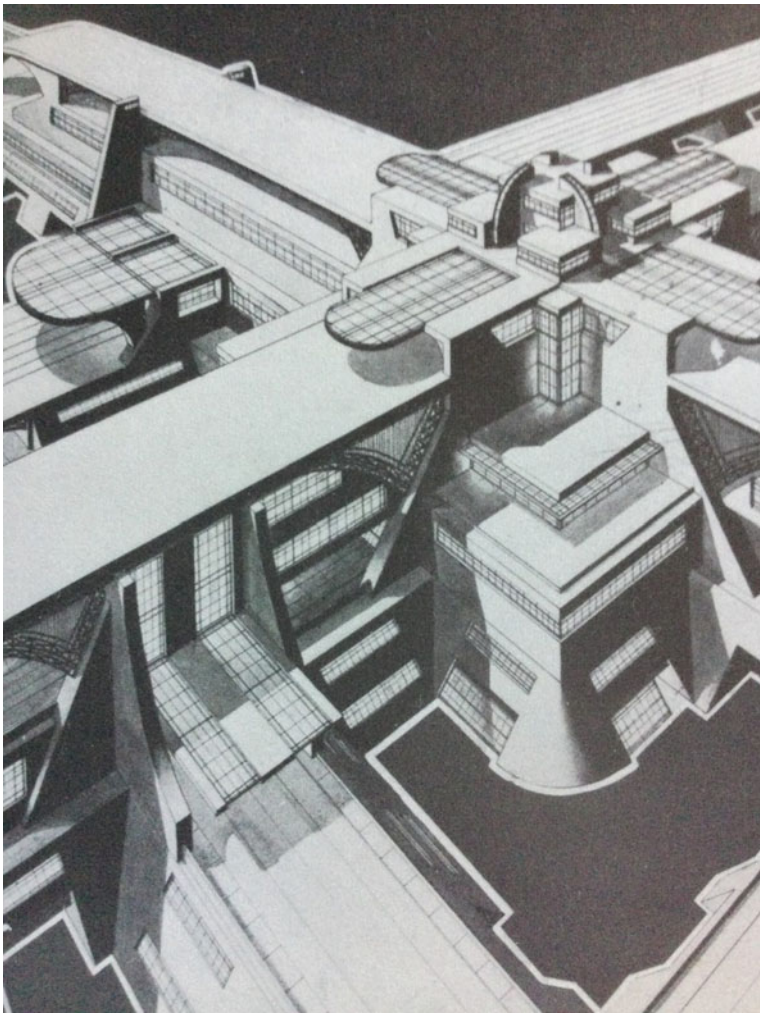

Fig. 10 Tullio Crali, *Interconnected urban structure (detail), air terminal*, 1931–1932

own physical and logical strength, without remaining at the mercy of events, hostage of exasperated technology[14] (Figs. 13 and 14).

[14] While architecture in a proper sense is cancelled in the spatial figure proposed from time to time as a universal resolution, since the supposed new dimension of freedom predisposed for it has no possibility of achieving autonomous expressiveness, being constrained within distorted limits, the urban structure itself, fixed in the apodictic geometric model on a gigantic scale, is annulled as an organism capable of following a dynamism dictated by the very constitution of the territorial reality in its processual phenomena. Therefore, the initial binomial form-freedom ends with the exclusion of the second term, but in return also with the reduction to zero of the very idea of form,

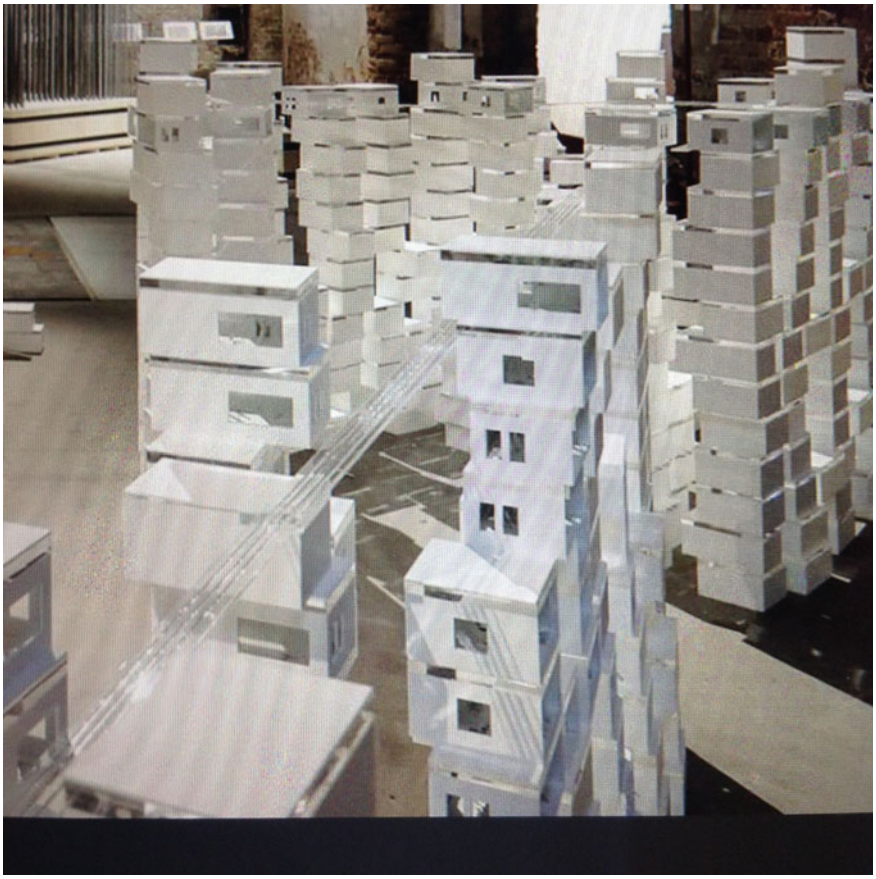

Fig. 11 *Emergential City, Jinher Park* (detail), SsD Architecture and Urbanism, South Korea/USA, Venice Architecture Biennale, 2021

In conclusion, thinking ahead, I find myself forced to return to the past by repeating what Renato De Fusco (1929), disregarded, had written on the subject back in 1967, warning us: "How can one deny that in the idea of the new dimension, of the new polymorphous and polyvalent typology of 'positive' technology, there is an evasive, formalistic component, a desire to incorporate the most contradictory phenomena in a view that, at the same time, leaves the doors open to sudden course changes and ultimately sets aside or postpones meanings of operative action? This constant talk of openness, indeterminacy, large scale, demythologisation, if legitimately reflects the rejection of dogmatism and preconception, inevitably entails the loss of all completed experience, of every critical reference, of the very possibility of determining a meeting point, a code between culture and society (Fig. 15).

given that its geometric reality is irremediably precluded from being supported by a consequent dynamic-organisational idea (Tafuri 1968).

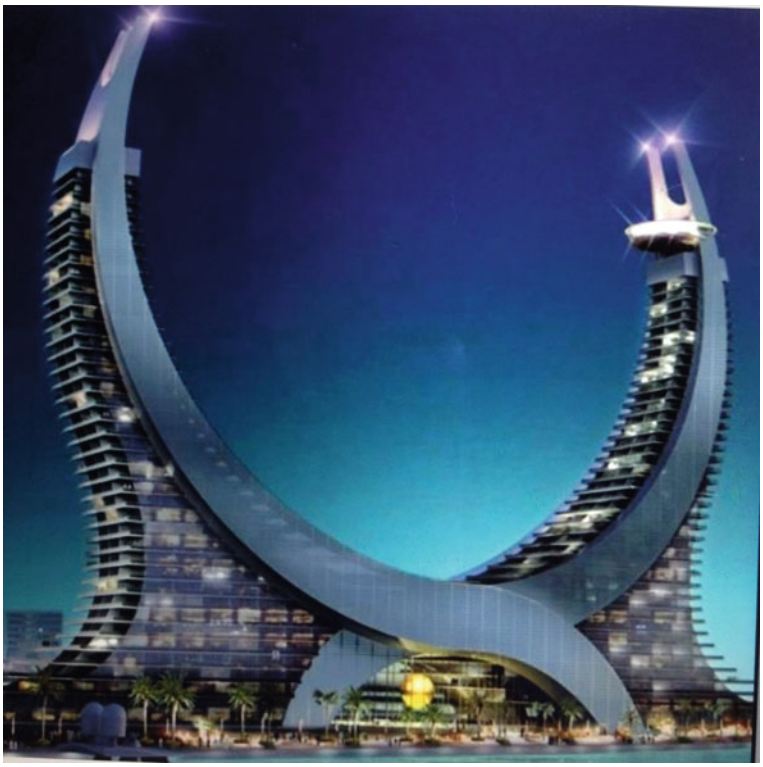

Fig. 12 *Mega-sign*, Dar Al-Handasah, Katara Towers, Qatar, 2018

Undoubtedly, there is the risk that in the great territorial environment, dreamt of by the realistic contemporary utopia, with “all-purpose” structures and without defined forms, all meaning is lost and, from the communicative point of view, that desert is obtained which Morris, in his well-known definition, sets as the only place without architecture” (De Fusco 1967).

Thus, the anti-nature utopia brings back the myth of the demiurge who dreams an architecture for a technological “new man”, capable of replacing the primitive space with a different, artificial space. A "second nature" that contrasts with what should instead concern the reality of the global eco-system, understood as a balance of values, including above all moral values at the service of man, as recalled by this faith statement: “The cathedral is the fruit of human genius, the masterpiece of man. The human person is the fruit of divine genius, the masterpiece of God”[15] (Fig. 16).

[15] Paris Archbishop Michel Aupetit (1951), in April 2019, during his sermon for the partial reopening of the Parisian Cathedral of Notre Dame, after the disastrous fire.

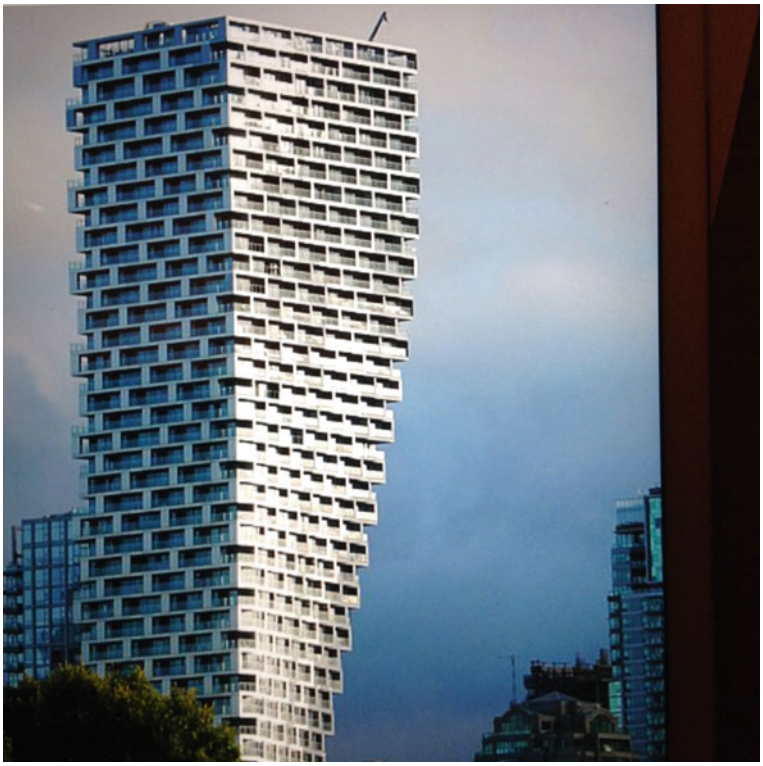

Fig. 13 Bjarke Ingels, Vancouver House, Canada, 2018

Fig. 14 Urban megastructure, Dubai Civic Centre

Fig. 15 Abandoned horizontal megastructure, Milan 1972, demolished in the 2000s

Fig. 16 Mario Coppola, Leonardo Caffo, Arup Italia, *Post human Villa*, integration of artificial and natural forms, Italian Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, 2021

References

Anzani A (2020) Mind and places. A multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer Nature, Cham
Ashton TS (1948) The industrial revolution, 1760–1830. Oxford University Press, Oxford
Banham R (1976) Megastructure urban future of the recent past. Harper and Row, New York
Benevolo L (1972) Le origini dell'urbanistica moderna. Edizioni Laterza, Bari
Calabrese O (1985) La macchina della pittura. Laterza, Bari
Cattaneo C (1974) La città come principio. Collana Polis, Marsilio Editori, Venezia
Crispolti E (ed) (1979) Immaginazione megastrutturale dal Futurismo ad oggi. Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia
De Fusco R (1967) Architettura come mass medium. Dedalo Libri, Bari
Guglielmi E (1980) Utopia e realtà. Il punto sul dibattito "L'architettura domani". In: Corriere di Lecco, 14 gennaio
Guglielmi E (1993) Ambiente e costruito. La necessità di una pacifica coesistenza. In: Geotec. Professional Press Editore, Milano, pp 34–39
Guglielmi E (1994) Lettura storica dei valori territoriali finalizzata alla progettazione ambientale. In: Giorgetti P (ed) Il golf e l'ambiente, Collana Incudine n.5. Il Pomerio, Lodi, pp 152–164

Guglielmi E (2005) L'arte e la città: riflessioni a cielo aperto. In: Al, Mensile di informazione degli Architetti Lombardi, Consulta Regionale Lombarda dell'Ordine degli Architetti, Milano, pp 12–13

Guglielmi E (2010) Raccolta di lezioni di Storia dell'Arte Contemporanea e Semiotica. Università degli Studi di Firenze, Facoltà di Architettura, Corso di Laurea in Disegno Industriale, Collana di dispense "Gli asterischi", Firenze

Guglielmi E (2010) Alla ricerca delle radici perdute. Riflessioni sul culto della romanità e della classicità nella cultura degli anni Trenta in Italia. In: Firpo G (ed) Fides amicorum, studi in onore di Carla Fayer. Università degli Studi di Chieti, Opera Editrice, Pescara, pp 243–251

Guglielmi E (2021) Nature and anti-nature. The fractals of the unfinished. In Crespi L (ed) Design of the unfinished. A new way of designing leftovers regeneration. Springer Nature, Cham

La Cecla F (2008) Contro l'architettura. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino

Raggi F (1978) Casabella n. 382, 1973. In: Vinca Masini L (ed) Topologia e morfogenesi. Utopia e crisi dell'antinatura. Momenti delle intenzioni architettoniche in Italia. Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia – Electa, Venezia – Milano, pp 20–24

Tafuri M (1968) La nuova dimensione urbana e la funzione dell'utopia. In: "L'Architettura" n.124, a.XI, n.10, Roma

Teige K (1973) Il mercato dell'arte. L'arte tra capitalismo e rivoluzione. Collana Nuovo Politecnico 58, Einaudi, Torino

Vinca Masini L (ed) (1978) Topologia e morfogenesi. Utopia e crisi dell'antinatura. Momenti delle intenzioni architettoniche in Italia. Edizioni La Biennale di Venezia – Electa, Venezia - Milano

Vitale E (ed) (1998) La visione illuministica del mondo nell'Encyclopédie di Diderot e d'Alembert. Baldini&Castoldi, Milano

Wilcoxon R (1968) Council of Planning Librarians Exchange Bibliography, n.66, Monticello III, U.S.A

Intangible Heritage of Bedouins: Habitat, Habitus and Representations of Nomadic Culture

Giuseppe Amoruso and Sara Conte

Abstract The chapter proposes a graphic analysis of the intangible expression of nomadic Bedouin culture, starting from the material equipment of the black tent in relation to its natural ecosystem, temporary habitat and socio-economic system. Starting from the literature review, mainly of anthropological nature, the conscious relationship between habitat and dwelling in the desert context was investigated, especially that of the Jordanian Bedouins and their *wadis*. The globalisation phenomena have led to a radical change in the organisational models of the populations that have historically inhabited steppes and deserts. In many cases, international tourism, also attracted by the extraordinary archaeological and natural beauties (just think of Petra, recognised as a universal heritage site), has changed the pastoral micro-economy typical of nomadic living towards new models of subsistence or urban marginalisation. Although this anthropological phenomenon has been widely described in the literature, few contributions highlight the symbolic and visual value of the black tent as a perfect balance between dwelling consciousness and a symbiotic relationship with the landscape adjacent to the domestic interior. The illustrations, presented here for the first time, highlight the aesthetic influence of the desert landscape on nomadic culture, the characteristics of the tent construction system and the geometric motifs of the fabrics which, acting as walls, compose its structure and functional parts. The geometric motifs and shapes symbolically translate the natural elements and bring them into the interior, making the tent organic to the environmental context and richly representative of the Bedouin intangible heritage.

Keywords Bedouin · Jordan · Black tent · Textile · Pattern

G. Amoruso (✉) · S. Conte
Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: giuseppe.amoruso@polimi.it

S. Conte
e-mail: sara.conte@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_8

1 The Intangible Heritage of the Bedouins

On 22 August 1812, the Swiss traveller and orientalist Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, disguised as an Arab traveller, discovered the ruins of a city, the last rocky bastion of an ancient civilisation. Before his eyes were the visible traces of Petra, the Nabatean capital of the first and most important Arab empire, today the most fascinating and mysterious archaeological site belonging to the Jordan territory. In fact, until the 1940s, the Arabian desert was uncontaminated, alien to Western culture; its landscape belonged to the tales of the travellers who first explored it, recounting its uniqueness compared to the European context. On the eve of the world wars, as a geographical region "in between" amid Egypt and the East Indies, the Middle East had been present for a few decades in the political agendas of the nations competing for the (military) defence of the Arabian Peninsula. Despite the trade routes between the Mediterranean ports had been travelled for centuries and the Holy Land had historically hosted Christian missions and pilgrimage flows, little was known about the populations of the vast Arabian Peninsula and its geographical feature, the desert. A vast natural universe, pure and in some ways the parent of ancient civilisations and religions, was unknown and mysterious, perhaps even today, in its being a land of nomadic populations, with no boundaries other than those dictated by religious or tribal affiliation.

The term Bedouin, which does not have a precise ethnic value, derives etymologically from the Arabic word *badw*, desert or arid place, which ideally delimits its habitat. In addition to the hot and cold desert zones, geographically this area includes those marginal areas constituted by the steppes and the first savannas; highly diverse environments, but all characterised by the cyclic alternation of atmospheric events and their scarce consistency that only allow a tenacious and hard nomadic life. The Arabic word for "Bedouin is *bedewī*, which means "steppe dweller", a name used to designate nomads who inhabit steppes and deserts as opposed to those who lead a sedentary lifestyle typical of cultivated areas and cities (Jabbur 1995). Thus, Bedouins are those who dwell the desert living in tribes and practising loyalty to their kin. It should be pointed out that not all Bedouins are Arabs, just as not all of them speak Arabic, but they are united by an ideal of essential living, hospitable and respectful of the environment that offers them subsistence in the different seasons.

The habitat determines the nomadic nature of these populations, since the nomad establishes a balanced, seasonal dependence relationship with the landscape and its ecosystem. The scarcity of water and pasture for the animals, a source of survival and support for the economy and movement, cyclically determines the need to positioning in more suitable areas for habitation. These populations manifest their belonging to the habitat through the practical exercise of material expression; by making fabrics and skilfully embroidering their parts, they appropriate the intangible forms of the landscape in an iconographic exercise that translates signs, colours and climatic elements into geometry.

Unceasingly, Bedouins practise the traditional pastoral culture and preserve specific skills and knowledge related to flora, fauna, traditional medicine and

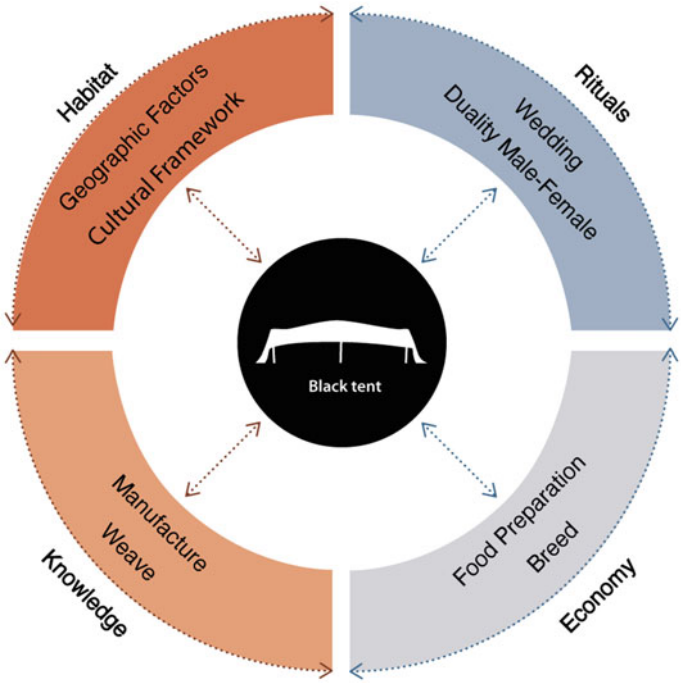

Fig. 1 The cultural system of the Bedouin community develops from the physical object of the black tent

dromedary breeding, but above all they manufacture tents and handicrafts (Fig. 1). Over time, they have developed a broad knowledge of their environment and retain a complex moral and social code, which is transmitted within the family context, in a reciprocal balance between genders. Feilberg's ethnographic studies are an absolute reference for a deeper understanding of their origins (Feilberg 1944).

Bedouin culture and tradition are expressed symbolically through few material objects that nomads carry with them, and which accompany social rituals. In addition to the tent, a concrete symbol of a dual Bedouin society, utility objects and animals determine the survival of a tribe and tell of a fragile intangible environmental and cultural heritage. The handicraft construction of the tent, a construction system, habit and custom of the nomadic life of these communities, has been taken as a universal and authentic symbol of humanity.

The Bedouin cultural heritage can only be understood, and therefore enhanced, by carefully studying and reproducing these symbols that establish the unique and dual relationship between the people and the land. Their dwelling consciously translates traditional knowledge into the design of the house, the black tent, and all the objects that are part of their daily life. The objects and techniques are cultural products of the environment; it is important they are communicated in the global domain so that they can still be passed on to future generations. At the beginning of the century, after

the 2003 release of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, the valorisation of this intangible heritage was undertaken by UNESCO when studies focused on its universal recognition. Since 2008, *The Cultural space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum* in Jordan has been included in the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*. Intangible heritage, as a concept, extends the cultural heritage into the sphere of traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or knowledge and skills to produce traditional objects. This is not only a fragile and intangible cultural heritage to which specific studies should be devoted, but also a factor of cultural diversity characterising peoples and regions in the face of increasing globalisation.

The research brings together various studies on Bedouin cultural heritage and enhances the cooperative tradition through the iconographic translation of materials, techniques, products and symbols in the context of an international cooperation project; this is aimed at enhancing the original roots of their identity in two museums in Amman dedicated to popular traditions and to folklore. Documenting the knowledge and skills heritage that have been passed down through the Bedouin Muslim culture from one generation to the next means representing traditional practices, communicating symbolic expressions and spreading a sense of identity and belonging to the habitat. The aim is to show how representative this heritage is, evaluating it not only as a cultural asset, for comparison and exclusivity, but in its relationship with the reference community on which it depends. Not the product will be shown, but the context, the people and the collective social practice that contributes to knowledge, traditions and transmission of skills from generation to generation. The Bedouins are known for the extensive knowledge of their ecosystem and for the complex moral and social code they adopt. All is passed down and expressed in various forms of oral communication, including poems, folk tales and songs that are closely linked to particular places and to the history of these communities throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

The study also addresses the characterisation of the Bedouin community and its settlement form, since intangible cultural heritage can only be recognised by the communities that economically and socially produce it, through the groups or the individuals who create, maintain and transmit it. Without their real recognition, no one can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage. In recent decades, this living testimony of knowledge and civilisation is threatened by a sedentary model of living that, of course, is also offering services, education, housing and health care. The proximity to great tourist attractions and the demand to live an authentic "Bedouin life experience" is favouring a phenomenon of cultural weakening which, however slowly, leads to forgetting knowledge and skills matured over generations.

How can we prevent more and more groups of Bedouins from leaving their tents and settling in a new form of cultural anonymity in the city's outskirts? Visualising their values, disseminating their iconography, making their authenticity more

comprehensible will certainly encourage a process of valorisation even among the Jordanians younger generations.

2 Habitat: the Intangible and Tangible Landscape in the Nomadic Culture

The area of diffusion of the black tent nomadism extends from the Africa northern belt, through the Arabian Peninsula to the eastern Tibet fringes; a territory characterised by arid lands, continental climate, poverty of vegetal forms, in which the Bedouin culture and the breeding of sheep and camels as a primary source of sustenance dominate (Kay 1978; Campetti and von Löwenstern 1983; Jabbur 1995). In fact, the particular existence of nomads and migration as the most characteristic aspect of their way of life depend on climatic factors. The harsh and difficult environment imposes a constant nomadism on the inhabitant populations and the consequent adoption of a temporary and provisional type of dwelling, the black tent, whose construction system allows its form and materials to be adapted, according to the different environmental and seasonal conditions. The tent has been widely described as a constructive paradigm of temporary and nomadic living that practices a model of collaborative architecture, with the participation of men and women from the community. Anthropologists and experts such as Torvald Faegre offer many documents for the study of nomadic dwelling, whose constructive elements reflect the qualities of impermanence and hierarchy derived from millennial adaptation to desert climates (Faegre 1979; Feilberg 1944) (Fig. 2).

The tent typology is based on its temporary connection to the territory where it is established, usually in a collective or family neighbourhood camp; it conforms to the needs of a people who camp when pasture is available for livestock (mainly goats and camels) and dismantle the camp when the land becomes again unsuitable for animal feeding. This cyclical and uninterrupted way of life is reflected not only in the building structure of the tent, which must be quickly dismantled and easily transportable, but also in the activities, farming and weaving, carried out by the community as well as in the extreme functionality and the aesthetics of Bedouin objects and furniture.

Among different types, the Bedouin or Arab tent is the most widespread, as it is best suited for use in the desert (Feilberg 1944, p. 12). Besides responding to the need for lightness, transportability and protection, it is built with materials provided by the natural environment and is manufactured using the traditional knowledge of the entire surrounding region. Over the centuries, its shape has been progressively adapted to the often hostile and extreme habitat, making it flat and aerodynamic to better resist the wind force. Bedouins call themselves *Ahl el beit*, people of the tent, and as observed by the ethnographer Feilberg—also supporting the orientalist Alois Musil's statements—they classify the tribes of their countries according to their degree of nomadism. The population is divided into the *Hazars*—those who

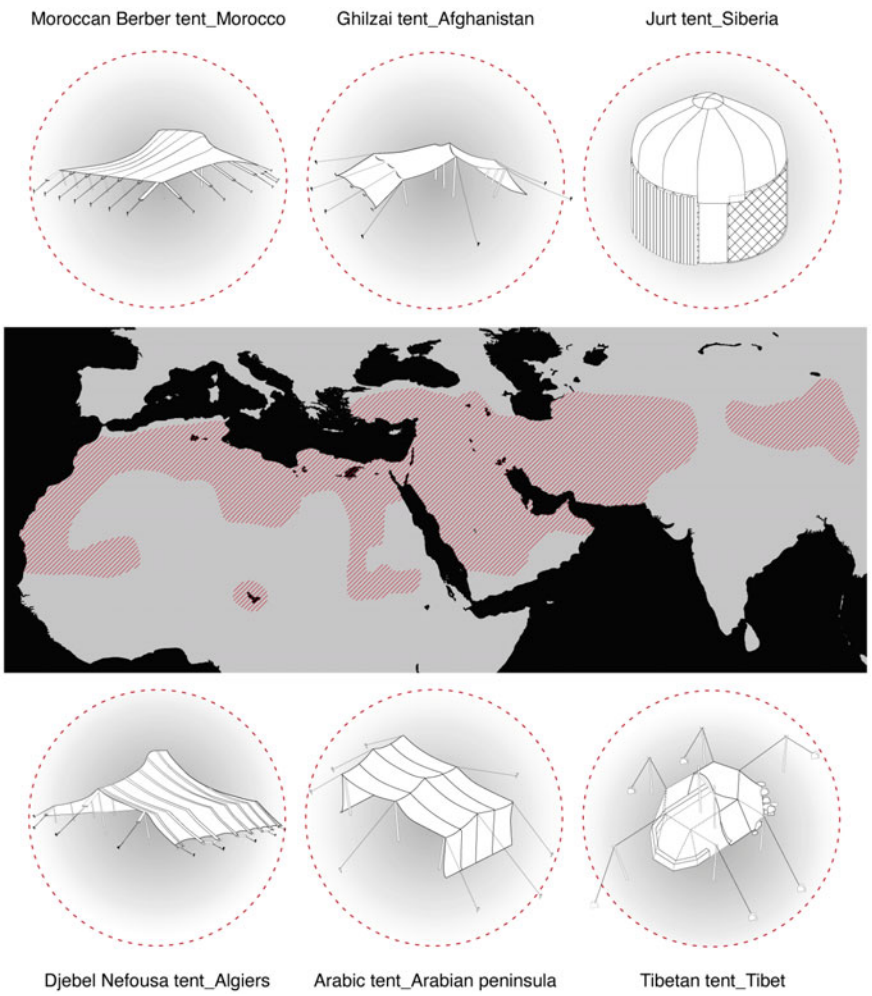

Fig. 2 Spread of the nomads of the black tent and adaptation of this type of dwelling to the environmental conditions

live in houses—and the *Arabs*—those who live in black tents and therefore are nomadic. To the *Hazars* belong the *Qarawne* or *Karawne*, who cultivate the land near the oases and live sedentarily in villages, and the *Ra'w*, semi-nomadic people who seasonally, in periods of drought, travel with their flocks to guarantee their economic subsistence, while in rainy periods cultivate the land and live in stable villages. Considered *Arab* but not Bedouin, there are the *Swaya*, nomadic tribes devoted to goat and sheep herding; requiring more frequent watering than the dromedaries, they allow for shorter and less frequent journeys (Feilberg 1944, p. 19). The Bedouins properly called are mainly breeders of dromedaries (*Camelus dromedarius, Linnaeus* 1758), animals with which they are in a mutual dependence relationship, which constitute

the only means of rapid movement in the desert and a tool for their survival. The dromedary allows nomadic life and the possibility of searching for new pastures, carrying the tent, the objects and the people. It provides milk, wool for making cloth, dung to fuel the fire, urine to protect against parasites and meat in case of emergency, thus becoming the symbol of the family's prestige and wealth. Today, the largest nomadic tribes inhabit the deserts of Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Israel and Iraq, while in Jordan the communities mainly live in the south, from Jerash to Petra and Wadi Rum, within a region of semi-arid and desert plateaus.

Bedouins have a deep knowledge of their surrounding space. Their survival depends on their knowledge of hidden wells, on finding information about new grazing possibilities and on their ability to move quickly through the territory. Their keen sense of direction and strong observation skills enable them to identify morphological features that guide their movements. In areas characterised by large plains, the Bedouins name the mountain reliefs according to the shape they recall, making them easy to recognise even for those who have never crossed these areas (Campetti and von Löwenstern 1983). Life is regulated by the alternation of seasons, which determines the position and location of the camp. In the driest summer months, the Bedouins are forced to live near wells or permanent watercourses, or at high altitudes when present, in order to provide for their own sustenance and of the animals that accompany them. The importance of these elements is also highlighted by the names given them by the Bedouins, generally derived from the ancestors of the group that frequents the area. In the autumn period, with the return of the rains and for about nine months, the Bedouins resume their movements in the desert. The camps, previously larger and composed of several families to meet the need for water, become smaller, with only 4–5 tents, and are scattered over the territory following the course and location of the pastures, which, if abundant, allow greater distance from the primary water sources. The direction of wind, which is constant in the different geographic areas, also plays an important role; during winter or in the presence of strong winds, tents are set up in the valley, seeking shelter near buffers or at the mountains foot where they are protected from sandy storms by walls of reeds, bushes or stones. The orientation of the tents itself depends on the prevailing conditions at the time, thus adapting to the surrounding terrain, as well as to tribal practice. Usually, the Bedouin of the Arab territories turn the main tent opening eastward, to the Mecca, towards which they address their prayers. In the Jordanian territory, consistent with the geographical location, the opening is turned southward (Faegre 1979), allowing the rear wall to be turned northward and the inhabitants to be protected from the winds and the *jinn* evil spirits blowing with them (Fig. 3).

The same environment that determines movement also characterises the Bedouin's work typology. Weaving is the activity that best suits the nomad's lifestyle, who raise dromedaries, sheep and goats, the animals from which they derive the raw materials. In a culture where the home is the tent, and everything in it must be transportable and reduced to the essential, the textiles manufacture reflects the functional needs of living. Preparation for weaving is a cooperative process representing a high degree of sociality and involving men and women in distinct ways. The men raise and shear the animals, card, separate and sort the raw material according to quality and colour;

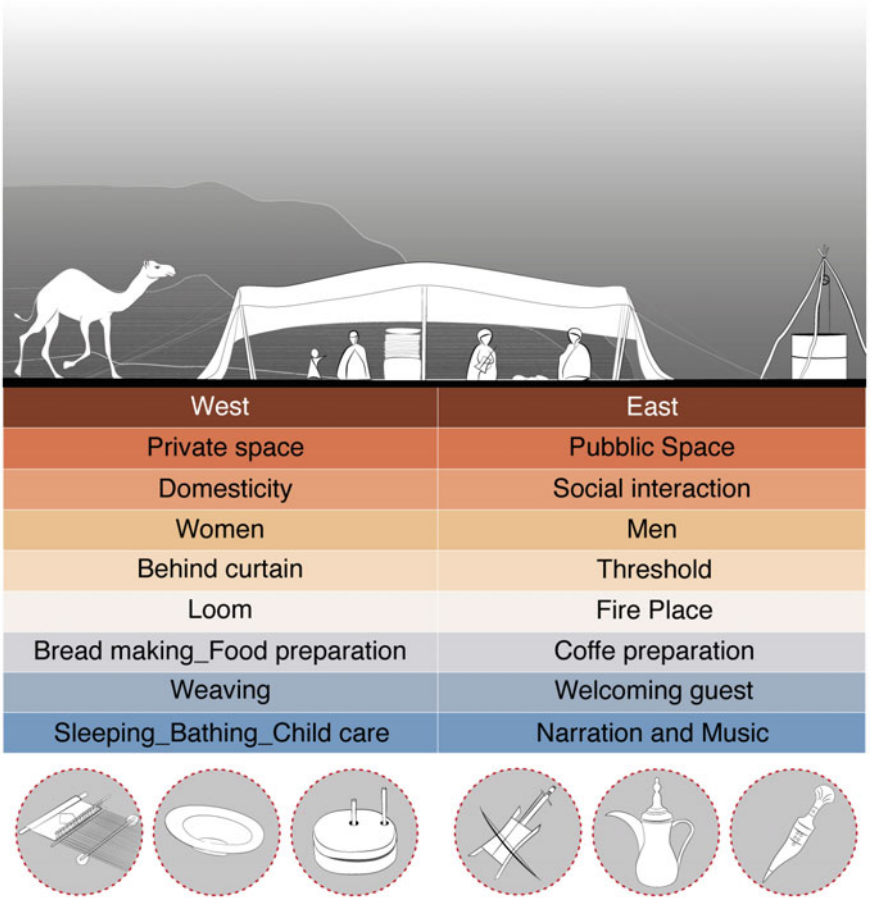

Fig. 3 The Bedouins' social dualism: environment, orientation, space, meanings, sociality, actions and material objects

the women spin the wool, dye and weave it, creating from the same type of loom different types of cloth which vary in weft, material and colour according to the use and tribe. Spinning and weaving in particular are a women's prerogative; just as they generate life, women transform the raw materials and create the fabrics that are essential for building the tents. To prepare the yarn, often a mixture of fibres to improve the strength and elasticity of the raw materials, Bedouin women use a simple drop spindle called *meghzal* or *maghzal*; it is a wooden rod on top of which a spool or small flywheel regulates the filament thickness, and they can use it also while carrying out other activities such as walking.

