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THE AESTHETIC TURN, CREATIVITY, AND THE CITY

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ABSTRACT

Despite uncertain ontological status, 'creativity' is superseding 'innovation' in arguments about the key factors of development. That uncertain status mirrors the long lasting and apparently unhealable divide between rationalism and aestheticism that arose in the Nineteen Century as a reaction to the dominance of Enlightenment, and that widened in the last century with post-modernism. In this regard, 'creativity' is contended between a logical-positivist interpretation that downgrades it to a combinatory device and an aestheticist interpretation that looks at it as an aftermath of the aesthetic. While not disregarding the rationalist and the aesthetic views, the paper shows that (a) a non-reductionist or subordinate approach to creativity is possible, based on abduction; (b) space is the necessary condition for carrying abduction out effectively and (c) landscape, with its emotional and aesthetic connotations, is the 'transitional object' for allowing abduction to develop its creative power. In this connection, urbanscape appears as the *dispositif* par excellence for performing creativity. It also plays a didactic role, by engendering a suitable atmosphere for creativity to become a collective rite, and a social commitment, as well. The downside is the risk that the aestheticization of social life and the city makes people's commitment to being creative turn into compulsive behavior, thus opening the way to the an-aestheticization of society.

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1. Introduction

"Cities provide an ideal environment for innovation as they offer proximity, density and variety" (Athey *et al.*, 2008: 156). This is one out of dozens of similar statements available in literature, concerning the top role of urban ambiances in enhancing innovativeness and, more broadly, creativity. More or less knowingly, anyway implicitly, they all echo Durkheim's (1895) seminal notion of milieu, according to which new social facts stem from the localized concurrence of three structural factors[2], namely social volume, relational density and the spatial distribution of all sorts of items. Though 'space' is intrinsic to the opening quotation and the many other similar ones, they differ from Durkheim's approach, however, because they make reference to a metric rather than topological notion of space, inside of which the specific spatial arrangement of items also matters, beyond reciprocal distance and size.

Even though Durkheim did not achieve a convincing explanation of how topological space works in giving milieus generative power[3], it is quite odd that his more or less sentient followers (at least concerning this limited though crucial issue) have disregarded his insight: not so much because they do not quote him, since quotations could be redundant when a certain source has become general knowledge, but, on the contrary, because of lack of debate. In actual fact, if the topological space concurs in yielding generative effects, enormous room opens up on both the analytical and the normative side, at every decision-making level, from the micro inner spaces to organizations, enterprises and institutions, inside all of which pragmatic sensitivities have since long anticipated any scientific reflexion, to the urban and the territorial scales. There are at least two explanations other than that of mere neglect and subsequent oblivion by mainstream scholars:

a) a structural approach is hard to swallow by neoclassic economics, where methodological individualism reigns. Admitting that structural factors can, not only condition individual rationality, but also interact with it, would be fatal to its entire theoretical fabric: the crucial distinction would actually fail between *given* exogenous factors (of all sorts) and *maneuvering* (economic) variables, so that economics would eventually dissolve into sociology (Swedberg, 1990);

b) the same applies to topology, which is qualitative in nature (Faltings, 1995). Though important efforts are underway to employ quantitative analysis in transformational issues (Gromov, 1999; Blumberg, Mandell, 2013) and to devise methods and models that combine qualitative and quantitative research (Tashakkori, Teddlie, 1998), an algorithm (hopefully[4]) is still lacking to integrate those aspects analytically. Therefore, mainstream economists' reluctance against intrusions by qualitative aspects into mathematical models, along with their expedient of confining them into the pre-analytic realm (Schumpeter, 1954) is quite understandable.

The real stakes of abiding by such mainstream options are how much they cost in terms of loss of interpretative and operational power, especially after a third wheel, namely creativity, claims for more room between invention and innovation. Having just quoted Schumpeter, it is worth recalling the importance he gave to creativity as regards economic change, by significantly ending the chapter devoted to it as follows:

> Now a theoretical construction which neglects this essential element [creative destruction] of the case neglects all that is most typically capitalist about it; even if correct in logic as well as in fact, it is like *Hamlet* without the Danish prince. (Schumpeter, 1950: 86).

Unfortunately, to comply fully with neo-positivism "in logic as well as in fact", he avoided giving a definition of creativity. To remain within the metaphor, would be the same as Shakespeare making Hamlet act without investigating his soul. While that negligence is bearable at the meso- or macro-level of analysis (which Schumpeter applied to "creative destruction") because at those scales it is enough to detect visible outcomes, it

[2] 'Structural', in that they escape immediate deliberate intervention.
[3] For a critical assessment, see Cusinato (2016).
[4] Would that algorithm have been found, full control would ensue on the emotional sphere. Following Pirsig's (1974) concern about the risk of being driven mad by attempting to conceive of it, the question raises if true madness ensues rather than preceding (as Pirsig argues) the achievement of that supposed algorithm.

is not viable at the micro-level, especially since the concern for creativity – essentially, its governance – has importantly entered the entrepreneur's radar. As we know, Schumpeter avoided that hurdle by sharply distinguishing between the inventor's and entrepreneur's roles, viz. ideation and innovation, while disregarding the former because mental processes and moral moves are of no concern to neo-positivism: thus eliminating the micro-process of creativity from his visual field, on the *pre-analytic* belief – a sort of Maxwell's demon – that it belongs to the ideational side.

Questioning, more realistically, if the act of innovating is resolved in a spot decision, as Schumpeter Mark I attributed to the heroic and solitary entrepreneur, or if it follows complex decisional processes, as Schumpeter Mark II insinuated (without actually taking the issue to a conclusion, however), and also questioning how much ideation is required to manage such processes that the sharp distinction blurs between the inventor and the entrepreneur, the need arises for enquiring into the nature of creativity. What is odd is that neo-positivism is enough to investigate into its logical side, so that the question rises about the reason(s) why its champions have neglected it. As this paper will show in more detail, the answer is that, taking such issue into consideration would entail infringing the basic methodological rule of neo-positivism regarding the closeness of its algebraic structures, as the prerequisite for having full control over both the cognitive and operational domains. After all, since 'creativity' is a child of modernity, the enduring phantom of its unresolved nature is a sign that something has gone wrong or, anyway, that modernity has not performed well in its approach to reality.

With these premises, this paper aims at outlining a prospect for, not so much dissolving that phantom (at least, since its intriguing presence is stimulating), but indicating a path for trading congenially with it. The outline starts from the antecedents of the event that some scholars have wittily labelled as the "invention of creativity" (Nelson, 2010; Reckwitz, 2017). Both of them date it at as mid-XIX Century, but the epistemological conditions for its appearance date at least at two centuries earlier, in Descartes's announcement that knowledge can allow human beings to "render [… them]selves the lords and possessors of nature" (Descartes, 1920/1637: 49). It is actually since Descartes that an algebraic, hence desacralized vision of Nature began to took shape (Lenoble, 1969), and that Humans have looked at themselves as a second God. It was not until the Enlightenment revolution, however, that they became fully aware of enjoying that power, eventually detaching it from any transcendental origin. But Enlightenment yielded another crucial consequence, namely the divide between the scientific and the aesthetic domains on the basis of the duality between the rational and the irrational. The end result is the vague condition of 'creativity', which we are now well acquainted with.

