

## 17. Spatial tensions: urban microgeographies for changing cities

### Urban Crisis Storytelling: idioms and forms of city's equilibrium integrating the uncertainty

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**Abstract:** I will present two years of experience as a PhD researcher on the thesis “European city: Fundamentals and images of its Crisis”. I made an anthology of narrations accompanying projects “for”, “against”, “between” crisis. How do these tells make urban government frameworks pass from the paradigm of “finality” to the paradigm of “intentionality”? Mixing functional rationality (biological sciences) and intentional rationality (social sciences), Urban Studies create the condition to reshape equilibrium. From the consciousness that the total outcome doesn't satisfy everyone's interest, negative externalities are something to be controlled. Like Odysseus binds himself to not hear the Mermaids, reducing the field of action, we reduce the unpredictability. The problem of operationalization of the concept of crisis reveals the contraposition of two genealogies of thoughts; the one considered dominant and the other in objection. If we give the attribute of “feminine” to the genealogy of thought in opposition, we find some important concepts: empathy, contradiction, anachronism, otherness, cosmogony. Recognising the historical genealogies of this thought I want discuss the lexicon of the tension between patriarchal language and a feminine way of access to reality. How does the triad work/efficacy/example change? May this manage European city in order to integrate the uncertainty?

**Keywords:** crisis; feminine; European city; storytelling

**Introduction** Starting from the call of this Session I will discuss three main themes: the concept of crisis, intended as discontinuity transformation; the storytelling potential of the discipline of Urban Studies; the concept on gender, in a double sense of literary genre and in a biological/cultural sense. I will put the emphasis on some misguided words expressing transformation, to propose tension problem roots. Is it true that cities does never stop to change? From what distance we look at the urban? I propose the perspective of ‘micro’ not as a dimensional topic but as something to do with emancipation. These reflections I propose are inspired by my PhD activities (still in progress) for nearly two years. For my research project “European city: Fundamentals and images of its Crisis” I am carrying on an anthology of narratives about the presumed aspects of “urban crisis” at the beginning of this century. My review of discourses on the presumed urban crisis as a complex construct (not yet well framed in in Europe) leads to consider vocabularies showing their mutual conflict. How can these rhetoric and speeches define the two horizons separating something *before* and something *after*? My work has both an historical/geographical value and an anachronistic approach (in a positive sense). Effective verb *krino* (from the ancient greek “to separate”, “to decide”) is that part of the human experience that sets out the fundamental issue of something we could say as: *While a human being is transforming his world human being is transforming himself*. I will discuss this one-to-one condition to propose a concept of ‘tension’ and to wonder

about its geographical and economic scalability. Is micro-geography a good point of observation for changing cities? Is this a dimensional size?

**Is it enough European?** Starting from the rhetoric of the crisis, the purpose of my PhD dissertation would be to point out some aspects of the relationship between project and community, between civilisation and measure of the space, between the idea of city and practices. At the beginning of my research project the majority of my interlocutors observed that:

- European city doesn't exist!
- 'Urban crisis' hasn't been univocally defined in European geographical context

Unlike in other contexts (for example in America Latina, as a political crisis; or in North America, as recession) the association between 'urban' and 'crisis' has many different declinations (economic crisis, resources crisis, refugees crisis) often well mixed in a general 'crisis of values'. This general feeling is a good starting point to examine the cultural devices of transformation. So I took different 'urban' projects (simply meaning for 'urban' ones assuming the pre-existence of the city as a matter) and look at the corresponding storytelling (involving one of the various concepts of crisis), plotted by different narrators. My Questions is: With what extent are the narratives of the crisis functional to the reformulation of the practices and of the frame of government actions? And so: In which cases did the narration allow to configure a change and when, instead, was it misleading?