The yarns used to make carpets and tent furnishings, bags and harnesses for dromedaries are usually dyed by the Bedouin women with natural pigments deriving

from mineral, vegetal and animal sources of the local area (Ghazi 2000), thus reproducing the colours of the outer landscape also in the tent living environment. The yellow earth typical of the area, *mughrah*, is processed to produce dye extracts ranging from yellow to orange; indigo, extracted from the shrub *Indigofera tinctoria*, is the most widely used, especially in the areas of Ghor, Irbid, Jericho, Nablus and Salt, and is used to produce different shades from blue to black; the most popular insect-derived colour is *kermes* extract, which produces a full, warm red used in weaving and embroidery, while *cochineal* produces a dyeing extract ranging from pink to a deep fuchsia commonly used in Bedouin textiles; mulberry fruit, typical of the Jordanian hills, produces different shades of red.

The *natti* is the simplest and oldest loom, still used by many Bedouins today. Made of simple parts that are available in the area, it is suitable for nomadic life, as it can be assembled and dismantled quickly and easily. The women are the ones who take care of its construction, as is also the case for the tent. Some wooden beams resting on a few stones are the essential parts on which, thanks to the skills of the individual weavers, the warp and weft threads are wound, crossed, exchanged and combed to form different types of fabric differently used, their width being however limited by the loom width. These fabric strips, varying in width from 60 to 80 *cm*, are sewed together by the women to create the tents. The material used to make these *shuggahs*, which form the tents cover, is black goat hair, thanks to its length, natural oiliness, resistance to tension; from its characteristic colour the tent takes its name. The rough hair together with a little sheep's wool is prepared for spinning and woven into a not too tight weave. The black acts as a screen and shade for solar radiation, while absorbing more heat; the wide weave of the fabric disperses it, favouring ventilation. With the humidity of the rain or at night, the weave thickens and closes its interstices, becoming waterproof thanks to the hair natural fat. In the weaving of the *ruwag*, a back wall which is raised as needed, camel wool is used, which is considered more precious, alternating goat and sheep hair yarns, obtaining the typical black, beige and white striped look. To protect the tent inhabitants from strong sandstorms, here the weave is thicker, while that for the inner walls is made with a wider weave. By using the same yarn material with different degrees of tightness and stretch, the tent weaver is able to control the porosity, daylight and air ventilation of the different surfaces inside the house (Fig. 4).

Although the link between the Bedouins and the territory in which they live is emblematically close, it is precisely in the textiles' motifs (tent coverings, carpets, cushions, sleeping objects) that the essential and aesthetic influence of the intangible heritage of the surrounding desert landscape shows. The motifs symbolically reproduce idealised natural forms, organised by modules in symmetrical fields, and represent the weavers' perception of natural elements. In the patterns' symmetry and rhythm, also highlighted by the dichromatic nature of the yarn, they transfer the cyclical seasons alternation in the desert and the incessant repetition of the transhumance of the nomads and their herds.

The maximum expression of this decoration is represented by the *sahah*—a curtain that inside the tent separates the part reserved for women from that reserved for men and guests, towards which the front of the fabric is positioned. Sometimes, this

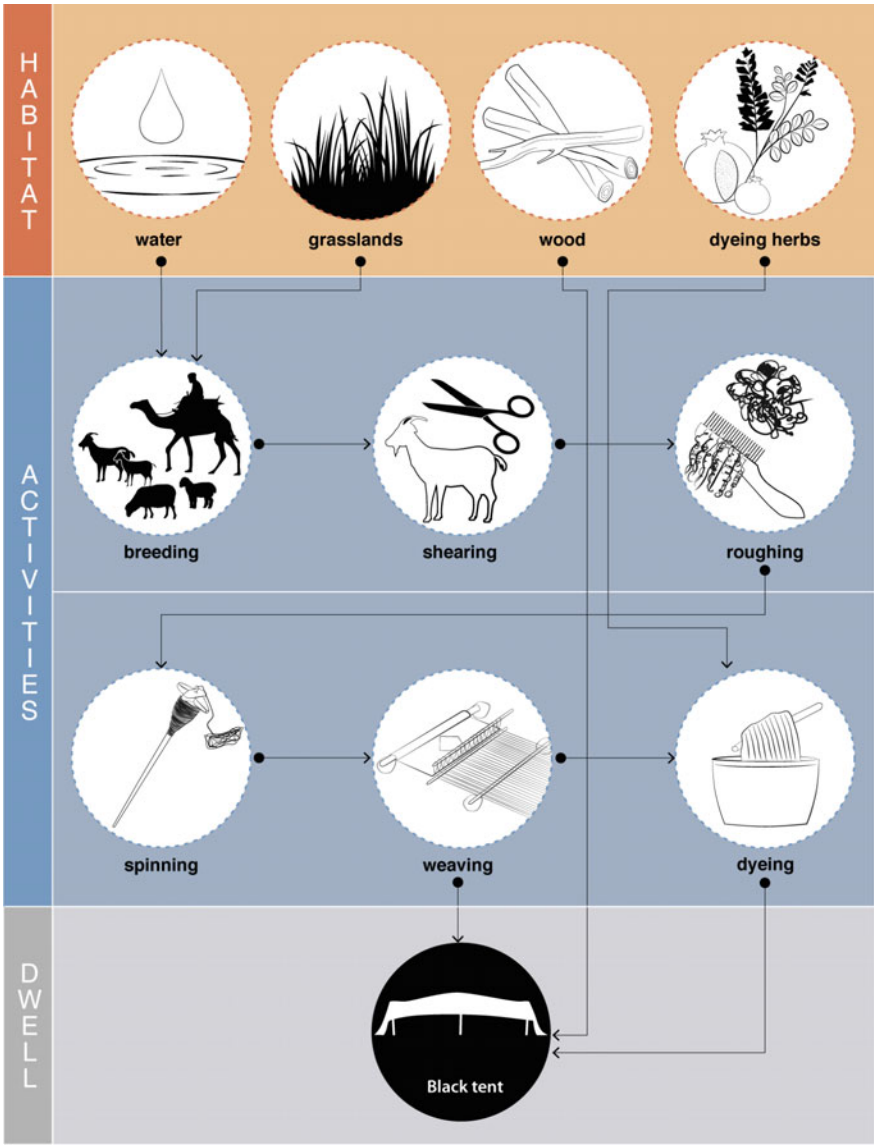

Fig. 4 Resources and activities related to tent making

curtain is also physically connected with the surrounding area, extending outward to underline the close link between inside and outside. The patterns summarily recurring in the various Bedouin tribes take on different forms, names and meanings depending on tribal practice and the weaver's interpretation and skill, which makes them difficult to catalogue (Crowfoot 1945). Repeated dots and stripes represent sand dunes or

parts of animals' bodies, such as dromedary ribs, while repeated rows of triangles represent abstract concepts such as elevation, but also sand dunes, piles of dates or birds' wings. On the other hand, a zig-zag pattern depicts the impression of a snake trail in the sand, while the importance of water and its lack is represented in the concentric diamond patterns that recall how a pool of water quickly evaporates in the heat of the desert or sinks into the sand. Drawings with a strong symbolic meaning, handed down from generation to generation, from woman to woman, tell the identity of a culture and its relationship with the environment as well as of individual tribes, the memory of which is unfortunately being lost (Fig. 5).

3 Habitus: the Bedouin Traditions of Black Tent in Jordan

The black Bedouin tent is the most appropriate type of dwelling for the nomadic lifestyle, from the point of view of both adaptation to the habitat and the materials it is made of. By virtue of its construction methods, it is a representative symbol of the social cooperation within the Bedouin community, and in the clear functional separation of its interior it manifests the man-woman social dualism (Feilberg 1944). Through the organisation of the camp itself, it is also an expression of tribal hierarchy. The tent, *beyt al-sha'r* (fur house), serves to protect from the sun, cold and sand and allows the private life of its inhabitants. The construction of a new tent symbolises the addition of a new family unit within the tribe, so that the tent's life is directly related to and dependent on the existence and well-being of the family unit. Every five to ten years the family is responsible for its maintenance and repair as the fabric wears out. In the absence of family members, the tent is neglected and destined to be abandoned. Its construction is a solidarity-based activity within the family: the men collect the wood for the support poles and the brackets for the ropes, while the women weave the cloth that forms the tent shell and take care of its assembly and sewing. The construction, technically simple, is based on an interdependent structural system, where none of the parts can sustain itself without the help of the others, as in a living organism, following the social structure of the Bedouin tribes. Each individual, man or woman, collaborates for the survival of the whole family and the families themselves collaborate for the survival of the tribe. The roof, *shgag*, is a rectangular fabric made of several strips sewn together, *shuggah*, between 10 and 15 m long; most roofs are made of 6 to 8 strips, which are replaced when they become worn. The roof is supported on poles, kept taut and anchored to the ground with hemp ropes, *habl*, attached to the roof with V-shaped wooden brackets, *'agafah*, which differ according to the tribe. The great weight of the fabric and the tension created by the cables is distributed only on the vertical poles (Feilberg 1944); to avoid fabric damage at those points, transversally to the fabric strips the women sew a band or *tarigah*, usually decorated to reinforce the weft and connected to the stirrups, to distribute the tension over a wider area. To further protect the fabric, a small wooden plinth, *wawiyeh*, or a stick, *gatab*, is placed between it and the central poles (Fig. 6).

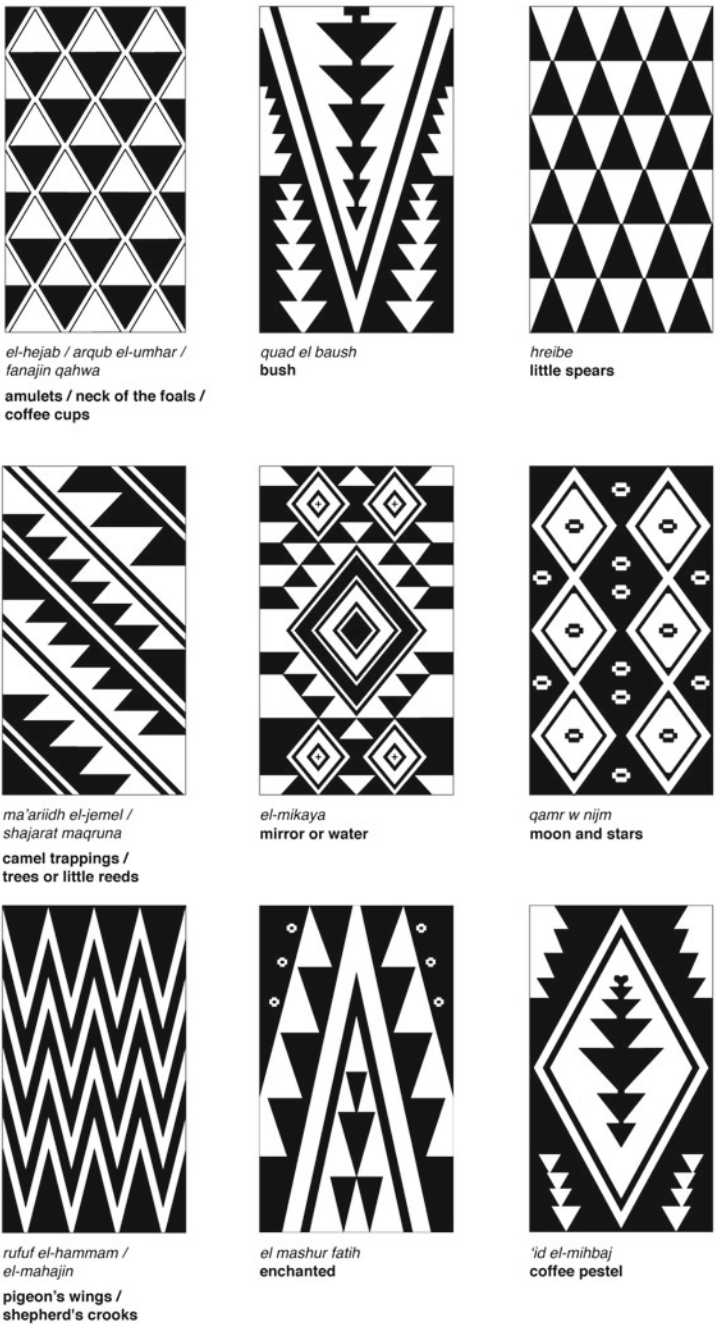

Fig. 5 Some of the patterns used by Bedouin women to weave the *sahah*

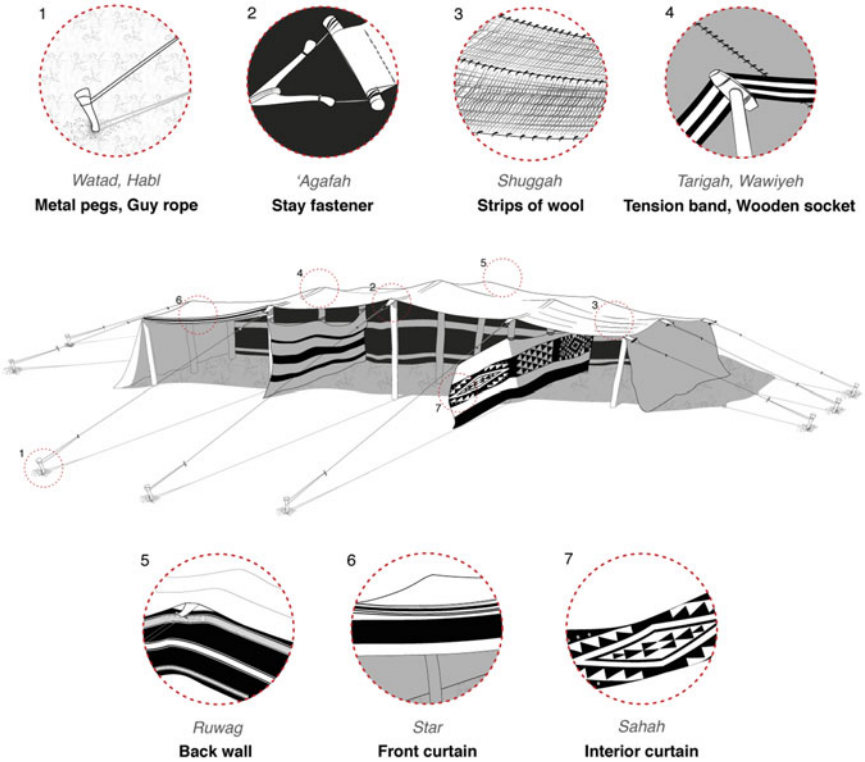

Fig. 6 Iconographic scheme of the Bedouin tent and the main knots

The symbolic meaning of the tent is made explicit through the names of its parts; the front one is the "face", *wujh al bayt*, the back is the "nape", *gafa al-bayt*; the two front side poles (B) are the "hands", *yid*, the opposite ones on the back (E) are the "legs", *rijil*, while the central pole (A) is the "centre" or "head", *wasat*; names and positions that may call to mind the Muslim act of prayer, a ritual that marks time in the desert. Tents are differentiated according to the number of *wasats*, which determine the overall tent length and consequently the family wealth and importance: in the case of a single pole, the tent is called *gatbeh*; one with two poles, *fazah* or *wasatayn*; one with three, *mtho-wlath*, and continuing up to five, *mruba* and *mkhumas* (Weir 1977) (Fig. 7). Most Jordanian tents have two or three poles and the fabric which they are made of is predominantly of black goat hair, with some parts made of a mixed type of goat and sheep yarn. The side and back walls are attached to the roof with needles and are raised and lowered according to climate and need. On the sides of the roof, in correspondence with the walls and in order to facilitate their attachment, strips of cheap fabric are added, *makhal,* which can be replaced periodically; in the same way, the side walls are finished off with bags or strips, *sfaleh*, which are buried or filled with stones to keep them anchored to the ground.

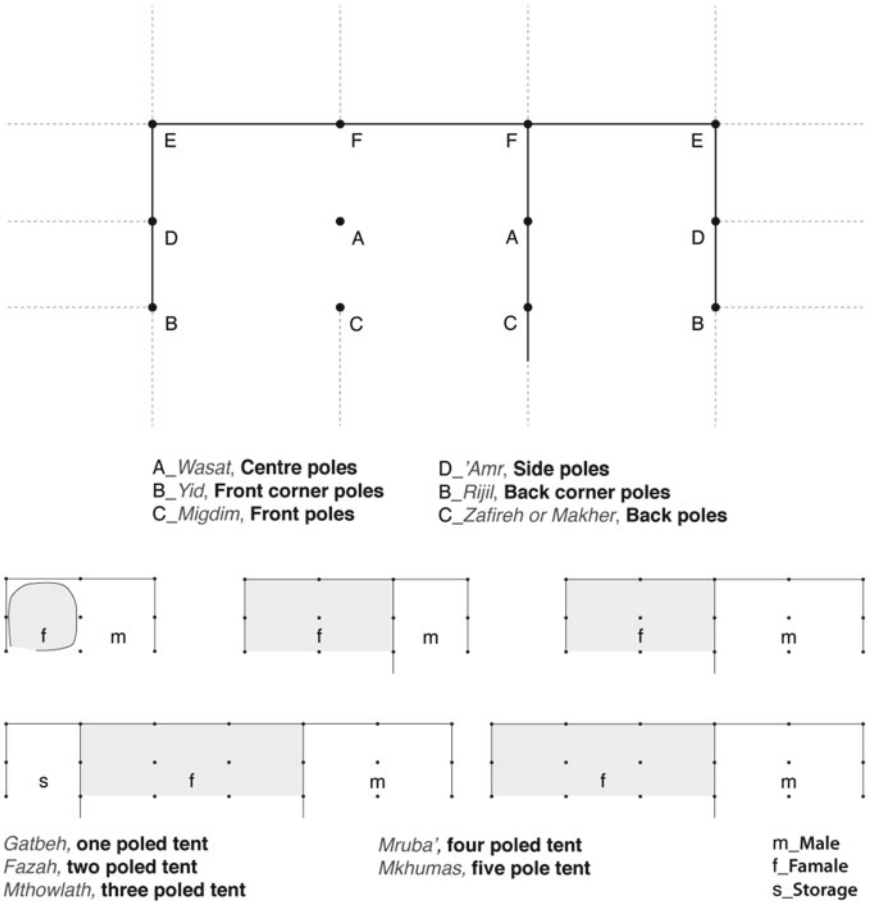

Fig. 7 Structural scheme of the tent, terminology and typological subdivision of tents based on the number of supporting poles

The Bedouin community, socially articulated in families, centres around two main spheres, public and private, which govern daily life and must stay separate in order to remain in balance. The physical characteristics of the tent reflect this dualism: inside, it is divided into two sections through the *sahah*, the size of which depends on the tent dimension in accordance with the number of *wasats* and the inhabitants needs. The curtain, stretched on a central pole, runs along the entire tent depth separating men and women physically and occupationally. Privacy is not an individual but a collective concept: the curtain protects women from unwanted interactions with men and is the common physical boundary dividing the two spaces; at the same time, the tent does not constitute a clear boundary between inside and outside, leaving a cohesive dialogue with the surrounding environment. The division reflects the social orientation towards patriarchal rules; women are protected by a code of honour,

from which the reputation of the whole family and tribe derives. However, there are different types of interaction between the two worlds depending on age and genealogical relationship: only older women, like children, are allowed to sit in the male section even in the presence of guests, while when the guests are closely related to the family, young women can also access it (Faegre 1979).

In the Jordanian area, the men's section, *al shigg*, is to the east according to the orientation of the main front of the tent towards Mecca. It is used as a living room, for storing weapons, for receiving guests; here traditions are narrated accompanied by the sound of the typical stringed musical instrument, the *rababah*. The central point of this area is the hearth, a symbol of hospitality, accompanied by various utensils for tea and coffee, real social catalysts. Around the fireplace, positioned on the tent threshold as a formal link between outside and inside, seats are distributed; the place of honour, the closest to the coffee fire and the warmest seat in the house, is reserved for the head of the family next to the guests. The hearth stones are the only tangible sign of the tribe's passage that is left when the tent is dismantled, evidence of the type of camp, its size and the level of hospitality of the family.

The female part or *al-mahram*, facing west, is the largest part of the tent and represents the private part of the house; the area is not only dedicated to the food preparation, the weaving of cloths, the care of children and their friends, but is also the sleeping area for the whole family. Many of the utensils are stored in this area, like the loom for the preparation of the alcove, pots and pans for the preparation of food, personal family items, as well as carpets and mattresses on which men and guests can lie. Visually separated from the men's part, it is also outwardly screened with a curtain, *star*, when strangers approach. The fulcrum of this area is the *natti*, positioned so that the women are protected in privacy by the curtain while working; it stretches outwards becoming a formal link between the interior and the desert (Fig. 8).

The ropes that bind the tent to the ground also extend into the territory, sometimes excessively so. Besides having a constructive and balancing function for the entire structure, they are used as an alarm and deterrent, preventing the approach of the marauders' dromedaries during raids, and have a strong symbolic meaning. The layout of the dwellings in the camp reflects the social structure of the tribe, based on patriarchal family membership and dynastic descent. In the centre of the encampment there is the tent of the eldest sheikh or chief, and all around the tents of the other members: although there is a respect area, the closer the tents and the more crossed the tension ropes, the greater the relationship between the families living in the camp (Campetti and von Löwenstern 1983). The detailed illustration of such a dwelling system makes the social rules, which are thousands of years old but also modern, be hierarchically represented in the tent continuum. Over time, in the transformation towards more open and globalised social models, these populations have developed greater integration with the villages scattered around the *wadis*, changing their habits into a more sedentary daily routine, which jeopardises the survival of their identity and the authenticity of their heritage.

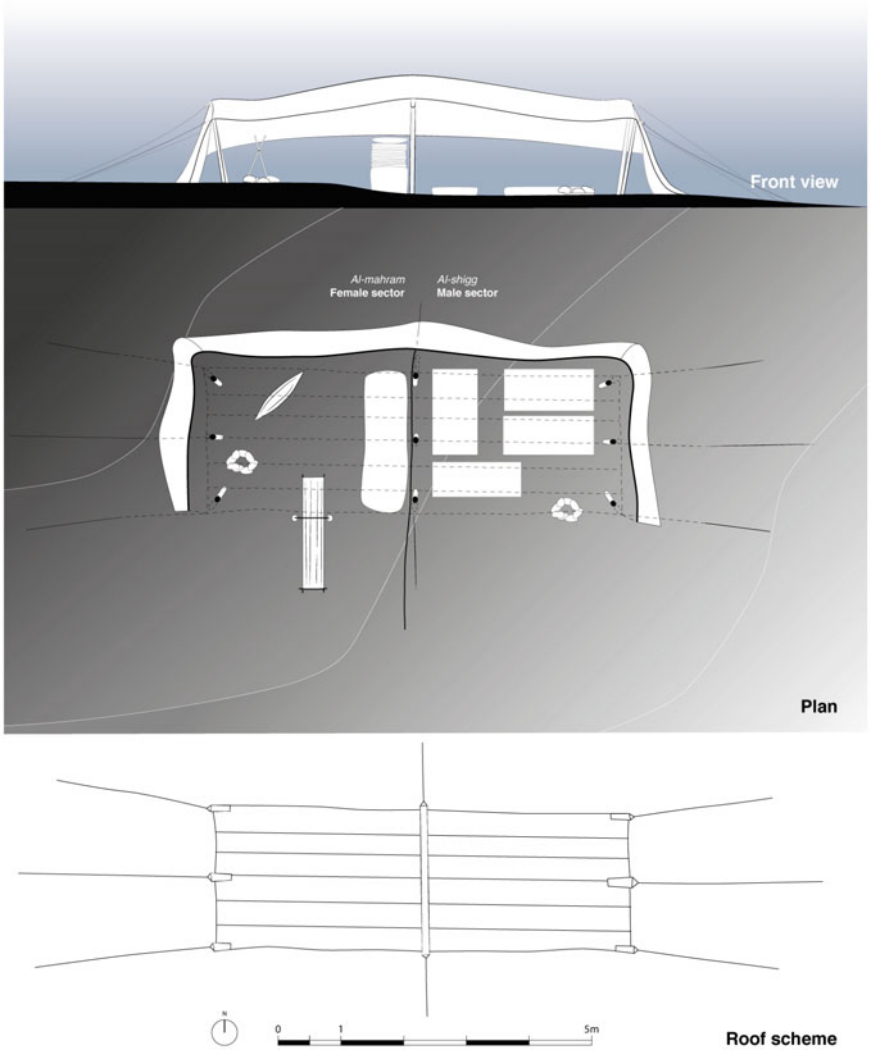

Fig. 8 Articulation of an encampment and of a tent structure

4 Conclusions

The research allowed to reread the numerous writings left by scholars on the immense Bedouin heritage. The great richness that this culture has expressed over the centuries is surprising, like the efforts to document its value since the first expeditions to Petra by Burckhardt and Alfred von Domaszewski, who drew the first map. It was not until 1929 that the first archaeological expeditions aimed at discovering the ancient city began, and in the 1950s the British School of Archaeology started excavations in

the centre of the city; in the 1960s, international attention on Petra led the Jordanian government to relocate the Bedouins outside the city in order to obtain a better profit from exploiting the site. In 1985, inclusion in the *World Heritage List* finally opened the way to a vast international audience and thus to a programme of preservation and sustainable management of the site, but also to the ensuing phenomena of erosion, damage and loss of integrity of the economic and social context, which until then had been the territory of the Bedouin *Bdul* tribe. The forced displacement of these populations towards an urban anonymity and the progressive sedentarisation of the Bedouins suggest the adoption of inclusion policies that also take into account the importance of the habitat, which is still partly unstudied. Bedouin culture cannot be understood unless it is correctly framed within the geographical, climatic and social organisation systems that identify it. Being Bedouin is reproducing cyclically the ritual of dismantling and reassembling the tent as well as the slower and more laborious ritual of its making. Here lies the beauty of this unique intangible heritage, the feminine knowledge of women. *The tent beautiful*, as Grace Mary Crowfoot called it in her extraordinary essay (Crowfoot 1945) when her studies traced the life of the Bedouins through the hands and eyes of the "honourable Arab woman" who conquers her honour by becoming a skilled weaver. Women build the bricks to make their houses, they are the ones who spin the thread, construct the looms, weave by pulling the ropes and prepare these long, heavy rolls of cloth to be packed for transport on camels. Therefore, the Bedouin woman is an architect, *home-maker* and builder, and in the Jordanian Bedouin culture she is responsible for decorating the most important part, the *saha*, the curtain that separates the section reserved for the head of the family and his guests from the larger part occupied by women, children and objects. Thus, the tent is the most important material expression of female work, whereas women fulfil their purpose and contribute to the family organisation through their skills in making and decorating, typically weaving patterns to make black and white stripes. Losing this heritage also means exasperating the gender difference, unbalancing a social model that ritually and cyclically allowed the establishment of resilient and supportive families, clans and tribes. Studying the Bedouins again and representing their heritage means retracing the history of a people and the places where they are rooted in order to recognise and pass it on, even by modern means. The purpose of this research, which is aimed at disseminating and musealizing the results, is to create new knowledge by reproducing and communicating, in contemporary graphic forms, the lesser-known aspects of Bedouin culture and its intangible heritage. The opportunity arises from an international cooperation project aimed at enhancing the collections of Folklore Museum and Popular Traditions Museum at the Roman Theatre in Amman. The aim is to establish a protocol for the documentation of intangible heritage through the creation of learning environments and the definition of a library of living traditions (Amoruso et al. 2021).

How can the primitive concept of dwelling rooted in the origins of humanity be revealed? What are the codes of nomadic peoples that characterise Jordanian identity? The research on the representation of the intangible heritage wants to connect the cultural expressions and facts that have been rooted for centuries in the Bedouin culture as an economic and social tradition of adaptation to the habitat of the Near

East. The cultural landscape of the black tent is a common asset not only for Jordan, but also for the entire Arabian Peninsula, therefore it needs adequate tools for interpretation and analysis. A complex process of cultural co-operation, recently started, aims to strengthen awareness of the local identity and traditions by connecting people to heritage, to develop skills into the heritage representation with particular attention to new languages and technologies, to improve the accessibility of common goods, to test intelligent applications for museum systems and archaeological sites to enhance heritage.

Acknowledgments This work is part of the international research and cooperation project "*Program for the definition of a strategic plan for the improvement and the enhancement of the Folklore Museum, the Museum of Popular Traditions and the site of the Roman Theater in Amman*" funded in 2020 by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation in agreement with the Department of Antiquities of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and operated by the Department of Design of the Politecnico di Milano. Giuseppe Amoruso is the scientific director of the 3-annual project and the curator of the digital museology project for both the museums; he is the author of paragraphs 1 and Conclusions, and curated the scientific reviews of all the texts and illustrations; Sara Conte wrote the paragraph 2 and 3 and also edited the illustrations.

References

Amoruso G, Conte S, Mironenko P (2021) Representation of the intangible, Bedouin culture and technologies to connect. In: Arena A, Arena M, Mediati D, Raffa P (eds) CONNETTERE un disegno per annodare e tessere/CONNECTING drawing for weaving relationship. FrancoAngeli, Milano

Campetti S, von Löwenstern EB (1983) L'altra umanità, origini storia e arte dei nomadi della tenda nera. Sansoni Editore, Firenze

Crowfoot GM (1945) The tent beautiful: a study of pattern weaving in Transjordan. Palest Explor Q 77(1):34–46

Faegre T (1979) Tents: architecture of the nomads. Anchor Books ed. Garden City, New York

Feilberg CG (1944) La Tente Noire: Contribution Ethnographique a L'histoire Culturelle Des Nomades (Vol 2). Nordisk Forlag, Kopenhagen

Ghazi Bin M (2000). Cultural treasures of Jordan. Jordan's traditional crafts. Joseph D. Raidy Printing Press, Beirut

Jabbur JS (1995) The Bedouins and the desert: aspects of nomadic life in the Arab East. State University of New York Press, Albany

Kay S (1978) The Bedouin. Crane, Russak, & Company, Inc, New York

Weir S (1977) The Bedouin: aspects of the material culture of the Bedouin of Jordan. World of Islam festival, London.

Mapping Beauty: Narrating Relational Crossroads and Interior Pictures

Valeria Locati

Abstract Through the lens of systemic psychotherapy and cybernetic epistemology, the chapter aims to analyse the key role of the concept of beauty applied to the city and the urban contexts, starting from the view that the observer-citizen has of the outside world. The city, with its crossroads and points of interest, is a metaphor for the life cycle stages of human beings as they grapple with their evolutionary tasks. Thanks to the images captured from the aesthetic sensibility of individuals and to the possibility of narrating and sharing them through art forms, specifically literature and reading, the experience of living in the city responds to a need for continuous exchange between internal and external dimension, the latter containing the former and restoring it on a collective level. If a descriptive view of the city and its beauty is immediately associated with the space dimension, the time dimension seems to help in a process of learning and relating to never visited physical places, that yet are equally capable of evoking emotionally charged representations of the self.

Keywords Relationship · City · Beauty · Images · Reading · Book therapy

1 Introduction

It is both fascinating and reassuring that what we experience emotionally, cognitively and socially can be reflected in one or more specific terms of our language. In fact, it is a common experience searching for the most appropriate word to be precise in our communication and be understood by others; but not always the opposite process, of finding in a single expression the set of experiences, emotions and thoughts through which we have passed, seems so obvious. On the other hand, observing the city, scrutinising it with an amused and intrigued gaze, following the creative images flow that refract on our retina and enjoying them for pure cultural satisfaction are all actions that find a beautiful condensation in a precise French noun, *flâneur*.

V. Locati (✉)
ASST Rhodense - Mental Health and Addictions Department, Corsico, Milan, Italy

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_9

Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin distinguished themselves for their generous use of this term and, from different perspectives and with different intentions, they recounted a certain way of wandering along the city, with rhythms far from those imposed by the flow of daily time enslaved by work, commitments and frenzy (Baudelaire 1857; Benjamin 1963).

Through this possibility of seeing the outside and the urban landscape structure as it appears in a specific moment and circumstance, the human being can let himself be led, lost and found again, to the final discovery of a connection between the observed views, the flow of thoughts inhabiting his mind, the relationships characterising his context. In search of a multidisciplinary definition of this only apparently casual process, the systems theory and Gregory Bateson's epistemological approach (Bateson 1972, 1979, 1991) offer a frame of meaning capable of containing the value of the beauty concept, human cognitive and relational structure and the intrinsic characteristics of the urban spaces in which he moves.

2 The City Between Identities, Crossroads and Relations

In the systemic-relational psychotherapeutic practice, we are sufficiently accustomed to imagining our patients not as containers of immutable identities and personality structures, but as human beings embedded in their contexts. We open the doors of our studios to people who move within their own frames of reference, live immersed in relational exchanges that are constantly being reshaped, and structure ideas and opinions on the basis of this network of meanings.

Identity, which has always been at the centre of a debate on the perfect correspondence between name and object on the one hand and the multiplicity of constituent factors on the other, inevitably takes advantage of defining itself as an inclusive, in motion process, contaminated by the outside and also by the experiences offered by the places where people live (Lai 1988).

In this sense, and in relation to the multidisciplinary nature of this contribution, the proposal is to consider the patient, and therefore the individual, as a citizen (Hillman 1999): a human being who lives immersed in politics, geography, history and culture, in the *urban events* that see him as a protagonist (Rossi 1982).

Recognising the great power of the metaphor as an instrument of change, horizons amplification, almost as a rehearsal of a scenario in which one can realise oneself, we can reread the stages in each person's life cycle like a great urban journey. The city can be a metaphor of our lives, it can offer crossroads at which we stop and must give precedence, decide to go on, assess where to go. The same is required to human beings in their managing growth, family transitions, critical normative and non-normative moments such as weddings, births, bereavements and divorces (Scabini 1995).

We draw life maps on much larger territories (Bateson 1979), we differ from others according to our perception of the points of interest on those maps, to the attention we pay to that building, that river, that street, that crossroads. We are not tourists,

but citizens, inhabitants. Hillman suggests that those who design and build cities should bear in mind that an inexperienced tourist, who is foreign to the environment, moves around looking upwards, fascinated by the heights of the city buildings, but that the true urban dweller seeks confirmation at the eye level. In fact, he believes that man needs to recognise himself in his relationship with others, to experience the city starting from his soul, represented by human beings themselves (Hillman 1999).

Trying to get out of the height dilemma, the common element in these visions is the exchange, the relationship, the correspondence aspects between the human beings' need to belong and the *raison d'être* of the cities themselves, in their ageing, renewal and redefinition.

What do the human beings ask to their geographical and territorial context? What do they expect from the identity of a city in which they live? The oscillation between novelty elements designed by experts and strenuous attempts to remain faithful to past landscapes and architecture says a lot about the life phases we are going through, and the psychic energies employed in doing so.

Looking at the city, walking along its paths, fixing an image through cognitive memorisation processes are never only habitual and functional activities aimed to a balance in one's existence, they also add a lot at a relational level. One gets in relationship with the city itself, in a circular gaze, in a system of exchanges and construction of meanings that helps to redefine the concept of identity mentioned above.

From this point of view, the pivotal concept of *mental unity* in Bateson's work cannot be disregarded. In fact, according to the epistemologist and anthropologist, there is a single structure, an immanent system of relations and interdependences, which unites the dynamics of growth and learning (Bateson 1979, 1991).

It is a question of considering worthy of study and interest not so much the organism itself, but its being inserted in its own environment. The power of this vision, beyond the clinical implications for the therapist profession, lies in the possibility of understanding the world through an education in aesthetic sensibility and the recognition of the structure connecting the individual to all other living beings (Bateson 1972).

3 Beauty and Images: Movement Between Outside and Inside

This gets us to the reflections that this approach, together with the metaphor of man in a city of relational crossroads, brings with it the possibility and the need to narrate urban beauty. This is not merely a discussion in hedonistic terms, although from a holistic point of view pleasure also has its justification for being, but a reflection on the relationship between the human being and the concept of "beauty".