Thus, the viability is explored of possible intersection(s) and interaction(s) between those domains, thanks to which that vague condition could be resolved. After having outlined how the notion of creativity emerged with modernity, and how it locates at the intersection – a divide, in the general opinion – between the rational and the aesthetic, the paper enquires into its logical side, because of its compliance with neo-positivism, in order to move successively on to its pragmatic side, where the aesthetic comes into play. What will emerge – and aims at being this paper's original contribution – is the constitutive role that space plays in both steps: firstly, as topological space and, secondly, as symbolic space, specifically landscape, without either of which creativity can be neither conceived nor practiced. Finally, urbanscape will prove to be the main *dispositif* for creativity, at both the individual and social level.

2. 'Creativity': A missing notion in the Classical and Christian thoughts

If classical and modern thoughts share a common epistemological trait, it is the idea that knowledge lies on mimesis, so that the suitable way to get it is conceiving respectively forms and models that best imitate reality. There is a difference, however, within this common view, regarding the role of *mimemata*, namely artworks. Whereas the classics considered them as approximate though decisive intermediaries for knowledge, the moderns look at them as signifiers of mental processes, while disregarding their precursory character of

knowledge concerning the external world[5]. If any reference remains to some kind of forms in modern science, it concerns algebraic structures, where the reciprocal arrangement of elements matters.

Aristotle and Plato are the reference points of the classical approach to the pair mimesis-knowledge, though having opposite opinions about its effects on 'good' knowledge. According to Aristotle, mimesis enhances knowledge, not only because "through imitation [man] acquires his earliest learning", but mainly because mimesis entails a formal gap, by its own nature, between the *mimema* and the represented object, thus inducing the onlooker to wonder about this latter, especially when the gap "comes on us by surprise" (Aristotle, *The Poetics*, IV). Owing to artists' higher imitative power compared to craftsmen and even historians, arts are the best kinds of mimesis and, consequently, the most suitable way to knowledge: while both artists and craftsmen provide imitations of contingent objects or facts, artists also evoke what could happen or could have happened under different conditions, namely the *universalia*, beyond contingencies.

Though Aristotle's approach to mimesis is teleological in nature, in that "the human […] brings to completion what nature *would have* brought to completion" (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000: 32; emphasis original), it contains a twofold germ of modernity:

1. the aesthetic, however it might be defined, does not firstly deal with the beautiful, but with the gap between the signifier and the signified (Sörböm, 2002; Woodfield, 2009). More specifically, though focusing on artworks' mimetic power, Aristotle notes that their didactic power does not reside only in the gap in se, but also in craftsmen's and artist's idiosyncratic power of rendering it, thus shocking onlookers: "For if you happen not to have seen the original, the pleasure will be due not to the imitation as such, but to the execution, the coloring, or such some other cause" (Aristotle, *The Poetics*, IV);
2. as regards knowledge, the key to it lies within the earthly world, in the concrete natural forms that populate it.

Plato's view was quite opposite, for at least two reasons. The first is of an epistemological kind and refers to the belief that beyond any contingent form there is a transcendent Idea, of which the real thing is only an imperfect imitation. Knowledge is not directed therefore to the real thing that, according to Aristotle, conceals its natural form inside itself, but beyond it, to a Hyperuranion placed "above the heaven" that, not by accident, "was never worthily sung by any earthly poet, nor will it ever be", and where "the colorless, formless, and intangible truly existing essence, with which all true knowledge is concerned, [… lies] and is visible only to the mind, the pilot of the soul" (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 247b-d[6]). As a consequence, there are two orders of mimesis: the one regarding the gap between real things and the respective Ideas, and the other regarding the gap between artworks and the real things (Janaway, 2001).

It also follows that, insofar as artists are not philosophers – as they actually aren't, according to Plato, who firmly believed in the 'division of labor'[7] – works of art are doubly deceitful: they imitate real things which, in turn, imitate Ideas. Contrary to Aristotle's view, craftsmen are therefore closer to truth than artists, because they misrepresent Ideas only once. And artists are not merely the blameless victims of the unescapable defects of mimesis, but their accomplices, because their "imitation is a kind of play and not serious" (Plato, *The Republic*, X, 602b). Despite its transcendental character, Plato's view on the cognitive role of mimesis (and arts) is less sophisticated than Aristotle's, however, because of the negative value that follows the unbridgeable gap between the representations and the Ideas. As a consequence, he did not look at mimesis, as Aristotle would have done, as a fortunate occasion for questioning about 'original' forms and knowledge, but as a sort of ill-fated human attitude (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000).

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[5] Descartes's (1920/1967) argument against ancients' habitus of enquiring by means of figures (in the sense of forms) is paradigmatic.

[6] Available at https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/ (accessed on 19 March 2020).

[7] Except the poet and the musician, who can be either "an ordinary workman" when they practice mimesis or merely abide by the canons of their art, or "a man of the gods" when they are inspired by the Muses (Plato, *The Symposium* 203a; quoted by Tatarkiewicz, 1980: 99).

The second reason of divergence between the two philosophers on mimesis is of an ethical kind. It ensues from Plato's main concern on the *polis* and its rulers, rather than Aristotle's concern for individuals. According to Plato, "a true ruler really does not naturally consider his own advantage but rather that of the one who is ruled", namely the *polis* (ibid., I, 347). It is not only a matter of individual morality by the rulers, therefore, although he dedicated some important pages to it, but public ethics, because the *polis* is more than its parts: "to produce justice [is] to establish the parts of the soul in a relation of mastering, and being mastered by, one another that is according to nature" (ibid., VI, 444b)[8]. Il follows that virtue transcends the Aristotelian view of the individual complying with the natural forms, to turn into public ethics, in order to abide by the needs of the social 'body'. As regards mimesis, another fault follows, therefore, in addition to the double misrepresentation outlined above. Arts, mainly poetry, actually instill an attitude towards mimetic behavior into rulers – especially by young men, the future guardians of the city. Since the poet speaks through the voice of his characters, "[poetry] *aims* at deception concerning the identity of the speaker, and it entices us to do the same: […] to be beguiled into becoming performers, and therefore into taking deception as *our* aim […] and this would be bad practice for the life of a guardian" (Woodruff, 1992: 75-76; emphases original).