I could have chose to do a transoceanic comparison or to focalise on a casa study (as Rome, Barcelona or Madrid) or to chose and compare different sensitive contexts (such as Cipro, or post-Brexit Ireland, or Athens). But what I am doing is to conduct small case studies with a mixed method and heterogeneity of the sources (photography, spaces, interviews, kinds of spaces). This investigation of different discourses uses historical reconstructions, with references to Carlo Ginzburg and Alessandro Portelli; biographies of cases, in the manner of Arturo Lanzani and Pierluigi Crosta. This may appear like an heuristic method but I have been naturally brought to the hypothesis that the essence of European city is mainly a device of translation (Leciejewicz, 2000), indeed the world 'crisis' arises when an intentional action is transforming something, understanding the rules of the living.

In European *forma mentis* a presumed equilibrium of urban coexistence is always built through *an effort of translation: from a culture to another, from a city to another*. European modern culture was born in the literary entourages and the Myth of Europa is migrant and tells of a rapture.



Figure 1 Palazzo Farnese, Caprarola (Italy), Sala del Mappamondo o delle Carte Geografiche and Figure 2 Antonio Carracci, *Il ratto di Europa* [credits, M. Pietropaoli].

If “European city” or “European culture” don’t exist, what is shaping urban relationships are plural “European cities and European cultures”. Right in in this proliferation of the use of the lemma ‘crisis’ I see a reaction to the dogma of identity, mainly underlying a patriarchal thought. This must be considered not a weakness, not a ‘crisis of values’, but an impulse to define the authenticity of timeless values put into practice in the democratic coexistence. Is the project of democratic city (and has it always been) a project of redemption for human being? Does the lexicon of crisis make arises an ‘objection thought’? How this words are opposing or collaborating or weave a complementarity with the ‘dominant thought’? Does this emerging vocabulary belong to a feminine genealogy of thought?

**The feminine as a culture of emancipation through project** What I propose with this paper is to give the attribute of ‘feminine’ to the genealogy of thought in opposition to the dogma of ‘unique identity’. It points out some important concepts: empathy, contradiction, anachronism, otherness, cosmopolitanism; and the capacity to lead this transformation one-to-one between giving form to the world and the knowledge of being. ‘Feminine’ attribution is intended as *feminine way to access to reality* and not only as cause for women’s right (Buttarelli, 2017). This is not a way to reclaim the separation of gender identity but to “unravel” it; it is necessary to deconstruct the narrow gender affiliation built in the context of socio-political, historical creations (Villani, 2018). The Reclaim and Rebranding feminism is the so-called Third wave of feminism. I consider this reclaim activism one of the references of my research. I will not dwell on these aspects of gender activism because I don’t want to give the Gender Study tag to my investigation.

My contribution concerns mainly the theoretical part of my research work with a multidisciplinary approach. I will discuss some idioms. I believe that this perspective could offer some coordinates to draw an idea of ‘tension’ able to rediscover a design culture integrating conflicts, contradictions, uncertainty. In the following paragraphs I will claim a systematisation of this approach coming to the definition of three spatial tensions:

1. **Part One: The possibility of becoming-woman or the concept of *work*** about the “becoming-body” of the city as a “becoming-woman” of the city;
2. **Part Two: The possibility of making space or the concept of *efficacy*** about the concept of authority is changes in a society drawing its storytelling on a dimension of permanent crisis;
3. **Part Three: The possibility of becoming-urban or the concept of *example*** about how an emerging lexicon is refunding Urban Studies not only in the performativity of the vocabulary but radically conditioning the possibility of urban narratives (in politics, policies, practices fields) as a literary genre.

I will use humanistic fields’ tools (semiotics, philosophy, anthropology) to sustain my arguments. The starting and final point is the concept of ‘tension’ as opportunity for urban planning and design practices (as invitation by the curators of this Session of Aesop 2019). The question underlying these themes is that urban government frameworks are wondering how to integrate the paradigm of “finality” with the paradigm of “intentionality”.

Over recent years, Roman Departments of Architecture has been marked by the presence of distinguished philosophers, invited to introduce Academic Years; to give a direction to research priorities, to provoke a questioning of design categories. Giorgio Agamben has celebrated with *Costruire abitare* speech the inauguration of PhD Courses (7<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, Sapienza University, Rome) and Carlo Olmo gave a *lectio magistralis* with the title *Segmenti e bastoncini* (14<sup>th</sup> of December 2018, Roma Tre University, Rome) and another for a cycle of open lessons about Europe, *L’Europa vista dai tetti del Birkbeck College* (March 2019, Roma Tre University). In Italy this presence is not new, since Massimo Cacciari has been the catalyst for several disciplinary and political debates, with a multi-media relevance. This quest for a philosophical assumptions of the relationship between “standard and form” (Olmo, in the second conference) shows a permanent conflict. The “common destiny” expressed by the syntagm ‘public space’ is in crisis (Olmo, 2018). This can be the latent tension informing all the other tensions.