The aesthetic paradigm i.e., the lens through which we observe the world, says a lot about a sensitivity to relationships and differences, to the involvement of the

cognitive, emotional, relational and biological spheres, in a perspective of "search for breadth" (Bateson 1972) and of multiplying the possibilities offered by the reality we interact with (Von Foerster 1981). Therefore, it is not the glittering palace that is beautiful, nor the sunset observed from a strategic point, nor the flowering of the extremely rare species in the naturalistic park, hypothetical symbol of the city. Instead, it will be our relationship with those spaces and places, the activation of an emotional and interactive level, the exchange, the passage from the inside to the outside and vice versa, in a circular perspective of retroactions that give meaning to human experience. Imagining people in the act of experiencing the city, benefiting from it, savouring its sounds and smells, we can reflect on how much that experience builds the very definition we all have of the city. How it responds to us, how it aligns with the events that are characterising us at that moment, what it offers us to cure our psychic balance oscillations.

In the manifold declarations of love or impatience that the inhabitants of an urban community perform on the stage of everyday life, images play a leading role. Like many photographs taken by our own lens, the subjective map of the city shows the shape of our understanding of the outside world (Bateson 1972, 1979). We have had sad evidence of this in this year of pandemic, when we have looked at cities as observers who are always the same and we have seen them change in relation to the time passing and not to our dwelling them day after day. We have made different images our own, we have transformed interior spaces into totalising places, adding to the image galleries of our relational memory, inserted into the Batesonian (1991) structure that connects, new definitions of the same perceptions immortalised with smartphones.

Alberto Maturana and Francisco Varela come to our aid in arguing that the world reveals itself to man also thanks to the images that are co-defined by his own actions, like a path that is constructed as he walks along it (Maturana and Varela 1992). What does that look at the external context say about us? How much does the "outside" dimension allow us to express the emotions we feel, and how much are they activated and exist thanks to it? Hillman believes that man is influenced by beauty, or its absence: he is affected by it, influenced by it, he sees it insinuate itself and become one with his soul and the soul of places and communities. Ultimately, beauty produces change and concretely modifies the personal and collective experience of human beings (Hillman 1999).

According to his view, to be happier citizens and live in a more efficient city, the first aspect to take care of is the beauty of the city itself, since it is through our sense of beauty that we tend to live the community, to become socially and personally active. The images that have struck our aesthetic taste will shape our needs and our possibility of feeling part of a context. They define a perimeter and, at the same time, are defined by those who observe them, originating from the aesthetic sensitivity of the processes of understanding reality.

4 Art, Reading and Relational Book Therapy

This precious way of understanding reality and feeling part of a shared context can be seen and communicated outside through narration. Once defined and recognised by the subject, images need to be shared and taken outside, due to the principle of relationship and exchange mentioned above and because through language the understanding of reality takes on an even more accurate form. The stories that we construct and that shape the world are supported by their underlying structures, according to an order originated by logical-emotional premises (Schinco 2009). Michael White shows us how fundamental is externalising certain types of story vision: in his clinical experience, he helps patients to distance themselves from the symptom, from the discomfort, giving it a new form and achieving control and mastery over the remaining resources that do not move around that difficulty (White 2007). Fiction, construction of stories, communication of invented plots is the basis of literature, of the works of talented writers and storytellers, of the production that always accompanied man in his dedication to entertainment and to nurturing increasingly higher needs in the pyramid that sees them ranked according to the logic of survival (Maslow 1943).

Like all forms of art, literature gives man access to a level of world representability that allows differences to be introduced and gives voice and space to individual experiences by relocating them in a shared human plot. Hillman's expression, through which he defines the function of emotions expressed through a therapy based on art as a means of realisation, is beautiful and emotionally astonishing. He states that "the fact that we feel emotions within ourselves and experience them in our bodies does not mean that they are 'of ours'. On the contrary, I believe that emotions are there to make us 'of theirs'" (Hillman 1999, p. 125).

A novel, a fictional story, a plot resulting from the imagination of an organising pen, tells something about the human protagonist, something about the writer and something about those who will read and benefit from that content. But it will not happen only because the emotions described will represent these mentioned individuals: it will also take place thanks to the opposite vision, the possibility of asking ourselves what those elements serve for those who live and observe them.

Let us return for a moment to the relational crossroads in the city metaphor and to man's ability to stop and look at his surroundings and be struck by the images that take shape in his mind. These images, the light in the houses in a city centre, the suburbs colours, the curtains on buildings' facades, the flowers vases on the balconies of railing houses arouse emotions, memories, moods. Hillman proposes to go further and ask what that emotion wants from the human being, how it moves and activates a change. Then, not only from the inside to the outside, but also in the opposite direction (Hillman 1999). Not trivial at all, if you think of how much, from psychoanalysis onwards, the myth of the profound, of digging, of drawing out has structured an idea of meaning contained in increasingly internal spaces.

Looking at the city and reading or listening to descriptions of landscapes and urban movements through this vision, similar to a therapeutic dance, offers a key

to understanding the human mind and spaces, once again linked to information obtained from differences (Hillman 1999; Bateson 1972). Projection, the possibility of immersing oneself and the selection of contents all speak of individual identity as much as of the connecting structure we have long talked about so far. Reading about experienced places and mapped territories by someone who is not us allows us to activate resonances and enchantments, to desire while imagining, or to get an idea of the effect it would have on us while paying attention to what is outside. We find examples of this transformative and enriching power possessed by narratives in numerous landmark novels, in the literature from every corner of the world.

When in *Les Miserables* Victor Hugo (1862) describes the immense protagonist Jean Valjean as he traverses Paris underworld, on the one hand struggling with the urge to give up everything and on the other with the obstinacy to survive, to save himself and the wounded man he is carrying on his shoulders, he brings the reader right down to the character level. He takes him into a thicket of darkness, suffocating smells, orienting noises and emotions that draw him closer but repel him at the same time. The reader knows nothing about the Paris sewers, yet he sees them, experiences them, relates to them through this images process.

In a more contemporary era, even Donna Tartt, in her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Goldfinch*, relies on her protagonist Theo's emotions to tell the readers a different Las Vegas than that of the stereotypes to which they are accustomed. Through images, sounds, contrasts, descriptions of absolutely uncommon details, the author proposes a map of the American city that would make no sense except in that particular story, with those specific characters. The desert, the aridity, the burning streets and the absence of human movement counterbalance the energy of the casinos and tell of a degradation that gives shape to the protagonist's story, but is also a possible consequence, in a circular exchange (Tartt 2013).

The social distances imposed by the global health emergency we are experiencing have shown us a new way of interpreting the city and the gradual return to the old habits of closeness we are witnessing says a lot about the need and at the same time the fear to regain possession of the places and beauties that we know and always wanted to know.

During one of the meetings of the Relational Book Therapy groups that I co-conduct online,[1] an interesting point of view emerged which is in line with what has been held up to now. Starting from a graphic novel (Bevilacqua 2016) in which the protagonist moves around an American city in search of a safe place for his emotional wounds, of which he discovers to be an integral part, the process of systemic hypothesis (Boscolo et al. 1980) within the therapy group has shifted the attention from nostalgia of known places to that towards *not yet* lived contexts, cities, spaces. This idea of lack and sadness generated by cities, contexts, destinations never visited before, yet described and present in a collective knowledge, a sort of experience to

[1] Relational Book Therapy, out of an idea with my colleague Dr Marco Vassallo, is a form of individual or group psychotherapy in which the reading and sharing of a fiction work between patient and therapist, and between patients themselves when they are more than one, is at the service of change and treatment objectives in the clinical process.

which we all have access although we do not experiment it in the first person, lays the foundations for a multidisciplinary reflection on the concept of images, stories, identity, recovery of soul and body spaces.

Not physically dwelling a space does not make its knowledge less possible, and knowing it gives that place a tangible possibility to exchange with the life intersections. Once again, that dance between inside and outside and that feeling of being part of the system of shared meanings seem to have an important weight when mapping the places of human existence.

5 Conclusion

Having reached this point, in this description of the power of connecting with the human community operated by the individuals gaze on a city, a further aspect of the question seems important. As suggested by Peter Szondi in his afterword to Benjamin's work on urban images collected by the gaze of those who let themselves be amazed like real *flâneurs*, the narration of a city is much more like a journey through time than through space (Benjamin 1963). We move to know, to learn, to build experience, but we can also do it thanks to a connection with what Boscolo and Bertrando define as the self-reflective time ring. Past, present and future mutually influence each other, "the ring becomes more complex if we consider the eventuality i.e., the future, which receives meaning from past and present, and in turn influences them: expectations, projects, strategies help to give meaning to present actions, which in turn influence the processing of memory (the past)" (Boscolo and Bertrando 1993, p. 106).

The city and its images built through a relationship acquire shape thanks to a journey on the temporal dimension. Expectations, heard and read narrations, collected images lead the individual to a level of knowledge that is in the future, but that in fact remains in a present in which that journey has not yet taken place, and makes the very moment in which the knowledge itself is formed become past. From lived places to those not yet experienced, towards which one envisages feeling a certain kind of emotion, learning rests on collective bases, like a mirror from which an image is expected, whereas a similar yet different one is received, both on the temporal and the aesthetic axis.

References

Bateson G (1972) Steps to an ecology of mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology. University Of Chicago Press, Chicago

Bateson G (1979) Mind and nature: a necessary unity. E. P. Dutton, New York.

Bateson G (1991) A sacred unity: further steps to an ecology of mind. Harper Collins Publishers, New York

Baudelaire C (1857) Le fleurs du mal. Auguste Poulet-Malassis, Paris

Benjamin W (1963) Städtebilder. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main
Bevilacqua KG (2016) Il suono del mondo a memoria. Bao Publishing, Milano
Boscolo L, Bertrando P (1993) I tempi del tempo: Una nuova prospettiva per la consulenza e la terapia sistematica. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
Boscolo L, Cecchin G, Prata G, Selvini Palazzoli M (1980) Hypothesizing, circularity, neutrality: three guidelines for the conductor of the session. Fam Process 19(1):3–12
Hillman J (1999) Politica della bellezza. Moretti&Vitali, Bergamo.
Hugo V (1862) Les Misérables. Lacroix, Bruxelles.
Lai G (1988) Disidentità. Feltrinelli, Milano
Maslow AH (1943) A theory of human motivation. Psychol Rev 50:370–396
Maturana A, Varela F (1992) The tree of knowledge: the biological roots of human understanding. Shambala Publications, Boston and London.
Rossi A (1982) The architecture of the city. The MIT Press, Cambridge
Scabini E (1995) Psicologia sociale della famiglia. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino
Schinco M (2009) "Ma tu amore mio…" Ricordando Bateson e cercando nuove metafore per la psicoterapia. In: La natura sistemica dell'uomo. Attualità del pensiero di Gregory Bateson. Raffaello Cortina, Milano.
Tartt D (2013) The Goldfinch. Little, Brown and Company, New York.
Von Foerster H (1981) Observing systems. Intersystems Publications, Seaside
White M (2007) Maps of narrative practice. W. W. Norton, New York

Semantic and Architectural Sound Space. Musical Creativity and Performance

Alfonso Chielli

Abstract Sounds permeate and characterise the space; they outline and decline both our permanence in the environment and, as a consequence, also the very meaning we give to that experience, apparently implicitly and only partially consciously, which is the basis of the relationship that we live in a specific situation. Enjoying and "making" music allow the extrinsic expression of what each one is, give voice to that sphere of the Self, often unconscious or subconscious, which only partially and incompletely can find expression in spoken language. In this difficult period in which people, because of the regulations to fight the Covid-19 pandemic spread, have been denied the closeness of friends and loved ones, have been restricted the freedom of expression and movement, limited, if not deprived of work activity, music can allow a new capacity to listen to ourselves and to others. It can recompose a worn and lost Self, giving space for creative expression and a renewed awareness, thanks to which the joy of being and not of having, the inclusion and sharing capacity instead of egoic and narcissistic solipsism can be achieved.

Keywords Soundscape · Music · Relationships · Self-expression · Covid-19

1 Introduction

A world wrapped by silence is difficult to imagine. The absence of sound leads to a sense of unease that can be distressing, putting us in a state of alarm, reminding and assuming the disturbing lack of any form of life. Even a short stay in an anechoic chamber is accompanied by the presence of "panic, disorientation, dizziness and nausea" (Foy 2010) and the absolute record for staying in what is considered the quietest place in the world, the Orfield Laboratories in Minneapolis, is only 45 min. "Wherever is life, there is sound, and the world should be compared to a great musical composition, of which we are both actors and users. The sound is an aspect of the world presentation to our consciousness, a spy that reveals its intimate articulations.

A. Chielli (✉)
Conservatorio "G. Verdi", Milan, Italy
e-mail: alfonso.chielli@consmilano.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_10

Therefore, the sound experience is the experience of an environment, of the movements that permeate it and of the emotions that link the sounds to the morphology of places in which we experience them" (Serra 2002). "For twenty-five centuries Western culture has been trying to look at the world. It has not understood that the world is not looked at, it is heard. It is not read, it is listened" (Attali 1977). "Changing perception priorities (by preferring audial perception to visual) can lead to new perspectives to understand, analyse and design for an urban area and form new ways of thinking and making new connections for its architecture" (Bilen and Kandemir 2018). It is also important to recall how there is "a relationship between soundscape and lightscape, which can influence the human perception of space and sound" (Molinero 2018). "The perceived dominance of sound sources had a significant effect on relaxation, communication, spatiality and dynamics" (Zang et al. 2018). "Are we aware of how an urban space sounds as we are aware of how it looks like?" (Calleri et al. 2015). Sounds permeate and characterise the space; they outline and decline our permanence in the environment and, as a consequence, also the very meaning we give to that experience, apparently implicitly and only partially consciously; and that is the basis of the relationship that we live in a specific situation, often making the expression of subconscious or unconscious emotional content possible. Music can give voice to a pain that otherwise would not have been able to emerge, allowing the soul to smile; insistent and percussive, often played at very high volume, it can lead to release a compressed energy, which has slowly accumulated during moments and days lived with no freedom and creativity, as often happens in the hectic daily and working life; otherwise, in its calm flux and quietness, it brings our tired soul to a state of peace and serenity. Being immersed in newly snow-covered nature is a familiar experience where, in a special and characteristic way, muffled and distant sounds come to define a magical and enchanted dimension. In its purity, without being aware of it, it seems to take us back to that prenatal dimension which characterised intrauterine life or to the most precious moments of our childhood, so well described and represented in the fairy tales of every age and region. There, despite omnipresent anxieties and fears that disturb pure souls, everything tends towards the good and its realisation, providing that light which can illuminate the darkest moments of our lives, allowing us to strive for the sublime and the absolute, always been expressed by nature that, at the same time, has represented the way to grasp it. In contrast, the urban reality in which we are immersed, and which will increasingly be chosen as a residence by the entire population, is characterised by a different kaleidoscope of sound events, typical of our industrial production, our civilisation and the anthropological and social choices that have been made over the centuries. "The soundscape of the world" is "a huge musical composition unfolding around us ceaselessly. We are simultaneously its audience, its performers, its composers" (Schafer 1999). "Moving beyond cause–effect relationships between decibel levels and resulting noise annoyance, new scientific evidence might be provided on the health, mental-health, and well-being effects of noise exposure and soundscape perceptual indicators. Such knowledge would provide new sound quality metrics and levels for building protocols, design guidelines, and

standards that are a function of the space use, the availability of control, and exposure time. Below such thresholds, soundscape methodologies should be applied for improving the conditions of people inhabiting the built environment, in terms of emotion, cognitive performance, and health outcomes" (Torresin et al. 2020). "An innovative and integrated soundscape plan vision should […] be taken into consideration to ensure a truly sustainable urban design agenda" (Gawad and Omira 2020). "Soundscape research […] involves not only physical measures but also the cooperation of human and social sciences to account for the diversity of soundscapes across countries and cultures, and it considers environmental sounds as a 'resource' rather than a 'waste'" (Kang et al. 2016).

2 Embodied Music, Memory and Reuse

Just as any facial nuance and body attitude condition the quality of a relationship, beyond what is said, the presence of sounds that characterize the space in which we live can define a different quality of being and living. "Man, soundscape and music are parts of a system in which every modification of one element involves the modification of the others, in a continuous and incessant game of interactions and references" (Disoteo 2003). Experience is not determined by a sort of elusive and inscrutable objective reality, but by the relationship that each of us comes to have with whom or what surrounds us. Therefore, it is precisely this relationship that must be investigated in its being an expression of the truest nature of the human being or of its frustrations and dissatisfactions. In this context, music has the value of representing and expressing what we are, without possible misunderstandings or projections, allowing any affective and psychic process, whether conscious or unconscious, that may be present within us to be externalized. And precisely in this manifestation, each event is permeated and characterised by memory. In music, nothing can exist except through a continuous becoming in which each sound determines a mnestic trace that gradually gives new meaning to the musical phrase, whose value is affectively different from any other experiential content. Though it may seem incredible, in Alzheimer's patients, who are now unable to recognise their closest people, only the musical memory that has accompanied and characterised their life is safeguarded, thus allowing the expression of their own emotional and psychic state, even at a time when it is difficult to recognise their individuality and presence. The testimony given by Sacks (2007) is very emotional in remembering Artur Balsam, "who became so amnesic from Alzheimer's disease that he lost all memory of the major events of his life and was confused about the identity of friends he had known for decades. At his final concert at Carnegie Hall, it was not clear that he even knew he was there to perform, and there was another pianist backstage prepared to take his place. But he performed magnificent, as always, and received tremendous reviews". Equally incredible and moving is the memory he gives of the baritone Woody: "He has no idea what he did for a living, where he is living now, or what he did ten minutes ago. Almost every memory is gone. Except for the music. In fact, he opened for the

Radio City Music Hall Rockettes in Detroit this past November (…) The evening he performed, he had no idea how to tie a tie…he got lost on the way to the stage – but the performance? Perfect (…) He performed beautifully and remembered all the part and words". Any song, melody or musical performance acquires meaning by relating to what has just been said musically, but unlike what happens in spoken or written language, in the repetition there is no loss or flattening of the communication quality; one's own affective and psychic state is entirely conveyed in the sounds which, precisely through repetition and variation, so frequent in music, can become even more expressive and full of meaning. We have always tried to set the body against the mind, electing the latter as the conscious centre capable of putting a brake on what our feelings would mistakenly direct us towards; as if our truest reality could inevitably tend towards selfish and obtuse expression, not only forgetting, but even more despising, as an illusion, the deep and authentic feeling that only allows artistic expression. And so, in order to draw on a life characterised by deep and passionate feeling rather than by un-affective thinking, not only young adolescents often desperately seek "another" way in the use of drugs, but also adults, consumed by an inauthentic routine, seek the support of psychiatric drugs which, by giving integrity and harmony to a deconstructed and tired Ego, can allow the enjoyment of life in a novel and renewed beauty. In a society that has made unrestrained consumption the only guarantee of economic growth, pushing people to chase always new targets and concentrating the meaning of being in incessant purchases and ostentatious achievements, music, in its own definition, necessarily acquires meaning thanks to one's affective memory and its revisitation, in a continuous and progressive re-elaboration. Any musical idea, however splendid, acquires strength thanks to memory and to the continuous reuse of what it receives. Indeed, what appears to be new, not allowing the recognition of something that is already of ours and deeply loved, is often tackled with difficulty, unless its intrinsic expressive force is able to reach directly to the heart, the deepest Self. Not only what is new and allows us to move forward can give us the possibility of living fully. Continuous fleeing is at the root of our inability to enjoy the beauty of every single moment, and of that sense of frequent dissatisfaction and incompleteness that often fills our lives. Only by returning to the present moment, to the feeling and action that we are now living or acting, will we be able to give new and authentic awareness to life and allow joy to be realised.

3 Music and Social Conditioning

It must be pointed out how music can not only be a vehicle and expression of one's deepest and truest feelings, but also become a tool through which feelings and, therefore, thought and action, can be manipulated. An example of this is its use to increase commercial exchanges. It has been shown that in shops, supermarkets or shopping centres "the tempo of instrumental background music can significantly influence both the pace of instore traffic flow and the daily gross sales volume purchased by customer" (Milliman 1982). Instead of being authentic, and therefore having the

courage to say no and at the same time having the strength and freedom to say yes, it is much easier to relegate pleasure and satisfaction to the confirmation given by a group and by someone else, as a validator of our own existence, without being able to realise that often the other is the economic system that needs to control and manipulate the individuals. Anyway, even if we could free ourselves from any conditioning, what is repeatedly offered by the media, be it forms, thoughts or music, shapes our own perception and thought capacity; thus, we derive pleasure and satisfaction in re-knowing and revisiting those traits that, rather than being offered, have been imposed on us. And unfortunately, the Academy or the Conservatory of Music, wanting and affirming a different "seriousness" and "truth", often reiterates the same principles, disguised and offered as authentic, failing to acknowledge how these are only significant of a more refined and profound thought. Authenticity, which is reluctant to be conditioned in any way, is a different matter; it is the expression of an inner need that cannot accept any compromise. Thus in the academic sphere, it can happen that instead of allowing a capacity for inner listening, taste is moulded in order to transmit the true "aesthetic criteria" through which the beautiful can be recognised and distinguished from the ugly; this prevents from recognising that a conditioning, therefore an abuse, has been exercised, which is even more serious because it has been carried out in the name of truth and as a guarantee of beauty and authenticity.

4 Music and Neurosciences

"Contrary to the old, simplistic notion that art and music are processed in the right hemisphere of our brain, with language and mathematics in the left, recent findings […] are showing us that music is distributed throughout the brain. […] Music listening, performance, and composition engage nearly every area of the brain that we have so far identified, and involve nearly every neural subsystem" (Levitin 2006). "Evidence from behavioral, neuroimaging and lesion studies suggests that different elements within a musical sequence may be processed in a parallel, hierarchical manner in different brain regions" (Schiavetto et al. 1999). Generally speaking, as regards both music perception and production, rhythm, temporal and sequential components of music are believed to be elaborated mainly in the left hemisphere, while the analysis of sounds characteristics (pitch, timbre) and the discrimination of melody, based on the tonal contour and the evaluation of prosody, would mainly involve the right hemisphere (Poli and Spada 2007). According to some scholar, the right hemisphere is more specialised in understanding music in a holistic sense, the left in an analytical sense (Barrocal 2008). In addition, there are "significant similarities in the interpretation of emotional meaning […] in music from different cultures" (Poli and Spada 2007) and Imberty (1986, 2005) suggests that the existence of musical universals can be recognised. According to Boulez (2016) "the work is simultaneously individual and universal" and common rules "are expressed in different ways, through somewhat different dialects". We are said to have innate hereditary aspects on which the experience we gradually acquire within the environment that

welcomes us from intrauterine life is attached. Pre-natal aspects characterise some keys to interpretation related to maternal-foetal interaction, which becomes experience and at the same time the capacity for recognition and understanding. According to Anzieu (1976) "the original Self emerges from an acoustic bath, made up of sounds and stimuli coming from inside the body and from the external environment" and according to Di Benedetto (2001) "the original acoustic experiences are to be considered formative of the first nuclei of the Self and of the first internal object representations". "The fetus responded first to the 500 Hz tone, where the first response was observed at 19 weeks of gestational age. The range of frequencies responded to expanded first downwards to lower frequencies, 100 Hz and 250 Hz, and then upwards to higher frequencies, 1000 Hz and 3000 Hz. At 27 weeks of gestational age, 96% of fetuses responded to the 250 Hz and 500 Hz tones […] Responsiveness to 1000 Hz and 3000 Hz tones was observed in all fetuses at 33 and 35 weeks of gestational age, respectively. […] The sensitivity of the fetus to low frequency sounds means that the fetus will be exposed to sounds of speech and language" (Hepper and Shahidullah 1994). "Near-term fetuses are able to make simple discriminations (e.g. tempo […], loudness and speech […]) and have some rudimentary memory of music […] and short speech sequences" (Kisilewsky et al. 2004). "Prenatal music exposure has an effect on the neural responsiveness to sounds several months later, supporting a sustained effect of fetal memory through early infancy" (Chorna et al. 2019) and "significantly and favourably influences neonatal behaviour" (Arya et al. 2012). Songs sung by the mother are recognised after birth, allowing a longer feeding time (Schön et al. 2007) and "the gypsies still follow an ancient practice: they ask the best musician to play during the last six weeks of pregnancy and for another six weeks after the baby is born, in the belief that this immersion in music will stimulate the child's desire to play the instrument continuously listened to for 12 weeks and he or she may become a good performer" (Semplici 2008). The meaning of a piece of music for us and our own ability and quality of listening can be traced back to those early prenatal experiences on which later experiences are based. According to Romano (1998) "the meaning of music is therefore in its presumed 'cause' (the experience of symbiotic union with the mother) and, reductively, music is nothing but that same experience in various disguises". How and why privileged vertical and horizontal paths have been gradually defined is more difficult to explain. The facial conformation of different races has favoured and often determined the preferential emission of specific sounds. Analogies between the language and music of a given area have been repeatedly highlighted. "Many results have demonstrated that musical expertise not only impacts on music processing but also on several aspects of speech processing including lexical pitch, sentence intonation and the metric structure of words. Conversely, recent results indicated that linguistic expertise with tone or quantity languages such as Mandarin Chinese, Thai, Finnish and Japanese, influences the processing of harmonic tones and musical intervals" (Besson et al. 2011). These harmonic and formal structures, which are the result of study in various academic fields, represent the different and possible nuances given by each people, at a specific moment of their existence, to each instant of living. As it is possible, with reference

to the imaginary, to define and trace specific archetypes, it would be just as interesting to investigate which melodic figures or sound aggregates might correspond to each of them. Actually, this is what each performer unconsciously does when he or she gives a specific meaning to each musical fragment. Whether isolated or within a chord, with the passage of time each note gives rise to lines that necessarily come into dialogue with the underlying and overlying ones, to give specific architectural spaces in continuous evolution. As in the intellectual process different paths can be followed, so the sensations given by individual sounds and their complex and magnificent architectural structures will be codified, giving rise to perceptions, often distant from one another, though significant and meaningful. Nevertheless, in each composition or performance, as long as it is authentic, man in all his aspects will be recognised. It follows that "the final interpretation attributed by the listener will depend on the weight he assigns to the various strategies, and on the fact that their effects reinforce or contradict each other" (Sloboda 1998) and not on the presence of a possible single, univocal and correct vision, as sometimes one would like to impose. "Formal structure should be viewed as a dynamic quality of the perceived music, not as a static property of the music score. Formal analysis of single performances and scores should not be regarded as meaningful analysis of a musical work, but merely as possibilities for experience" (Kvifte 2001). Therefore, in the perception of any piece of music there is a decontextualization of thought, leaving space for the free associative flow. "The musical sound has direct access to the soul" (Kandinskij 1979). According to Langer (1953) "the music is a tonal analogue of emotive life" and in any piece, sounds realise what gives rise to the dream world in images and visions. "Music represents a 'path' that leads to self-knowledge through self-denial" (Galgigna 2002). Thanks to the ability to be available and open, to welcome a grace that is actually already present, a spontaneous unravelling of musical lines takes place within us, the expression of a feeling deprived of any object, which allows us to free an almost always overworked mind and the manifestation of being.

5 Music Listening and Production

The recent pandemic, which has affected every geographical area and brought people back to a naturally indefinite and uncertain reality, has forced them to consider death as an unavoidable presence and possibility. Under the banner of safeguarding human life, the state has returned to extraordinary measures that are typical of humanity's darkest moments. But the distortion of inalienable needs of human beings, of their being social, free and part of a nature that welcomes and restores them, instead of giving space for reflection that could allow to distinguish what is imposed by a society based on consumption from what instead nourishes and allows a happy and conscious existence, has led to loneliness, anger and despair. It has been shown that "during epidemics, the number of people whose mental health is affected tends to be greater than the number of people affected by the infection" and that, in similar events in the past, "the mental health implications can last longer and have greater prevalence than

the epidemic itself" (Ornell et al. 2020). An Italian study (Rossi et al. 2020) highlighted how the first four weeks of lockdown in 2020 already led to the emergence of PTSS (Post-Traumatic Stress Symptoms), depression, anxiety and ADS (Adjustment Disorder Symptom) in 37, 17.3, 20.8 and 22.9% of the population respectively. In a new dimension in which, according to the anti-Covid rules, sharing of free and creative artistic expression is no longer possible, music conveyed by headphones or loudspeakers has become a source of resistance, nourishment and, together with reading, which is increasingly forgotten, the main protection to oppose an alienation that, in its madness, forces people to communicate only through telematics. Music "may help us manage negative moods and stress. At the same time, listening to music makes us feel connected to others, and may help to create a sense of be-longing. Thus, on both levels, music may aid in coping with difficulties arising from the situation created by the pandemic" (Ziv and Hollander-Shabtai 2021). And precisely the new dimension, which has distanced the oppressed and frightened people from each other, wiping out their smiles with the use of masks, thanks to a new capacity of comprehension and acceptance of an unscathed and unbent soul, can allow a reconsideration of what mistakenly appeared old-fashioned and obvious, as if it were a worn-out garment no longer capable of warmth and beauty. Having become capable of being untouched by an anger that unfortunately could only grieve our closest and intimate affects, we can return to understanding the enchantment of life. Nourished by that sense of brotherhood which binds us together, that chorality can return which, throughout history, has always accompanied the super-individual feeling and its tension towards those values to which man has always aspired; a nourishment of the soul and of the Self, in the presence and sharing of an emotional and spiritual dimension, whether individual or of all humanity; today, because of the pandemic, it has been denied and not granted, except in the alienated expression of a voice imprisoned by the mask. Perhaps never before, has mankind been forced to deny itself and the very condition of community, making any contact unnatural and intolerable, in a context where the only constant presence is the continuous hammering and oppressive repetition of the news about the infected and dead number. Music has always given voice to our deepest Self, which in song asks to be united with that of others to give the magic of harmony. I want to recall that "the musical or artistic powers that may be released in frontotemporal dementia or other forms of brain damage do not come out of the blue; they are, one must presume, potentials or propensities that are already present but inhibited - and undeveloped. Once released by damage to these inhibitory factors, musical or artistic powers can potentially be developed, nurtured, and exploited to produce a work of real artistic value - at least as long as frontal lobe function, with its executive and planning powers, is intact" (Sacks 2007). Sound and music, invisible and intangible "events", are "able to represent our states of mind through resonance, to connect us with them, to unite, inform and give shape to thoughts. Sound becomes symbolic presence and metaphor" (Grugno 2013). In coming back to ourselves, in redefining the role of thought, a way can be found that once again is able to lead us to smile and joy, in the recognition of how much individual existence, as well as its feeling, appear fragmentary and incomplete if real communication and sharing are not allowed. The aphasic patient, unable to communicate verbally, "can *sing* -

sing not only tunes, but the words of operas, hymns or songs" and in the Alzheimer's patient music "seeks to address the emotions, cognitive powers, thoughts, and memories, the surviving 'self' of the patient, to stimulate these and bring them to the fore. It aims to enrich and enlarge existence, to give freedom, stability, organization, and focus" (Sacks 2007). Authenticity in music is capable of filling a life blighted by banality, ravaged by suffering, allowing us to be once again capable of a free and true existence.

6 Music and Audience

Today, in the light of what we can observe, the public is moved away from concert halls, the world of culture, the reading of the classics, in favour of a new reality, where on the one hand a search for ever-changing emotions is evident, on the other hand the mind is open to what is unknown, abandoning everything that appears old-fashioned, boring and predictable. And so, unfortunately, in its desire to impose, rather than seek out, defined and determined aesthetic criteria, academic teaching happens to distance the public from concert halls, from the enjoyment of music written in other historical moments, relegating its listening to those who, as "music lovers", can be as passionate about it as a collector of coins or comics. On the other hand, the public does not realize that what appears to be new and interesting, in reality, is often a product with a very strong demagogic content, magnificently constructed and proposed. And beyond those who inexorably proceed in this way, secure in their knowledge and truth, more and more angry voices—and this has been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic—are being raised, no longer willing to engage in dialogue, but only in critic or violence. Actually, everything can and must also be seen from other perspectives. Never before, the academic environment has reached such a high level of depth and study. Nothing is left to chance or improvised talent, and never before has such a high level of instrumental technique been achieved. And as far as the world of so-called light music is concerned, never has so much been invested, involving almost every possible technical-artistic resource, in order to offer exactly what the public wants. As is always the case, within any reality there is a shadow aspect that can deny it, but necessarily also a light without which the shadow would have no way of existing and manifesting itself.

7 Conclusion

"Music continues to give a stubborn testimony" of the aspiration to an impossible transcendence, "sometimes receiving as a reward the possibility of fleetingly contemplating by hints what is hidden behind the veil" (Romano 1998). The search for a beauty that only wants to be original leads to solipsism, the expression of an increasingly exasperated individualism, while the obsessive need for recognition by others

and their applause conditions musical production, the creative act losing that necessity which alone guarantees authentic and original expression. It is only by listening to oneself that one can begin a process of awareness and self recognition, which in turn allows to open up to others in a relationship of respect and freedom in the joy of sharing. Following these premises, the denial of any freedom, imposed by the pandemic in many geographical and political realities, can be understood as a structured denial of life itself, actually wanting to preserve it. This has led to freezing all spaces, which have been denied the becoming and transformation provided by the possibility of encounter and relationship. Each individual has found himself trapped and imprisoned in the environment that was welcoming him, and he has been denied any freedom of expression and communication, except within that limited and constrained dimension. Fear has consumed all energy and anger has consumed the capacity for abandonment and ecstasy. In fear there is only the desire to flee, in anger only the desire to destroy. Instead of becoming aware of how much this frenetic and solipsistic life has distanced us from ourselves, in the light of what today, with vaccination, is once again allowed, only an amplified desire for an even more obsessive and egoic frenzy seems to have found new space. Whereas only a return to the "fleeting moment", to the "here and now" can allow the wonder and astonishment in looking at nature, the gratitude in being able to rejoice in life and in the new possibility of communication and sharing after so much suffering. Barale suggests that music "can have a function of recomposition" by reuniting "separated parts, helping those who enjoy it to integrate the multiplicity of emotional elements that make up a person and that painful traumatic experiences may have separated" (De Mari et al. 2015). In making music, including its production and enjoyment, we give freedom to the emergence of any psychic content, giving voice to the unexplored, the neglected, the nocturnal world. Music can thus allow us to rediscover ourselves and our bodies, sometimes ignored and abjured, sometimes made a vain expression of our only possibility of mutual recognition. We are our body, not the appreciation that the other acts in perceiving us, which would actually deny the existence of our own body; if it comes to exist only as an object of appreciation and desire, it would lose its characteristic ability to express itself. The body is an expression of life in its manifestation through action. In the free expression of our body, which today is increasingly sought after, in the joy of being able to give voice and expression to our truest and deepest being, we find our nature. "The mind is embodied, in the full sense of the term, not just embrained' (Damasio 1994). The body cannot dissociate itself from feeling, and when it distances itself from it, the field of psychiatric pathology opens up, of that schizoid being at the centre of so much study and literature. Music itself also seems to have arisen from the first percussive acts that led man to relate to his own body and to the objects around him. The body as an expression of the self and, at the same time, as a sounding board for this self. The body that in this act becomes alive and that, thanks to this act, can enter into a sacred relationship with the environment, which it fears and loves at the same time. And only thanks to a new awareness that radiates from our being, first and foremost a body, music will be allowed to be. Music enters into us, to the point of becoming itself soul, affection and thought, allowing feeling and communication. In music, "the confrontation between

ethics and aesthetics becomes fundamental" and the "expressive sincerity of a performance can only be achieved if everything superfluous, inappropriate, self-gratifying or manipulative is expelled" and requires, in a Spinozian sense, "an understanding of the essence of things" (Baremboim 2012). At the same time, "instrumental practice is above all an inner journey" (Hoppenot 2012); music allows "to expand one's own state of consciousness or to generate new ones by activating what is present in the potential state in man" (Cordoba de Parodi 1998). "The profound meaning of music and its essential aim […] is to promote a communion, a union of man with his fellow man and with the Supreme Being" (Stravinsky 1947). As Adorno (Dahlhaus 1978) put it, "music represents the human attempt to name God". "Suspended like the soul, between two worlds, music is inextricably linked to the fate of the soul. Therefore, man can lose his music if he loses his soul; but he will never lose his soul if he keeps his music" (Fornari 1984). And all this becomes an unavoidable premise in redefining the environment in which we are immersed, thus allowing and guaranteeing awareness, a new, happy and authentic dimension of existence within those increasingly boundless urban aggregates; so, despite their being an expression of contradictions, conflict and violence, they can present themselves as a possible new expression of civilisation and sociality.