If a common trait descends from the primacy of virtue, though differently intended by Plato and Aristotle, it is that 'creativity' remains a wholly extraneous notion to them: "[Art] production understood as a purely routine matter, and the onlooker's sensation understood purely receptively – these where the two forms of the negation of creativity" (Tatarkiewicz, 1980: 93). Both the earthly world and the Olympus exist *per se* since the year dot, and their respective dwellers are similarly concerned with the commitment for virtue and the temptation toward vices: if there is any room for originality, it relates to inventiveness (from Latin *invenire*, to find), namely the ability to devise suitable ways of approaching the natural or ideal forms, or to pursue vice, as well. And the poet is a 'maker' himself too: he composes or, what is the same thing, he combines words into a new unit, albeit at the highest formal level (Bloom, 1968).

The belief that there is no room for creativity in this world, but only for mimesis and combination was passed on to Christian thought. God is *the* Creator, and the idea of epitomizing Him as 'creative', with the smart connotation that the term conveys, is inconceivable. Humans only act as pro-creators, without creating anything *ex novo* and even less *ex nihilo*, but only giving the inherently inalterable substances different forms. Despite the germs of modernity and a new aesthetics that grew in the late Middle Age and the Renaissance[9], the secular thought has also long followed the Classic-Christian approach, by denying Humans any creative power (Nelson, 2010). About half a century after Enlightenment's fulfillment, Antoine Crysostome Quatrèmere de Quincy still stated in his *Dictionnaire historique d'architecture*:

> *... il nous reste cette vérité, qui s'applique à tout : c'est que l'homme ne crée rien, selon le vrai sens du mot ; que l'*ex nihilo nihil *est pour lui un arrêt irrévocable ; et qu'il lui faut toujours, dans toutes ses œuvres, un antécédent, dont très-souvent l'existence s'est perdue dans la nuit du passé. […] On est convenu en effet que l'homme ne crée rien dans le sens élémentaire du mot, et qu'il ne fait autre chose que trouver des combinaisons nouvelles d'éléments préexistant ; il en est du même de l'inventeur, il trouve ces combinaisons*. (Quatrèmere de Quincy, 1832: I: 201 and II: 23; emphasis original).

Was Quatrèmere a late epigone of the classic thought or a herald of modernity? Both, because his language and many argumentations echo the classics, as the above quotation suggests, whereas his approach to the aesthetic focuses on the gap between images and represented things. In any case, he is the living proof of how

[8] On Plato's parallelism between the soul and the city, see Bloom (1968).

[9] Blumenberg, Wertz (2000), among others, date the early detachment from the mimetic practice in arts and the ensuing birth of creativity back to the Cusan *Idiota de mente* (1450), who maintains that he carves spoons without any other reference form than his mind's idea of the spoon itself, and to the Parmigianino who, in 1524, "painted his self-portrait from a distorted convex mirror – thus not allowing the natural to preserve and increase itself in the artistic, but rather to refract and transform itself" (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000: 18) or, as Giorgio Vasari (1848/1550) wrote incisively, "to counterfeit everything on a whim" (p. 490).

the classical approach to creativity has remained unchanged despite Enlightenment's revolt against the authority of the antiques and the dominance of forms. How long and how deeply that vein infiltrated modernity, is possible to grasp from Feyerabend (1987). While counterpoising mimesis to creativity and dismantling the latter, he advises a constructivist approach to action and knowledge, according to which it is Humans' adaptive instinct to evolving ecological conditions that leads them to take suitable/successful creodes[10]. According to him, the fact that they are inclined to interpret those Hobson's choices as creative acts ensues from the typical modern idea that "human beings are self-contained entities, separated from the rest of nature, with ideas and will of their own". On this view, virtue is again compliance with natural forms: updating Aristotle to the post-modernity, it is a "return to wholeness" (ibid.: 708 and 709).

Without taking Feyerabend's radical side, Blumenberg, Wertz (2000) similarly remark that the establishment of creativity as a trait of modernity follows the ontological distinction between human mind and Nature (which took the form of the opposition between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*), eventually to argue that modernist lingering on "the topos of imitation of nature is a cover for the incomprensibility of human creativity, which is thought to be metaphysical violence" (p. 22). In actual fact, neither are these criticisms against creativity *in se* – the faculty of devising possible different states of the nature from the existing ones – nor are they against the transformation that follows of *technê*, based on imitation, into technology, based on manipulation. As Blumenberg, Wertz (2000) note, there was a margin for creativity also in the traditional-classical world, in that there was room, not only to imitate the Forms, be they of a natural or a transcendental kind, but also to complete Nature itself. Consequently, they speak out against the submission of creativity to the urge for technological progress, which has become impersonal if not out of control in contemporary capitalism. Insofar as a distinction is possible between creativity, as a human faculty, and its uses, a reassessment is possible of both the above criticisms: after all, might it be any room for criticism without a bit of creativity?

3. A third wheel between ideation and innovation

In my opinion (which is conditioned by disciplinary background), the paradigmatic reference character for outlining the ambiguous condition of 'creativity' is Joseph A. Schumpeter. Though he is not counted by Dekker's (2014) membership lists of the eight Vienna Circles most concerned in economics at the end of the Nineteen-twenties, he was a champion of logical-positivism. When asked about "what positivism actually meant" at those times, Friedrich A. von Hayek replied that "Joseph Schumpeter had fully fallen for Mach", a leading member of the Circles' ambiance (Hayek, 1994: 49).

It is therefore quite odd that Schumpeter, as staunchly committed as he was to analytical rigor and against intrusions of the "pre-analytic" into economic analysis (Schumpeter, 1954), took 'creativity' as a constitutive term of one of the most fortunate expressions for depicting the engine of capitalism – "the perennial gale of creative destruction" (Schumpeter, 1950)[11] – without defining it. Whereas it is plausible that he made reference to the then current meaning(s) – the aptitude "to bring into being or form out of nothing" or, more cautiously, "to beget : to form : to invest with a new form, office or character : to produce" (Findlater, 1904; entry "creativity") – he likely leaned towards the second, pragmatic family of meanings, *apparently* because of their empirically observable character, but *substantially* because they abide by the law of internal composition of algebraic groups, according to which any solution, though being possibly external to the given set A of starting elements, must belong to another known set B.

Logical-positivists are thus used to defining creativity as the aptitude *to combine* current entities to yield new entities that, according to that law, belong to the starting reference set(s). No creation, but only *invention* or

[10] The neologism 'creode' was coined by the biologist Conrad H. Waddington (1905-1975), which stands for 'necessary path'.

[11] This expression mirrors once again Schumpeter's parentage from Nietzsche. In *Thus spoke Zarathustra* this latter had actually written: "Whoever would like to be a creator for good or ill, he must first to be a destroyer and transgress values" (quoted in Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000: 23). The same applies to Schumpeter's idea of the entrepreneur as a super-man (Santarelli, Pesciatelli, 1990).

discovery (in their literary meaning) are therefore at issue, because what occurs is realizing something that pre-existed ontologically to its discovery and which had remained unknown till then, according to the typical functioning of the Cartesian "light of reason". Nothing new on 'creativity', therefore, by the positivists compared to the classics: there is no possible creation in this world, but only combination[12]. After all, empirical evidence – the pillar of the positivist method – provides indisputable proofs about the validity of that algebraic/combinatory approach. When tangibles are at stake, new tangibles can actually stem from any other but recombination of pre-existing tangibles:

> Technologically or economically considered, production "creates" nothing in the physical sense. […] To produce means to combine materials and forces to our reach. To produce other things, or the same thing by a different method, means to combine these materials and forces differently. (Schumpeter, 1950: 14 and 65).