In the next paragraph I will discuss the problematic pact between *mots et choses* bringing it to the view of the possible integration of a genealogy of thought properly feminine within a large *corpus* of morphologies of human living structures. The way these structures consolidated their trajectory can be assumed as a predominantly patriarchal way of

access to reality. Annarosa Buttarelli (2017) emphasizes the presence of two big mechanisms of repression: the civil war (in the wake of Nicole Loraux and Marija Gimbutas), the sexual contract (in the wake of Carole Pateman). I propose, with Buttarelli, this double and interconnected substratum as a generative matrix to be freed up from a masculine empowerment:

- the unconscious repression of the origins of democracy, buried deep in a lasting subjection
- the freedom from a monosex and chained history

And I add a third critical issue:

- European City as a thematic field in which an emerging feminine vocabulary expresses thoughts liberating the patriarchal matrix.

Agamben offered a reflection of the sense of *arché*, reclaiming this attitude to investigate this root. Olmo (2018) invokes the distinction between the use of “visual tools and narratives as a support for instrumentalized governance functions” and “the impartiality that this function should practice and conserve”. The “definition of the democratic form of the contemporary city” (id.) is passing from the report about the present possibility of a feminine government authority; not only in by woman or for woman.

**Part One: the possibility of becoming-woman or the concept of *work*** Last year I wondered how to recognize in the additive culture of ‘zoning’ some interesting trace of *transition* culture (Pietropaoli, 2018). I tried to show “how urbanism, mediating between a geography of the supply and a geography of the demand, organises a discourse on diversity which can help the individual story-telling to escape from the single frequency of the *Égal*.” (id.). I proposed to see in urban government thought some intuitions of Deleuzian coordinates with a decolonising attitude (id.).

“Negotiation of an urban fact cannot fall in a dichotomous dimension (be/not be): the challenge is to construct discourses on the future of the urban, that are able to contain the minute stories of the becoming-minor; that make order, rarefying.” (id.)

I adopted from Deleuzian categories both the concepts of becoming-minor and rarefaction. While a “general theory of urban facts”, in Aldo Rossi’s *L’architettura della città* (2011), is a way to express the permanent essence of the ‘immobile stage’. Aldo Rossi wants to affirm “the values of architecture in the city’s study” (id.). Collective and private elements are confused in the city, “small beings looking for their accommodation, a small environment suitable for the general environment” (id.). Paraphrasing Rossi, architecture as an inherent fact of civilisation is a permanent stage of a theatre; it is necessary to:

- create a favourable environment for life
- express an esthetical intentionality
- make readable the stratification of memory and self-awareness of the city itself.

While Aldo Rossi shows that the “the city grows on itself” (id.), he trusts on the possibility of the universality and readability of architecture. He calls on a particular attention in the study of permanences. I think that this milestone signs a misunderstanding yet operational, leading the way for the concept of ‘assemblage’.

In the current time, some discourses use the word ‘assemblage’ trying to challenge the determinism of zoning approach, Sixties season of urban standards openly had declared the trust on urban fact as a dispositive of socio-cultural articulation, providing norms for society. Federica Giardini (2017) proposes a review of the massive success of this English acquisition of the French word *agencement*, pointing out that “this notion is both a point of precipitation of the transformations of the politician and an indication of a return of the materialistic approach” (id.). In Italian *agencement/assemblage* is translated as *concatenamento*, giving the accent on this figure of continuous chain (Deleuze and Guattari, 2017). Giardini shows that the “spatiality of the chain” gives relevance to the question of the “unforseen