References

Anzieu D (1976) L'enveloppe sonore du soi. Nouvelle revue de psychoanalyse, p. 161–180

Arya R, Chansoria M, Konanki R, Tiwari DK (2012) Maternal music exposure during pregnancy influences neonatal behaviour: an open-label randomized controlled trial. Hindawi Publ Corp Int J Pediatr 2012

Attali J (1977) Bruits. Presses Universitaires de France, Essai sur l'économie politique de la musique

Barenboim D (2012) La musica è un tutto. Etica ed estetica. Feltrinelli Editore, Milan

Barrocal JAJ (2008) Música y neurosciencia: la musicoterapia. Sus fondamentos, efectos, y aplicaciones terapéuticas. UOC (Universitat oberta de Catalunya)

Besson M, Chobert J, Céline M (2011) Language and music in the musician brain. Language and Linguistics Compass 5(9):617–634

Bilen AO, Kandemir O (2018) An attempt to design for an urban area through its soundscape. EAA—HELINA

Boulez P, Changeux JP, Manoury P (2016) I neuroni magici. Musica e cervello. Carocci Editore, Rome

Calleri C, Rossi L, Astolfi A, Armando A, Shtrepi C, Bronuzzi F (2015) Drawing the city with the ears. Urban spaces comprehension and design through auditory perception. Energy Procedia, Volume 78, November 2015, pp. 19–24. Part of Special Issue: 6th International Building Physics Conferences, IBPC 2015

Chorna O, Filippa M, De Almeida JSa, Lordier L, Monaci MG, Hüppi P, Grandjean D, Guzzetta A (2019) Neuroprocessing mechanisms of music during fetal and neonatal development: a role in neuroplasticity and neurodevelopment. Neural Plasticity, Hindawi, Vol. 2019

Córdoba de Parodi MA (1998) Música y terapia. Ediciones Indigo, Barcelona

Dahlhaus C (1978) Die Idee der absoluten Musik. Bärenreiter, Kassel

Damasio A (1994) Descartes' error: emotion, reason and the human brain, Putnam Publishing

De Mari M, Carnevali C, Saponi S (eds) (2015) Tra psicoanalisi e musica. Alpes Italia, Rome

Di Benedetto A (2001) Musica e affetti. In: Longhini L, Mancia M (ed), I sentieri della mente. Filosofia, letteratura, arte e musica in dialogo con la psicoanalisi. Bollati Boringhieri, Turin
Disoteo M (2003) Il suono della vita. Voci, musiche, rumori nella nostra esistenza quotidiana. Booklet, Milan
Fornari F (1984) Psicoanalisi della musica. Longanesi, Milan
Foy GM (2010) Zero decibels: the quest for absolute silence. Scribner Book Company, New York
Galgigna M (2002) La rappresentazione dei processi interiori. In: Volterra V (ed) Melancolia e musica. Creatività e sofferenza mentale. Franco Angeli, Milan
Gawad IO, Omira RA (2020) Urban soundscape ecology: considering users perception. Int J Eng Res Dev 16(7) (July): 59–72
Grugno G (2013) Il Suono come messaggio armonico dell'Universo, Youcanprint
Hepper PG, Shahidullah BS (1994) Development of fetal hearing, Arch Dis Child Fetal Neonatal Ed. 71(2) (Sep)
Hoppenot D (1982) Le Violon Interieur. Edition Van De Velde, Paris
Imberty M (1986) Indicazioni per una psicologia cognitiva della musica. In: Lorenzetti ML, Antonietti A (a cura di) Processi cognitivi in musica. Franco Angeli, Milano
Imberty M (2005) La musique creuse le temps. De Wagner à Boulez: musique, psychologie, psychanalyse, L'Hamattan, Paris
Kandinskij V (1979) Scritti intorno alla musica. La Nuova Italia, Fiesole-Firenze
Kang J, Aletta, Gjestland TT et al. (10 more authors) (2016) Ten questions on the soundscapes of the built environment. Building and Environment
Kisilevsky BS, Hains SMJ, Jacquet AY, Granier-Deferre C, Lecanuet JP (2004) Maturation of fetal responses to music. Dev Sci 7(5):550–559
Kvifte T (2001) Images of form: an example from Norwegian Hardingfiddle Music. In: Godoy RI, Jorgensen H (eds), Musical imagery. Taylor & Francis, New York and London
Langer S (1953) Feeling and form. a theory of art. Charles Scribner's Son. New York
Levitin DJ (2006) This is your brain on music. Dutton, New York
Milliman RE (1982) Using background music to affect the behavior of supermarket shoppers. J Mark 46(3): 86–91
Molinero L (2018) Soundscape approach: survey of sound environment in a public square in London and analysis of the relationships with urban context and perceived safety. Master's Degree in Architecture Construction City, Politecnico di Torino
Ornell F, Schuch JB, Sordi AO, Paim Kessler FH (2020) "Pandemic fear" and COVID19: mental health burden and strategies. Braz. J. Psychiatr. 42(3):2020
Poli, DM, Spada D (2007) Musica e neuropsicologia. In: A.A.V.V. (a cura di Lucignani G e Pinotti A) Immagini della mente. Neuroscienzia, arte, filosofia. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan
Romano A (1998) Musica e Psiche. In: Carollo R (ed) Le forme dell'immaginario. Psicoanalisi e musica. Atti del convegno dell'Associazione per l'Aggiornamento e lo Studio della Psicoanalisi e della Relazione Analitica. Moretti & Vitali, Bergamo
Rossi R, Socci V, Talevi D, Mensi S, Niolu C, Pacitti F, Di Marco A, Rossi A, Siracusano A, Di Lorenzo G (2020) COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown measures impact on mental health among the general population in Italy. Front. Psychiatry, 07 August 2020
Sacks O (2007) Musicophilia. tales of music and the brain. Alfred A Knopf, Canada
Schafer RM (1999) The soundscape: our sonic environment and the tuning of the world. Destiny Books, Rochester, Vermont
Schiavetto A, Cortese F, Alain C (1999) Global and local processing of musical sequences: an event-related brain potential study. NeuroReport 10:2467–2472
Schön D, Akiva-Kabiri L, Vecchi T (2007) Psicologia della musica. Carocci Editore, Rome
Semplici R (2008), La cura della salute, Paoline Editoriale Libri
Serra C (2002) Paesaggi Sonori e Spazio Musicale. In: Scarnecchia P (ed) Incontri. Ismez-Onlus Editore, Rome
Sloboda JA (1998) La mente musicale. Il Mulino, Bologna
Stravinsky I (1947) Poetics of music. Vintage, New York

Torresin S, Aletta F, Babich F, Bourdeau E, Harvie-Clarck J, Kang J, Lavia L, Radicchi A, Albatici R (2020) Acoustics for supportive and healthy buildings: emerging themes on indoor soundscape research. Sustainability 12: 6054

Zhang X, Ba M, Kang J, Meng Q (2018) Effect of soundscape dimensions on acoustic comfort in urban open public spaces. Appl Acoust 133:73–81

Ziv N, Hollander-Shabtai R (2021) Music and COVID-19: changes in uses and emotional reaction to music under stay-at-home restrictions. Psychol Music 2021:1–17

Multisensory Perception: Implications for Architecture and Interior Design

Nicola Bruno

Abstract Architects and interior designers are increasingly paying attention to the role of multisensory perception in the design and appreciation of places and buildings. This trend represents a welcome and timely departure from traditional approaches focussing on vision ("oculocentrism") to consider how auditory, somatosensory, and even olfactory components may constrain and enrich our experience of buildings. In these new approaches, however, theorists have mostly focussed on multimodal experience rather than multisensory processing. This has led to the development of the ambiguous notion of "synaesthetic architecture" and to the neglect of multisensory mechanisms such as multisensory integration and natural cross-modal correspondences. Here I outline key concepts and terminology that provide the conceptual tools necessary to distinguish between perceptual modes vs. sensory mechanisms, multimodality vs. multisensory integration, and synaesthesia proper vs. cross-modal correspondences. I conclude by arguing that designing for integration and correspondences may represent an especially effective approach as these phenomena engage obligatory, automatic, and fast cognitive processes (i.e., "system 1" cognition) that are grounded in the biology of perception, attention, and memory as well as largely independent of cultural factors.

Keywords Perception · Multisensory integration · Cross-modal correspondences · Synaesthesia · Architecture · Design

1 Introduction

This chapter explores some issues at the intersection between architecture and my own area of specialization, the psychology and cognitive neuroscience of perception. I have no academic training in architecture, and for this reason I have relied mostly on secondary sources for that side of this chapter's coin. As a young postdoctoral

English version of the chapter provided by the Author.

N. Bruno (✉)
DiMeC, Università di Parma, Parma, Italy
e-mail: nicola.bruno@unipr.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_11

researcher, however, for a few months I did share a Venice apartment with three architecture students. As students often do, they liked to mock their lecturers' limited repertoire of catchy phrases. One such phrase was the key teaching of a Swiss visiting professor of architectural design: "It is the eye of the commissioner that pays your fee". The mantra was relayed in just three words of a Swiss-Italian dialect, and it was relayed often. But catchy it was, and I am now offering it as the starting point of the chapter.

Theorists have long been aware of the close relationship between architecture, aesthetics, and perception. For instance, Le Corbusier's seminal essay *Vers une architecture* opens up with the following argument: "the architect, by arranging shapes, realizes an order which is a pure mental creation: through these shapes, architecture deeply affects our senses" (Le Corbusier 1924, vii).[1] Echoing Le Corbusier, Polish architecture theoretician Maciej Skaza recently noted that if architecture is to be conceived as the art of building, an additional element should be present that sets it apart from mere construction. This element stems from perception as a cognitive process which eventually leads to aesthetic experience (Skaza 2019). However, the role of perception in the practice of architecture has traditionally remained confined to *visual* perception. This bias is apparent in Le Corbusier, who only a few lines after mentioning "the senses" thus develops the argument: "Our *eyes* are made to see shapes through light" (Le Corbusier 1924, vii). And a similar implicit bias lurks behind the Swiss professor's motto—and behind most discussions of architecture. Even Skaza's essay, which includes sections on hearing, touch, smell, and even taste, argues that environmental perception is 87% based on sight, the remaining 17% being divided as follows: 11% hearing, 3.5% smell, 1.5% touch, and 1% taste—although the source of these dubious percentages remains unclear. Thus, traditional analyses of the relationship between architecture and perception identify the latter with vision, a stance that has been dubbed "oculocentrism" or "visual imperialism" (Gallese and Gattara 2021).

Within the context of the dominant oculocentric approach, however, some theorists have occasionally reminded designers of the importance of perceptual modalities different from vision. In the domain of the design of artifacts, for instance, the celebrated Italian designer Bruno Munari wrote: "To this day, many of us still design only for the visual sense. […] One thing I have learned from the Japanese culture is the importance of taking all senses into account" (Munari 1981, 379). This notion is now enjoying increasing popularity under the rubric of "synaesthetic" design (Haverkamp 2013), and is increasingly being incorporated in discussions of architecture and interior design. As noted among others by architecture theoretician Pallasmaa (2011), places and buildings are encountered as multisensory experiences. Spaces and ways of navigating them are seen, but information about directions, distances, and volumes is also picked up by auditory mechanism. Physical contacts with flooring, door handles, hand rails, buttons, and furniture engages somatosension. Colors, music, and scents can influence behaviors within the buildings in various ways (Spence 2020a).

[1] Here and elsewhere, translation and italics are by the Author.

It may be noted, however, that what seems to guide synaesthetic designers is a sort of the-more-the-merrier principle. Synaesthetic design, we are told, is about adding auditory, tactile, and even olfactory experiences to the visual component of one's interaction with a building. Conceived in this way, I will argue, synaesthetic design promotes *multimodality* rather than *multisensory interactions.* It focuses on providing additional, but independent, perceptual components rather than exploiting how stimulation processed by separate sensory mechanisms may be combined within the brain to yield unified and *novel* perceptual experiences. The notion of multisensory interactions is not completely foreign to design theorists. For instance, the pioneering book of Milan-based professor of industrial design Dina Riccò argued that designers needs not only to consider all "senses", but also to understand and exploit how these might interact and cooperate to engender the overall experience of everyday objects (Riccò 1999). In practice, however, multimodality remains the dominant framework in synaesthetic architecture and design.

2 A Case Study

The 2021 *Biennale Architecture* in Venice featured *Desplazamientos* (Displacements), a Mexican installation consisting of thin suspended black wires that create a winding path bordered by immaterial "walls" (Fig. 1a). At specific locations through the path the installation includes screens for presenting video content as well as loudspeakers for presenting multifarious audio content. The latter includes, for instance,

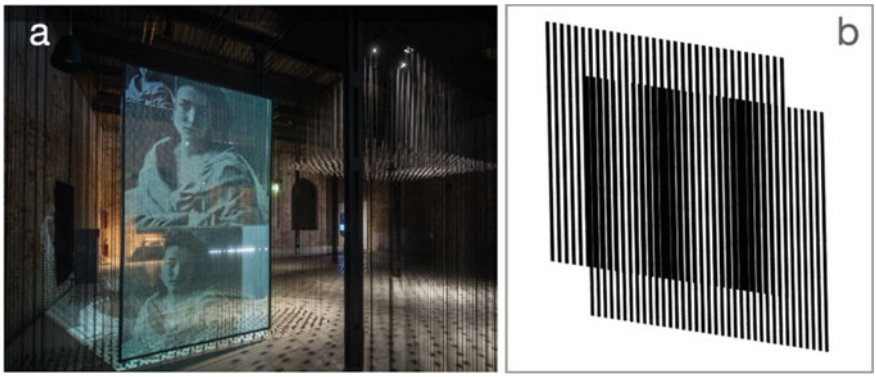

Fig. 1 (a) A view of *Desplazamientos* at the 2021 Venice *Biennale.* Source: Adapted from the official installation website (https://bienaldevenecia.mx/es/biennale-architettura/17-bienal-de-arquitectura/); Image in the public domain, cropping by the author. (b) Interference (Moirè) fringes arise from abutting vertical patterns. The fringes can appear to move if the patterns are optically displaced, or when one scans the wireframes by eye movements. Image in the public domain: Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:070309-moire-a5-a5-upward-movement.gif

natural sounds, such as dripping water or birdsongs; human voices, such as an individual uttering words in some native-American idiom or a laughing child; artificial sounds such as noises from construction working, a truck engine, or other mechanical devices; as well as sounds from percussion instruments or pure musical tones. Moiré fringes (Fig. 1b), an op-artistic motion effect arising from abutting visual patterns, are noticeable across the black wires. The sound content reminds visitors of the underlying theme of Mexican immigration through USA borders, while the subtle illusion of motion across the wires provides an additional layer of meaning to the "displacement" mentioned in the installation title. *Desplazamientos* is perceptually fascinating, and, at first blush, a prime example of the notion of "going beyond oculocentrism" which is typical of the so-called synaesthetic approaches. The installation is not only meant to be viewed: it involves a visual environment, to be contemplated and navigated, and an accompanying soundscape. In addition, it invites walking through a path. This engages various aspects of somatosensation, including those involved in controlling posture, heading, and stepping, as well as premotor processes to inhibit walking *through* the penetrable wireframe walls (a potentially quicker way out). *Desplazamientos* could thus be claimed to stimulate at least three of the infamous five "senses". Such stimulation, however, is meant to offer concomitant perceptual experiences in the visual, auditory, and somatosensory modalities. These experiences are related at a semantic, symbolic level, but remain separated. One sees things, hears other things, experiences some bodily configurations and motions. This is the essence of a multimodal experience, and multimodality can provide effective ways of engaging users. In choosing multimodality, however, the creators of *Desplazamientos* passed on opportunities to go one step further, that is, to design an environment that promotes multisensory interactions. As I show in what follows, multisensory interactions can enrich one's experience in a variety of ways, all of which go beyond mere multimodality. Before delving into the varieties of multisensory interactions, however, a brief note on terminology is in order.

3 There are No "Senses"

Some of my readers may have noted in the initial part of the chapter that I avoid references to the "senses" (except when quoting the words of other authors). This is not merely a matter of style or idiosyncratic terminology. The idea that humans have five senses is deeply rooted in our culture (Fig. 2). However, as I have argued in greater detail elsewhere (Bruno and Pavani 2018), the notion of five senses in human perception is fundamentally misguided. Although in ordinary language it is often expedient to talk about vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, there is in fact no clear cut way to map these notions to organs, sensory mechanisms, or unitary functions. For instance, although the ear is connected to hearing in ordinary language, the inner ear in fact contains two different organs, one (the cochlea) concerned with hearing and the other (the vestibular system) concerned with balance. The eye is connected to vision, but sensory mechanisms in the retina (the part of the eye which

Fig. 2 Allegory of the five senses by Theodoor Rombouts (1597–1637). Artistic renditions of the sense notion abound in our culture. Here, sight is represented by the spectacles; hearing by the musical instrument; touch by the statue; taste by the glass of wine; and smell by the pipe. Image in the public doman: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, Belgium/Bridgeman Images

absorbs light, converts it to a neural signal, and pre- processes it before sending it to the brain) include a system for day vision and another system for night vision, and these systems are just as important for balance as they are for seeing objects and events. The mouth is connected to taste, but the perception of flavours depends much more on the nose than on sensory mechanisms in the mouth. The skin is connected to touch, but the skin is not a specific structure in the body like the eye, or the tongue; and neural units in the skin and muscles subserve a variety of different functions, such as coding pressure, vibration, shear, limb position, temperature, and noxious stimuli.

Finally, perceptual experience emerges in our consciousness in several, qualitatively different *modalities.* For instance, there is something about the character of visual phenomena that is intrinsically different from that of auditory phenomena. These two kinds of perception have different *qualia,* a term invented by philosopher of mind Clarence Irving Lewis (1929) to define "what it is like" to experience a given percept (see also Nagel 1974). Thus, we experience percepts in the visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory modality, each with a distinct, and incommensurable, qualitative character. Again, however, there is no clear-cut way to map these perceptual modalities to organs, sensory mechanisms, or functions. In many cases, what is experienced in one modality depends just as much on sensory mechanisms that

one would relate to a different modality. As mentioned above, this happens in the case of flavour, but also, for instance, when we perceive the location of a sound, or in the intriguing phenomenon that neuropsychologists call *synaesthesia* (for details, see the following sections). And to make things worse, some aspects of perceptual experience also *lack* a distinct modality, that is, they are *a-modal.* Perhaps the most obvious of these are in the domain of time perception: we perceive durations, simultaneity, succession, and rhythm, but there are neither a distinct perceptual mode for time nor identifiable sensory "clocks" to measure it (although, presumably, there are higher-order neurocognitive brain mechanisms that are involved).

For all these reasons, I have suggested (Bruno and Pavani 2018) that perception scientist should abandon the notion of the "senses" and all related terminology. This notion is not only ill-defined, but also a source of several conceptual confusions that hinder scientific progress and communication. For instance, these confusions make it impossible to provide a definition of the kinds of multisensory interactions that are discussed in the following section. Conversely, useful definitions can be attained if one keeps in mind the distinction between perceptual modalities (which are the domain of perceptual phenomenology) and sensory and brain mechanisms within our biological perceptual system (which are the domain of cognitive psychology and neuroscience).

4 Three Kinds of Multisensory Interaction

To clarify the difference between multimodality and multisensory interactions, it is useful to consider three domains whereby signals from different sensory mechanisms are joined in the brain. I will refer to these as integration, cross-modal correspondence, and synaesthesia. In each, the multisensory process generates a novel percept or adds a novel perceptual dimension which cannot be traced back to the individual signals. As an entry point to this topic, consider the traditional view of the perceptual system which is still found in several textbooks and popular accounts. In this view, the perceptual system is made up of sensory "input systems". Each of these is involved in processing some form of energy (electromagnetic, mechanical, or chemical) and in sending its output to the corresponding *primary sensory area,* a specialized cortical center for that specific "sense". Importantly, each of these is assumed to be essentially *modular,* that is, to be independent of the others. Sense-specific perceptual representations are then assumed to be relayed to higher-order, "associative" centers where integrated percepts would be produced with the aid of stored memories.

In the last two decades, however, the theoretical and empirical bases of the traditional notion of input systems have been questioned. Evidence from animal models documents multisensory interactions at many intermediate stages in the neural paths to cortex (see for instance, Wallace et al. 1998; Nishjo et al. 1988; Cappe et al. 2009) as well as in the assumed "primary" cortices (Alais et al. 2010; Ghazanfar and Schroeder 2006; Klemen and Chambers 2012). For instance, parts of the primary auditory cortex have been shown to respond to visual signals during lip reading (Calvert et al. 1997).

The primary visual cortex has been shown to respond to somatosensory signals in tactile tasks (Sathian and Zangaladze 2002). Similarly, several studies have demonstrated that primary sensory areas that are deprived of their normal sensory input can be recruited for processing other kinds of input. This has been documented, for instance, in early blind individuals where primary visual areas can become responsive to non-visual input (Collignon et al. 2013).

Most importantly, behavioural studies suggest that multisensory interactions are often much more important than was originally believed (Driver and Spence 2000). For instance, rub your left hand with your right hand. How does the skin feel? Dry or well hydrated? Note that your perception has a specific tactile quality and is localized on the skin, the "feeling" comes from the skin. Yet, it can be demonstrated that your percept does not depend merely on the tactile signal, but is also modulated by hearing. If the rubbing sound is experimentally modified by emphasizing higher frequencies, the hand will feel smoother and drier (the *parchment-skin illusion,* Jousmäki and Hari 1998; see Fig. 3). Perhaps more relevant to architecture, recall the last time you saw a movie. Where did the voice of the actors on screen come from? Naturally, it seemed to come from the lips of the actors. Yet, the sound did not come from the lips on screen, but from the loudspeakers in the theatre. What you experienced is the *ventriloquist illusion.* A ventriloquist can produce speech sounds without moving the lips but while moving the puppet mouth. The illusion arises that the sound comes from the puppet, not the ventriloquist.

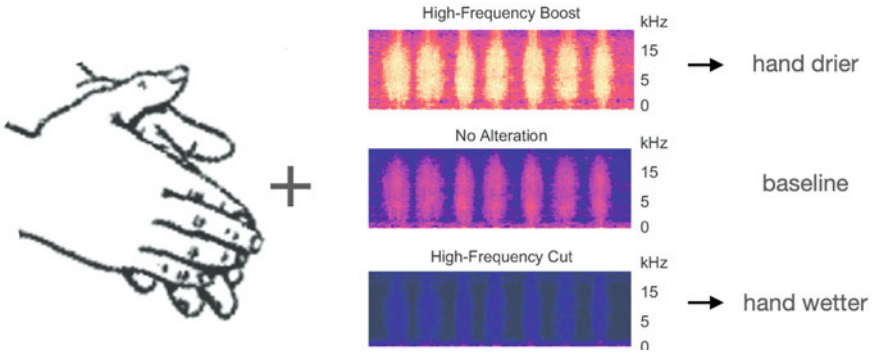

Fig. 3 The parchment-skin illusion. Participants rub their hands (left) while listening to the resulting sound through earpieces. The sound can be altered before it is fed to the participant (middle). Participants report on how dry the skin of the hand feels (right). Boosting higher frequencies yields more frequent "dry" reports, whereas cutting higher frequencies boosts "wet" reports. Based on Champoux, et al., 2011

5 Multisensory Integration

The ventriloquist illusion is a prototypical example instance of *multisensory integration* between hearing and vision. Multisensory integration is the process whereby multisensory signals are joined into a single unified percept, which is perceived in one specific perceptual modality. For instance, you *hear* the sound coming from a given direction, but what you hear, in the auditory perceptual modality, is in fact dependent on both auditory and visual signals. Or consider touching an object while you look at it. Suppose that this happened in a psychology laboratory, and that experimenters have tweaked the situations such that what you are touching is in fact smaller than what you are seeing. You will *feel,* in the tactile perceptual modality, that the object is larger in comparison to conditions when no such tweaking has been performed.

These kinds of multisensory interactions are not confined to laboratory tricks or specific stimulus conditions—they happen all the time in the environment, because the environment typically provides us with information that can be picked up by different sensory mechanisms and the brain makes good use of this redundancy to improve perception. Behavioral, electrophysiological, and neuroimaging studies are now beginning to reveal several principles underlying such integration processes. One such principle is *spatial–temporal congruence* (Stein and Meredith 1993). Sensory signals will be integrated, yielding a unified percept, when they are coded as coming (roughly) from the same spatial location and as happening in the same point in time. This is one of the reasons why a slow connection during a videoconference often hinders speech comprehension and is generally annoying. If video and audio are too much out-of-synch, audio-visual integration fails and both our ability to perceive the origin of speech and to understand it are hindered. Another such principle is *optimal integration* (Ernst and Banks 2002). When presented with multiple sensory signals, the perceptual system integrates them by taking into account their reliability: More reliable signals (as indexed by lower neural noise) are given more weight and bias the unified percept to a greater extent. This process is statistically optimal, in that the multisensory outcome can be mathematically demonstrated to be more precise than either of the unisensory data that enter the computation. Thus, multisensory integration has natural implications for architecture and interior design. Buildings and spaces that include multiple sources of information about their structure, navigation opportunities, and usage will engender more accurate and precise perceptions of such features by users, provided that such multiple sources respect constraints on integration.

Optimal integration offers an elegant account of phenomena like the ventriloquist illusion, as in typical conditions the visual coding of spatial direction is more precise than the auditory coding. At a ventriloquist's show, therefore, you would expect that vision would influence perceived direction much more than hearing, and this is what happens. If you created laboratory conditions whereby vision were made *less* precise than hearing, however, you would expect the illusion to reverse and to perceive sounds to originate much nearer the location of the physical sound source. Empirical studies have provided a clear confirmation of this counterintuitive prediction (Alais and Burr

2004). Finally, when stimulus conditions violate the prerequisites for integration, multisensory interactions change. In some cases, we simply experience separate (and sometimes annoyingly conflicting—as in the videoconference example above) percepts in separate modalities. But in many other cases, it so happens that the sensory signals will be complementary rather than redundant. Suppose that you were looking at the front side of a cup while your hand is touching its back side. In this case, visual and tactile signals provide information about different parts of the same object, and binding them into a unified representation is in fact beneficial. This form of interaction has been called *multisensory combination* (Ernst and Bülthoff 2004) and it provides another way to enrich perceptual experience. Although combination has been studied relatively less than integration, some intriguing results (Newell et al. 2001) have begun to reveal the principles that regulate it.

6 Cross-Modal Correspondences

Cross-modal correspondences are the spontaneous and near-universal experience that certain percepts in different perceptual modalities naturally "belong to each other". A striking example is phonosymbolism, a form of spontaneously perceived association between heard linguistic sounds and visual shapes. When asked to match the nonsense names with the two figures shown in Fig. 3, the match is obvious to everyone despite the fact that there is no physical basis for it. First observed a century ago by the German psychologist Wolfgang Köhler using the nonsense words "malouma" and "takete", phonosymbolisms of this kind are extremely robust. They are readily observed in informal demonstrations, and can be observed in prelinguistic toddlers (Spector and Maurer 2013), in different cultures (Rogers and Ross 1975; Bremner et al. 2013), and even with implicit tasks based on reaction times (Westbury 2005). These results suggest that the multisensory interactions underlying phonosymbolism are pre-semantic, a conclusion that has attracted enormous interest by linguists and philosophers of language. Non-arbitrary pre-semantic mappings of sounds to visual percepts may provide a crucial first step in the evolution of language in humans, "jumpstarting" an iterative process that maps sounds to referents (Ramachandran and Hubbard 2001).

However, cross-modal correspondences occur in many other domains besides phonosymbolism (for a review see Spence 2011). For instance, high-pitched sounds are spontaneously experienced as associated to small and bright objects in higher spatial locations; low-pitched sounds to big dark objects in lower locations. In the last 40 years, several studies have studied cross-modal correspondences measuring reaction times in information processing tasks involving cross-modally corresponding or non-corresponding stimulus pairs (Bernstein and Edelstein 1971; Evans and Treisman 2010; Ferrari et al. 2014; Gallace and Spence 2006; Marks 2004). These studies consistently show that although participants only have to classify stimuli in one modality (e.g. small vs large shapes), they fail to ignore task-irrelevant corresponding stimuli in the other (e.g. high or low tones). As a consequence, they

respond more quickly to cross-modally corresponding pairs, and more slowly to non-corresponding, relative to baseline measurements without task-irrelevant add-ons. These results therefore suggest that cross-modal correspondences are a perceptual phenomenon, which occurs spontaneously and are obligatory. As in the well known Stroop effect (Fig. 4), one cannot *not experience* the correspondence, even if it irrelevant for the task, and to enjoy benefits or suffer costs in terms of cognitive processing (Fig. 5).

Fig. 4 A "natural" cross-modal correspondence. Suppose you were told that the names of these nonsense objects are *bouba* and *keki*. Which is which? The answer may seem totally arbitrary, but there is usually complete agreement by viewers that bouba is rounded and keki is jagged. Image in the public domain: https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/3290605.3300689

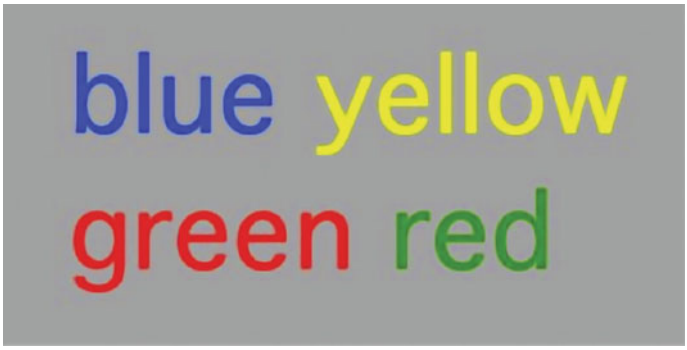

Fig. 5 The Stroop effect. Participants are asked to name the color of the ink used to write words or meaningless strings of letters (baseline condition). The words are color names, and they are sometimes congruent (top) and sometimes incongruent (bottom) with the ink color. Congruency yields faster naming, and incongruency slower naming, in comparison to baseline. The effect is widely regarded as evidence that reading is automatic and obligatory. When presented with a word, we automatically process it up to accessing its entry in the mental lexicon. This facilitates access to a congruent color name in the same lexical entry, but hinders access to an incongruent one

In a recent review, Spence (2020b) argued that cross-modal correspondences underpin a fundamental dimension of multisensory design, *congruence.* Multisensory signals that correspond cross-modally will be spontaneously and automatically coded as associated and "belonging" to each other. For this reason, they will tend to be processed more fluently, that is, faster and with fewer errors. This in turn will engender the experience of *cognitive ease,* which has been related both to aesthetic preference (e.g. Winkielman et al. 2015) and to preferences in decision making in a variety of domains (e.g. Kahneman 2011). Multisensory signals that do not correspond crossmodally will instead prove more difficult to process, and the additional cognitive effort will bias preferences negatively. Consider a personal anecdote. In the very center of my town of residence lies the *Galleria del Leone.* Built about a century ago in the style of the *passages* between Paris boulevards, it showcases marble floors, rich wall decorations, and a glass ceiling supported by iron castings. It is a beautiful closed space, which is now partly filled with tables and chairs from a nearby cafeteria that uses it as a *dehors* for customers. Naturally, customers talk, and when the place fills up, there are a lot of customers talking. Unfortunately, the structure of the space generates a great deal of acoustic reverberation, and the interaction of echoes with the voices of customers generates a chatty, boozing confusion and a definite feeling of incongruence with the stately proportions of the architecture. To make things worse, the cafeteria speakers often blare out loud, contemporary dance music, providing not only an additional layer of auditory confusion, but also an additional, stylistic, layer of incongruence. I have tried to stop for coffee at the place on several occasions, but have never been able to stay.

My anecdotal evidence is consistent with formal studies. For instance, stylistic congruency was manipulated in online and laboratory experiments by Siefkes and Arielli (2015). These researchers asked participants to evaluate baroque and modern buildings while listening to music that was either congruent (e.g., baroque architecture with baroque music) or incongruent (e.g., baroque architecture with the Philip Glass soundtrack from the movie *Koyaanisqatsi).* Results revealed that the buildings were rated as looking more balanced, coherent, and complete, when viewed while listening to congruent as opposed to incongruent music. In another study, Mattila and Wirtz (2001) manipulated the olfactory environment of stores (no scent, a low-arousal odor, or a high-arousal odor) while simultaneously manipulating store ambient music (no music, low-arousal music, or high-arousal music). When odor and music were congruent, customers rated the store more positively, exhibited higher levels of buying behaviour, and expressed more satisfaction. Finally, (Spence 2020a) cites several other such "atmospheric" effects in eating or drinking spaces, ranging from colors, sizes and shapes of plate and cutlery affecting food choice, intake, and evaluation; general ambience of the tasting room affecting ratings of whisky (Velasco et al. 2013), to the colour of ambient illumination modifying participant's ratings on several sensory dimensions of a wine drinking experience (Spence et al. 2014).

7 Synaesthesia

The term *synaesthesia*, from *syn* (union) and *aisthesis* (perception or sensory-based experience), is often used in ordinary language to refer to just about anything that relates to the senses, including multimodality and the contemporary notion of synaesthetic design. In the cognitive neurosciences, however, synaesthesia refers to a specific, rare, and curious form of multisensory interaction. In individuals with synaesthesia, stimulation of one sensory mechanism evokes, in addition to percepts in the perceptual modality ordinarily associated to that mechanism, an additional percept in a different modality. In contrast to multisensory integration, where two sensory signals ultimately converge into a unimodal percept, in synaesthesia one signal engenders two percepts in two different modalities. For instance, synaesthesia researcher Richard Cytowic has described MW, an individual that experiences food "shapes". For MW, tasting includes a set of tactile perceptions, as if "things were rubbed against the face or were sitting on the hands" (Cytowic 2002, 4). When he cooks, MW aims not only at pleasant tastes, but also at interesting shapes: he uses sugar to "round" the taste; citrus to make it "pointy" (Cytowic 2002, 6). Thus, for MW tasting is multimodal. The multisensory interactions that underlie the perception of food flavours in most of us, and that for us result in a unified percept in the gustatory modality, for MW result in a double percept in the gustatory and somatosensory modalities. Moreover, MW's experiences of the shape of foods are not imagined or conceived, they are actually perceived—they are "there"—and he cannot help but perceiving them.

In true synaesthetes, such as MW, multisensory perceptual processes can be genuinely different from those of the rest of us. Nonetheless, the condition is not cited in psychiatry or psychopathology textbooks, and it does not usually have negative effects on the quality of life of synaesthetes, except, perhaps, for the feeling of being different, somehow anomalous in one's manner of experiencing the world. This feeling is probably enhanced by the fact that synaesthesia is extremely idiosyncratic. For instance, the following inducer stimuli have been described in relation to colour concurrents: musical pitch, chords, or timbre; other auditory stimuli, such as the human voice or sounds in general; tactile or thermal stimulation; letters or numbers; pain; odour; and even emotional or somatosensory experiences such as, for instance, the experience of female orgasm. Taste or odour concurrents have been described in relation to visual and auditory inducers. Yet other peculiar cases are well known, such as the case of MW who has tactile concurrents from taste inducers. The combination of rarity of occurrence with diversity of manifestation represents an especially difficult challenge for attempts to draw valid generalizations, although there is some evidence suggesting a genetic basis (Gregersen et al. 2013).

Despite the diversity of its manifestations, synaesthesia is rare. Estimates differ, ranging from extremely rare to rare but-not-so-rare after all, but there is little doubt that only a few of us are synaesthete. There is therefore a key difference between this intriguing multisensory phenomenon, and the two other forms of multisensory interaction that I have discussed above, which are universal. In this, "synaesthetic"

designers would probably benefit from focussing on multisensory integration and cross-modal correspondences rather than on synaesthesia (unless of course they use the word to mean something different from the neuroscience definition).