Accordingly, Schumpeter set a sharp distinction between the agents of ideation and innovation, the inventor and the entrepreneur, but the question arises if the entrepreneur acts exclusively as an innovator when he[13] innovates or if he *must* also be an inventor. The answer is 'not' if he operates in a situation of absolute rationality, inside which the inventor had already prefigured every, even minimal, subsequent occurrence to any conceivable innovative decision, so that the entrepreneur has only to calculate the expected profit of alternatives, and to act accordingly. It becomes more blurred, however, if he operates in strategic conditions, characterized by the interplay of idiosyncratic visions and free-rider behaviors of the actors involved. Since a third part – the inventor, in the case under consideration – cannot provide exhaustive ex-ante representations of all possible contingencies, the entrepreneur must take charge of them *in order to be a proficient innovator*, by envisaging, not so much the most *satisficing* decisional path, but new decisional maps for as long as the strategic game develops: in short, he must be an 'ideational entrepreneur' (Gemmell, 2012), an expression that patently contravenes the Schumpeterian distinction compared to the inventor.

The belief that creativity is the attitude to combine things or ideas valuably in new ways is still dominant within economic literature, and similar. For instance, Lundvall (1992), while considering "searching for new knowledge" as the most important form of learning for economic development, conceives creativity as the outcome of "unforeseen new combinations" of available information (p. 38), without explaining, as usual, how that combinatory process works.

Amabile (1983) adds an important hint in this direction, by noticing that the task at hand in the ideational/creative process "is heuristic rather than algorithmic" in nature (p. 360). Amabile (1996) made this suggestion clearer by drawing from Hilgard, Bower (1975) that, whilst algorithmic tasks admit a straightforward path to a solution, heuristic tasks do not fully enjoy such property, because logical discontinuities generally occur. Regardless of the placement she made (not alone, indeed) of creativity within the problem-solving framework[14], her formulation leaves important room for ambiguity. It is not clear, indeed, if heuristic practices are shortcuts compared to still unidentified algorithmic paths *internally* to a certain algebraic structure or they induce the practitioner to explore the *external* space to that same structure. In the first instance, it is a matter of talent, because the task at hand is, again, discovering something that ontologically pre-exists to its discovery, whereas creativity comes into play in the second instance, by yielding something ontologically new.

It would be possible to mention many other similar approaches to creativity by mainstream (inherently neo-positivist) scholars. While sharing rising interest in it, especially since it has become a social must (Reckwitz, 2017), all of them suffer from the impossibility of entering its inner mechanism, which turns into inability to deal effectively with it. This paper's hypothesis is that such inability is based on the neo-positivist principle of eschewing, not so much non-empirically testable assertions or assertions that are not logically traceable to them, but assertions that infringe the internal laws of composition. The hypothesis is also that, however, logical-

[12] "The major drawback of combination-theories, whether as definitions of creativity or explanations of it, is that they fail to capture the *fundamental* novelty that is distinctive of the most puzzling cases of creative thought" (Boden, 2004: 41).
[13] Male gender complies with Schumpeter's habit of looking at the entrepreneur as a (super-)man.
[14] For a critical review, see Runco (1994).

positivism holds the key to enter creativity, for the simple reason that, like any other mental process, it stands on two legs, the logical and the emotional: and, whereas the latter escapes logical-empirical investigation and can only be observed in its external manifestations (as behaviorism does), the former fully complies with the true/false criterion of investigation, and belongs therefore to its domain.

4. Creativity between aestheticism and rationalism

Two homonymous works by Nelson (2010) and Reckwitz (2017) – *The Invention of Creativity* – narrate, almost similarly, how the notion of creativity emerged in the mid-Nineteenth Century in the wave of the Romanticist reaction to Enlightenment's pervasive commitment to reason, and how the artist has been its champion, thanks to an inherent disdain against conventions and rules. The two works also share the belief that, after a century of confinement within artistic circles, 'creativity' has entered other domains of human activity, to become a key topic in advanced societies. The similarities end here, however, for two reasons. First, because of different time horizons of investigation, as their respective sub-titles announce: *The emergence of a discourse* and *Modern society and the culture of the new*. Nelson (2010) actually stops at the last Nineteen-sixties, when 'creativity' began to sprawl everywhere into social discourse and praxis, whereas Reckwitz (2017) focuses on what has happened from then on, though having first devoted significant gaze to the preparatory events. If the difference were only of a temporal kind, the two works would be simply consequential to each other, but things are not quite so, because they differ over the substance of creativity. Let us follow their reasoning in order to locate the point of divergence.

They both open by sharing the widespread opinion that, in Classical and Christian thoughts, 'creativity' had no room, at least when referred to earthly affairs. It was rather 'imagination' to denote a sort of mental creativity, with negative connotation, however, owing to its power of driving minds away from mimesis. As Nelson (2010) recalls, imagination actually denoted a demonic device (Aquinas), false creation (Shakespeare's Macbeth), a cause of mental corruption (Malebranche) if not insanity. More succinctly, owing to his prospective rather than retrospective look, Reckwitz (2017) notes that "the imagination had been regarded from antiquity to the Renaissance as a primitive and perilous sensuous faculty, either performing the simplest kind of registration or at worst producing irrational fantasies" (p. 39), while remembering that traces of such negative assessment persisted until the Nineteenth Century If any kind of imagination was admitted, it was that of devising the most effective techniques to carry out the mimetic task, mainly to strengthen its didactic power.

They also agree on dating the aesthetic turn – thanks to which the aesthetic was emancipated from the mimetic-teleological vision – at the age of Enlightenment, precisely when the primacy of human rationality was proclaimed, against any transcendental system of values, beliefs, goals and constraints. On closer inspection, this turn did not take place so much as a reaction to the supremacy of rationality *in se*, as Reckwitz's narration suggests, but as the proclamation of Humankind's want to establish its own values and goals by itself. In actual fact, which better implementation of that principle is there than devising a mental- and action-space free of any predetermined value and goal? The aesthetic domain rose against, indeed, not so much the supremacy of rationality (who could be more rational than a libertine in the pursuit of his own goals?), but the interference of any teleology, and the connected historical social order. It follows that enquiring into creativity does not entail neglecting its possible rational side if not ultimate rational basis, unless espousing the idea that it ensues the aesthetic *and* that this latter conflicts with rationality, thus shifting into aestheticism, as in Reckwitz (2017).