development” (Giardini, 2017). She grabs the point of the problem of the “provisional composition of strengths” (id.). For urban planning the problem today is the knowledge of the dynamics, more than the mastery of balanced forms. We are back to the concept of tension. If we immerse further in Deleuze and Guattari’s *milles plateaux* (2017), we find in the *Traité de nomadologie : la machine de guerre* (chapter 12) the figure of the “transhumant”: “to follow the flow of matter is wandering, roaming”. And they evoke the figure of the artisan as a *phylum macchinico*, “who is determined to follow a material flow” that “cannot only be followed” (ibidem). This transhumant figures are made of concentric circles, different from the practice of nomadism and itinerancy. Therefore the material has its own life (flowing) and to follow its dynamism means is a sort of encirclement.

European Urban scholar is accustomed to esteem the figure of the flaneur as positive way of re-mapping the world, while participating to life. I want to stress the aspect that this non-finalisation of the wandering is a typical ‘feminine’ attribution. In the same way it’s a woman attribute the accent on the non-action, in opposition to an active way. Man acts, builds, and transforms, interrupts the infinity of the woman experience of the continuous (of which he has no experience).

This value of inactivity in ‘space realm’ has his own correspondence in ‘time realm’; the aesthetics of the *ephemeral*. If the non-permanence in space has the value of making a free presence exist, non-permanence in time has the power of dissolve the traces of an action shaping the world. In the first figure the perception of the subject is moving and the scene is immobile. You can trace a map of this experience. In the second the thought is able to shape reality only for a meanwhile. A female lightness of the action is less ambitious and permanent but has a form, a tension, and a trajectory. What’s the problem? And why we need a reclaim of feminine way to reality? I see to forms of these concepts of equivocal appropriation by patriarchal *forma mentis*:

- mapping is a properly colonial action (Anderson, , attributed to the feminine/post-colonial experience of the suspension of the judgement
- the figure of transhumant has a cyclical (as in woman experience) and circular way but the risk is to confuse it with a vicious cycle.

I come back to ‘permanence’ concept of Aldo Rossi, to reveal the misunderstanding I anticipated. The problem of an unforeseen development for Giardini (2017), in search of a renunciation of permanence, lead European design culture fall into a dichotomous opposition. To follow the stream of material and impermanence of this material is free. But according to my opinion these categories can be re-appropriated by an effort of re-configuration that see in ‘assemblage’ just a more casual way of zoning.

Giardini (id.) points out that the ‘assemblage’ weakens the effectiveness of the vertical playset approach; in the “spatiality of the chain” (id.) geographical scales are not Chinese boxes. Inter-connections are not only vertical, as in Actor Network Theory. The problematic effect of this ‘non vertical’ feature is that words linked to the culture of *agancement* are flattened to a one-dimensional aspect. And what’s the paradox? Without a vertical reference, territorial scale becomes a generic scale. So these adjectives, associated to design devices, give to project an inability to recognize its efficacy. Process/procedural, relationship/relational, participation/participated. Here are some evidences of how the tension of reality is frozen in a presumed horizontal playset. Horizontal has the generic value of a non-territorial-scale tag, good intentions often unsuccessful, a false friend of emancipation. These may be forms of “salvage capital” (Tsing, 2015) which appropriates itself of emerging awareness born in the local frictions. Often this “salvage capital” re-uses positive expertise to conquer again the freedom of local cultures. Tsing also claims that is not possible to scale-up any adjectives and frame of sense.

The problem of reshaping a world full of layers and objects is not new. “The basis of the current concept of city is the idea that it does not therefore fulfil the physical representation of a rigorous concept, but rather it’s the effect of the sum of countless historical experiences, of an inexhaustible process of shaping, involving, more or less directly, all the citizens, with their daily behaviour” (de Seta, 2010). As well as Rossi, de Seta conceives the city as a big artifact. What happens if the typological configuration is not a standard for project *efficacy*? De Seta (id.) points out the classical



difference between *civitas* (the complex of people shaping their living together with architectures and rules) and *urbs* (the physical construction, as a result of the way of living). These are often categories conceived as in opposition. Nothing newer than the opposition between Antigone and Creonte. What can be radically new (or radically reconquered) is considering the multiple physicality of the city as an activator of a multiple subjectivity. The problem of multiple points of view has been taken on with thought of *plurality*, by de-colonisation thought. Considering that another way of being is always possible in a feminine scenery. While cosmogony observes and accepts, cosmopolitan culture collects and juxtaposes differences (Buttarelli, 2017). Patterns, imagination, narrative, expectations compose a lexicon for a project that can observe but also tags used by politics and policies for a unique identity. Cosmopolitan government just accepts and recomposes differences without continuing the observation.