There is, however, another feature of the condition that may impact on the work of architects and designers in a different way. Synaesthesia has been linked to superior cognitive performances in some domains, most notably, those related to memory and creativity. Individuals endowed with prodigious memories are often synaesthetes. For example, the famous S described in neuropsychology's classic *The Mind of a Mnemonist* (Luria 1968) reported actively exploiting his automatic synaesthetic associations both when encoding and when retrieving information to perform complex memory tasks. In addition, many famous artists are reputed to have been synaesthetes, including, for instance, the composer Olivier Messiaen, the painter Vassily Kandinsky, and the writer Vladimir Nabokov. Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001) cited a study by Domino (1989) reporting that, in a sample of 358 fine-arts students, 84 (that is, 23% of the sample) were synaesthetes and that these scored better on measures of artistic creativity compared to controls. To the extent that a synaesthete's brain more readily and comprehensively produces associations between percepts and concepts, it is not unlikely that this might produce a greater propensity for mapping across unrelated ideas in a creative fashion (Ramachandran and Hubbard 2001). Synaesthesia may therefore be a potential factor in the design process not so much with regard to potential users of an architecture, but to the designers themselves and their creative processes of thoughts. For the few that are true synaesthetes, this may bring in the benefit of unusual links between ideas or images, which in turn may steer a project towards innovative directions. For the rest of us who are not, the deliberate use of synaesthetic metaphors in language, which we can all practice, may serve the same purpose at least in part.

8 Conclusions

Ordinary perception is multisensory, and multisensory interactions are the norm rather than the exception (Shimojo and Shams 2001). Professionals that are interested in approaching architecture and design from a multisensory perspective may therein find interesting and novel ideas for developing building, urban spaces, and design objects. Specifically, in this chapter I have explored two: enhancing the accuracy and precision of user's perception by exploiting multisensory integration, and enhancing aesthetic preferences and decisions by manipulating cross-modal congruence. There is, however, an even deeper reason why multisensory interactions should matter in design processes. As already hinted in other parts of the chapter, there is a great deal of evidence that multisensory interactions are automatic, spontaneous, and often obligatory mental processes. They work the way they do mostly as a consequence of our biology, and are much less affected by culture and interpretations. In the theory of Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman (2011), these processes provide much of the input to the mind's "system 1", the label that Kahneman uses to group mental processes

that are unconscious, fast, automatic, and emotional—and which are the basis of most of our reasoning and decision making in everyday situations. I am quite convinced that designing for system 1 represents an effective tool to engender cognitive ease in users, and, as a consequence, improve their overall experience of buildings and spaces.

References

Alais D, Burr D (2004) The ventriloquist effect results from near-optimal bimodal integration. Curr Biol 14(3):257–262

Alais D, Newell FN, Mamassian P (2010) Multisensory processing in review: from physiology to behaviour. Seeing Perceiving 23:3–38

Bernstein IH, Edelstein BA (1971) Effects of some variations in auditory input upon visual choice reaction time. J Exp Psychol 87:241–247

Bremner AJ, Caparos S, Davidoff J, de Fockert J, Linnell KJ, Spence C (2013) "Bouba" and "Kiki" in Namibia? A remote culture make similar shape-sound matches, but different shape-taste matches to Westerners. Cognition 126(2):165–172

Bruno N, Pavani F (2018) Perception: A multisensory perspective. UK, Oxford University Press, Oxford

Calvert GA, Bullmore ET, Brammer MJ, Campbell R, Williams SC, McGuire PK et al (1997) Activation of auditory cortex during silent lipreading. Science 276:593–596

Cappe C, Morel A, Barone P, Rouiller EM (2009) The thalamocortical projection systems in primate: an anatomical support for multisensory and sensorimotor interplay. Cereb Cortex 19(9):2025–2037

Champoux F, Collignon O, Bacon B, Lepore F, Zatorre R, Théoret H (2011) Early-and late-onset blindness both curb audiotactile integration on the parchment-skin illusion. Psychol Sci 22:19–25

Collignon O, Dormal G, Albouy G, Vandewalle G, Voss P, Phillips C, Lepore F (2013) Impact of blindness onset on the functional organization and the connectivity of the occipital cortex. Brain 136(Pt 9):2769–2783

Cytowic RE (2002) The man who tasted shapes. MIT press

Domino G (1989) Synaesthesia and creativity in fine arts students: an empirical look. Creat Res J 2(1–2):17–29

Driver J, Spence C (2000) Multisensory perception: beyond modularity and convergence. Curr Biol 10:R731–R735

Ernst MO, Banks MS (2002) Humans integrate visual and haptic information in a statistically optimal fashion. Nature 415(6870):429–433

Ernst MO, Bülthoff HH (2004) Merging the senses into a robust percept. Trends Cogn Sci 8(4):162–169

Evans KK, Treisman A (2010) Natural cross-modal mappings between visual and auditory features. J vis 10(1):1–12

Ferrari V, Mastria S, Bruno N (2014) Crossomodal interactions during affective picture processing. PLoS ONE 2:45–58

Gallace A, Spence C (2006) Multisensory synesthetic inter- actions in the speeded classification of visual size. Percept & Psychophys 68:1191–1203

Gallese V, Gattara A (2021) Simulazione incarnata, estetica e architettura: un approccio estetico sperimentale. In: Robinson S, Pallasmaa J, Zambelli M (eds) La mente in architettura: neuroscienze, incarnazione e il futuro del design. Firenze University Press, Firenze, pp 160–175

Ghazanfar AA, Schroeder CE (2006) Is neocortex essentially multisensory? Trends Cogn Sci 10(6):278–285

Gregersen PK, Kowalsky E, Lee A, Baron-Cohen S, Fisher SE, Asher JE, Ballard D, Freudenberg J, Li W (2013) Absolute pitch exhibits phenotypic and genetic overlap with synesthesia. Hum Mol Genet 22(10):2097–2104
Haverkamp M (2013) Synaesthetic Design. Birkhäuser verlag, Basel
Jousmäki V, Hari R (1998) Parchment-skin illusion: Sound-biased touch. Curr Biol 8:869–872
Kahneman D (2011) Thinking: fast and slow. Farrar, Straus & Giroux
Klemen J, Chambers CD (2012) Current perspectives and methods in studying neural mechanisms of multisensory interactions. Neurosci & Biobehav Rev 36(1):111–133
Le Corbusier (1924) Vers une architecture. Paris. Les Editions G. Crès et C. https:// www.mondotheque.be/wiki/images/d/d4/Corbusier_vers_une_architecture.pdf
Lewis CI (1929) Mind and the world order. New York, NY, Scribner & sons
Luria A (1968) The mind of a menmonist: A little book about a vast memory. Harvard university press (MA)
Marks LE (2004) Cross-modal interactions in speeded classification. In: Calvert GA, Spence C, Stein BE (eds) Handbook of multisensory processing. MIT Press, pp 85–105
Mattila AS, Wirtz J (2001) Congruency of scent and music as a driver of in-store evaluations and behavior. J Retail 77:273–289
Munari B (1981) Da cosa nasce cosa. Roma, Laterza
Nagel T (1974) What is it like to be a bat? Philos Rev 83(4):435–450
Newell FN, Ernst MO, Tjan BS, Bülthoff HH (2001) Viewpoint dependence in visual and haptic object recognition. Psychol Sci 12(1):37–42
Nishijo H, Ono T, Nishino H (1988) Single neuron responses in amygdala of alert monkey during complex sensory stimulation with affective significance. J Neurosci 8(10):3570–3583
Pallasmaa J (2011) Architecture and the existential sense: space, body, and the senses. In: Bacci F, Melcher D (eds) Art and the senses. Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp 579–598
Ramachandran VS, Hubbard EM (2001) Psychophysical investigations into the neuralbasis of synaesthesia. Proc Biol Sci 268(1470):979–983
Riccò D (1999) Sinestesie per il design. Milano, Etas
Rogers SK, Ross AS (1975) A cross-cultural test of the Maluma-Takete phenomenon. Perception 4(1):105–106
Sathian K, Zangaladze A (2002) Feeling with the mind's eye: contribution of visual cortex to tactile perception. Behav Brain Res 135(1–2):127–132
Shimojo S, Shams L (2001) Sensory modalities are not separate modalities: plasticity and interactions. Curr Opin Neurobiol 11:505–509
Siefkes M, Arielli E (2015) An experimental approach to multimodality: how musical and architectural styles interact in aesthetic perception. In: Wildfeuer J (ed) Building bridges for multimodal research: International perspectives on theories and practices of multimodal analysis. Peter Lang, New York, pp 247–265
Skaza M (2019) Architecture as a consequence of perception. IOP Conf. Ser.: Mater. Sci. Eng. 471: 022033
Spector F, Maurer D (2013) Early sound symbolism for vowel sounds. i-Perception 4(4): 239–241
Spence C (2011) Crossmodal correspondences: a tutorial review. Atten Percept Psychophys 73(4):971–995
Spence C (2020a) Atmospheric effects on eating and drinking: a review. In: H. Meiselman (ed), Handbook of eating and drinking. Cham, Springer, 257–276
Spence C (2020b) Senses of place: architectural design for the multisensory mind. Cogn Res: Princ Implic 5(46): 1–26
Spence C, Velasco C, Knoeferle K (2014) A large sample study on the influence of the multisensory environment on the wine drinking experience a large sample study on the influence of the multisensory environment on the wine drinking experience. Flavour 3(8):1–12
Stein BE, Meredith MA (1993) The merging of the senses. MA, MIT Press, Cambridge
Velasco, C., Jones, R., King, S. & Spence, C. (2103). Assessing the influence of the multisensory environment on the whisky drinking experience. *Flavour,* 2(23), 1–11.

Wallace MT, Meredith MA, Stein BE (1998) Multisensory integration in the superior colliculus of the alert cat. J Neurophysiol 80(2):1006–1010
Westbury C (2005) Implicit sound symbolism in lexical access: evidence from an interference task. Brain Lang 93(1):10–19
Winkielman P, Ziembowicz M, Nowak A (2015) The coherent and fluent mind: how unified consciousness is constructed from cross-modal inputs via integrated processing experiences. Front Psychol 6:83

Dwelling Our Relational Space

Reinventing Relations: Healing Wounded Spaces and Times

Massimo Schinco

Abstract The twentieth century was marked by radical states of local and global crises, which were also addressed by the development of the so-called "critical thinking". In the XXI century, a deeper and more desperate malaise has taken over: the "crisis of the crisis". Confronting its destructive potential has been made urgent by the pandemic: in order to get out of the "crisis of the crisis" we must stop escaping it, and instead develop the capacity to "live together". By dealing with the pain brough by the crisis, we can enter a real "time of healing", characterised by authentic creativity, solid caring, willingness to honour the spirit's demands. By "healing", we mean the development of new competences, functions and attitudes that re-use what has gone into distress over time. Re-invention oriented towards community healing i.e., the recovery of meaning in the growth and development of new health, is achieved through the creation of listenable places, which do not erase memory, promote expressiveness, give space to the human condition, are sufficiently safe, facilitate sharing, do not hinder the inner dimension and require to exert responsibility. Though relying on memory, the solutions we need will be new and will arise from a stormy "urgency of creation".

Keywords Living together · Healing · Reuse · Reinvent · Urgency of creation · Listenable places

1 "Crisis of the Crisis" and "Critique of the Critique"

Just over two decades ago we left the XX century behind us, a time when many of us completed their education, spent their youth years and entered adulthood. A time marked by macroscopic and discontinuous changes in all areas of human existence. To these changes, corresponded as many states of local and global crisis; radical

M. Schinco (✉)
Design Department, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: studio@massimoschinco.it

Centro Studi Eteropoiesi, Turin, Italy

Milton H. Erickson Institute of the Bay Area, Albany, CA, USA

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_12

crises, not only because of the unprecedented monstrosity of armed conflicts, and not only because of the cruelty of economic and financial catastrophes. Industrialisation and urbanisation have weakened the texture of community and family life consolidated over centuries. Along with the awareness of crises, and at times anticipating them, critical thinking has developed: a very refined kind of thinking, which has sprouted from the bosom of very different anthropological and philosophical traditions, such as Christian personalism, Marxism, psychoanalysis and existentialism, which are sometimes fiercely opposed to each other, and at other times inclined to mutual contamination. Thanks to schooling and the mass media, albeit very often in a crude and naïve way despite its sophisticated starting point, the aptitude for critical thinking has overflowed beyond the narrow confines of philosophical and academic circles. Over time, it has left its imprint on the community, as a pervasive state of mind and a widespread prejudice, so that large masses of people have experienced the politicisation and ideologization of their working and relational lives as well as of their most personal beliefs. Indeed, for many, the aptitude for critical thinking has developed as a result of tormenting maturation processes, manifesting itself as an inescapable feeling of a state of necessity, and thus as an act of personal awareness and responsibility. Nevertheless, spreading with a superficiality facilitated by a consumerism never experienced before, generalising and amplifying itself, this attitude has changed its physiognomy into a victimistic and persecutory sense, almost attacking from behind and the sides its own protagonists. What was initially a dream for individuals, couples, groups and, finally, vast political subjects, perhaps a painful one but still aimed towards a future that was desired and felt to be possible, over time has turned into discomfort and malaise that is increasingly profound, insidious, pervasive and despairing. Accompanied by the ever-growing evidence of a state of crisis that can no longer be connoted solely as global, but rather planetary, in all spheres—political, philosophical, religious—critical thought has finally turned to criticise itself, opening up fractures and rifts marked by desperation and the feeling of the impracticability of any future utopian vision. Together with the implosion of critical thought, an opposite reaction emerged in the communities, based more on emotion than on thought, which was *in primis* pre-political and only later also alarmingly political. A mixture of vitalism, rancour and oversimplification that has always characterised fascism and national socialism, however differently labelled according to circumstances and historical periods. And for many, the search for a withdrawal, at least a temporary refuge, has emerged in the most diverse forms, while waiting to find sufficiently strong foundations for a thought and a feeling that can look to the future.

However, the unexpected onset of the pandemic has made a direct confrontation inevitable, a face-to-face with the "crisis of the crisis" and the "critique of the critique". Ruthlessly, the crisis horizon has shown all its destructive and self-destructive potential: psychological destruction, because most people do not know what to believe in, or if they do, they cannot. Economic and social destruction, because the consumer society is crumbling, both on the production side and on that of the so many economically impoverished end users. As it crumbles, the consumer society does not loosen, but rather tightens its destructive grip on the unequal distribution

of resources on the planetary level, making a widespread state of war increasingly evident and not limited to those unfortunate areas where it manifests itself through the effective use of weapons. Destruction of feelings, due to the extensive inability to handle emotional responsibilities and reliable relationships. Cultural destruction due to the seemingly incessant deterioration of the basic education quality. And finally, most threatening of all, eco-environmental destruction due to pollution and the senseless resources exploitation.

The worsening of the state of crisis brings to light states of need that can no longer be evaded or ignored, and these states of need are inherent to dwelling. This is a radically human condition, the foundation of being in the world, which is being in the world together.

2 Dwelling Together

"A village is necessary, if only for the pleasure of getting away. A country means not being alone, knowing that in the people, in the plants, in the earth, there is something of yours that, even when you are not there, is waiting for you. But it's not easy to stay calm there" (Pavese 1950). So wrote Cesare Pavese in his masterpiece *La luna e i falò* (*The moon and bonfires*), a witness of needs and anxieties that in his life manifested as tragically unresolved. Needs and anxieties that we have probably not taken seriously enough. Needs since "a village is necessary": the sense of loneliness, depression and anxiety that characterise metropolitan dwelling leads us to dream more and more about recovering the living dimension of a hamlet, a small village. The voices calling for a return to living in small towns and villages are increasingly numerous and authoritative, and many ingredients are making this call appealing. In the immediacy of perceptive experience, the landscape of old villages speaks to us in a reassuring way, and not only by virtue of the familiarity of the lines that compose it. With its tendency to be curved, short of right angles, of truly straight lines and completely regular surfaces, the borough expresses itself largely in an analogical way, which is in itself closer to the living world, if not also physiognomic, and therefore typical of childhood. The village can be explored by walking and its walls can be touched with hands. You sit on the wood and stone. The smells, sometimes pleasant and sometimes less so, are those of life and nature. The older the walls of the village, the more they speak of a life continuity that has passed and even survived in spite of famine, epidemics, wars and individual tragedies. Materials and construction techniques evoke a craftsmanship handed down orally and though example from one generation to the next. And since every communication brings with it a metacommunication, all this speaks to us of stability and protection, of meaning, of a secure sense despite the daily effort and inevitable pain of existence.

As always, not all that glitters is gold. Those who have lived or live in a small town, perhaps belonging to it for generations, know constraints and restrictions that the habit of urban freedom cannot even conceive of tolerate: the pivot on which the town life revolves is the family, not the individual, and from an emotional point of

view that is more subterranean than visible on the surface, the town is populated by an inextricable and ancient interweaving of families and social codes that gives rise to an ultra-stable symbolic system (Schinco and Schinco 2016). Just as the roots in centuries-old trees woods give the land stability towards adverse natural events, at the same time they strongly constrain its nature and identity. A few examples: the village knows the prohibition, either openly expressed or concealed and perhaps for this reason even more compelling, to leave except for serious necessity. And if you go, you have to be committed to return; but if you come back, you have to come back unchanged in mentality and customs, and that is impossible. And having left the village, as long as you are elsewhere, you must stay there as a foreigner. In memory of Giovanni Verga, Pirandello wrote: "I was born in Sicily and there, man is born an island within an island and until death remains an island, even if he lives far from the harsh land of his birth surrounded by the immense and jealous sea" (Sabatino 2006). And almost inevitably, this is a source of suffering, whether one returns or not, at least for two or three generations.

This does not mean that turning to the living dimension of the small village is impossible or inadvisable. However, it requires awareness, realism and the ability to refrain from cultivating holidaymaker illusions. Actually, the dimension of living in a village or hamlet cannot be that of a return: it is a dimension to be re-invented. Re-invention faces basic issues that are currently the subject of exciting experimentation but are still far from finding practical and robust solutions to be applied widely: they concern education, work, mobility and in particular the way goods are produced. Once again, we are facing necessity states. Undoubtedly, the social constraints associated with the pandemic have accelerated the application, availability and acceptance of *home working*, *smart working* and distance learning formulas. New experimental ways of producing and building that bring production and dwelling together again rather than separate them are multiplying, sometimes with surprising results. But much has still to be invented, or rather re-invented: regardless of the scenarios that sooner or later will emerge and impose themselves on our attention, the memory of current dwelling, whether in a village or in a city, must not be erased, despised or reduced to a museum item if not to a "pro-loco" attraction, as many times has already happened. Once again, inventing is re-inventing: that is, making past and future dialogue, compare and clash, if necessary, but always in an encounter context.

Encounters, especially those that are difficult from an emotional and value point of view, take time to be achieved and this conflicts with the urgency of the needs that press upon us: how can we get out of this contradiction? In this circumstance, clinical psychology can suggest a path, deriving more from consolidated practice than from pure theory. Every psychotherapist knows that the resources which will lead to recovery must be confidently sought, as if they were hidden treasures, precisely where the maximum of suffering and pathology has settled. Not in nostalgia for the restoration of past happy conditions, nor in looking to the future with utopian optimism, will we be able to find the needed creativity source to emerge from the "crisis of the crisis". Rather, in ceasing to escape it, looking it in the face without being overwhelmed by fear. From the willingness to suffer the pain it brings, creativity,

resources and new ideas will spring forth. Pain itself will be more contained than if one would try to escape perpetually.

When a psychotherapist offers his patient a challenging journey of this kind, he also offers him a protected time and space to undertake it. The same happens to a person sick in the body, who is provided with special environmental and relational conditions so that he can emerge from his illness. Certainly, we cannot, nor would it be desirable, turn the planet into an endless psychotherapeutic or hospital setting; yet, if we really want to try and change, there is a need for a special context, although in quite different forms. In order to understand which path could be concretely taken, let us try to imagine a multiplicity of paths that human existence can follow simultaneously, focusing its conscious attention now more on one and then more on another. The first path is "taking care": this is characterised by the possibility of carrying out well and continuously concrete and small-scale interventions. Therefore, taking care is attention, looking after, service for the benefit of those in need, and is inseparable from relationship life, from the connection between living and living, human and human. There is no "smart" device that can take care of a human being. At most, it can help human beings to take care of each other, but it cannot replace them. Therefore, there is an urgent need to find a way of bringing people back into contact, close together in safety conditions, not just health; in short, to put them in a position to take care of each other.

Another path is a direct confrontation with an area of human life which the "crisis of the crisis", accelerated by the pandemic, has troubled more severely than any other; the one where the warm "feeling" of life and the cold "not feeling" of death, existence and non-existence join; a region of darkness, *chiaroscuro* and light (Schinco 2002), of impassable boundaries (Hartmann 2011) and transitions, bewilderment and hope, childhood and disenchantment, emptiness and serene fullness. This is the area of human spirituality. The very use of the term "spirituality" has become difficult, at the risk of generating a not genuine sound, because in the face of a profound crisis of traditional religiosity forms—the great organised religions as well as the popular religiosity of agri-pastoral matrix—individualistic, consumerist and at times intellectualistic practices and approaches have appeared, which have deservedly earned the name of "plasticized spirituality". In flying so low and so short-range, the human spirit finds no satisfaction, if only ephemeral and recreational. We speak of satisfaction not as the prerogative of a hedonistic or optional need, but as a question of meaning and significance. Let us not forget that the absence of meaning and significance cannot be long tolerated by human beings without psychological damage and deterioration of their essential dignity. Therefore, conditions should be promoted that facilitate, support and encourage adventures and flights of the human spirit. These conditions are very difficult to recognise in inhabited places where the stars have not been visible for a long time, the air is dirty and partly poisonous, silence exists only in sealed environments, suffering and vulnerability are regarded as a shame to be hidden and left behind as soon as possible, injustice and inequality are exhibited as a value, elders and ancestors are not honoured. In cities, trees are planted and grow pointing towards the sky. But if the earth and sky are separated either by real plastic

bubbles, as has been suggested for some metropolitan areas, or even just metaphorical, what meaning, other than utilitarian and decorative, will these trees have? If honestly looking at ourselves and our interiority, we recognise that we resemble the food neatly wrapped in plastic which we buy in the supermarket; it is time to start getting rid of that packaging and the fragmentation that makes it possible.

Finally, a further path is traced by the study of creative thought within the framework of dynamic systems and the theory of implicate orders (Bohm 1980; Bohm and Peat 1987; Peat 2008). Creative thought is driven by emerging configurations of thought, images and affects that manifest (explicate, as the Authors mentioned above would say) the presence of non-manifest (implicate, again in the Authors' terminology) orders. These configurations behave as real attractors. On the other hand, there are more or less prolonged times, in which they "do not emerge", do not manifest themselves in a recognisable way capable of making sense of the field, which consequently appears chaotic and dispersive. This does not mean that nothing is happening; the change that will become manifest (explicit) is prepared, so to speak, "underwater" or, to express ourselves more rigorously, in ways that escape the limited working circuits of our conscious mind. It is a question of going along with it, primarily avoiding to hinder it with excessive planning and decision-making interventions based on what Bateson (Bateson 1972) (Bateson and Bateson 1988) would call "conscious finality", instead maintaining an open disposition to the emergence of novelty. In Bateson's view, attempts to solve problems through analysis and decisions modelled unilaterally on the linear connection between causes and effects identified through the traditional method of isolating variables, easily lead to false solutions and new problems worse than those they were trying to solve, since the circular and systemic connection between the involved variables is not respected. The loosening of intentions and processes strongly aimed at the search for large-scale solutions, which inevitably end up suffocating many human beings, could appear like a "waste of time". Instead, we prefer to define it as a time of suspension (Peat 2008). It is not a question of rejecting grand projects or ambitious visions in principle, but rather of not falling into the illusion of " doing a lot and doing big, always doing more", which often, because of the ambitions and interests it can arouse, turns out to be a tempting path beyond its actual validity.

Following the paths that we have mentioned requires time; the time of suspension is combined with that of caring and of the spirit: thus, a true healing time takes shape. Even the use of this term requires caution and awareness. If we speak of healing in the context of mental health, whether individual or collective, let us remember once again that "healing" is neither a return to the *status quo ante* nor a pedestrian "repair" of what is broken. Healing is the development of new competencies, functions and attitudes that enhance (re-use!) what over time has suffered. For this to happen, in spite of the seriousness of the situations, it is necessary for thought to adopt a playful attitude (Schinco and Schinco 2018). Playfulness, as we know, requires free time, or a dedicated time, or even better, "extraordinary" time, as it is removed from ordinary practices and objectives. "Ordinary" practices, objectives and prejudices turn into real prisons from which one would not be able to escape if crises of such dimensions as to impose the framework of "extraordinariness" did not occur: we are

living it in this pandemic present. The extraordinariness of the situation is imposing an indispensable and inescapable framework to finally let us be free and live a time of healing.

3 Healing Time and Reuse

Under what conditions can practices of spaces and buildings reuse contribute to enhancing the healing time we are entering? Since both terms "reuse" and "healing" admit a multiplicity of different readings and meanings, it is necessary to clarify.

3.1 Healing and Health

About healing and health, the World Health Organisation points out that "health is a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health is a positive concept emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities" (WHO 1998). Within this framework, the vision is broadened and enriched in a processual and positive sense. Among the references introduced, which are conceptually vast and generally known, I would like to mention three that have a rather direct link with the dimension of practice and feasibility: "health gain", "health promotion" and, in the context of mental health, the concept of "recovery". "Health gain is a way to express improved health outcomes. It can be used to reflect the relative advantage of one form of health intervention over another in producing the greatest health gain" (WHO 1998). "Health promotion represents a comprehensive social and political process, it not only embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, but also action directed towards changing social, environmental and economic conditions so as to alleviate their impact on public and individual health. Health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over the determinants of health and thereby improve their health. Participation is essential to sustain health promotion action" (WHO 1998). It is worth emphasising here that the scope of health-promoting actions is vast and ranges from everyday life to the management of important environmental macro-variables. Finally, "from the perspective of the individual with mental illness, recovery means gaining and retaining hope, understanding of one's abilities and disabilities, engagement in an active life, personal autonomy, social identity, meaning and purpose in life and a positive sense of self. Recovery is not synonymous with cure. Recovery refers to both internal conditions experienced by persons who describe themselves as being in recovery - hope, healing, empowerment and connection - and external conditions that facilitate recovery - implementation of human rights, a positive culture of healing, and recovery-oriented services" (WHO 2013).

3.2 Reuse

About reuse, the benchmark is Henri Bergson's theory of knowledge. I have already approached this topic in previous contributions (Schinco 2020; Schinco and Schinco 2018). Here I intend to take it up again with a particular focus. The starting point is Bergson's synthesis of his own thought: "One can only know and understand what one can to some extent reinvent" (Bergson 1934). In this regard, Schinco and Schinco (2018) commented: "the Author tells us that something to know exists (he is not a subjectivist, nor a radical constructivist), as well as a pulse to knowledge intense enough to be disciplined. Then, he states that "to explain" why and "to show how" it is not enough. We need to comprehend, that is, find the meaning of what we know, and meaning shall come out of a whole experience. What there is to know has been invented: a demanding statement! When we have an invention, we have an inventor, no matters how one wants metaphysically define it. Bergson's stand is very clear: reality acts like a creative subject, not at all as an impersonal being, subjugated by rules, no matters whether they are mechanical or chaotic. Thus, the play of knowledge, instead that implying the trivial implementation of rules, requires a pledge to originality. However, just 'to some extent'. It is not allowed to re-invent anything without criterion. On the nature of this criterion, on its definition and measure, maybe the discussion will never end".

3.3 Urgence of Creation

The significance of Bergson's statement can only be fully grasped if it is related to other important insights. The first is by Bergson himself and concerns the nature of consciousness. Bergson defines consciousness as "urgency of creation". This is a dynamic definition on a phenomenological basis; consciousness is an active condition, characterised by a tension state between what is not yet and what is already there. The difference between the two states is radical and incessant, a boundary that can be likened to a kind of fracture from which reality flows incessantly, as water flows from a spring into the rock. Just as in the spring, the boundary between rock and water has a fractal nature (how can we define exactly where dryness ceases and wetness begins?), in the same way the boundary between memory and intuition of what is unseen is always present; it can only be treated as a definite quantity when, through narration and reflection, thought distances from itself. The panorama evoked by Bergson reminds us of the work of another author, Karl Jaspers, a psychiatrist and philosopher who, in an incomparable way, has shed light on the relationship between genius and madness. In Jaspers' conception (Jaspers 1919, 1951) the inner split condition that characterises the mental functioning in psychosis goes beyond the clinic boundaries, as it reflects a fundamental existential condition: the inevitable transcendent tension whereby the inner world—defined and structured in a logical and space-temporal way—faces, or rather is constantly attracted by, the indefinite,

the chaotic, the unknown, the incomprehensible. A tension that nourishes creativity, and is sustainable through physical, psychological and relational skills; conversely, a tension that can attack and destroy creativity itself if these skills fail. The genius and depth of Bergson's concept of knowledge as reinvention is evident in the passage that characterises a boundary, a limit that distinguishes the creativity inherent in the human condition from the psychosis that can attack it in various clinical and sub-clinical forms, diagnosed or not: precisely, "to some extent". A fractal boundary, for which some suffering condition and, in a broad sense, even a pathological negation of reality, is always present in the creative act. An act that, however, tends to heal itself in the moment in which it recognises its own limit and its own full humanity, also made up of suffering, vulnerability and evil; and vice versa, that sinks into madness to the extent that it denies all this by simulating an omnipotence or an innocence that do not belong to humanity. A creative act that is not the privilege of a few, but is necessary for all and whose mortification, when it occurs, configures a pervasive mortification of human subjectivity as such. We cannot afford not to "re-invent", and this is a peremptory invitation to approach reality not by considering it in as impersonal and looming, but as a creative subject, alive and ordered, even when the complexity of this order approaches the infinite, the unrepresentable, and appears to us as chaos. An invitation that becomes an inescapable necessity precisely where we would not want it to be: when reality becomes imbued not only with chaos, but also with evil and death. Despite the widespread prejudice that creativity is the condition of a small number of isolated individuals who tend to be anti-social, it naturally places us in an attitude of confrontation and dialogue, characterised by curiosity, respect, affection movement, openness to imagination, proposal and ability to listen. These are all strong points for a practice of reuse oriented towards community healing, seen as the recovery of meaning in the growth and development of a new health, rather than as an illusory repair.

4 Listenable Places

So, what characteristics should a place have to promote health and, even more, facilitate that community healing we so strongly need? I am not going to propose a manual-type answer, which would go through and summarise the numerous suggestions and indications that can be found in the literature and, particularly, in the documents attributable to the World Health Organisation or to initiatives connected with it. Instead, I would like to make an invitation to create and enhance what I metaphorically define as *listenable places*. I intentionally choose a metaphorical formulation both because of the truth value of metaphorical thought, which is capable of aesthetically represent the life processes, and also because of the inseparable connection between metaphor and the relationships world. Recalling once again the work by Bateson and his group (Bateson 1972), the quality of metaphorical thought and communication codes is in close connection with the quality of the relationships between the communication protagonists. The use of the term "listenable" should

not be misleading. These are not places that necessarily convey harmony, relaxation feelings and uplifting thoughts. There are parts of the human experience characterised by conflict, pain, despair, breathlessness and anguish, which are so extreme that they cannot be represented except in a cacophonous, discontinuous, disturbing way. However, unexpressed and hidden memories are poisonous to the souls of individuals, families, large and small communities. Therefore, also these memories must find an intelligent expression and representation if their poisonous potential wants to be rendered as harmless as possible and, when possible, transformed into medicine.

So, what characteristics must a place have to be defined as "listenable"? Finding effective and feasible expression codes is the task of planners and designers. We can ask them that the places they deal with

1. *avoid* the memory erasure, even when it is painful, politically uncomfortable, and lacerating on a human and value level (Schinco and Schinco 2015);
2. *promote* the expression of initiatives and affections, particularly those that struggle to find statement and language;
3. *give space* to the human condition as it is, not as we would like it to be;
4. *be sufficiently safe*, able to absorb the impact of discontinuity and difference;
5. *facilitate* the sharing of *time* and *mutual attention*;
6. do not hinder the feeling of the *interior dimension*, of the transcendence of the human spirit from which only *high-profile* values can derive;
7. require, while respecting the possibilities of each individual, the exercise of *responsibility*.

By taking care of places this way, one can legitimately aspire to give life to places that in turn take care of the people who dwell them and lead them over time to follow healing community paths.

5 Conclusion

While great masses of people migrate from countries ravaged by conflict and misery in search of a chance to survive and above all to grow, the "crisis of the crisis" is also forcing us, the inhabitants of the rich countries, to an existential migration towards a borderland where, although feeling attracted by a vague awareness of its inescapable presence, certainly we would not have set foot on our own initiative. We are facing necessity states of an existence understood in its entirety and in the full sense of its transcendent rootedness; here, the spirit's horizons and abysses are deeply incarnated in corporeality and in overwhelming streams made of affections, fantasies, and memories. Not only are they rooted, indeed they are "interred" in the natural environment, which is waiting for at least a sign from us to set in motion the powerful processes of recovery and renewal that have characterised it since long before we existed. Overcoming our existential crisis implies profound changes in the way we produce and use goods, we move around the territory, work, spend our time and communicate, and in the way we design places. Above all, it implies a radical change,

or at least a greater availability, towards that area, which is both individually interior and ritually collective, which we define as "the area of inquietude". A borderline area between what we are able to express in a performative, narrative, iconic, musical way, in any case codified by shared rules, and what is instead chaotic by nature, pervasive even more than participatory, beyond solid and well-defined distinctions between subject and object, and between these and the environment. This experience is abductive and generates tension, since it demands resolution but cannot obtain it. Since the Age of Enlightenment, this is an area of the self that vainly attempted to be confined to the margin, that of mystics, artists, madmen or of those who in one way or another practice excess. It is an area that rebels against its confinement and when it does not obtain hearing and visibility, it violently demands them, with a violence that can become inhuman.

Granting this listening and visibility will allow us healing and salvation, because the solutions we need will be able to lean on memory and indeed treasure it, though they will not spring from memory. They will be creative, new, unimagined, still undreamed solutions, and can only arise from a stormy "urgency of creation". However, unless we want to risk being overwhelmed, or even devastated on a psychological and physical level, the confrontation with the creative area of our consciousness is quite demanding: it requires consolidated skills, functioning relationships, clarity of values, recovery of a spiritual dimension of existence. This is a long-term commitment that will last for generations and will require a serious revision of our education systems.

References

Bateson G (1972) Steps to an ecology of mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology. University Of Chicago Press, Chicago

Bateson G, Bateson MC (1988) Angels fear: towards an epistemology of the sacred. University of Chicago Press, Chicago

Bergson H (1934) La Pensée et le mouvant. Essais et conférences. Alcan, Paris

Bohm D (1980) Wholeness and the implicate order. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London

Bohm Dm Peat FD (1987) Science, order and creativity. Bantam Books, New York

Hartmann E (2011) Boundaries, a new way to look at the world. CIRCC EverPress, Summerland

Jaspers K (1919) Psychologie der Weltanschauungen. Springer, Berlin

Jaspers K (1951) Strindberg und Van Gogh. Piper Verlag GmbH

Pavese C (1950) La luna e i falò. Einaudi, Torino

Peat FD (2008) Gentle action—bringing creative change in a turbulent world. Pari Publishing, Pari

Sabatino M (2006) M. Tra la mia perduta gente. Lettere e poesie, epilogo. La Moderna Edizioni, Enna

Schinco M (2002) O divina bellezza … o meraviglia. Uno psicoterapeuta ascolta Turandot. Carabà, Milano

Schinco M (2020) Dreams. the relational link between nocturnal and diurnal creativity. In: Anzani A (ed), Mind and places—a multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer Series in Design and Innovation, Cham

Schinco M, Schinco S (2015) Spazi travagliati: tempo, affetti e memoria nei processi di identità territoriale. In: Piselli A (ed), Alteridentità. luoghi narrati, luoghi taciuti, luoghi comuni. Durango Edizioni, Manerbio

Schinco S, Schinco M (2016) Attracted by the future, conditioned by the past, shaped by our decisions: that's where a place is. In: Lytovka O (ed), The place of memory and memory of place. Interdisciplinary Research Foundation Press, Warsaw

Schinco M, Schinco S (2018) The "ephemeral architectures" as an example of play and re-invention in shared processes of creative knowledge. In: Amoruso G (ed), Putting tradition into practice: heritage, place and design. Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering 3. Cham, Springer International Publishing AG

World Health Organization (1998). Health promotion glossary. Geneva

World Health Organization (2013) Mental health action plan 2013–2020. Geneva

Living Painful Boundaries

Ada Piselli

Abstract Bad things happen in specific places and times and leave more or less visible scars, memories that convey identity and condition future choices. Communities must decide what to do with these places that are so full of history, but also of pain. Whether it is a matter of erecting monuments or tombstones ex-novo or of finding a new use for existing buildings, in any case it is a question of handling not only tangible material, bricks and concrete, but delicate and fragile human material, which deeply touches on issues such as belonging, memory and identity. It is not just something that concerns the past, quite the contrary. It is something about how we dwell these painful boundaries together in the present, and how we will dwell them in the future (and how our children, and our children's children, will dwell them). Therefore, deciding what to do with these places is not just a matter of design or town planning, but looks like something that involves psychological aspects of boundaries, wounds, pain, memory and identity. The decision-making processes related to these places should be rethought at a meta-level that also includes psychological aspects in a relational, ecological, complex and creative way, in order to take care of the collective wounds. So that boundaries can become thresholds.