It is precisely at such a point that the bifurcation takes place between the two authors. Though not neglecting the debate about the possible role of the aesthetic in enhancing creativity, and rather remembering that its entering as a common notion and even must into Western societies took place through advertising, Nelson (2010) insinuates that "it might even be possible that the discourse of creativity does not originate in art, or the discourse of imagination, as is commonly believed, but represents new forms of thought migrating into the arts from the emerging biological and life sciences" (pp. 67-68). Accordingly, she ends by recalling Guilford's (1958) seminal work, to remark how the then dramatic concern for creativity, mainly in the USA, abided by pragmatic rather than aesthetic reasons: namely, the urges for competing against USSR's supremacy in the Space Race and copying with the rising complexity of the then thriving Keynesian-Fordist pattern of

development. Reassessing the relationships between creativity, the aesthetic and the rational becomes thus expedient in these pages.

5. Creativity, the aesthetic and the rational

The *Holy Bible* tells us that, at the end of each day of the Creation "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good", before resting "from all his work" (*Genesis*, 1, 31 and 2, 2). These passages are constitutive of the aesthetic dimension. Uttering such words, God created it, but since He did not name it, unlike any other thing He had created, He generated at once the ineffable. In this portrayal, God appears as a craftsman who, after having worked hard, puts his tools down and breathes a sigh of relief by gazing at the outcomes of his efforts. His gaze is not aimed only at assessing his efforts' efficacy in relation to some pre-established goals, however, but also at getting the image back of the surplus of industry that he has applied beyond purely functional application, in order to remedy possible unexpected accidents, to seize unforeseen opportunities, to bring about minimal improvements and/or to give the outcome a pleasurable form. More deeply, this additional gaze strives for cultivating his own image as a character who does not simply comply with needs (thus remaining subject to them), but who is able to create a margin of freedom, paradoxically from those needs and the connected material constraints.

It is then possible to define the aesthetic experience as *the apperception of unfettered freeness and the related new totality of meaning, by way of the constraints that lie inherent to materiality*. The 'creation' of that generative power ensues from the artists' ability of bestowing the imitative gap of works of art with a surplus of signification beyond that of being mere inequality in the relationship signifier-signified, as Glendinning (2001) draws on Heidegger:

> While the craftsman "brings forth" the presence of something present within the world, makes a change or alteration to the world, "what looks like craft in the creation of a work [of arts] is of a different sort" [Heidegger, 1993: 184]. Here, according to Heidegger, we do not simply have a new thing 'there' but a coming into presence of a thing whose coming into presence "first clears the openness of the open region into which it comes forth (ibid.: 191)" (p. 115),

that "openness of the open region" lying precisely within the imitative gap. As a consequence, the beautiful or ugly character of works of art mirrors respectively the surplus or the lack of openness of their imitative gap to new regions of freeness/meaning.

About *which substance* that surplus of openness is made of, Lévi-Strauss (1987/1950) argued that:

> […] in man's effort to understand the world, he always disposes of a surplus of signification (which he shares out among things in accordance with the laws of the symbolic thinking […]). That distribution of a supplementary ration – if I can express myself thus – is absolutely necessary to ensure that, in total, the available signifier and the mapped-out signified may remain in the relationship of complementarity which is the very condition of the exercise of symbolic thinking. [… It] represent[s] nothing more or less than that *floating signifier* which is the disability of all finite thought (*but also the surety of all art, all poetry, every mythic and aesthetic invention*), even though scientific knowledge is capable, if not of staunching it, at least of controlling it partially. (pp. 62-63; last emphasis added).

At the basis of the aesthetic experience it would hence be the Human gap of analytical capacity in comparison with power of signification. About *where* that surplus comes from, it comes from sudden opening of the current reference systems to a possible infinite – the ineffable, both beautiful and horrific – that is something else than the known. About *which social forms* that process has historically materialized into – the magic (Hubert, Mauss, 1902), the religious (Durkheim, 1990/1912), the mythic, the aesthetic (Lévi-Strauss 1987/1950), the politic (Bleiker, 2001) – is a well-known topic, and a subject that exceeds this paper's aims.

Having argued that the creation of that prospect for unfettered freeness, which is the bulk of the aesthetic experience, takes shape in the gap between virtually unbounded Human power of signification and bounded capacity of dealing analytically with it, it follows that creativity precedes the aesthetic onto-logically, so that

the question arises about what it originally is. Charles Peirce's seminal work on abduction is the mandatory reference term for that aim. Peirce (1868) showed that a new idea – 'hypothesis', in his early terms – does not stem from the combination of old ideas according to certain established rules, but from their infringement through abduction. Unlike deduction and induction that, abiding by established rules of internal composition, do not add any novel information compared to the starting ones, but only make them explicit, abduction insinuates – *hypothesizes* – that other laws and/or reference sets are possible, thus breaking the internal consistency and closeness of the given algebraic structure (de Bono, 1971; Dörfler *et al.*, 2010; Frankish, 2010). In Peirce's words, abduction "supposes something *of a different kind* from what we have directly observed, and frequently something which it would be impossible for us to observe directly" (quoted in Fann, 1970: 9; emphasis ours). In the same vein, Rothenberg, Hausman (1976) write:

> According to [… Peirce, among others], creative activities elude both regularities (or repeated sequence of events) *and any unbroken complex of necessary connections*. (p. 280; emphasis added).

If empirical tests will corroborate the hypothesis, a re-adapted algebraic structure will appear to assimilate it. Peirce's celebrated example of beans better elucidates this state of affairs. By it, he depicts the three logical operations as follows[15]:

Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Rule. All beans from this bag are white.	Case. These beans are from this bag.	Rule. All beans from this bag are white.
Case. These beans are from this bag.	Result. These beans are white.	Result. These beans are white.
Result. These beans are white.	Rule. All beans from this bag are white.	Case. These beans are from this bag.

Beyond the different logical mechanics, two traits distinguish abduction from the other two operations. First, the established relationship between "these beans" and "this bag" mirrors a factual datum in both deduction and induction, whereas it is the fruit of pure imagination in abduction. What abduction actually throws into being is a relationship between certain elements outside those available, which is conceived thanks to purely idiosyncratic perception of a similarity between them, regardless of any empirical evidence or any logical tie: in the above example on abduction, how many other bags of white beans could there be in addition to the selected one, which escape the onlooker's gaze, one of which could rather be the true source of "these beans" instead of the selected one? It is in this sense that the onlooker is said *to create* the 'hypothesis'. The circumstance that the outcome of abduction *appears* ex-post as a combination of pre-existing items is therefore fallacious to infer creativity combinatory nature, because the observed outcome might lie outside the admitted ones according to the pre-established algebraic structure. Creative outcomes lie, indeed, on the breach of that structure, in that "unbroken continua preclude new laws or new continua" (Hausman, 1993: 186), thus intimating that other possible laws of composition may be envisaged, along with connected new systems of meaning:

> In sum, the surprise that we feel on encountering a creative idea often springs not merely from an unfamiliar combination, but from our recognition that the novel idea simply *could not* have arisen from the generative rules (implicit or explicit) which we have in mind. With respect to the usual mental processing in the relevant domain (chemistry, poetry, music …), it is not just improbable, but *impossible*. […] This is not a matter of abandoning all rules (there madness lies), but of changing the existing rules to create a new conceptual space. (Boden, 2004: 52 and 58; emphases original).