Another form of “salvage capital” can be the people-for-people paradigm: just a mutual appropriation through an instrumental knowledge and acceptance of the difference of the Other (Pietropaoli, 2018). “What is the work of genius if it is not the work he produces?” is the question posed by Massimo Carboni (2017) in *Il genio è senza opera*. The title is taken by an ancient Chinese expression. I take the three words “work, efficacy and example” from his essay. Carboni starts questioning about how in art the performativity of life became more important than the subjectivity of the kantian *genius* expressing an idea (id.). I will treat the problem of efficacy and example – closely related topics – in the next paragraphs. Now I want to end this paragraph with an accent on the becoming-body. The effectiveness of urban narratives outlines an idea of city no longer as the sum of decisions, but as becoming a woman, understood as becoming-body (Pietropaoli, 2018). Becoming-woman gives to the materiality of reality the character of a fold (Deleuze), of a push toward the multiplicity. This plural presence of objects is to be intended as a ‘work’ that is the result of Deleuzian practices of emancipation. I am proposing that the impartiality to which Olmo referred must be intended as a discourse on the urban body, different from the organic and medical metaphors of functionalism. This becoming-body is a field of a cosmogony of which dynamics are tensions to be read. This becoming-body could substitute the category of work.

**Part Two: The possibility of making space or the concept of *efficacy*** This dynamics reveals hidden theories of urban government based on the integration between masculine and feminine genealogies of thought. The index of this passage is the proliferation of the word crisis instead of the word equilibrium. What is breaking the wall of order? Stories. In this part of my essay I want to discuss about the possibility of histories and stories to exist; this touches the classical opposition of *logos* vs. city of stone. One of the questions underlying the use of the concept of tension is: does *logos* gives an order or get out of order? There’s a beautiful scene of the documentary about Donna Haraway (Terranova, 2016) where she’s playing with her dog (Figure 3). It’s a serious play, because they are making a contest for dog and masters of dogs, of those with obstacles. The sequence shows how the intimate understanding between these two creatures is made by experience and exercise. They have some common rules, a pact, and a common way of living. I see in this attitude to dispose bodies to a common discipline something important about tension. They feel empathy. They keep attention on gestures.

The importance of the exercise of gesture is something not so trendy in the current urban design composition. In a world overloaded with signs we are often embarrassed by giving an unique gesture to the use of an object. Narratives on ‘spontaneous’ and ‘informal’ are very successful. As happened in the case of impermanence, these are two adjectives taken from feminine realm but are exploited by patriarchal *forma mentis*. The culture of the ‘residual’, the basis of the concept of regeneration, starts from the recognition of a missing gesture. There are no gestures using a building, a park, a... Whatever object in the city. This generality of the concept reminds us what I still told about non-territorial-scale. These objects can be not only abandoned but also misutilised. The consubstantial presence of these objects ‘within’ the city reveals the unavoidable coexistence of life and death in urban becoming-body. But urban ‘death’ doesn’t coincides with a lack, a void, an organic decomposition. Architectural organism sometimes are still void (as a square space) or are made by a complex texture of organic and, often, inorganic materials. So the lack is an absence of intention or the presumed inefficacy of the intention using that part of the urban body.

In *Karman*, Giorgio Agamben (2017) treats the topic of gesture, starting from the origins of the concepts of cause, fault, will. “The laborious grafting of the concept of will on that of power” (Agamben, 2017) is fulfilled in Christian theology, with philosophers Agostino and Anselmo. The verbs “I can”, “I want”, “I must” are void of significance and “Possibility contingency, necessity” are articulation of the ontological thinkability (ibidem). Agamben shows how the ancient man has power and the “Christian man is a wanting being”. Proper of the ancient word is also the difference between *skopos* and *telos* (purpose and finality), with a preference on finality. Because “the *skopos* doesn’t depend from us but from the destiny” (id.).