Keywords Boundaries · Wound · Care · Process · Time · Living Together

1 Places in the Clinic

In my work as a systemic psychotherapist with individuals, couples and families, I often work on the theme of place. For instance, with young adults who are struggling with the difficulties of moving away, "leaving the father's house" is often both a metaphor and a life urge, that occupies the mind and the sessions. Couples discuss where to settle. Families find themselves dealing with property inheritances that carry ancient issues of loyalty, alliances, rivalries. I meet people who have left their places of origin, for different reasons, and cannot return. Children, even adults, for whom "going home" means returning to the place where they have been hurt or abused;

A. Piselli (✉)
Centro Milanese di Terapia della Famiglia, Milan, Italy

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_13

and so, they do not go back at all, putting kilometers of distance, in the hope that this distance will also become emotional; or they go back and feel bad every time, consumed by the desire that "this time" it will be different. Children who have never had a space of their own, even just a drawer, and are unable to leave places where they have never belonged. Mothers-in-law who enter married children's homes without knocking, using their own keys. I meet adults who can't wait to get rid of family properties at the cost of selling them off, with the illusion that they can also get rid of all the emotions that these places evoke, and adults who keep their parents' house like a mausoleum, ending up living in houses haunted by memories and ghosts that leave no room for the present and the future. Couples who separate and have to decide what to do with the conjugal home: situations in which continuing to live where you were happy—and then betrayed—means living inside a shattered dream.

When we talk about places in therapy, it is clear that we are talking about something that literally embodies themes such as boundaries, memory, identity. Themes linked to the affective and relational events of families and time. Themes that carry huge pains which are not exclusively located in the past, but are alive in the present and condition decisions for the future. A house is not just a house, especially if it is the father's house, but a place charged with personal and family meanings that are sometimes incandescent.

For people who undergo therapy, i.e., who look for a way to take care of their wounds and feel better in their lives, handling these places becomes an opportunity to handle something else, often an emotional material that they have been trying to contain for a long time in other ways, perhaps even with symptoms. And, although life sets concrete, material constraints on us (we cannot bulldoze the house of the grandfather who abused us, nor take our beloved home away with helium balloons), the choices on places made during therapy can make an important contribution to alleviating pain, giving space and time to deal with grief, restoring pieces of a sense that seemed lost, holding together memory and future possibilities. Many therapies contain some form of affective and material renegotiation of the relationship with places: sometimes, they are major changes such as moving, selling or relocating; other times they are smaller movements, such as planting flowers on the terrace, adding or removing photographs from the shelves, closing the door of one's room; but they all have to do with feeling better in a place that was previously experienced as uncomfortable, when not definitely unbearable. On the level of meanings, these renegotiations concern the issue of boundaries (Hartmann 2011; Piselli 2020): painful boundaries that are "felt", recognised, explored, thinned, thickened, dwelled.

It is clear that the therapist is not a surveyor, a real estate broker nor a designer. Yet, somehow, the therapist also constructs a space for his clients, a space with material boundaries (the studio where he receives them, a welcoming and reserved space) and immaterial (time, the rules of the setting). It is good that these boundaries are rather thick, so that a space can be created inside in which both individual's boundaries can be thinned, in which one can experience proximity without judgment and without invasion, in which pain is welcomed, as well as joy, fear and finally hope.

It should be emphasized that thick boundaries around therapy do not make it (and according to the writer should not make it) a parallel dimension, disconnected

from the world. It is well known that in Freud's clinical works there is no trace of Nazis, or of workers or any consideration on the condition of childhood or of women. The systemic model always considers the individual in his physical and relational environment, as well as the connections and feedback between them (Bateson 1972). The therapy does not focus only on the individual or on the family environment but extends its gaze to include social and cultural contexts.

In therapy, we mainly deal with "private" places, both in terms of ownership and in terms of the events that have happened there and the people who took part in them. History, as well as extended cultural and social systems, is always the background—both for the therapist and for the patients—and it enters the sessions with a degree of penetration that depends on many factors, not least the contextual strength of macroscopic events and their involvement of the people who are in therapy. For instance, the financial crisis of 2008 forcefully entered many sessions in terms of economic difficulties and job losses, which involved worry, despair, family and individual crises, in addition to the social ones that we all remember very well. And how could we not mention the recent Covid-19 pandemic, which has upset the relationship of all western people with public and private spaces, which has changed first of all the setting of many therapies (it has been more than 18 months that between me and my patients a further boundary has been added, a device screen in online sessions and the mask in those in presence, a boundary that needs to be dwelled with great humanity and professional competence) and which has entered forcefully the contents of many sessions, in terms of grief, anguish, loneliness, helplessness, fear of contagion, worries for the near and distant future. Even in these situations, in which the world and history enter the sessions, it is clear that the therapist's goal remains the exercise of systemic wisdom (Bateson 1972), in the awareness that no part of the system can unilaterally control the system and that, however, there is always a margin, sometimes millimetric, to try to feel better, even just a little more comfortable, even in these situations beyond our direct control.

It is within this space that a process of change can be generated, in which we move recursively over past, present, and future, in which we work on levels and meta-levels (Bateson 1972), contexts, relationships. In which the therapist does not already know the solutions and does not give advice, but stands next to people with his professional skills and humanity, favoring the emergence of new, unexplored possibilities. It is a generative, creative process that needs both a space to contain it and a time, sometimes even a lot of time.

2 Dwelling Painful Boundaries

The considerations expressed above can also be extended to places that affect the life of communities, sometimes of entire nations. I refer to places that embody painful, uncomfortable, controversial memories. Places that have been the scene of terrible tragedies, which have torn entire communities apart, and show the scars of past wounds. Deciding what to do with these places is a delicate and urgent question, in

light of the profound changes that have taken place in our societies. In fact, these places convey memories, identities, possibilities for the future. But they also bring with them divisions and conflicts. The tension between the need to preserve historical memory and that to "move forward", to "bury the hatchet" is almost always declined as an *either-or* that generates irreconcilable positions. And so, in our cities, we are witnessing clumsy attempts to reconcile the irreconcilable: endless debates between conservation and innovation that, precisely as they are expressed, are destined to never reach a solution.

They are places where individual and collective boundaries meet, touch, sometimes collide. The boundaries (Hartmann 2011; Piselli 2020) can be thin or thick and it must be emphasized that one condition is not preferable than the other. The critical aspect, if anything, is the stiffening of the boundaries on a single position, without the possibility of thickening or thinning them depending on the internal and external circumstances in which people find themselves. In the mentioned situations, it is more frequently a matter of very thick boundaries, which separate "us", with our memories, truths, identities from "them", with other memories, truths, identities. So thick and painful individual and group boundaries make dialogue difficult, even proximity intolerable, a mediation that does not appear to be a debasement of either position impossible. And even with these thick boundaries, in these thick boundaries, just like prominent scars on our skin, we find ourselves living together in those same cities, those same places that were the theater of horrors and pain, as Aramburu masterfully tells in his novel *Homeland* (2016). Bittori, an unforgettable character, had to leave her home, her country because, after her husband Txato was murdered by ETA, she was no longer welcome in the community. It is a story of thick boundaries: Txato was not deployed, he simply refused to give money to ETA, but when identity boundaries thicken, in a climate of war and violence, the logic of "Either with us or against us" prevails. And Txato becomes a traitor who deserves to die. It is the same logic that overwhelms Miren, Bittori's best friend and the mother of Joxe Mari, the man accused of the murder, who espouses her son partisanship, so as not to betray him. And so, two families linked by an ancient friendship find themselves separated by a thick boundary, which runs through and divides the entire small community of the village and, in the background, the entire nation. Therefore, Bittori lives far away, next to the cemetery where Txato rests, and decides to return to his home, first at night, secretly, then in an increasingly manifest way: she opens the shutters, enters the bar, crosses the square in broad daylight. Bittori is not an activist, her movements across the small town are not a demonstration of some principle, they are not a provocation, have no "political" intention in the strict sense. Rather, they are the sign of an intimate and profound need to regain possession of a place, to take care of it and take care of her wounds, to live again that painful boundary, together with an old friend and a torn community. And in this sense, they are definitely political.

In time, in care, in mercy (Schinco) and in forgiveness, the boundary can thin out and become a threshold (La Cecla 2000). The threshold is a potential passage, not without possible stumbling blocks, in which differences remain, of course, but in which looking at each other, distinguishing each other, recognizing each other becomes (again) practicable. One can remain on the threshold, even for a long time,

and it is still an encounter. And one can cross it, as long as he or she is willing to be welcomed by the other and to recognize this welcome as something that changes both. Aramburu shows us how complex and painful this process is, how much affects, identity, belonging are called into question, how long it takes. And how much space it takes. The small town is both scenery and character, in the novel as well as in life.

Now let's imagine for a second that, some time after Txato's death and Bittori's return to town, someone proposes to dedicate a plaque, a monument to what happened. The first question could be: dedicated to whom? Txato was not a hero, nor a traitor. He was what today we would call a small business owner, an amateur cyclist, a husband and a father. Nothing that "deserves" an equestrian monument, in fact. Yet he was important to many people, his family, his friends, his employees. And his death marked, remarked, a painful boundary for the whole community. Then yes, a plaque or a street could be named after him, perhaps the alley where he was killed. In fact, our cities are full of plaques, headstones, streets and squares dedicated to victims of more or less known tragic events; often, it should be noted, rather than preserving the memory these celebrations obtain the result of maintaining rigid and opposing identities, which become inflamed during the decision-making processes, which calm down, but not pacify, only later on. And the names on the tombstones remain as good as addresses, but the stories are lost. Or you could think of a monument, or a plaque, dedicated to women, Bittori and Miren, of course, and their daughters, and the women of the village, who found themselves living in painful boundaries without having chosen them, out of love, out of loyalty, by belonging. Or to the whole town, to the wound that still tears it, to the scar that remains and runs through the whole of it. It is something of which we all are and have been witnesses, both in our communities and as a "global village" (just think of events that have occupied newspapers around the world such as the events about the reconstruction of Ground Zero in New York, or those related to Hitler's birthplace in Austria).

Before any consideration of the final "product" (architecture, design, plaque or commemorative headstone), as a systemic therapist I believe we should stop and reflect on the processes that precede the actual design, processes that are political acts, in the sense that they involve the whole polis, and acts that have to do with treatment. These are complex processes that necessarily raise a series of questions on several levels (actually, in the collective imagination, therapists ask a lot of questions).

The first issue to question concerns the context: who asks for a monument to be erected? Is it a request from the (entire) family? A part of the community? The whole community? Is it a decision imposed from above in the context of some national pacification process? Are all cities doing this where something similar has happened? Why right now?

The second concerns the process: who participates in the decision-making process? Are Txato's and Joxe Mari's family members involved? And the parish priest of the town? And Joxe Mari's companions? And the trial judges? Is it possible to really make these people meet around a table? Is a dialogue possible? A mutual recognition of the common living within that painful memory, that wounded boundary? What could help closeness or dialogue? Only once an authentically participatory process of this type has started, the next step could have to do with deciding how to

translate this wound (at this point in the process of healing) into an object/product and then involve the design. Of course, the ideal would be that the designer could assist and participate in the whole process, to be able to tell and represent, with the tools and creativity that belong to him, not only the story of Txato, but the whole path, which is precisely the path of care.

Therefore, within and outside the narrative context of this example, it is clear that design cannot be asked to deal with a process of this magnitude on its own, not even from the transdisciplinary perspective that is emerging (Anzani 2020). It is equally clear that what is being suggested here is not some form of "community psychotherapy". Rather, the idea is to inscribe the decision-making processes and therefore the design of some "wounded" places within a broader framework of community care.

3 Taking Care of Places

So, do spaces heal? Yes, they also do. Or rather, the process through which we decide what to do with painful spaces can become a process through which wounded communities take care of themselves. A process which, like the therapeutic one, does not seek immediate and common-sense solutions, but manages to tolerate uncertainty, fatigue and pain. It holds together contexts and levels without hasty and superficial appeasement. It allows for the expression of creative processes, not only of "professional" creatives, such as designers, but of all those involved.

3.1 Process

On the morning of August 2nd 1980, a bomb exploded in the Bologna railway station. It was the first day of the summer holidays and thousands of people had set out for the sea. The Bologna station was, and still is, an important and busy railway hub. 85 people were killed, and hundreds were injured in a fascist terrorist attack that remains today one of the darkest pages of recent Italian history. This attack deeply shook public opinion, marking a line, a clear boundary between a "before" and an "after". Italian and foreign deviated secret services sidetracked the investigations for a long time, in the collusive silence of parts of the state. A long and painful legal matter followed, which has not yet come to a definitive conclusion. Since the massacre, the clock outside the station had stopped at 10.25, the exact time of the explosion. But in 2001, 21 years later, *Ferrovie dello Stato*, the Italian company that manages the railway lines and stations, decided to fix the clock so that it would start to keep the correct time again. Indeed, it was a rational and common-sense decision: many years had passed since the massacre, in the meantime the Bologna station had become an even more important hub for Italian and foreign travelers, and when you are in a station you look at your watch to know if you are in time to catch the train, so the clock must be showing the correct time. Yet, this rational and common-sense

decision provoked a national uprising: the families of the victims, the then mayor of Bologna, politicians, intellectuals, many protested against the decision to fix the clock.[1] So *Ferrovie dello Stato* decided to stop the clock once more, which since then has marked 10.25 again. The Bologna station still shows the signs of the attack: there is a hole in the floor and a gash in the wall, with the names of the victims engraved around it, in the exact spot where the bomb exploded. There are indeed many clear traces that the killing took place. So why has a watch become so important? I believe there are at least two levels. The first level concerns the content (the affects, the memories, conveyed by the clock) and a second level concerns the decision-making process.

Even though 21 years had already passed since the massacre, the legal matter was still going with difficulty (the third trial ended only in 2020), so what had happened in Bologna was not a thing of the past, but, in 2001, it was something that was happening in the present. There is a shared time, marked precisely by clocks, and there are many individual times, which do not necessarily go at the same speed (Boscolo and Bertrando 1993). Therefore, time was still blocked, for the families of the victims and for a large part of society, who demanded justice. Psychological and moral wounds were not yet closed and were causing great pain. Preserving memory is not a simple matter. Restarting the clock meant restarting time, leaving the attack behind and moving forward, without a historical or legal or at least shared truth that could make sense and help heal wounds. Even "healing" is a complex issue, both for individuals and communities. It does not only have to do with the disappearance of symptoms and pain, quite the opposite: it requires time and compassion, and some form of truth. It needs love, closeness, places and times to connect with pain and space for hope.

The second level concerns the way in which *Ferrovie dello Stato* made the decision to restart the clock. As mentioned above, decision-making processes can become important frames of meaning, also in terms of care. To date, this still seems an "orphan" decision, with no one to claim paternity. It seems it came out of nowhere, a simple, rational, common-sense choice made by some anonymous bureaucrat without any ethical intention and without an aesthetic thought: the clock is broken and needs to be fixed. Rationality and conscious finality (Bateson 1972) in their maximum expression. There was no public debate nor any attempt to involve the victims' families or parts of politics or society in the decision-making process; apparently, politics or design were not addressed. It is clear that these things require time, and a lot of effort for all the actors involved; but they can lead to shared decisions, or at least generate shared and participatory decision-making processes. This decision literally fell on the heads of families and society, without knowing why or by whom, in a sense just like the attack. The watch was not only a property of the company, it had become not a symbol, but a piece, made of matter, of that dramatic event that had involved a large part of the community. When the wounds are open, they hurt; we are human, fragile, mortal. And when suffering and feelings are denied and neglected,

[1] https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strage_di_Bologna (last accessed 2021/07/16); https://www.repubblica.it/online/cronaca/orologio/serra/serra.html (last accessed 2021/07/16).

then the human being is denied and neglected in its complexity (Gruen) and in its relationships with each other and with places, memories, identities. Any decision then risks becoming "inhuman": that is, without human beings involved and without care for the psychological, ecological, and aesthetic aspects.

3.2 Memory

Remembering is an action that takes place in the present and that concerns both past events and current inclinations. Remembering is not like opening a file on your computer, which sits there unchanged, but it is an individual or collective active reconstruction of past events, based on the knowledge, conditions, intentions and emotions of the present. The past does not change, but the meanings we attribute to events can profoundly change. Present dispositions lead us to have to keep together narratives with different affective colors, sometimes even dissonant, which raise questions of loyalty and can generate suffering. For example, in therapy, people find themselves having to put together the childhood memory of a loving grandfather with the knowledge learned years after that the same grandfather may have done a great harm to their father, causing him enormous pain. The question becomes not so much "choosing" who the "real" grandfather was, and not even belatedly siding with the father (even if this awareness finally explains why parents always stayed with grandparents for a short time), but rather holding these narratives together, in a complex vision which excludes neither tenderness nor anger, nor one's childhood memories nor the father's experiences.

Something similar also happens with historical characters and with collective memories. For example, the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, UK, was at the center of a process of this type, which is not exactly virtuous.[2] Colston was a seventeenth-century English merchant, best remembered for his philanthropy (he financed schools and homes for the poor, hospices, hospitals, and churches out of his own pocket) for which a statue of him was erected in Bristol, his hometown. Starting from the 90s of the twentieth century, English historians have highlighted his participation in the slave trade from Africa to America. As historical evidence of his involvement in human trafficking emerged, a request was raised that the plaque under the statue be changed, including the new information, or that the statue be torn down. In 2018, the municipality of Bristol commissioned a local historian to write a new epigraph to be added under the statue. However, the following year, when the epigraph, which tried to keep philanthropy and slavery together, was ready, the municipal administration had changed and the new mayor vetoed it, promising a new plaque, and appointing new experts. On June 7th 2020, the statue was shot down and thrown into the sea by Black Lives Matter protesters demonstrating against the brutal killing of George

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Colston (last accessed 2021/07/16); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statue_of_Edward_Colston (last accessed 2021/07/16); https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-bristol-57350650 (last accessed 2021/07/16).

Floyd, an African American by police in the United States. Subsequently, the statue was fished out of the water and exhibited in the Bristol Museum since June 2021. The exhibition is considered a starting point for "a dialogue on our shared history". The city of Bristol has announced that citizens will decide what to do with the statue in a public consultation. One of the members of the commission in charge of managing this passage stated that they intend to use this opportunity to understand what the inhabitants think, because, he still says "we must live together in this city". This time, it seems that the conditions are in place for a participatory process, which can really involve citizens and contribute to the treatment of very ancient and terribly current wounds. A process of this type and scale takes a long time. Meanwhile, a suggestion came from art. A few days after the statue was demolished, on June 9th 2020, the artist known as Banksy published a sketch on his Instagram profile with a suggestion on what to do with the empty plinth in Bristol.[3] The drawing depicts people in the act of pulling Colston's statue down with ropes. The caption reads: "Here is an idea that caters to both those who miss the Colston statue and those who don't. We pull it up from the water, put it back on the plinth, tie ropes around its neck and commission life-size bronze statues that represent the demonstrators pulling it down. All happy. A great day commemorated". Perhaps Banksy's was just a provocation, yet interesting elements can be glimpsed in this idea barely suggested. If Banksy's work were carried out, it would represent not only Colston, a slaver and philanthropist, but also the change that occurred in Bristol citizens, at least in a part of them, and the lost opportunity (not forever, fortunately) to rewrite the story together, stretching many levels together. In some ways, it would be a meta-logical sculpture (Bateson 1972), which would tell a relationship, a context, rather than a character. And it could create a threshold: an opening in the boundaries to look at each other, see the differences and feel the analogies, and to meet. And after the meeting, people are no longer the same.

4 Conclusion

Too thick boundaries generate separations that risk dehumanizing the other. It is something that we tragically witness every day, for example here in Europe with respect to wretched people crossing the Mediterranean, or in the United States with respect to desperate people trying to cross the boundary from Mexico. The too clear division between "I"/"we" (my people, my community, my nation) and "you"/"they" can lead to the denial of any profound, vital and necessary interconnection with both the environment and with the other. The reasons, the truth, the feelings, the very right to life are on one side only, "ours". This leads to acting exclusively for the survival of the "we", in competition or even to the detriment of the other, natural environment or people, without empathy, without compassion and without any ethical consideration (Bateson 1972). These boundaries have ancient and painful roots, they persist over

[3] https://www.instagram.com/banksy/?hl=it (last accessed 2021/07/16).

time and tend to become even thicker and more rigid when some form of threat is perceived (Hartmann 2011). And the world today, with its changes and uncertainties, appears definitely threatening. These boundaries cannot be broken down easily or abruptly. We all remember with emotion the night when the Berlin Wall "fell down", one of the most hateful boundaries of the twentieth century; but what happened on that night in November 1989 was only a very visible passage of a long process, which certainly did not take place that night. However, it is also unthinkable to "bypass" these boundaries, creating thresholds in other contexts with more subtle boundaries such as sport, culture, music, or religion. Sure, these contexts can help, but some painful issues tend to re-emerge, as evidenced by the recent attacks to black football players of the England national team. In short, we must go through the wounds.

Therefore, when these too thick boundaries are encountered, the strategy cannot and must not be elusive or even aggressive, aimed at breaking them down, even if one is on the side of reason. That's why I think having recovered Colston's statue and exhibited it in a museum makes sense: monuments or buildings can, sometimes must, be demolished, but memories and identities and the boundaries that delimit them, which are painful boundaries, cannot be demolished. Therefore, it is necessary to think of longer, complex and multi-level processes that involve delicate individual and collective psychological aspects. Even the most unseizable fortress has an access door. The real challenge is to find a way to lower the drawbridge. We need to think of processes and therefore of places that favor and allow the opening of thresholds (La Cecla 2000), without Trojan horses. Processes and places where we can feel safe enough to meet the other, without the fear of being invaded, or getting lost, or being deceived. Meeting the other does not mean denying differences, nor does it mean flattening historical truths into a dangerous relativism. It means being able to recognize the humanity of the other, his suffering, his hope. And once recognized, it can no longer be denied as easily as before. The meeting on the threshold changes both, forever. And it can signal the start of a new process, which can generate other changes, if conditions permit. Taking care of places in this light means taking responsibility for processes that favor these conditions, with different skills and professionalism, but above all with rigor, ethics and hope.

In his *Vocabulary of desires* (2020) the Israeli writer Eskhol Nevo dedicates a poignant voice to the word wound. It's a small story about a little girl who injures her finger while she is at the supermarket with her dad. Two shop assistants take care of the child, console her, make her laugh. The father feels grateful, joins his hands and feels his heart expand in his chest "as if to take up more space". The supermarket is in some city in Israel, the father and the child are Jews, the shop assistants are Arab. "Racism, anti-racism, big words. In the end, it's the small moments that are decisive, I hope".

References

Anzani A (ed) (2020) Mind and places - a multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer Series in Design and Innovation, Cham

Anzani A, Guglielmi E (eds) (2017) Memoria, bellezza e transdisciplinarità - Riflessioni sull'attualità di Roberto Pane. Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna

Aramburu F (2016) Patria. Guanda

Bateson G (1972) Steps to an ecology of mind: collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology. University Of Chicago Press, Chicago

Boscolo L, Bertrando P (1993) I tempi del tempo. Bollati Boringhieri, Torino

Gruen A (2007) The betrayal of the self: the fear of autonomy in men and women. Human Development Books

Gruen A (2011) War or peace? We cannot survive with real-politik. International Psychohistorical Association, Fordham University, June 9, 2011. http://www.cosmicdreaming.com/warorpeace.html

Hartmann E (2011) Boundaries. CIRCC EverPress, Summerland, A new way to look at the world

La Cecla F (2000) Perdersi. L'uomo senza ambiente, Editori Laterza, Bari

Nevo E (2020) Vocabolario dei desideri. Neri Pozza

Piselli A (a cura di) (2015) Alteridentità. Durango Edizioni, Manerbio

Piselli A (2017) Io e noi. Abitare i luoghi e le memorie. In: Anzani A, Guglielmi E (a cura di) Memoria, bellezza e transdisciplinarità - Riflessioni sull'attualità di Roberto Pane. Maggioli Editore, Santarcangelo di Romagna

Piselli A (2020) Boundaries. Dwelling in the boundaries. In: Anzani A (ed) Mind and places - a multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer Series in Design and Innovation, Cham

Schinco M (2015) Epiphanies of Right, Epiphanies of Evil: eleogenetic practices as an alternative to a «problem based » reality. http://www.slideshare.net/beinetter/krakow-eleogenetic-2015-online

Schinco M, Schinco S (2015) Spazi travagliati: tempo, affetti e memoria nei processi di identità territoriale. In: Piselli A, (ed) Alteridentità. Luoghi narrati luoghi taciuti, luoghi comuni. Durango Edizioni, Manerbio

Being Together as a Body Exercise. Ethnographic Perspectives

Paola Briata

Abstract In a multi-ethnic and multicultural city, being together is also a body exercise, a habit to different smells, tastes, skin colours, to heterogeneous ways of understanding proximity and distance. To understand how individuals and groups shape their existence in the city of differences, we cannot consider them as subjects without a body, but rather as actors who produce and receive sensory stimuli. A way of living together, sometimes of "disturbing" each other, which involves spaces and bodies. The body is one of the means through which knowledge is acquired, and the chapter makes an explicit positioning on ethnographic methodologies to explore the links between spaces and bodies, reconstructing the fundamental moments of the so-called "sensory turn" in anthropological studies. Several examples are mobilised to recount the extent to which the senses contribute to defining otherness, establishing tolerance thresholds, tracing material and symbolic boundaries between foreigner and native, but also between rich and poor. And again, the senses can be a register for giving or not giving value to people's lives, helping to construct norms and policies. The pandemic crisis has unequivocally highlighted how closely interrelated spaces and bodies are. But defending oneself "from the other" may have become an automatism: it is a drift to which we must pay attention so as not to lose the many conquests already achieved in so many gyms of coexistence that we call cities.

Keywords Multicultural City · Space · Bodies · Society · Multisensory Ethnography

1 The Pandemic City as a Lens on Spaces and Bodies

Milan, October 2019. I return home on the last metro in a day of transport strike. I share an "intimate" space (Hall 1966) with a lot of people, but especially with a man who is inevitably leaning against me; I think he is as attentive as I am to every

P. Briata (✉)
Dastu, Politecnico di Milano, Milan, Italy
e-mail: paola.briata@polimi.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_14

movement he makes. The situation does not allow us to say that we are uncomfortable, but we are.

Milan, June 2020. I take the metro for the first time after the lockdown that stopped Italy in the first Covid-2019 wave. I choose a time when I think the train is empty, and it is. So, I see in all their (also graphic) power the signs on the floor saying "stay here"; the ones indicating which seats are usable and which are not; the arrows that indicate the directions of entry and exit. I think back to the last metro on that strike day. This space full of instructions makes me uncomfortable, even if it is a different kind of discomfort.

I have been reflecting on the themes proposed in this chapter for some years now, but today I find myself starting it in a different way than I had imagined. The starting point was the conviction that, in a multi-ethnic and multicultural city, being together is also an exercise of the body: a habit of different smells, tastes, skin colours, heterogeneous ways of understanding proximity and distance (Amin 2012; Briata 2019, 2020). Today, I believe it is impossible to write about "spaces and bodies" without mentioning the pandemic that has affected the whole world since the end of 2019. Although I do not want to talk about it, it is interesting to observe how the health crisis has unequivocally highlighted, on the one hand, how closely spaces and bodies are interrelated, and on the other hand how the social polarisation that now characterises our cities (Piketty 2014; Cucca, Ranci 2017; Alacevic, Soci 2019) is also reflected in the "space availability" that each body has at its disposal.

Some have written that in the face of the virus we are all equal because it can indiscriminately affect anyone, but this is not the case: the pandemic has made more evident social divisions and how these have also a spatial dimension. "I'll stay at home", the most basic containment strategy adopted during lockdowns, highlights the impossibility of doing so and the greater exposure to the disease of those who do not have a home, as well as the difficult coexistence of bodies in the space of those who have a small flat and a large family.

The virus has made more evident injustices, but also how we live in the encumbrance and impediment of the body (Bianchetti 2020; Bianchetti, Boano, Di Campli 2020). A body that touches, impacts, perceives and knows space in a direct and carnal relationship. Butler (2020) underlines how vulnerability also recalls the porous and interdependent character of our bodily and social lives. Humans inhale the air that other people exhale. The human trace that someone leaves on the multiple surfaces that constitute the materiality of the world can pass from one body to another.

This reciprocal, material sharing describes a crucial dimension of our vulnerability: the interdependencies of our embodied social lives. It is no coincidence that the response to the vulnerability of bodies towards the threat has been a strategy of separation and containment, which hat operates by drawing perimeters between environments, ecologies, subjects and social groups. In other pages (Briata et al. 2018), I have described how a public transport is also a place of urban compression of bodies that can teach us a lot about living together in the space of the city. Since Covid-2019, compression in public spaces is "regulated" through the multiplication of confines between bodies. A spatial separation between clean and dirty, safe and dangerous,

healthy and sick, foreign and familiar, which configures fences and distances previously absent, sometimes making a regime of prohibition and surveillance normal and accepted.

If living together among strangers is also an exercise of the body, the pandemic has made this exercise much more difficult, because it has exponentially narrowed the circle of "family members", while exponentially enlarging the group of "strangers", potential carriers of a threat. This is perhaps as risky as an accepted regime of surveillance. I shall move away from the virus in these pages, but it was not possible to begin this essay without mentioning it.

2 Ethnography as a "Full Contact" Match

I believe that one of the privileged methods of investigating togetherness as a body exercise are ethnographic routes, and I will try to explain the reason for this positioning. Ethnography implies forms of direct participant observation i.e., being for a long period of time in the contexts and among the people one wants to study. It is a multisensory "full contact" match in space, with other people, even those who are very different from those who are involved in the research (Cefaï 2013; Ocejo 2013). The researchers can be even deeply touched by the situation they are studying, can appreciate it, but also feel distant from it. In any case, participant observation implies the impossibility of being "indifferent" and one's own reactions are also an object of reflection. These reactions are linked not only to what one sees, but also to what one hears, eats and smells.

Attention to the multisensory dimension has become increasingly central to ethnographic research. In his *Doing Sensory in Ethnography*, Pink (2009) underlines that the so-called "sensory turn" is characterised above all by a greater reflexivity on this aspect of field research. The body is important in any human experience and is one means by which knowledge is gained; however, since the 1980s and 1990s, social sciences have worked more intensively on the relevance of the senses for understanding and representing people's lives. The anthropology of senses has outlined very relevant reflections on the importance of the body in human experience (Howes 1991, 2003). In the same years, human geography has also expressed an increasing attention to the sensory dimension in the study of the environment (Rodaway 1994; Pile 2005; Amin 2008). And again, in architecture Pallasmaa (1996) criticised the centrality of sight in the work of Western architects by proposing reflections on the tactile dimensions of buildings and Zardini (2005) emphasised the importance of street life in cities, inviting researchers to consider the sensory qualities of urban life, the sound and smell landscape.

Stoller's (1989, 1997) work shows how anthropological practice is a bodily process that involves the ethnographer not only in putting into play his idea of "the other", but in learning about what the others understand through their own sensory experiences. An important reference point for anthropologists is Simmel's 1907 paper on the sociology of the senses, in which he suggests that sensory perception of

another person or group brings about an intimate emotional and physical response that is an avenue of knowledge (or rejection) of the other (Simmel 1997).

In a multiethnic and multicultural society, several sensations can make us perceive diversity: a way of "disturbing" that is both multisensory and spatial. In the introduction to Peneff's (2009) *Le goût de l'observation*, Becker (2009) points out how skilled we are at constructing otherness even based on the smallest details: hearing the spoken language, observing the way people dress, even the smell of the food they eat and somehow "carry with them". So, if we want to understand how individuals and groups shape their existence in the city of differences (Fincher, Jacobs 1998), we cannot consider them as subjects without a body, but as agents who live by producing and receiving images, sounds, smells, tastes and contacts.

All this concerns the people and places at the centre of attention, but it also concerns the ethnographer. Therefore, a clarification must be introduced. In this piece, I take responsibility for carrying the "pre-judice" of a gaze that I would define, in very broad terms, as "Western". I have studied migratory phenomena in western cities. I was born and raised in Italy, and I have lived in several European metropolises, but always in the West. I have travelled in different countries of the world, but even when I have been very close to very distant cultures, still I was a tourist. This is my background when I "observe with my whole body". Among his talents, the ethnographer must surely have a certain ability to get close to the people with whom he develops his research, but he is not a chameleon. He cannot change the colour of his skin according to the situation he finds himself in.

Also for this reason, my ethnographic experiences over the last twenty years have taught me that one possible way of breaking out of the prejudices we carry through our bodies and backgrounds is to "multiply points of view", i.e. to build research teams composed of people who share a situation and an investigation space, but who have very different ethnic, cultural, social or generational origins. We had the opportunity to do this through a three-year exploration on the 90/91 bus in Milan, asking 80 students from all over the world to develop an ethnographic journey (Briata et al. 2018). The students brought into play bodies with different sensory repertoires and spatial cultures. Bodies that are perhaps the object of prejudice in the West and, also for this reason, register difference or discrimination more easily because they experience it, literally, on their own skin. This has led us to a vision of a situation that is certainly not exhaustive, but plural, in the space of the city of differences.

Through his background, the ethnographer filters the perception of reality, and his point of view is not only about what is visible, but also about the smells that, for better or worse, capture the attention or the promise of more or less familiar flavours. A smell that is foreign to me may make a space familiar to a person from a distant country, but it may also be pleasing to me if it takes me back to a trip to a country I loved. The way behaviour is labelled as right or wrong, normal or deviant is constructed through value scales that are also based on *sensory expectations and memories*.

Although in this essay the pathways will be exposed by separating perceptions according to the five senses, it is evident that each of them collaborates with the

others in creating "repertoires" of images, smells, tastes that are more or less familiar, accepted or stigmatised. Let us begin by talking about smells.

3 Snow (and more) on 42nd Street

Many scholars agree that, in the Western world, smell is a central sense for defining "otherness". According to Simmel (1997), smelling a person is the most intimate perception one can have of another. Less familiar smells are often referred to as an insurmountable barrier. This is another reason why contact with strangers on a crowded bus is uncomfortable. We can smell them without having anything in common, apart from the compressed space in which we find ourselves cohabiting for a more or less prolonged period of time.