It is precisely this last outcome to call into play the aesthetic dimension, because a look suddenly opens on new possible *totalities of meaning*. After all, if one wants anyway to abide by the combinatory approach, it would be expedient to outsource that task to an artificial device, like the Turing Machine, which will succeed

[15] Quoted by Redding (2003): 296.

sooner or later in yielding some new and valuable combination (Burks, 1946)[16]. The possible success is subject, however, to the fact that the onlooker realizes both the newness and the usefulness of that outcome (Poincaré, 1929; Boden, 2009), with the consequence that what the positivist stance had thrown out the window (idiosyncratic perception and the pre-analytic) comes back in through the door. Insofar as creativity is the ability of devising new meaningful relationships beyond given algebraic structures, no machine can be creative, indeed, unless it infringes its own way of functioning, to eventually implode or explode.

The risk of auto-destruction is not extraneous to Humans when flirting with abduction/creativity, either. If both of them rest on the idiosyncratic aptitude of devising imaginary relationships outside/despite the internal logics of established mental structures, the danger of 'going off the furrow' is real (Barrantes-Vidal, 2004)[17]. The crucial question is not that danger in se, however, because inclination towards free mental association lies inherent to Humans. As Winnicott (1989) maintains[18], there actually is "clinically no sharp line between health and the schizoid state" (p. 89) in devising associations, unless it is the schizoid's inability of noticing that she is going off at a tangent. To strengthen this belief, he significantly adds that "we can share a respect for *illusory experience*, and if we wish we may collect together and form a group on the basis of the similarity of our illusory experience [… which] is a natural root of grouping among human beings" (ibid.: 3; emphasis original).

The danger of insanity comes rather from leaving definitively a *certain* furrow, precisely the socially shared, though not less illusory, vision on the world. This insight is implicit to the above quoted passage by Lévi-Strauss (1987/1950) regarding the inherent presence to Humans of a "floating signifier" with rapport to their capacity of processing it analytically, in that it compels them to devise an imaginary distribution of it among things, while concealing its possible deceptive character under the unquestionability of a socially shared belief. A veil that would dissolve as soon as anyone puts forward another though not less imaginary distribution without the society will react by epitomizing it as deviant: but the society will definitely react. Looking at this state of affairs more closely, the true insane subject is the society, inasmuch as *it* resists to the opening of its imaginary to possible criticisms and changes by, not only claiming people's credulity, but also sanctioning as insane the ones who do not abide by it.

If so, the quite recent "invention of creativity" – i.e. social recognition of individuals' right of (and must for) flirting with the collective imaginary – turns out to be, not only functional to the needs of today's globalized capitalism, but to have deeper implications at the structural level. It actually allows the collective imaginary to enjoy some degree of flexibility, and individuals widen the margin for digressing around it without being thought (and becoming) mad. From this perspective, creativity grows on the socially acknowledged permission for people to wander around *the* furrow, and to amend it as well. In Saussurean terms, the invention of creativity mirrors the realization by modern society of its faculty of intervening deliberately into the interplay between the *langue* and the *paroles*, which had been till then believed to belong exclusively to the natural course of things, if not actually sacred. This inedited power has been recently institutionalized through the creation of the "creativity *dispositif*" (Reckwitz, 2017)[19]. Mirroring Foucault's notion of *dispositif*[20], it condenses that plastic

[16] As Boden (2004) recalls, Alan Turing was not far from thinking that a computer can *appear* creative by appreciating or even composing a sonnet. Anyway, she remains very doubtful that "computers can *really* be creative" (p. 20; emphasis original.

[17] Not quoting the abundant literature about the nexus between schizophrenia, divergent thinking and creativity. One for all: O'Reilly *et al.* (2001).

[18] Let us remember that Winnicott (1989) refers to creativity in the same sense we give it in these pages, "not letting the word get lost in the successful or acclaimed creation but keeping it to the meaning that refers to a colouring of the whole attitude to external reality" (p. 65).

[19] This actually is his work's original contribution, rather than "the invention of creativity" that appears in the book title.

[20] According to Foucault (1980), the *dispositif* (or "apparatus") is a "system of relations that can be established between […] a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions – in short, the said as much as the unsaid" (p. 194): an open list that is held together by items' common belonging to the sources of social communication – to the *langue* – out of which it would appear a sort of Borges's (1964) "Chinese encyclopaedia" , which Foucault was well acquainted with (Foucault 1970).

and evolving complex of "practices, discourses, systems of artefacts and types of subjectivity" (ibid.: 28) that shapes today's life-style and culture in advanced societies, by instilling the commitment for creativity into people, organizations and institutions, along with socially rewarding it.

6. Space matters

The second distinguishing trait of abduction is the constitutive role that space plays within it. The above quoted examples by Peirce of the three logical operations are not yet suitable to prove it, because they refer to a spatially situated condition, as the expressions "these beans" and "from this bag" indicate in all the quoted examples. Reformulating them by making abstraction from space, it results that the first two operations continue to hold, whereas abduction becomes meaningless:

Deduction	Induction	Abduction
Rule. All beans are white.	Case. These are beans.	Rule. All beans are white.
Case. These are beans.	Result. These beans are white.	Result. These beans are white.
Result. These beans are white.	Rule. All beans are white.	Case. These are beans.

This proves that abduction requires a spatialized distribution, namely a map, which eventually turns into a topology. Devising new relationships between things actually entails, not only glancing *around* "these beans" and possibly perceiving something similar *elsewhere* (two spatial adverbs), but also modifying the system of proximities between the spatialized items.

The circumstance that space is a necessary condition to abduction does not solve the question of whether it is also a sufficient condition, however. Since the answer is negative, because mind would be otherwise determined by space, the question arises about which kinds of space – that is, space characterized by which features – are conducive to abduction. That the spatial arrangement of things matters in generative processes, Durkheim (1895) had already though inconclusively stated with reference to what he called "the collective mind" – i.e. the institutionalized view on the world. As said above in the introductive Section, the co-working of social volume, relational density and the way in which things are spatially arranged generates the milieu effect, specifically the emergence of new social facts. More in detail, he maintained that, when the first two variables exceed certain thresholds, individuals experience sensations that they do not and cannot ordinarily feel, by inducing them to think and behave in ways other than they usually do. While it is clear enough how social volume and density can cause such an effect, the way by which organized space also plays a part remained obscure, owing to his lingering on its physical notion (Cusinato, 2016).