Figure 3 Donna Haraway and her dog, photogram from the movie by Terranova, F., 2016, Donna Haraway: Story Telling for Earthly Survival [1h 30m].

I think that this tension between purpose and not-finalisation is some other material for the misunderstanding path I am proposing. This accent of ‘something lacking’ and the way Donna Haraway performs the efficacy of her relationship with her dog offers an image to a kind of social contract more based on ‘community’ realm than in ‘society’ one. In the documentary Haraway calls this relationship “a lifetime commitment”. This is not a question of metric-scale; society doesn’t contain community as something smaller. Efficacy gesture is something to cultivate between relationship and purposes. Efficiency is different from efficacy (Buttarelli, 2017). The efficiency is a different paradigm that prefers *telos* than *scopos* and common destiny is taken for granted. Instead if we choose efficacy, common destiny is something to conquer from time to time.

It reminds Cristina Bianchetti’s expression in *Tensioni urbane* (Cerruti But, Kërçuku, Setti, Vassallo, 2017, p.140): “pragmatic attitude that does not surrender to general theories”. Nevertheless this approach of urbanism in the same book is defined as ‘weak’ by Paola Viganò (chapter *Verso un’idea di Urbanistica debole*). This is the problem of considering opposition thought as something weaker (because proper of women), by convention. The strength of efficacy can be shown by considering philosophical and grammatical problems as a scenery to be integrated in case studies. The strength of efficacy can be reclaimed by women to be offered to everybody. This brings us to the final paragraph. Two sexes: the one strong, the other weak. An human being: primarily bad.

**Part Three: The possibility of becoming-urban or the concept of *example*** I will end my argumentation with a reflection about responsibility of Urban Studies scholars. A recent work by Patrizia Gabellini has the title of *Le mutazioni dell’urbanistica. Principi, tecniche, competenze* (2018). She reviews a large number of words, as an emerging field of urban government actions. Assuming any alternative way of thinking as an opposite ‘weaker’ thought is something very insidious. This lexical emancipation has no sense if the narratives on crisis and mutation assume this dominant-man-thought as a reference for human action. Marcel Gauchet (2018) denounces the end of male domination: “To women the gift of life” and to men the posses of society. Based on the possibility of tradition of values, men power takes the the family domain as the “basic cell on which the common existence was based” (id.). According to Gauchet, the dissolution of family gives a new assessment to society, made of individuals. This is the end of the male domination: the paternalism in matter of exercise of the authority has become a scarecrow (id.). In the second paragraph about efficacy, I still discussed the passage from society to community topics. The relevant step of Gauchet argumentation is a consideration about the dimension of the public sphere; he shows how this sphere had its cognitive

fundamental in the “results of science”, because that kind of objectivity was “conceived for the public release” (id.). According to Gauchet “the public has taken the place of the male” and the “city-soldier [...] takes charge of the fate of his homeland” (id.). We can find some indicators of this “public safety” individual battle in big narratives of current ‘crisis’ in their ecological approach as Anthropocene, Collapsology, Degrowth. The system of reference is planet Earth, for different reasons.

I will treat the largest narrative on species common destiny: Anthropocene. In these narratives is more or less implicit (it depends on the speaker) that the specie’s (disregarding the relevance of this concept) behaviours are called into question. It is also emphasised the human ability to make damages. The Earth as a figure of Nature is something currently familiar but is something recent (Virno, 2015). Scenarios of stories are flattened on the curved sphere of the planet. This is a sort of end of “time disarticulation of the space-time hinges of history” (Danowski, Viveiros de Castro, 2017). The rhetoric of the ‘loss’/‘lack’ invest the World. But with inverted perspective: please, human being, stop acting. This kind of rationality has the model of Odysseus that stops with the ropes his instinct to reach the singing Mermaids (Elster, 2005). To know to be weak (id.) is to recognize the need for an imperfect rationality. Elster retains absurd that people can choose apathy to protect themselves from manipulation but this stabilizing effect of “stratagems to force oneself” is a typical disposition for European cultures.