Referring extensively to Simmel, Low (2005) dwells on the relevance of what he calls "sensory imagery" in interaction. Besides being a primary factor in the construction of "the other", smell is a barrier in relations between different ethnic groups, but also between different classes. These observations allow us to introduce a key theme in investigating the relationship between senses and society: the process that leads to considering a person or group as an outsider, and sometimes to stigmatising them, has not only to do with an ethnic or racial component, but also with a class component. "Wealth whitens", provocatively writes Ambrosini (2017), one of Italy's leading experts on immigration. And again, Rhys-Taylor (2018), in his walks through the streets of London's East End described in *Food and Multiculture*, came to the conclusion that a stigmatising smell par excellence is that of fried chicken. An extremely caloric and very cheap dish in a society that has made healthy eating a class dividing line. Smells contain information of an ethnic-cultural, but also of an economic-social nature. Fried chicken indicates that one is passing through a poor area. Wealth and poverty, luxury and decay are often associated with odours. Odours are "anticipators of a potential threat" (Corbin 2005), e.g., that of urine in an alley amplifies the perception of neglect and decay. A sophisticated fragrance heralds a space of luxury or the presence of a wealthy person. Bleach is the promise of a harmless place because it is clean, "sanitised", a word we have heard very often in recent months.

But often the city does not smell like a sanitised space (Zardini 2016). I think of a 1971 film by Hal Ashby: *Harold and Maude*. Maude is an exuberant old woman, in love and reciprocated in her love by the very young Harold. One day Maude invites him home and shows him some of her inventions, including a machine that reproduces smells. "I started with the simplest. Roast beef, old books, mown grass. And a Mexican courtyard. Here's one you'll like: snow on 42nd Street". Maude hands Harold a mask attached to a car which starts up as he sniffs and describes the smell: "underground, perfume, cigarettes … snow". I refer to this scene from a film that I love very much both because it allows me to talk about "more or less familiar" smells and how slippery this expression is (a question that also raises methodological aspects

that the ethnography of the senses shows us more clearly) and because Maude's car also leads me to talk about the difficulties of conveying sensory experience.

On the first front, we might think that snow in a city is a harmless, familiar, even romantic smell, but I am not sure that it is so harmless to a person living on the street or that it is familiar to someone coming from a warm country. At the same time, I think it is not easy to define what that concentrate of diversity which we call a city smells like today. More and more, the smell of western cities is not only "underground, smoke and snow", but also kebabs, poke, pizza, burgers.

What is the most appropriate food smell to describe London, one of the cities I have lived in, given that it is now accepted by everyone that the national dishes are both curry and fish and chips? I speak of smells, but implicitly also of tastes: taste is perhaps the "least spatial" of all senses, but it combines with smell in creating more or less attractive urban places. The promise of taste can also be a very strong urban attractor. Think of street food kiosks and how they create urban places, even ephemeral but highly frequented ones.

Smells and tastes can also be used in a stigmatising way. Filipino-born American anthropologist Manalansan (2006) recounts the lives of Asian immigrants in the United States, discussing the notion of "the immigrant who stinks". He points out that one of the concerns of the Americans of Asian origin who participated in his research was the persistent smell of "ethnic" food in their homes, on their clothes and bodies. Manalansan recalls that Mayor Giuliani's quality-of-life campaign in the second half of the 1990s criminalised certain odours such as sweeping or urine in working-class neighbourhoods or in those with a high incidence of immigrants. By using odours as a marker of deprivation, neglect was targeted without affecting its structural causes, paving the way for gentrification-centred redevelopment policies.

Harold and Maude introduces a second reflection on the difficulty of conveying and transmitting the multisensory nature of our experiences. Pink (2009) describes how reflection on the senses is often expressed through the work of scholars who tread the line between research and art. One example is the work by Oswaldo Maciá *1 Woodchurch Road, London NW6 3PL*, the address of a building where the artist lived with other people of different generations and nationalities. The installation consisted of five rubbish cans in which the smells of household waste were reproduced. Each inhalation by the visitors was intended to induce a reflection on odours in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural apartment block. The story of this work of art brought me back to many ethnographic journeys conducted in Italian cities (Briata 2014), where the issue of the rubbish smell was one of the first coexistence problems between people from different backgrounds that were pointed out to me. If rubbish is in many ways an extreme case, it is clear that the smell of unfamiliar food is a matter of discussion in multicultural coexistence. In a multi-ethnic block of flats where the smell of unfamiliar food disturbs tenants who do not produce it, should actions be taken to prevent these smells from being smelled or not? What are the right and wrong smells? In order to stay together, do we always have to "separate" or is there a way to train ourselves to be different? A first step, I think, is to recognise that there are just and unjust differences; that smells associated with poverty are not good, not because they are bad, but because poverty is unjust.

Therefore, smells are a register to signal ethnic-cultural and social diversity and to give or not value to some lives, contributing to build norms and policies.

4 Flesh and Stone

In *Flesh and Stone. The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, Sennet (1994) argues that Roland Barthes was one of the first to draw attention to the "repertoires of images" used by people when encountering a stranger. By analysing, even unintentionally, an unfamiliar scene, one tries to understand it quickly by resorting to images that fall into "already seen" general categories, stereotypes and simplifications. Thus, on encountering a black-skinned or an Arab man in the street, a white Western person registers a form of threat and is not inclined to explore the situation further. The judgement, according to Barthes, is *instantaneous*: based on their image repertoire, people close themselves off from any further encounter possibility.

Flesh and Stones reminds us that image repertoires concern both the diversity of bodies and the diversity of the built environment. On the diversity of bodies, the writings by the black (a clarification to which he is very attached) American ethnographer Elijah Anderson highlight that sometimes wealth is not enough to overcome prejudice towards black people. And this happens in a country where coloured people are often not immigrants, but citizens in their own right. Anderson (2015) recounts how, since the end of the civil rights movement, many black people have managed to find their own way into the American middle class and how much has been done to implement reforms in the spaces of black segregation. But racial segregation persists, along with the consequent stigmatisation of black ghettos by whites. Anderson's most interesting observations come from his description of what black people call "the white space". Restaurants, shopping malls, residential neighbourhoods, schools and public spaces where one does not expect to see black people and where their presence implicitly requires an explanation. Anderson recounts several situations where middle-class black persons wearing expensive clothes may perhaps go unnoticed in the white space, but, if they are dressed casually, they may be looked at with suspicion. If they don't want this to happen, they need to put some status recognition strategies in place, such as displaying their company badge prominently when they go shopping during their lunch break. Black people, especially if they are young males, are associated with a threat when they enter the white space. The images repertoire Barthes refers to associates skin colour with the stigmatised image of the ghetto, with poverty and danger. Referring to the reality of the United States, Anderson goes so far as to say that the public spaces of the city and its neighbourhoods can be conceptualised essentially as a mosaic of "white spaces", "black ghettos" (where not only African Americans, but also Latinos, Haitians or Caribbeans live) and what he calls "cosmopolitan canopies" where very different people can live together without problems because "the manifestation of public acceptance of all by all is particularly intense, becoming one of the defining characteristics of a place" (Anderson 2011, 3). Anderson's work is interesting because it shows unequivocally not only how much

the race issue matters in American society—it is an issue that we have seen re-emerge in all its power during the pandemic—but also how it is associated with both a class issue and the iconic image of the stigmatised black ghetto.

We talked about "flesh", but also about how flesh is associated with stones, with places in the city connected with a stigma. The city is also made of stones, and some more than others can arouse attention as much as skin colour. Leone's (2009, 2012) studies of Islamic worship places in Australia are a good example of this and tell of processes that are also recognisable in Europe. Leone says that Australians look at Islamic worship places as something that can ruin the architectural character of a neighbourhood. In Western countries where Islam is not predominant, all legal disputes over the construction of mosques mainly concern minarets, objects of contention even when they are purely decorative. This is because, more or less consciously, non-Islamic citizens see them as an architecturally visible sign of the appropriation of public space by Islamic minorities. In Europe, several countries have imposed a series of restrictions on the construction of minarets, often with the clear intention of making them appear lower and therefore symbolically less present in the urban landscape than the bell towers of Christianity (Haenni, Lathion 2009). In Italy, the fact that the project for an unbuilt mosque in Florence presented a façade strikingly similar to that of the church of Santa Maria Novella and minarets that resembled the architectural forms of Giotto's campanile makes us think. The height of the minarets is evidently a matter of contention not only for the "visual domain" but also for the potential diffusion of "Islamic sounds" in the Western city. And this brings us to soundscapes.

5 The "Boundaries" of the Bells of St Mary-le-Bow

Anthropologist De Martino (2002) described how the bell towers of Christian churches play a central role in public space not only because they are highly visible, but also because the greater the height, the greater the area in which the bells can be heard. This is also why Western societies have always tried to reduce the height of Islamic minarets as much as possible. The idea that minarets are used to spread the call to prayer by competing with the dominance of bells is viewed with hostility. Allievi (2009) has devoted much attention to the conflicts over mosques in Europe and, from his perspective, sound, even more than visual aspects, is one of the most controversial issues about these worship places. One example I have worked on directly is the mosque in East London, which is located in a neighbourhood where 70% of the population is of Bengali origin. Here, the permission to make the call to prayer was made possible by the support of the Anglican church (Eade, 1996). In recounting this controversy, I recall the bewilderment of the Bengali population because the mosque in question overlooks one of London's busiest thoroughfares and even powerful loudspeakers did not make the call to prayer audible. Therefore, the contrast was more symbolic than real (Briata 2007). On the other hand, in this part of London, the longest-established communities still say that the real Londoners

are the Cockneys, the people born in the East End. And you can only be called truly Cockney if you were born in a part of the city from which you can hear the bells of St Mary-le-Bow church. Actually today, in the crowded soundscape of the megalopolis, it is difficult to hear the sound of these bells.

These examples are interesting because they make clear how sounds can also be brought into play to "draw boundaries" in the territory of the city, thus expressing more or less explicit forms of space appropriation and control. Musicologists describe minarets and bell towers as "sound-marks" that also act on the sensory horizon of hearing (Schafer 1994; Lee 1999). At the same time, the soundscape, the sounds mix in a sound space, profoundly characterises the identity of places and their atmospheres (Bull, Back 2005; Mikola 2007), which is also why sound can be controlled, banned, discriminated against, promoted or celebrated. Sounds in a city where we are used to live are often so familiar that we tend to naturalise them: a mixture of traffic, trams running on rails, building sites under construction, advertisements, but also of wind, birds or rain; of course, church bells, but increasingly also different languages in the streets, music and rhythms from more or less neighbouring countries. As with smells and tastes, in cities it will become increasingly difficult to distinguish "foreign" and "native" sounds, an issue that does not only concern public spaces, but also interiors because sound goes beyond the walls of the house.

People experience domestic as well as public space in different ways that also depend on cultures, traditions, material conditions. As with odours, there is a tolerance issue, in this case related to the volume or times at which noise is made, and some have observed that the tolerance threshold may also have a socio-cultural connotation (Arkette 2004). A theme that we also find in the different interpretations of proximity and distance that are referred to by Hall (1966) and are discussed in the next section, but on which we must be careful not to slip into potentially stigmatising cultural reductionisms. Many studies on multi-ethnic society have highlighted how invisibility is a very important feature in the acceptance of immigrants (Tosi 2000). The multisensory journey proposed in this essay helps to understand how "invisibility" also concerns the possibility of not being heard or not letting people smell the food being cooked.

I conclude this journey by returning to the "compression of bodies" and the coexistence of strangers when bodies "touch" each other in a limited space.

6 The Hidden Dimension

The Hidden Dimension by anthropologist Hall (1966) is a text in which the author develops the concept of proxemics, analysing space or distances as a communicative element. Hall focuses on the meanings of the material distances that humans tend to interpose between themselves and others. The focus is on the distance people maintain between themselves in offices, shops and public spaces in the city. Hall describes four ways of being together in space: distances between people can be intimate, personal, social or public. But the perception of what is the right distance

in different situations can vary from culture to culture and thus become a matter of conflict. Thus, proxemics outlines the often implicit (hidden) rules of a spatial language that can be as diverse and comprehensible as a spoken language. Relevant observations; however, as with sounds and smells, associating a certain way of "being together" with a culture is a slippery slope where one must beware of reductionism and stigmatisation. Space is one of the basic elements in the life organisation of living beings, and Hall often refers to the animal world in developing his theories. Animals need to stay in contact, because in a group you are less vulnerable; therefore, the definition of "social distance" indicates the distance beyond which an animal loses contact with its group, can no longer see others, smell them or hear their calls. This is the opposite interpretation to the one we have become accustomed to over the past few months, when social distance is the minimum space that allows a primary defence against contagion. Through the comparison with the animal world, Hall also recalls the concept of territoriality, i.e., the behaviour through which an organism takes possession of an area in various ways and defends it. In animals, territoriality is a way of protecting oneself from predators. Man, on the other hand, creates material extensions of territoriality in order to take possession of a space, for example by establishing boundaries to delimit private property. I introduced the theme of territoriality because it leads me towards the closing of this essay.

I started with a reference to an underground, I told how the study of a trolleybus used by very different populations helped us to understand some mechanisms of coexistence within a space of "compression of bodies"; I end by staying with a means of transport and relying on a passage from the essay *The Great Migration* by Enzensberger (1992). The author describes a common dynamic in the compartment of a railway carriage. Two passengers enter and occupy tables, hangers, luggage racks. By territorialising the compartment, they feel "at home". Newspapers, coats and bags occupy the empty seats, trying to deter the arrival of other passengers. But the compartment door opens, two new travellers enter, and their arrival is not welcomed. Between the two passengers who arrived first, even though they do not know each other, there is an immediate feeling of solidarity, which is expressed especially in their body language. There is a clear reluctance to vacate the empty seats and share space with the newcomers. The compartment has become the territory of the first to arrive and any new person who wants to enter is an intruder. This behaviour, says Enzensberger, has no justification: it is deeply rooted in human nature. Newcomers are gradually tolerated, and one gets used to their presence, even if those who arrive later are always subject to a subtle form of stigmatisation. Newcomers are often not welcome even in a public and transient space like a train. Elias and Scotson (1994) in their book *The Established and the Outsiders* extended this reasoning by studying a multi-ethnic neighbourhood in a British town. The scale is larger, the area is a place of permanence, but the mechanisms are similar. In this study, there are inhabitants who "arrived first"—the *established*. The newcomers—the *outsiders*—are looked upon with suspicion, but over time even the new faces become familiar. However, the stigma is repeated with the arrival of each new generation. These stories help me to conclude with a certainly "partisan" look, but also with a vein of optimism.

7 Conclusion

The path outlined so far has made us realise how relations between individuals in space are also shaped by how people experience their own bodies and those of others. In spaces, people brush against each other, touch each other, share air, sounds, smells, life practices, but not necessarily a common identity horizon (Sini, Pasqui 2020). Where can I put my body? According to Sini and Pasqui, this is a crucial question in thinking about the problems of coexistence in contemporary cities.

What have design disciplines done and what are their action possibilities, having the aim to regulate the uses of space, in a context such as the one outlined so far? To articulate this question, I rely on Fincher and Iveson's *Planning and Diversity in the City* (2008). The two authors argue that in order to ensure spatial and social justice in a context of diversity, plans need to address three interconnected dimensions: redistribution, recognition and encounter. Fincher and Iveson develop these dimensions by referring to the links between space and society. The added value of the reasoning proposed in these pages introduces an additional element, looking at the links between spaces, *bodies* and society.

The *redistributive dimension* is perhaps the most difficult to tackle because it is the one most connected to structural factors. Redistribution implies a willingness to invest in policies, resources and spaces to support the most fragile components of a society, and this is also an increasingly difficult political positioning in a world dominated by neo-liberal drifts and an effective reduction in the resources available to the public hand. In front of the *perceptible* presence of urban immigration associated with poverty, the response is often anything but redistributive, rather repressive. Manalansan (2006) recounts how the smell of decay was one of the factors that led to the introduction of expulsion policies of the poor and immigrants during Mayor Giuliani's tenure in New York. Planning and architecture often play a repressive role against bodies that bear the marks of poverty, as well as potentially welcoming spaces for "diversity": think of the countless manifestations of so-called defensive architecture, but also of the roots of all those bans on mosques that in many cases are put in place thanks to more or less explicit planning rules (Fincher et al. 2014).

Mosques inevitably lead to the *recognition* dimension. Again, analysis at the "micro" scale is not sufficient in the face of structural issues because more or less inclusive policies and public discourses are played out in broader contexts. Mosques are a paradigmatic example of how visual and sound aspects combine to make non-Muslim populations think that Muslim are trying to appropriate urban space. The countless *invisible* worship places (mosques and others) in the basements of our cities are not in the spotlight because they bypass the issue of recognition. And it is the lack of recognition that determines the difficulties for black persons to cross the "white space" without using escamotage that make it clear to everyone that they are harmless. And again, there is an issue of recognition (and habit) in deciding where the line is between "the immigrant smelling bad" because he cooks and eats an unfamiliar food and assuming that curry is one of the national dishes in a Western country.

When I write that being together is also a body exercise, I think that cities, despite the countless repressions we are more or less aware of, are also *great gyms* to train for diversity. If the *established* seem to get used to *outsiders* in a more or less short time, part of the habit also concerns *landscapes*, *soundscapes* and *smellscapes*.

Cities change and people get used to the changes regardless of what the planners do, but perhaps it is worth understanding better the connections between spaces, bodies and society, starting also from the places where coexistence seems simpler and more possible. Space offers outlets and obstacles to the social practices of different populations, so understanding how spaces can be opened up to possibilities and opportunities for aggregation is an important task for planning and project culture. Spaces can be designed to be more or less open to unforeseen uses; working on spaces in the city of differences also means conceiving them as fields of possibilities that can be activated by the most diverse people.

For this reason, too, the *encounter* dimension is perhaps *the one on which designers could work most*, beyond structural issues, by understanding and learning to act on the "micro-publics of encounter" (Amin 2002) where people simply live together, confronting themselves with difference on a daily basis; also, by studying more carefully the spatial dynamics of places such as *cosmopolitan canopies*, which Anderson (2011) explored especially in their social dimensions. For many years the encounter issue has also been declined in terms of cultural hybridisation, the idea that in being together there is an exchange dimension that brings cultures and bodies closer together (Marconi, Ostanel 2016). If this is a possible perspective, it is important to recognise that sometimes encounters occur even without hybridisation and that the challenge is to share spaces even if space is really the only thing people have in common. During the pandemic, sharing the space became a problem. Social distancing was first and foremost a spatial distancing. If being together is also a body exercise, the virus may have taken us a big step backwards, because defending ourselves from the "other" with whom we share space has also become automatic. While respecting the provisions aimed at protecting the health of all, this is a drift to which we must pay attention so that we do not lose the many achievements already made in so many coexistence gyms that we call cities.

References

Alacevic M, Soci A (2019) Breve storia della disuguaglianza. Laterza, Bari

Allievi S (2009) Conflicts over mosques in Europe—policy issues and trends. Alliance Publishing Trust, London

Ambrosini M (2017) Migrazioni. Egea, Milan

Amin A (2002) Ethnicity and the multicultural city: living with diversity. Environ Plan A Econ Space 34(6):959–980

Amin A (2008) Collective culture and urban public space. City 12(1):5–24

Amin A (2012) Land of strangers. Polity Press, Durham

Anderson E (2011) The cosmopolitan canopy. Race and civility in everyday life. W.W. Norton & Company, London & New York

Anderson E (2015) The “white space”. Sociol Race Ethn 1(1):10–21
Arkette S (2004) Sounds like city. Theory, Cult & Soc 21(1):159–168
Becker H (2009) Prologue. In: Peneff J Le goût de l’observation: Comprendre et pratiquer l’observation participante en sciences sociales. La Decouverte, Paris
Bianchetti C (2020) Corpi tra spazio e progetto. Mimesis, Milano
Bianchetti C, Boano C, Di Campli A (2020) Thinking with quarantine urbanism? Space and culture, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1206331220938625
Briata P (2007) Sul filo della frontiera. Politiche urbane in un quartiere multietnico di Londra. FrancoAngeli, Milan
Briata P (2014) Spazio urbano e immigrazione in Italia. Esperienze di pianificazione in una prospettiva europea. FrancoAngeli, Milan
Briata P (2019) Multiculturalismo senza panico. Parole, territori, politiche nella città delle differenze. FrancoAngeli, Milan
Briata P (2020) Metropolis. Sensory ethnography paths in the city of differences. In: Anzani A (ed) Mind and places. A multidisciplinary approach to the design of contemporary city. Springer, Cham
Briata P, Bricocoli M, Bovo M (2018) Cosmopolis in un bus. Multiculturalismo Quotidiano a Milano. CRIOS 16:45–56
Bull M, Back L (eds) (2005) The auditory culture reader, Berg, Oxford & New York
Butler J (2020) Mourning is a political act amid the pandemic and its disparities. Truthout, https://truthout.org/articles/judith-butler-mourning-is-a-political-act-amid-the-pandemic-and-its-disparities/
Cefaï D (2013) ¿Qué es la etnografía? Persona y sociedad 27(1):101–119
Corbin A (2005) Le miasme et la jonquille, L’odorat et l’imaginaire social. Flammarion, Paris
Cucca R, Ranci C (eds) (2017) Unequal cities. The challenge of post-industrial transition in times of austerity. Routledge, London
De Martino E (2002) La fine del mondo. Eiunaudi, Turin
Eade J (1996) Nationalism, community and the Islamization of space in London. In: Daly Metcalf B (ed) Making Muslim space in North America and Europe, University of California Press, Berkeley
Elias N, Scotson JL (1994) The established and the outsiders. Sage, London
Enzensberger HM (1992) Die große wandering. Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt
Fincher R, Jacobs J (1998) Cities of difference. The Guilford Press, New York
Fincher R, Iveson K (2008) Planning and diversity in the city: Redistribution, regognition, encounter. Palgrave Macmillan, London
Fincher R, Iveson K, Leintner H, Preston V (2014) Planning in the multicultural city: Celebrating diversity or reinforcing difference? Prog Plann 92:1–55
Haenni P, Lathion S (2009) Les minarets de la discorde—Éclairage sur un débat suisse et européen. Infolio, Golion
Hall ET (1966) The hidden dimension. Anchor Books, New York
Howes D (1991) The varieties of sensory experience. A sourcebook in the anthropology of the senses. University of Toronto Press, Toronto
Howes D (2003) Sensing culture: engaging the senses in culture and social theory. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbour
Lee TS (1999) Technology and the production of Islamic space—the call to prayer in Singapore. In: Ethnomusicology 43(1)86–100
Leone M (2009) Architectures of Transcendence—a trans-cultural analysis of legal processes for the construction, modification, and restoration of places of worship’, in Trans(l)egalité, proceedings of the Conference of the Law and Literature Association of Australia, Griffith University in Brisbane, 2–5 December 2009
Leone M (2012) Hearing and belonging. On sounds, faiths, and laws. In: Hafner C, Miher L, Wagner A (eds) Transparency, power and control, Ashgate, London & New York
Low K (2005) Ruminations on smell as a socio-cultural phenomenon. Curr Sociol 53(3):397–417

Manalansan MF (2006) Immigrants lives and the politics of olfaction in the global city. In: Drobnik J (ed) The smell culture reader. Berg, Oxford
Marconi G, Ostanel E (eds) (2016) The intercultural city. Migration, minorities and the management of diversity
Mikola M (2007) Hearing diversity: representations and sonic landscapes of the culturally heterogeneous city'. In: Velayutham S, Wise A (eds) Everyday Multiculturalism Conference Proceedings, Macquairie University 28–29 September 2006, Sydney
Ocejo RE (ed) (2013) Ethnography and the city: readings on doing urban fieldwork. Routledge, London & New York
Pallasmaa J (1996) The eyes of the skin. Architecture and the senses. Wiley, Durham
Peneff J (2009) Le goût de l'observation: Comprendre et pratiquer l'observation participante en sciences sociales. La Decouverte, Paris
Pile S (2005) Real cities. Sage, London
Piketty T (2014) Capital in the twenty-first century. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA
Pink S (2009) Doing sensory ethnography. Sage, London
Rhys Taylor A (2018) Food and multiculture. A sensory ethnography of East London. Taylor & Francis, London
Rodaway P (1994) Sensuous geographies: body, sense and place. Routledge, London
Schafer RM (1994) The soundscape—our sonic snvironment and the tuning of the World. Destiny Books, Rochester
Sennet R (1994) Flesh and stone. The body and the city in Western civilisation. W.W. Norton & Co, New York and London
Simmel G (1907) Sociology of the senses. In: Frisby D, Featherstone M (eds) (1997), Simmel on culture: selected writings. Sage, London
Sini C, Pasqui G. (2020) Perché gli alberi non rispondono. Lo spazio urbano e i destini dell'abitare. Jaca Book, Milan
Stoller P (1989) The taste of ethnographic things: the senses in ethnography. University of Philadephia Press, Philadelpia
Stoller P (1997) Sensuous scholarship. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadephia
Tosi A (2000) L'inserimento degli immigrati. Case e città. In: Marcetti C, Solimano N, Tosi A (eds) Le culture dell'abitare. Polistampa, Firenze
Zardini M (2005) Sense of the city: an alternate approach to urbanism. Lars Mueller Publishers, Montreal
Zardini M (2016) Towards a sensorial urbanism. In: Schwanhäußer A (ed) Sensing the city. A companion to urban anthropology. Birkhäuser, Basel

Edge-City, Bubble-City, Foam-City

Federico Leoni

Abstract During the last century, we have become familiar with the constant metamorphosis of the edges of our cities. The edge of our cities is constantly being destroyed and rebuilt. But this instability of the edge mirrors the changed status of the city itself. Contemporary cities never cease to redraw their boundaries, to include further territories, wanting to coincide with the totality of the territory. But in this sense the edge of the city is not the threshold through which the city looks out onto something else, cultivated or uncultivated land. The edge of the city is an absolute, a periphery that has no centre behind it and no landscape in front of it. The contemporary city is a bubble-city, which does not have a state to which it belongs, but a series of other bubble-cities with which it interfaces in a sort of fundamental autism and equally fundamental hyperconnection. In other words, the planet surface is a foam of urban bubbles.

Keywords Earth · Foam · Language · Agriculture · Geometry · Topology

1 Transition Landscapes

Almost one hundred years ago, in the aftermath of the First World War, at the dawn of the Second World War, Ernst Jünger wrote in his, at the time, famous essay entitled *The Worker*: "Our landscape appears as a landscape of permanent transition. There is no stability of forms here; all forms are continuously remodelled by a dynamic restlessness. There is no permanence of means, Nothing is permanent other than the rise of the performance curve, that today throws on the scrap-heap the instrument that once was unsurpassable. Therefore, there is also no permanence of architecture, lifestyle, or economy. These activities are stable if the means on which they depend are stable, and such would be the axe, the bow, the sail, the plough. From day to day, individuals live within this workshop landscape" (Jünger 1981, 116). Jünger's entire book is dedicated to this dimension, which at one point is

F. Leoni (✉)
Department of Human Sciences, Università degli Studi di Verona, Verona, Italy
e-mail: Federico.leoni@univr.it

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_15

evoked in terms of a workshop. Our cities have become workshops, our houses have become workshops, our lives have become workshops. That is to say, building sites, places where people work incessantly. But, if we listen to Jünger, the work of this contemporary generalised workshop must be understood in a new and disconcerting way. In these workshops, work is done without the work equipment ever being stable and given once and for all. This means that a creation is never produced, nor a stopping point for the work, a complete realisation of its journey. Perhaps, not even the labourer, the artisan, the worker engaged in this interminable work ever gets to take face, to assume some recognisable status, to settle into a more or less stable physiognomy. Workshop means all this at the same time. Not a particular place in the city, but a place that now serves as a model for the entire city. Not the place of a particular activity, but the model of an activity which has contaminated every other, which has transmitted its own structure to every other sphere of human activity, that of a process always in progress and always unfinished. Workshop is the whole city, and if the city is the place of common life, the place of the life of each and every one, workshop is the life of each and every one.

2 Instability of the Contemporary City

Let's take up reading Jünger: "The variability of means result in a continuous investment of capital and labour, which, although concealed under the economic mask of competition, runs contrary to all the laws of the economy. Generations go by leaving behind neither savings nor monuments" (Jünger 1981, 116–117).

Again, let us take some distance from the text. Let us try to touch with our own hands what the text states with an exactness that is clairvoyant about the time that in our eyes has now come. With all the evidence, those generations that are no longer able to bequeath savings or monuments are ours. Savings and monuments basically say the same thing. They say something that remains of a job done, of a life that has taken its course, of a history that has settled into a system of recognisable traces. Each work left a remnant, an object on the field, and more generally made use of tools that were also capable of lasting and being reused, taken up again later. Even more generally, it involved the figure of a craftsman or a worker who, from the relative stability of his works and tools, in turn took some stable or almost stable awareness of his own figure and place in the world. Here the very possibility of something being constituted as a remnant, whether economic or architectural, seems precluded. Even if remains were to be produced, they would be perfectly useless and unrecognisable, and their transmission from generation to generation would be sorted out in the transmission of that uselessness and unrecognizability.

Let us give Jünger one last word: "This provisional relationship becomes obvious in the rough, untidy conditions which have characterised the technical landscape for over a hundred years now. This upsetting sight is generated not only by the destruction of the natural and cultural landscape—it is also explained by the imperfect condition of technology itself. These cities with their wires and steam, with their noise and

dust, with their ant-like confusion which, with its tangle of architectures and its innovations, to which every decade lends face, are gigantic workshop of forms, and yet they do not possess a form themselves. They are lacking in style, unless you want to consider anarchy as a particular kind of style. The fact is that, today, there are two ways of looking at cities: one thinks of them as museums, or furnaces" (Jünger 1981, 117).

Therefore, on the one hand there is the museum city, we could say the ancient city, the city of which we consider the centre, the oldest inhabited area, the set of remains and heritages, the set of monuments and memories. On the other hand, there is the workshop city, the most unstable city, the city where no remains, no monuments are produced but where there is a continuous remaking and disintegration, the peripheral city that encloses the centre in a sort of absolutely unstable border. That edge does not cease to expand outwards and, in a sense, it does not cease to expand inwards, bringing something of its restlessness, of its permanent mobilisation, of its continuous reformulating and redesigning itself, thus destroying in order to reconstructing itself and destroying itself again, even towards the interior, towards the oldest and most stable city core. The periphery, we might say, is the emblematic place of this instability, the heart of the contemporary city, the enigmatic centre of its landscape. In order to be conceived, it requires a sort of phenomenology of the periphery be constructed as a revelatory place of the contemporary city, or an epistemology of the edge as the most symptomatic element of all forms of spatiality.

3 Disappearance of Agriculture

Michel Serres, one of the great contemporary thinkers, unjustly neglected today after a long life of thought and a long season of success, can guide us down a further road. In a book of thirty years ago, *The Natural Contract*, Serres noted at one point something that had become common sense, however, without the full implications and consequences having really been drawn. "The greatest event of the XX century," Serres wrote, "remains unquestionably the disappearance of agriculture as the pilot activity of human life in general and of particular cultures" (Serres 1995, 28).

Published in 1990, Serres' book could have steered his diagnosis in other directions, for example suggesting that the major event of the century then underway should have been identified in the Second World War, or in the tragedy of the death camps, or in America's invention and then use of the atomic bomb. There is an endless historiographic, sociological and economic literature which, having to indicate a symbolic event, or a trigger cause, or a decisive symptom with respect to many other upheavals, has moved in one or the other of these directions. On the other hand, Serres looks in a completely different direction. He does not at all ignore the options just listed, but he suggests something that from various points of view can be considered the event of those events, the great underground earthquake on which those more specific shifts depend in cascade.

Was it not the twentieth century the one that saw the Second World War, of which, after all, the death camps and the atomic bomb are equally shocking and emblematic expressions? Was it not the century that had experienced that devastating conflict due to a set of tensions arising from the cultural and economic rivalry between recently industrialised countries (the rivalry between France and Germany on a European level, between the USA and the USSR on a global level)? Was it not the century that organised that conflict through rigorously industrial logics and instruments (the extermination camp or the atomic bomb as the industrialisation of destruction), with outcomes that in turn were intimately dependent on those industrial causes and instruments (a geopolitical redesign of the planet, in which the control of the seas became the key element because it allowed to move raw materials and finished products, i.e. to feed industrial production and to feed the consumption of that production)? But, precisely the movement that led industry to gain such centrality was merely the flip side of the coin of the agriculture decline. To use Serres' expression, the same movement caused industry to conquer the rank of "pilot activity of human life", and agriculture to be stripped of that same rank, a rank that it had enjoyed no less than for the entire duration of *homo sapiens* history.

4 The Linguistic Turn as an Anthropological Symptom

The event of which Serres speaks is so vast, and so slow in its unfolding, that perhaps this is why it is rarely focused on by historians, sociologists and economists when they reflect on the status of the contemporary world. It concerns a discontinuity produced against the backdrop of so vast a continuity as to be almost unthinkable and almost invisible.

Of course, there are reflections on the decline of agriculture and the rise of industry, but generally they are not on this scale of observation, that is millions of years old and does not concern historical, social or economic changes, but anthropological and, in a sense, eco-systemic changes. Instead, Serres points straight to the anthropological and eco-systemic transformation involved in this decline of agriculture, and in an even more general sense in the decline of what we might call the earth dimension: "Living now only indoors, immersed exclusively in passing time and not out in the weather, our contemporaries, packed into cities, use neither shovel nor oar; worse yet, they've never even seen them. Indifferent to the climate, except during their vacations when they rediscover the world in a clumsy, arcadian way, they naively pollute what they don't know, which rarely hurts them and never concerns them" (Serres 1995, 28).

Serres' conclusion illuminates a set of evidences that, like all evidences, has the character of the obvious, since it has been there for everyone to see for at least a hundred years, and at the same time that of the enigma, since it is not at all clear what follows from that evidences, and how so many features of the contemporary world connect to that evidence as so many obvious corollaries. "How do we keep ourselves busy? With numerical data, equations, dossiers, legal texts, new bulletins hot off the press or the wire: in short, language. True language for science, normative

language for administrators, sensational language for the media. From time to time some expert, a climatologist or an earth scientist, goes off on official business to gather on-site observations, like some reporter or inspector. But the essentials take place indoors and in words, never again outdoors with things" (Serres 1995, 28–29).

In the margin, we could observe something that concerns a cultural phenomenon produced in the last fifty years in the globalized academy, the so-called *linguistic turn*; as everyone knows, it is an epistemological turn that led to put language at the centre of theoretical investigation and, in a broader sense, to retranslate in linguistic terms every human experience, to investigate how much the language dimension was decisive in its innervating so many spheres of our life that had always seemed immune to it. We now see that this entirely academic or scientific phenomenon is merely the iceberg tip of a radical anthropological mutation and of a shift that affects the very history of the planetary ecosystem. Our knowledge has gone through with so much enthusiasm that fashion, however fruitful, that has been called *linguistic turn*, and that could sound so seductive, although at first sight abstract, because for four centuries a new era of not human but planetary history was being prepared. The earth was no longer our primary dwelling place, it was no longer the reality in which we were formed and educated in life and thought, it was no longer the decisive place of value production and extraction. Being had become language, but the condition of possibility for this resolution of being into language was the erasure of the earth from its economic-anthropological command position, and the transformation of our cities into what we will call edge-city, bubble-city, foam-city.

5 Epistemology of the Edge

We can now pose a question or a series of questions that arise precisely at the crossroads of the two trajectories outlined so far, that identified by Jünger and that identified by Serres. What is the significance of the edge of our contemporary cities? What should we read in its incessant instability? How should we read the contemporary city, if the instability of its edge is to be placed in a world in which the earth dimension is declining?

An edge traditionally marks the threshold where something ends and something else begins. But the edge of our cities no longer marks a border between the city and the land, or, as we might say, between the place of language, of mediation, of artificiality that distances itself from nature, and the place of nature, the plant and animal life, the soil that we had thought of as the origin of all life and of everything that nourishes life. As it grows, as it expands, the contemporary city no longer erodes the land around it and no longer conquers spaces, whether cultivated or uncultivated. This has been the case for centuries, for millennia. The edge has had this meaning, and the periphery of human settlements could be a restless place precisely because it marked the point of separation, and therefore of contact, between inside and outside,

between the human and the inhuman. This is no longer the case. The suburbs restlessness, which has certainly not disappeared, indeed it has grown hyperbolically, has a completely different meaning.