His approach offers an important hint, however. By noting that the people involved feel new sensations before devising new actions, he suggests that the milieu effect rests, not only on a logical basis (as the above quoted example by Peirce implies), but also on an emotional one. Winnicott's (1989) notion of 'transitional objects' becomes expedient in this connection. By referring to a newborn baby, who knows nothing about the world which it has been thrown into and only needs mother's breast, smell and touch, Winnicott maintains that, if things go well-enough its surrounding world will begin to become familiar to it, though initially bounded within the relationship with the mother. Insofar as the "good-enough mother" (ibid.) withdraws progressively and leaves the baby opportunities for exploring the world beyond her, it projects her breast into the surrounding world, starting with its own thumb, the cradle's blanket flap and so on, thus making them familiar. It is not important how illusory this operation might be, because what matters is the transformation of those objects into 'transitional objects', as the condition for exploring trustfully the world, by turning into the familiar what would otherwise appear as, not simply unfamiliar, but dreadful. More generally, the creation of transitional objects is the first operation of symbolization that individuals make in their life-course, just by transforming objects into signs: in the case under consideration, into signs of vitally experienced relationships.

While admitting that things continue to go well-enough, the baby and later the young child and then the youth and so on, will become increasingly aware of that process of symbolization, without however dismissing

it because the memory persists, though unconsciously, of that original seed of dread that lies inherent to the short while between the first search for mother's breast and the satisfaction of having reached it. That memory is destined to permeate every act of successive exploration, so that the need for transitional objects will persist all along the life course, along with the sensual pleasure of getting and dealing with them. More and more sophisticated images rather than mother's breast will be projected onto those objects, to such an extent that a "transitional area" – a symbolic universe – will take shape as the intermediary device to bridge the known to the still unknown world, and to encourage people to explore it:

> It is assumed here that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality, and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience […] *which is not challenged* (arts, religion, etc.). This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play. In infancy this intermediate area is necessary for the initiation of a relationship between the child and the world, and is made possible by a good-enough mothering at the early critical phase. Essential to all this is *continuity (in time) of the external emotional environment* and of particular elements in the physical environment such as the transitional object or objects. (ibid.: 13; emphases added).

A "not-challenged" area is required, because it has to provide people with a steady foothold to lean themselves towards the unknown. Winnicott quotes "arts, religion, etc." among those kinds of areas, thanks to their institutionalized dimension, but it is plausible to think that the "etc." contains ideologies at large[21], as well as that all-inclusive transitional object which is landscape: the space-image of people emotions projected on physical space. Though not all authors agree with this view[22], some important suggestions can be found in literature in that direction. With regard to what allows people to stay sane while exploring the world, Merleau-Ponty (1962) points to both proximate and distancing relationships they establish with the surrounding concrete space, populated with objects:

> What protects the sane man against delirium and hallucination, is not his critical power, but the structure of his space: objects remain before him, keeping their distance and, as Malebranche said speaking of Adam, touching him only with respect. (p. 291).

Some pages further on, drawing on Erwin Straus, he makes it clear that by "the structure of his space" he means "landscape", in that the mad person "lives within the horizon of his landscape [… inside which] the things to which patients refer by familiar names have ceased to be the same things for them that they are for us" (ibid.: 341). This means that sharing the same landscape allows people to recognize themselves as belonging to the same community, to communicate with each other and to encourage each other to explore the world.

Eva Kalpadaki, a fine photographer and photography tutor, offers an updated and detailed version about the role of landscape as an intermediate object, and a trigger of creativity as well:

> By the term *spacescapes* I mean the urbanscapes and landscapes as well as the interior domestic spaces I encountered with my lens throughout the practice during my research. I dealt with those spacescapes as spaces having a psychological impact on me, into which I projected my *phantasies* and unconscious desires and with which I came into fusion by internalizing them in the form of introjected part objects attempting to reach a state of oneness with them. Within this context of my particular encounter with the reality world, the notion of space is attributed the meaning of the concept of the *transitional object*, as it facilitates my adaptation in it. (Kalpadaki, 2008: 3).

It is possible to devise two steps forward, however. First, landscape is not a concrete object which is turned into a transitional object by a process of symbolization, but a transitional object in itself and, more specifically, a spatialized whole of transitional objects – namely a 'transitional area'. Second, passing from the interpersonal to the social dimension (which includes institutions), the landscape becomes a *transitional apparatus* or

[21] Thus, though agreeing with Adorno (2008) that ideology is a "socially necessary illusion" (p. 100), looking at it as a transitional object makes it possible to articulate its function from that of 'merely' being a device for "keeping people in line" (Adorno, 2001: 104) to that of also being the requisite for allowing them to explore the world beyond that same line.
[22] For instance, Bingley (2003).

dispositif, that is a social device having the role of channeling the otherwise wandering individuals' abductive inclinations into a common 'furrow'. At this point, it is possible to add that Reckwitz's (2017) "creativity *dispositif*" needs, itself too, a transitional *dispositif* to work effectively, which I argue is landscape. So, in the modern, desacralized world (Lenoble, 1969), landscape, not only replaces religion to provide Humans with the antidote against dread in coping with the unfamiliar, as Radley (1999) notes drawing on Nietzsche, but gives them the inedited capacity of being creative, which religion cannot do. Things are not so linear as they might appear, however: the final outcome actually depends on the way in which people go through the landscape.

7. Landscape matters

"The natural environment is not a work of art" (Carlson, 1979: 272), so that landscapes do not exist in nature. They are selected sceneries out of the perceived environment having symbolic, though not necessarily, aesthetic value[23]. Thus, while agreeing with Carlson (1979) that landscape has "obtrusive" impact, it is necessary to question its aesthetic content, namely the prospect for freedom it moves or it does not move in the onlooker's gaze. In the latter occurrence, the mind remains prisoner of its vision¸ and leaves little or no room for creativity. But, though admitting that a certain landscape enjoys aesthetic value, this is not enough, again, for it enjoys the power of enhancing creativity. James Joyce's/Stephen's distinction between proper and improper arts is significant in this connection:

> The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The esthetic emotion (I used the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing. […] The desire and loathing excited by improper esthetic means are really not esthetic emotions not only because they are kinetic in character but also because they are not more than physical. (Joyce, 2000/1916: 254-5).

Whereas improper arts entail moving towards or from *definite* objects or experiences, essentially to replicate or to avoid something that the mind already knows, true art opens to *infinite* prospect for freedom (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000). Its ecstatic character rests on that moment when "the eyes see the thing" and the mind is enraptured by the incommensurability between the sense of infiniteness that it causes and the finiteness of any possible hint of desire. Desire does not matter anymore in such conditions, because the mind goes utterly beyond any lack of definite objects and any claim to them, by experiencing the vision of that "some other place that contains the key to desire (missing in this world)" (Deleuze, Guattari, 2004: 28), namely to its initial cells, so that it simply vanishes.