If we look at the project reacting to these sings of Mermaids (by technology and exploitation) we find Martin Prominski Andscapes. “By using the term ‘andscape’, a dualistic, divisive understanding of nature and culture becomes impossible – instead, the focus is on the dynamic relations between humans, animals, plants, stones, water, and all other elements in the world” (Prominski, 2014). This effort of integration is voiced in Prominski’s landscape architecture projects (Figure 4). He proposes the effect of the design intention not in the final form but in the capacity to let interact vegetal and animal living with men urban traces. Athropocene is Prominski’s framework of reference. Instead of the result of a less governed aesthetics, I find in this action of design a strong reclaim of control. These are beautiful and successful places, integrating an attentive consideration of resources and of uses. “And” is a more feminine conjunction than “or” (Buttarelli, 2017) but at the end these are interactive spaces wants to be recognised as something additive. This is a step to admit multiplicity in the lexicon of project. No more nature vs. human but nature and human. They don’t exclude each other but they don’t add a quality to the dialogue. Is this a branding concept? I don’t want too bold in this consideration and I consider important this response from the perspective of landscape to the perspective of Earth. Is the Prominski’s concept of ‘entanglement’ a way to give peace to a tension? Is it a good sign of change without a stronger awareness of the deep root of this culture in feminine way of thought? The difference from Gilles Clément’s Third Landscape and Planetary Garden is the idea to concentrate not on Clément’s possible points of observations of something transforming but on the effect of an integration of the dualistic world. What Earth crisis perspective reveals is that, another time again, is grammatical and more feminine the key of a new narrative of project integrating uncertainty.



Figure 4 Martin Prominski’s projects [source <http://www.irishlandscapeinstitute.com/2016/04/29/andscapes-ili-may-lecture-by-martin-prominski/>]



“The tale must be rehearsed – and we may amuse ourselves imagining how these must have been, often, acrimonious, or at least in dispute. Whose version of events is going to be committed to memory by the Memories?” (Doris Lessing, *The Cleft*). In this wonderful and terrific book, Doris Lessing tells the story of two populations, one completely masculine and the other completely feminine. This meeting between two species provokes a strong conflict. The translation of the title in *Una comunità perduta*, in Italian version, expresses the problem of common uses and behaviours. Both the sexes have a beasts’ common attitude. The rhetoric of Wilderness, as a movement not totally well framed in landscape architecture, is a step posing the access to the radical wild (of course) nature of living beings. But isn’t city more wild (in the sense of uncontrollable) than vegetable life sometimes? Isn’t this reclaim of wild life a way to escape and deny to the vibrant – non perfectly rational – results of urban co-existence? Gilles Clément invoked to learn to take care of the Garden with the capacity of observation, to let life express. Prominski proposes an accent on co-existence of non-drawable and designed. Well, this is still a Garden more than a unknown Forest. But in both the figures there’s a promise of abundance and future. I want to propose as a final suggestion another fairy figure: the Wood. Into the Wood the tales have place; actors choose a direction or another, they lost and find. Urban Studies scholar opens the experiment to an investigation which gives to the community the posture of doubt, of standing at the crossroads of the insidious path of the narrative wood (Eco, 1994). “The fundamental rule for dealing with a narrative text is that the reader accepts, tacitly, a fictional pact” (id.). The space of the Wood is made of possible crossroads and the protagonist of this path can choose only if he has some traces of orientation and disorientation. According to Eco this pact of said and not said constructs the expectation in the reader. Expectation is the only important thing because it makes to the reader an adventure to the limit between choice and destiny. I use this metaphor of Wood to propose this place of grammatical agreement as a rich relationship to be cultivated: with readers of Urban Studies and with people living their life in Urban dimension. The awareness of being part of a common story and history is a challenge for us as good writers. The moral claim to engage ourselves while we see the transformation of the city must be reached with this discovery of other ways of access to reality.

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\*English translations of Italian and French texts are made by the author of this paper

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