As it grows, as it expands, the contemporary city erodes and conquers spaces that are not at all agricultural or wooded, that do not in any way belong to what we might call the earth, but that have always been urbanised or proto-urbanised. The edge that delimits the city is something like an absolute, no longer relative, edge. It is an edge no longer bordering on something else and no longer devoted to establishing a relationship with something else, even of exclusion or problematic juxtaposition. It is an absolute edge, because it is an edge that faces itself. It is an edge which overlooks itself and enters into itself. It is an absolute border in etymological sense. It is absolved by the relationship, or if you prefer, it is the sign of a relationship in which something goes into a strange business with itself. On its edge, our cities enter a particularly intense and laborious relationship, however, not with an otherness or an extraneousness, but with their own identity.

Of course, this identity, which no longer defines itself in relation to an extraneousness, is itself a new kind of identity. It is so absolute an identity that it can no longer even think of itself as identity. There is identity only where there is otherness, and there is otherness only where there is identity. But if this is so, reversing the formula just used, just as well we could say that the periphery draws a threshold where the city shows itself as an extraneousness that relates to its own extraneousness, as an extraneousness that penetrates its own extraneousness. Hence comes the instability that troubles our edges, the enigmatic fact that this absence of relationship with the outside produces, not a flat calm as we might expect, but an incessant yet immobile restlessness, a continuous but disinterested work that is in any case incapable of achieving any realisation.

At the extreme edge of its territory, the contemporary city relates to itself, grows into itself by destroying itself, or if you prefer, destroys itself by growing into itself. Undoubtedly it moves, but it moves by re-crossing its own space. It travels along a certain dimension, but revisiting something that already belongs to it, rethinking it in a new direction, reformulating it according to new purposes. The instability of the peripheral city edge does not stop and does not subside when a new area has been acquired by urbanisation, when a new series of buildings has been constructed, when a new road network has been put in place. At that point, the suburbs might gradually become historicised, their physiognomy might acquire some stability, and the work we are talking about might move further on, attacking for example a further and more outer belt. But this is not what happens. The periphery is in constant turmoil, but its movement is entirely resolved on the spot. One could perhaps say more. That movement in place is all the place that the contemporary city possesses, all the substance of which it is made.

6 Differences by Cutting, Differences by Bending

It is well known that twentieth-century mathematics went through a revolution called topology. It is not by chance, perhaps, that cities have suburbs that function in a Jüngerian way, that human history is going through that gigantic landslide that Serres describes in the terms just mentioned, and that since Henri Poincaré geometry has produced that strange gem called topology.

We are all familiar with the Moebius strip or the Klein bottle. We all know that the Moebius strip is a strip of space, we could imagine it as a strip of cloth or a strip of paper, which we could obtain by welding the strip itself in a sort of ring, except for imparting a rotation of half a turn to one of the two ends, just before closing it on the other. A Klein bottle, on the other hand, is an ordinary bottle, which undergoes a strange adventure, in a sense analogous to the one just described regarding the Moebius strip. If we imagine that the glass of the bottle is still warm and pliable, it is as if the neck of the bottle, normally turned upwards and outwards, is instead folded towards the inside of the bottle, and sunk into the body of the bottle until it draws a strange device that, we might say, seems to pour wine or water into itself.

Our still nineteenth-century gaze tends to see in these strange spatial experiments nothing more than curiosities, bizarre mental trials. Something surprising, something that rarely upsets our convictions about the existence of a geometry with much more prosaic and truer laws. Space, we think, is not made like a Moebius strip. The earth, we think, is not made like a Klein bottle. The word geometry resists. It puts its feet up with all the strength of its ancient etymology. After all, it is always like this: etymology thinks for us, words think for us what we believe we are thinking on their behalf. And geometry is precisely a word that speaks of the art or technique of measuring the earth, a word that speaks of a science that has in the earth its ultimate referent. No matter how many mediations separate the operations of the geometer from the ultimate referent, that ultimate referent continues to dictate law, or at least, continues to suppose it can dictate law to the geometry to which we spontaneously refer.

Moreover, German philosopher Edmund Husserl has shown conclusively how the Greek invention of geometry depends directly on the Greek practice of land surveying (Husserl 1954). A people of land surveyors had to, or at least could, from a position of great advantage, invent geometry through a sort of extension or passage to the limit of some objects and operations that arose from the fields work. Land surveying was a corollary or an instrument of that older and more fundamental practice that was agriculture, and geometry was in turn a corollary or an instrument of that older and more fundamental practice that was land surveying. What Husserl does not say, but easily implies, is that land, at least from the point of view of agriculture and surveying, entails a very precise edge logic. A certain land parcel ends where it meets the boundary that we have drawn, and perhaps marked with stones, rows of trees, irrigation canals and the like. Beyond that parcel, another one begins, and a mutually exclusive relationship exists between what grows within one parcel and what grows within the other parcel. My land and my harvest are not yours, and your

land and your harvest are not mine. A whole logic, a jurisprudence, an economy, a sociology, a politics, an anthropology descend from such a structured edge practice.

This is not how the edge works within that branch of geometry called topology. Not that there are no boundaries, somehow delimited figures, spaces with their own specific physiognomy. But the way those figures are produced, and the way certain geometrical operations are carried out on those figures, is profoundly different. The edge structure that identifies them is of an entirely different kind. The first who codified the foundations of this way of thinking space, not metrically but qualitatively, according to relationships known as homology and homotopy, was the French mathematician Henri Poincaré (Poincaré 1895; Dieudonné 1989). We could say something about the general logic implicit in these two concepts by thinking back to the two topological figures just mentioned, Moebius' strip and Klein's bottle. Topological spaces do provide for articulations and differentiations, but those articulations and differentiations are produced through continuity rather than discontinuity. It is not through a cutting process that these spaces take shape and consistency. Rather, it is through a folding process. What articulates and differentiates them is not a clear line, but a movement of inflection and curvature. One passes from one side to the other seamlessly. Yet one passes, and something like one side and another side are formed. It is the same fabric that is distributed in two regions. It is the same material that appears on both sides of the border. It is the same thing that meets itself beyond itself. Yet, this same thing is unstable and productive. Where Jünger and Serres see the catastrophe, the growing desert, the destruction of forms, topology shows another possible order, almost unthinkable through the logic of the old edges, very thinkable through the logic of these new edges.

7 Bubble-City, World-City, Foam-City

We could conclude that the contemporary city, since its edge functions as we have said, is a bubble, i.e., it is in relation to an exterior that is still its interior, it grows outwards towards an even deeper interior, it erodes and conquers land that already belongs to it and that in no way represents an alterity.

Or, and it would be the same thing, we could conclude that the contemporary city, precisely because its edge functions as we have said, is all outwardly everted a city, a city that tends to coincide with the world, that is both a segregated and all-encompassing a space. It is a city not inscribed in a state and thus in a map of states, but it is a state itself and does not relate to other cities through a non-urban space. Rather, it relates through immediate contact and perhaps immediate contagion with other cities that are also absolutes, entire worlds that swallow everything up inside and leave nothing outside.

In other words, the bubble-city would not be an institution of a local and administrative nature, which is part of a wider institution, within a space that is not local and not administrative, but tends to be universal and political, like the states have thought of themselves from modernity onwards, i.e., from the moment they came

into being. The bubble-city resolves in itself every possible political institution. It is not a smaller space inscribed in a larger space, but an absolute space that dialogues with other absolute spaces. The bubble-city is a world-city assigned to a paradoxical disposition, which sees it thrown between other world-cities, all of which are in turn closed on themselves and open and overflowing on each other, all of which are increasingly self-centred and devoted to an increasingly radical hyper connection. Seen from this perspective, the planisphere no longer looks like a kind of patchwork, a juxtaposition of territorial states, a summation of geometric areas drawn next to each other, according to that agricultural-survey-geometric logic that constitutes the very remote anthropological origin of modern states, and the political device that is still vaguely operative. What we see on the planisphere is a scattering of bubbles, all separated and all in intimate contact with one another. It is a geometric pattern that we could imagine as a foam, borrowing a term to which Peter Sloterdijk gave philosophical dignity some twenty years ago (Sloterdijk 2016). On the planisphere surface we see a sort of urban foam that coincides with the planet earth, or rather that dissolves in its own enigmatic, plural-homogeneous, multiple-singular figure, what we used to call "the earth", a name that not by chance brought to perfect coincidence the idea of a cultivable material, of an inhabitable surface, of an identity place, of an emblematic element of the very planet on which we were born.

In fact, the disappearance of any exterior with respect to the interior of the city does not draw the cancellation of the earth and of the logic of territorialisation into a sort of aquatic continuum, into an imaginary homogeneity of liquid nature. The topology lesson is different. It shows the occurrence of articulations, albeit not by cut and not according to discontinuity. It shows the possibility and indeed the inevitability of a number and order of differentiations, although flowing into each other and obtainable from each other by means of torsions, slippages, knotting, folding and unfolding. It shows absolutes, although paradoxically open and communicating. Thus, at the paradoxical crossroads between the bubble-city and the world-city, what we see emerging is not the pure aquatic continuum that characterises the geopolitical order. Rather, in a broader anthropological sense, it is a sort of continuous discontinuity or discontinuous continuity of which the foam, an intermediate metaphor between the closed air bubble and the open water mass, today seems to be able to offer the logical, political, economic, sociological, urban and in a broad sense anthropological scheme.

References

Dieudonné J (1989) A history of algebric and differential topology (1900–1960). Birkhäuser, Boston

Husserl E (1954) Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie. Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg

Jünger E (1981) The Worker, engl. transl. B. Costea, Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart

Poincaré H (1895) Analysis situs. Journal de l'École Polytechnique 2(1)

Serres M (1995) The Natural Contract, eng. transl. E. Mac Arthur, W. Paulson, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor
Sloterdijk P (2016) Foams (Spheres, vol 3), engl. transl. W. Hoban, Autonomedia

Inside and Beyond the Human City

Luca Bonardi and Andrea Marini

Abstract The lockdown that was implemented in many countries of the world between 2020 and 2021 has led some animal species that are unusual for this context to appear in cities, as well as others that are normally present to be increasingly perceived. Starting from the interest that these presences have aroused, the chapter analyses the possibilities and potentialities of a human-non-human rapprochement, even in non-domesticated forms, in an environment such as the urban one, which was traditionally the exclusive prerogative of the former. It also indicates some urban spatial contexts in which greater continuity with other species is in fact already in place and can be sustained.

Keywords Multi-species city · Human-nonhuman relationship · Lockdown · Anthropocene

1 There Is Life on the Planet[1]

Among the responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, the lockdown in its various forms and intensities has produced rapid, but perhaps not only transitory, consequences in spatial and ecological relations between living beings and, in parallel, in the Sapiens-Nature relationship.[2] The origin is above all to be found in the macroscopic

[1] This paper is the result of reflections and a documentation process largely shared by the authors. For the purposes of writing the text, the following attributions can be considered: Luca Bonardi, paragraphs 1, 3 and 4; Andrea Marini, paragraphs 2 and 5.

[2] For the sake of convenience, the term is used here in its meaning of otherness with respect to man. Thus, of a Nature without men. This is a voluntary, and momentary, "rearguard" position for the purposes of this contribution since, following the proposal by Timothy Morton (2009), among others, the overcoming of the man-nature binomial is inescapable.

L. Bonardi (✉)
Department of Humanistic Studies, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Venice, Italy
e-mail: luca.bonardi@unimi.it

A. Marini
Department of Philosophy "Piero Martinetti", University of Milan, Milan, Italy

A. Anzani (ed.), *Conscious Dwelling*, Springer Series in Design and Innovation 20,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-97974-4_16

mobility reduction (Nouvellet et al. 2021) tellingly defined by Rutz et al. (2020) as *anthropause*. Therefore, the Anthropocene experienced a pause which, paradoxically, made it more evident and manifest. As recalled by Lewis and Maslin (2018), if in the distant future archaeologists and climatologists want to study our age starting from natural core drillings, they will be able to clearly identify the origin of the Anthropocene[3]—according to the two English scholars it can be placed in 1610 -, but also to read in the folds of time the break in the 2020–2021 biennium, a pause in the anthropocenization of the Earth.

Many of the most immediately observable consequences of the lockdown took place in the urban space, transformed into a sort of immense "reverse zoo". On one side of it, a few billion humans have been locked in for months in cramped condominium cages. On the other hand, in what are only its most anecdotal effects, elephants walking around in Indian cities, monkeys among the palaces of Thai cities, pumas in the streets of Santiago de Chile, dolphins in the Grand Canal in Venice and fallow deer in the Parisian banlieues have been seen. These facts are only the most publicized tip of the huge number of sightings of wild animals in an urban and peri-urban environment reported during the lockdown. This temporary expansion of the range of (non-human) animals is clearly the product of weakening of (human) barriers which, no less than the climatic-environmental ones, limit and fragment their distribution in "normal" times.

It is true that many sightings, especially in the ornithological field, have involved non-human common species already present, in the shadows, in urban centers and around them, which the pandemic "silence" have made only more perceptible. However, what took place was a sort of large spontaneous *citizen science* campaign, with citizens, in some cases even explicitly, supporting naturalistic researchers who were unable to carry out their research in the field.[4] Although less spectacular, the phenomenon also concerned the plant world, which, despite the obvious need for longer times, entered more or less interstitial spaces of the city, starting with micro-surfaces that are normally kept a-biological by the sapiens' cleansing fury.

The presence of roe deer along the Mediterranean sandy shores, normally crowded by sapiens in bathing suits, was only one of the most amplified examples of the obvious extension of the phenomenon to extra-urban anthropic spaces; in this case, touristic spaces were opportunistically reoccupied by the most diverse animal species for reproductive purposes, food, etc. For instance, to remain in the coastal context, with greater ecological significance, the sudden expansion of the nesting areas of sea turtles was observed along the sandy coasts of each continent.

Even if we must not forget some negative effects on the level of ecological riassepta and on the conservation of natural environments that can be observed above all in the *Global South* (Gardner 2020; Buckley 2020), the interest and benevolence which welcomed the appearance of the "wild" in the settlement spaces that we have

[3] On the now long-standing question of the beginning of the Anthropocene, for which various dates have been proposed, see the quick summary by Zalasiewicz (2015).

[4] https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/citizen-science-increasing-pandemic-insects.

traditionally reserved for our species seem worthy of reflection. This posture is part of the more general appeal that extra-urban environments, and in particular those with a high degree of naturalness and biodiversity (forests and mountains in general, wetlands, etc.), have exerted in recent months (Corlett et al. 2020). It is too early to say whether this is a strictly temporary phenomenon or not, but what appears probable is that, on a deeper level, a fault has opened up in the customary perception of our society; that, in an era characterized by both the Covid-19 and the planetary environmental crisis, the complex idea of a land that existed before of us, exists with us and will exist after us, well argued by Telmo Pievani (2019), is settling in the minds of sapiens. In this context, the opportunity for a broader reflection on the ways in which human-non-human relationships are conceptualized, on the anthropo-exclusive conception of the world and, as a declination of it, on exclusive nature of the city (Wolch et al. 1995) is strongly recalled. In other words, on the need to renegotiate ownership and use of terrestrial spaces, including the urban ones.

From a more opportunistic point of view, in this reflection there is also the evidence of the advantages that sapiens themselves can derive from a more continuous bond with nature.

2 The City as a Laboratory of Human Totalitarianism

History, as we are taught in schools and universities, began around ten millennia ago, with the first permanent settlements in the Fertile Crescent and directly related with the development of agriculture in the region. The technologies with which agriculture is equipped and to which it gives rise have gradually enabled human beings to become estranged from and independent on their environment. The discovery of agriculture and the associated sedentary nature of life have led to an ever-increasing demographic expansion and the birth of cities, which in turn have given rise to writing, work specialisation, bureaucracy and hierarchical organisations of society (Diamond 1997). All this, in a self-reinforcing whirlwind, has profoundly altered our way of life, but has also allowed the creation of a world "on a human scale". A scale that has now come to correspond to the very world measure, since the incisive ecological and geological imprints left on it by Homo Sapiens are global.

These developments have led to the creation of culturized, more or less sanitised—i.e., deprived of all that is uncontrollable and entropically inconvenient—closed and human-shaped habitats. It is no coincidence that from these early processes of world culturalization we make our history start (as if there were not a previous and much longer one)—if we exclude some more recent trends (finally) open towards the so-called "deep history" (Lord Smail 2007).

As Stefano Mancuso (2020) reminds us, through these processes man, a generalist animal, endowed with a broad ecological plasticity that springs from his cognitive and imaginative potentials, has been transformed into an increasingly specialist being, unable or almost unable to survive in what is commonly defined as nature. The evident growth of this incapacity goes hand in hand with the progressive cultural

distancing from the surrounding environment in a purely independentist perspective. A mechanism which, rather than of a self-sufficient being, is reminiscent of an autoimmune animal that blindly self-phagocyte itself. As in the story told on 21 May 2005 by David Foster Wallace for the graduation ceremony at Kenyon College, in which two goldfish do not realise they are living in the water, sapiens becomes increasingly self-aware, but less and less so of the reality that surrounds it and of which it is a part.

A symbolic emblem of this can be seen in the well-known *Allegories of Good and Bad Government and their Effects*, frescoed between 1337 and 1339 by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. There, a typical medieval walled city is juxtaposed with the countryside, which can appear either rational and well cared for, in the case of good government, or chaotic an incoherent where the administrative power has not carried out its duties properly. In both cases, the promoted idea, of Greek and Judaeo-Christian derivation, is the same: man is the order-giver, the governor of the world and its dynamics, without whom the Earth would be wild, inhospitable and, in Dante's terms, demonic (in fact, in the frescoes, the bad governors are represented as demons).

From this point of view, the subsequent nineteenth-century romantic and post-romantic vision appears in some ways revolutionary, leading to the idealisation of nature, indeed, a nature "to be lived in". But even this, while restoring centrality to the natural world, continues to see it as a separate object, very distant from any ecological perspective and instead keeping intact the anthropocentric and dividing one (Pagano 2006). A pivotal element of this division has been the constitution of the city as a founding and fundamental spatial unit which, like a tree trunk, allows its cultural and technological branches to develop in space and time. Since its origins, as in many of its subsequent successful models, the city, a unitary space recognisable to the outside world through the wall system, has defined itself as a domain that is both protective and exclusive. The cost of this closure was primarily borne by nature, with its inhabitants inexorably relegated to the outside, to the *silvae* and *solitudines*, or at least to the liminal space between them and the city. Only with the exception of those species, domesticated and selected, over which sapiens exercises its power in a paternalistic form.

The not only physical expansion of the city, but also and above all its mental and cultural reproduction, with an imaginary boundary still operating even once the material walls separating inside and outside have fallen, has generalised this exclusive model. The urban explosion, with the birth of the territory-city, of the city-world or, if you prefer, with the disappearance of a recognisable city object (Cacciari 2004), has disproportionately exported the limits of this separation.

Although the control and annihilation of the "savage", its delimitation outside the boundaries of human space, can also be fully observed *extra moenia*, here it appears above all as a transposition of the logic of the city itself, also of power, referring back to Lorenzetti. On the other hand, isn't the industrialisation of agriculture, and therefore of the rural world, starting from the eighteenth century and with its most striking results during the twentieth century, evidence of a forced transfer of the production model, and of space management, out of its original context?

In other words, the city has been the cradle of a model of fierce and capillary control of terrestrial space and its inhabitants, a laboratory of human totalitarianism exerted on the planet. And even if, as it is quite possible, we want to look elsewhere and further back for its origins, the city is undoubtedly the field where this totalitarianism has been produced in its most radical expressions. Subject to the autocatalytic mechanisms that we have seen at work with the birth of agriculture and cities, the world control has become more and more unbridled, leading man's egomaniacal component to exclude everything considered other than himself because it is outside his custom, outside "normality". Total control excludes, especially in the city, the presence of the savage, who has meanwhile become what Mark Fisher (2017) suggests defining as "Weird" or "Eerie". At the same time, the human being himself is gradually being purged of his least bearable component: the homo, or rather animal, component that would place him on the same ethological plane as other animals. In this direction goes Peter Sloterdjik's idea (Sloterdjik 2016), who reflects on the ever more extreme anthropization of human life and its constant detachment from the so-called natural component. The hope implicit in such a world is the disappearance of pain and algostimulants, the prevalence of a state of "permanent anaesthesia" (Han 2021), separated from reality and the law of unpredictability that governs it.

3 The Urgency of a New Urban Ecology

While the systematic elimination of nature and its eco-systemic fragments in the city seems obvious, likewise, outside it, parks, oases, reserves and even the most acceptable ecological corridors, for little more than a century now, have been expressing the same vision of the world, "for sapiens" and not "with sapiens". The reality of these systems reiterates the exclusion, or at least the isolation, of nature from human reality.

On the other hand, however reductive and simplifying it may seem, the city is, first and foremost, a large aggregate of houses. As expressed by Emanuele Coccia, "the house and its expansion, the city, are above all a form of (human) monoculture, which pushes outwards […] anything that does not resemble it" (Coccia 2020). Only outside, in the "forest (from the Latin *foris*, meaning 'outside'), are gathered the excluded, the exiled from the cities, i.e., from our homes". This is why, rightly Coccia continues, "the word 'forest' should be translated literally as 'refugee camp'. Thus, every time we think of the forest as a natural place, a home for trees, animals, bacteria, viruses, we say that non-humans must live in exile, in refugee camps" (Coccia 2020). In fact, forests, together with constriction systems such as zoos and intensive livestock farms, belong to the group of spaces "in which humans have ideologically and materially placed the animals. That is to say, first and foremost as living beings inferior to humans and as otherness against which the human defines itself and, consequently, within large modern categories such as nature" (Colombino 2019).

By reproducing, more or less explicitly, the idea of the superiority of the human species, and of its survival, such logics forget the existence of a value superior to it, that of eco-systemic integration (Pagano 2006), of a combined harmony, precisely systemic, of living and non-living beings belonging together to the complexity of reality. As the history of the human being teaches us, everything is interconnected and the vectoriality of human and non-human forms of life has shaped reality despite the exclusivist barriers raised by sapiens; in an anthropocentric crescendo that has inevitably led us into the Anthropocene.

As Franciszek Chwałczyk (2020) has reconstructed in detail, many other terms have sprung up around the term Anthropocene, mostly emerging from the social sciences. Among these, the term *urbanocene* (but also the close term *urbocene*) has been very successful; of all of them, perhaps it is the one that most immediately resembles the former, both because of what we have seen so far, and because, as we know or should know, urban theory itself is anthropocentric.

Yet, never before has there been both the opportunity and the need to overcome such a monospecific posture. There are several reasons for this, both on a theoretical and on a practical level. On the one hand, the time is ripe for reasoning around a "right of nature" to urban space, in the direction of a multi-species urban theory that guarantees spaces of existence also to non-human living beings in cities. This, in our opinion, is part of a broader leap towards that irremediable maturity condition that sapiens is called to achieve (Latour 2017), abandoning the arrogance that has characterised its presence on the planet until now. In fact, the question of what legitimacy an urban space programmatically purged of any form of a non-domestic nature has is part of the larger question about world ownership. And the leap that this requires implies a much broader vision of the mere impacts' attenuation of human action, therefore of urbanization, on the natural environment, in the direction of a general reconsideration of the interactions between sapiens and others living.

A multi-species urban theory shifts from the peripheries to the center, in a physical and dialectical sense, the relationships with (and between) non-human animals as well as with the plant world. In this perspective, the former has so far received some extra attention (Caffo 2013). However, we should remember that the non-human also includes plants, often forgotten but similarly subjects of rights, at least from an ecosystem perspective. Plants are an intimate partner of our existence and their action plays a decisive role in the production of the landscape we enjoy.

And precisely in the more utilitarian and pragmatic terms of the use of the world, the second question arises, the one already in place but to be significantly expanded in terms of involved species and surfaces: the "right to nature" in the city, part of the more general "right to the city" of Lefebvrian memory.

Taken together, today these rights impose their validity for at least four main intersecting reasons:

1. The climatic urgency. This, as Latour still remembers (Latour 2017), requires the re-vegetation of every possible urban space. And nothing excludes, and indeed from this perspective it may be effectively convenient, that it also passes

through "openings" to forms of non-governed re-naturalization, starting, as we will say, from those already spontaneously taking place.
2. The contrast to the urban heat island phenomenon. In continuity with the previous motive and partially achievable through the same actions, this objective can also be pursued through the creation of "islands of naturalness".
3. The contribution to planetary biodiversity. The animal and plant diversification of cities contributes to addressing the loss of global biodiversity.
4. The quality of life improvement. Greater biodiversity of everyday living spaces also produces benefits for humans. Directly or indirectly, an increase in urban biodiversity means cleaner air and water, more light, more green spaces. From greater biodiversity and through the variety of ecosystem services that this produces, cities derive a higher environmental quality and this, in turn, determines a better state of health and greater well-being, through contemplative pleasure, learning and moments of recreational fun. Moreover, we cannot forget that in our biological and cultural history, as a species that has been present on Earth for over two hundred thousand years, the time we spent in multi-specific environments far exceeds that, fragmentary, of the few last thousands of years lived in almost monospecific contexts.

Ultimately, if the imperative is to make cities better places to live, we cannot overlook the fact that this is achievable through better connections with the natural world, i.e., through a new urban ecology, understood as a practice of integration between human and non-human living beings and the urban organism as a whole.

4 Biophilia and Biocentrism as a Guide for De-Planning the City

What happened during the lockdown, in terms of interest in the presence and observation of non-human life forms within the urban world, can be considered as a form of awakening of human biophilia, whether of biological or cultural origin (or indiscriminately of both); in other words, evidence of the not yet quenched human desire to keep contact with nature alive. This is an impulse potentially heralding wider consequences in terms of the possibilities offered to a biocentric vision of the city. Through what we could define as a form of affective ecology, the idea of a multispecies city finds greater strength, a key to re-establishing those evolutionary and co-evolutionary processes, constitutive of our history, that bind us to other living beings. The questioning of the monospecific nature of the city, that is, the most manifestly man-made environment on the planet, may seem almost crazy. But we must not forget that over 50% of the human population resides in the cities that and that 70% of it will reside here by the middle of the century. It is in cities and in places that have embraced the urban lifestyle that 80% of the greenhouse gases responsible for the climate crisis are generated, and it is here that most of all kinds of waste are produced (Swyngedouw 2015). And, again, it is here that the greatest health effects

of sensory deprivation are measured, indeed a typical phenomenon of the great world metropolises attributable to the deficit of nature.

Therefore, in our opinion, precisely by imagining and talking about biotic communities in an ultra-artificial sub-ecosystem we can lay the foundations for re-thinking the entire relationship with the non-human. The daily spatial continuity with other species, achievable in an urban environment that does not reject nature, and therefore does not place the city above it, must be considered as the first step to extend this idea beyond its own borders. And to culturally accomplish the deconstruction, scientifically carried out by Darwin already over a century and a half ago, of the alleged ontological privilege of sapiens, bringing it back to its natural phylogenetic continuity with the rest of living beings (and with the animal world in particular).

While, on the one hand, the usefulness and theoretical legitimacy of a re-naturalization of urban space seemed to be demonstrated, on the other hand its almost immediate feasibility, at least on an experimental basis, seems equally to be possibly confirmed. We are talking about something that goes beyond the useful, but narrow dimension of "green in the city", of sustainability measured through more or less real relationships between built-up areas and public gardens ordered and governed by man for his purposes. From a spatial point of view, this possibility is offered first of all by the so-called brownfields, or in any case those abandoned areas, today mostly of industrial origin (but increasingly also commercial), still not concretely involved in "regeneration" processes. Frequently, these are the same areas that, starting from the Eighties, should have compensated for the lack or removal of green areas produced by the often impetuous growth of the industrial city in the previous decades. And which, on the contrary, repeatedly remained unfinished fractions of larger "redevelopment" projects; once located on the edge of the city, today these areas are in fact incorporated into them.

In addition to these, many green—but also blue—interstitial spaces present in the folds of the city can be considered. Small pieces of the so-called third landscape which, on nearer inspection, reproduce as close as compatibly possible a natural or "re-natural" "primeval" multi-species landscape, where small *zoopolis* are already present. As Werner Nohl (1998) already argued over twenty years ago, such volumes of informal greenery can offer, perhaps temporarily, a first spatial reconciliation between humans and non-humans even in an urban setting.

Of one type or of another, these are the wild surfaces of cities where spontaneous vegetation is creating bubbles of naturalness that are also attractive to fauna. Dense green islands that also respond in various ways to the climate problem, both through carbon storage and cushioning the urban heat island phenomenon. This is not the place to dwell on the myriad of typologies that make up the overall picture of these two categories, but we can easily affirm that there is no urban environment where situations and opportunities of this kind are absent. A bit trivially, we can also point out that, from an economic point of view, these are easily sustainable operations, simply having to ensure continuity to the processes of spontaneous re-naturalization already underway. The greatest obstacles, if anything, come from the regulatory and planning sphere, cultural products of a species that, even through these, continues

to think of itself as the whole rather than part of the world, and therefore also of the city.

5 Conclusion

However unacceptable (and obvious) it may seem, we have "created" the Covid. Besides, the pandemic is the result of an environmental imbalance, generated by a disproportionate anthropogenic pressure on natural ecosystems that has produced the species jump of a virus (zoonosis), probably passed on by a bat, through other mediums, to man. Also, this virus, like any other, moves through a vector, which in this case is us, and its speed of propagation is given by the available human technology. Humanity is a community of nearly eight billion strongly interconnected individuals, capable of moving from one part of the planet to another in a few hours: an unexpected fortune for a virus. However, this same virus is also responsible for having awakened our gaze, ordinarily drowsy in the amnesia of an evident reality: that the exclusive world is only a habit, a (terrible) fantasy, an anthropocentric bias forgetful that reality is hybrid. In other words, according to the vocabulary of Nassim Nicholas Taleb (2007), this event would be nothing more than the discovery of the "black swan": so rare an event that it cannot be considered real, in a world accustomed to seeking safety in pre-established, stable and repeatable patterns. Tragically instead, the Covid put us in front of the fact that the existing is not so easily definable in equations of binary logic and one direction, but rather that the only constants are those of variation. And that the logic of total control, the illusion of a completely "manageable" world, at our disposal, can bend and disintegrate as a result of a creature that we cannot even define whether it belongs to the world of living beings (as we normally conceive it).

In the face of similar facts, the positivist vision, that was considered capable of establishing and defining everything, sees the lintels of its rational and predictive building collapse; despite these events are the result of what has been done in the past; in this case, the result of human choices made from an anthropocentric perspective; and although they are predictable and have been foreseen, simply in a broader and more consequential world view. David Quammen, among others, in *Spillover* (2012), and Jared Diamond in *Collapse* (2005) and in *Upheaval* (2020), told us of this possibility. As Roger Waters wrote in *The Thin Ice*[5]: "Don't be surprised when a crack in the ice appears under your feet". Instead, dismay prevailed.

But, as we said, from the constraints dictated by the microscopic creature that shocked the world in 2020, slender blades of grass appeared before our eyes, and not only metaphorically. The action of rapid and spontaneous cities re-naturalization that we have seen at work closely resembles, translated on the level of the non-human, the "tactile" matrices evoked by Michel De Certaud in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). In fact, in the months of the global lockdown, nature has inserted itself

[5] Pink Floyd, *The Wall*, 1979.

according to interstitial logics in the strategically planned and ordered cities framework, operating a sort of inverted poaching against the human building. Among the legacies of the pandemic, there is the chance, which is offered to us, to support and expand the city's biological diversification action.

Emerging from the narrow meshes of asphalt, concrete and bricks, as well as the dolphins of the Grand Canal, these stems remind us that even the city, like its builder, is part of nature, and not above it; that the city, and even more the city-world, is part of a planetary whole; that nature as something other, as we have pretended to consider it so far, also in this contribution, is a mirage, a great and dangerous collective hallucination; that the symbiosis with every living thing, evoked by Donna Haraway in *Chtulucene* (2016), is not an option, but an imperative. Finally, that if the Anthropocene is the problem, its overcoming can only consist in a non-anthropocentric world. Whatever it is.

References

Buckley R (2020) Conservation implications of COVID19: effects via tourism and extractive industries. Biol Cons 247:108640. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108640

Cacciari M (2004): Nomadi in prigione. In: Bonomi A, Abruzzese A (eds) La città infinita. Bruno Mondadori, Milano, pp 51–58

Caffo L (2013) Il maiale non fa la rivoluzione. Manifesto per un antispecismo debole. Sonda, Casale Monferrato

Chwałczyk F (2020) Around the anthropocene in eighty names—considering the urbanocene proposition. Sustainability 12:4458. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12114458

Coccia E (2020) https://triennale.org/magazine/coccia-virus, 25 agosto 2020. Accessed 19 May 2021

Colombino A (2019) Verso una geografia meno antropocentrica. Animal geographies: temi e metodi di ricerca. In: Salvatori F (ed) L'apporto della Geografia tra rivoluzioni e riforme. Atti del XXXII Congresso Geografico Italiano, (Roma, 7–10 giugno 2017), pp 2813–2816. A.Ge.I., Roma

Corlett RT, Poonia A, Grelle CEV, Christianini A, Mujuni N (2020) How is the COVID-19 pandemic impacting protected area management? https://www.researchgate.net/post/How_is_the_COVID-19_pandemic_impacting_protected_area_management#view=5e974d62d8edad62df541921. Accessed 19 May 2021

De Certaud M (1984) The practice of everyday life. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London

Diamond J (1997) Diamond, guns, germs, and steel. Norton, New York

Diamond J (2005) Collapse: how societies choose to fail or succeed. Viking Press, New York

Diamond J (2020) Upheaval: how nations cope with crisis and change. Penguin, London

Fisher M (2017) The weird and the eerie. Repeater Books, London

Gardner C (2020) Nature's comeback? No, the coronavirus pandemic threatens the world's wildlife. The Conversation, 14 April. https://theconversation.com/natures-comeback-no-the-coronavirus-pandemic-threatens-the-worlds-wildlife-136209. Accessed 15 Jul 2021

Han B (2021) La società senza dolore: Perché abbiamo bandito la sofferenza dalle nostre vite. Einaudi, Torino

Haraway D (2016) Staying with the trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene. Duke University Press, Dhuram

https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/citizen-science-increasing-pandemic-insects. Accessed 21 May 2021

Latour B (2017) Facing Gaia: eight lectures on the new climatic regime. Polity Press, Cambridge
Lewis S, Maslin MA (2018) The human planet: how we created the anthropocene. Penguin, London
Lord Smail D (2007) On deep history and the brain. University of California Press, Berkeley
Mancuso S (2020) La pianta del Mondo. Laterza, Roma-Bari
Morton T (2009) Ecology without nature: rethinking environmental aesthetics. Harvard University Press, Cambridge
Nohl W (1998) Is there such a thing as the aesthetics of sustainable cities and what could it be like? In: Breuste J, Feldmann H, Uhlmann O (eds) Urban Ecology. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg
Nouvellet P, Bhatia S, Cori A et al (2021) Reduction in mobility and COVID-19 transmission. Nat Commun 12:1090. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-21358-2
Pagano P (2006) Filosofia ambientale. Mattioli 1885, Fidenza
Pievani T (2019) La Terra dopo di noi. Contrasto, Milano
Quammen D (2012) Spillover: animal infections and the next human pandemic. WW Norton, New York
Rutz C, Loretto MC, Bates AE et al (2020) COVID-19 lockdown allows researchers to quantify the effects of human activity on wildlife. Nat Ecol Evol 4: 1156–1159. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41559-020-1237-z
Sloterdjik P (2016) Not saved: essays after Heidegger. Polity Press, Cambridge
Swyngedouw E (2015) Urbanization and environmental futures: politicizing urban political ecologies. In: Perreault T, Bridge G, McCarthy J (eds) The Routledge handbook of political ecology. Routledge, London, pp 609–619
Taleb NN (2007) The Black Swan: the impact of the highly improbable. Random House and Penguin Books, New York
Wolch JR, West K, Gaines TE (1995) Transspecies urban theory. Environ Plan D: Soc Space 13(6):735–760
Zalasiewicz J (2015) Disputed start dates for Anthropocene. Nature 520:436. https://doi.org/10.1038/520436b