It follows that landscape aesthetic experience can belong either to the domain of improper or true art, depending on which moving cause drives the onlooker's eye in framing it: if it be a desire for some object lacking in this world, or wish for "some other place" than this world. The chosen scenery might actually mirror a sense of nostalgia for some idealized home place, such as Eden or Arcadia, or certain historical conditions and events, or one's own youth, infancy or, as Winnicott (1989) suggests, mother's breast or womb. If so, the landscape becomes the repository and the symbol of desire for a missing past, by which to keep it alive, and indeed to repeat it. No abductive deed happens in this occurrence as there is no room for creativity, since landscape sceneries are deduced from a pre-established whole of mental images, feelings, conventions, and so on, into which (sceneries) they *precipitate*.

Otherwise, the scenery might abide by prospective emotions. As Cusinato (2016) showed by scrutinizing Giacomo Leopardi's mental process of landscape building in the *The Infinite*, a sophisticated spatial device is involved, to give it 'proper' aesthetic content. While complying with the "scenery model" (Carlson, 1979), that

[23] The most dramatic evidence of landscape having high symbolic value though being unsusceptible of aesthetical value, is Auschwitz concentration camp. The tragically mocking writing affixed upon the entry gate stands indeed for ruling out definitively any prospect of freedom. At most, a frail promise for it could vaguely take shape beyond the horizon, not only of the camp, but also the surrounding area and its time, though more as wishes rising *after* having viewed that unspeakable 'catastrophe' than a spontaneous move of the soul *while* looking at it.

device consists, not merely in shifting the eye from the inner content of the scene beyond its horizon – that dividing line between what is visible and what is only imaginable – but also, and more, by seizing on nearer obstacles to bring the horizon closer, thus providing increased room for imagination. The horizon just serves as an expedient to cast an imaginary glance over it, into the possible infinite spaces that could be beyond it (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000): an operation that pragmatically makes the breach true of that "unbroken complex of necessary connections" which Rothenberg, Hausman (1976: 280) refer to as the necessary condition for triggering creativity.

In Leopardi's ode, creativity happens by devising imaginary landscapes beyond – better, thanks to – the boundary fictitiously set by an edge on a concrete landscape scenery, and by turning this process into verses having deep emotional content. Verses that end in a delightful and, at the same time, deadly scenery: "And in the middle of all that / Immensity, my thought drowns itself: / Sweet to me, to be shipwrecked in this sea"[24], where the pleasurable rhythm of the weaves blends with a sense of abandonment into it, in perfect harmony with Joyce's/Stephen's account on proper art:

> Beauty expressed by the artist […] awakens, or ought to awaken, or induces, or ought to induce, an esthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror, a stasis called forth, prolonged, and at last dissolved by what I call the rhythm of beauty. (Joyce, 2000/1916: 256):

a sort of static, repetitive move.

8. City matters

City matters as regards creativity, because it enjoys, not only the classical triad of the assumed enhancing factors – proximity, density and variety of material objects, functions and people – but also the richest palimpsest of landscapes, at least for the 'intelligent onlooker'. Since copious, though not homogeneous but substantially convergent literature is on the first aspect[25], the following lines will focus on the second theme, which is, in reality, the fruit of a different way of looking at that same triad of elements: the difference resting on the aesthetical factor, along with the trail of its emotional implications. The key reference notion in that direction is 'urbanscape', which lies at the intersection of buildscape, socioscape and, with specific reference to the city, powerscape.

'Buildscape'[26] refers to the physical facet of the city, made of buildings, equipment, infrastructures and the alternation of empty and full spaces. It results from the projection on that composite of the emotions that its view arouses, according to that evolving play margin that lies between the institutionalized and the idiosyncratic ways of looking at the world. As regards its generative power in comparison with that of landscape in general, the buildscape enjoys three peculiarities, namely density, variety and artificiality. High concentration of artifacts creates a quite continual succession of visual barriers that induces the mind to wonder almost ceaselessly about what might be beyond each of them (Blumenberg, Wertz, 2000). Two paradigmatic examples of how this device works are provided by two literature masters, in a very similar way[27]:

> The view of the city light is delightful and extremely emotional, where this is beveled by the shadows, where the dark contrasts with the light, where the light degrades *poco a poco*, like on the roofs, where some hidden places conceal the sight of the sun, etc. etc. The variety, the uncertainty, the impossibility of all viewing, and the possibility of ample vision through imagination as regards what one does not view, all this contributes to the delight. I say the same about the effects which are produced by trees, rows, hills, pergolas, farmhouses, haystacks, the unevenness of soils etc. in the countryside. (Leopardi, 1901/ante 1837: 345; my translation).

[24] Translation by R. Jackson, *Numéro Cinq Magazine*, 2(10), March 7, 2011.
[25] While largely sharing the idea that the city is a "machine for learning" (McFarlane, 2011), that literature is mainly divided into a functional and a structural approach, even if the dividing line is not always clear from work to work.
[26] To the best of my knowledge, the term can be traced back to Beum (1975).
[27] Both quotations are taken from Cusinato (2016).

> *… tout d'un coup un toit, un reflet de soleil sur une pierre, l'odeur d'un chemin me faisaient arrêter par un plaisir particulier qu'ils me donnaient, et aussi parce qu'ils avaient l'aire de cacher au delà de ce que je voyais, quelque chose qu'ils m'invitaient à venir prendre et que malgré mes efforts je n'arrivais pas à découvrir.* (Proust, 1992/1906-1922: 172).

Whereas the density of physical barriers can free imagination, the variety of the built environment, in terms of objects, functions, styles, spatial distribution and composition, provides it with plentiful semantic material, even if not every imaginable 'language-game' is possible, owing to physical, technical, cultural and idiosyncratic constraints. The contrast between *urban*scape and *land*scape also gives rise to an imaginary barrier, over which creativity nests again.

Finally, the circumstance that the buildscape is the outcome of human ingenuity in shaping the physical environment to some (maybe supposed) valuable goals, gives imagination a pragmatic creative touch. First, because creativity is inclined to devise ideas, not only for pleasure, but also for utility. Second, because calling into play the human factor entails opening to the symbolic dimension of landscape and, what is more important, to the associated palimpsest of formal codes (Marvell, Simm, 2016), along with the governance of their generative processes (Cusinato 2016): the most appealing and even compulsory urge of capitalism nowadays (Böhme, 2017; Reckwitz, 2017).

Powerscape is often a neglected notion, notwithstanding its crucial role in turning the city into a creativity *dispositif*. It is a two-facet notion. On the positive side, it is the image-space, fixed on space, of social and political norms – "the landscape as produced in society as a system of norms and objectives" (Jacobs, 2006: 9). On the normative side, it is "a system of norms that regulate how members of a particular society are required to behave with respect to the landscape" (ibid.). Opting for the first wider meaning allows the aesthetic to come into play through yet another entry-door. As shown in the previous Sections, the construction of every kind of matterscape (the most comprehensive notion of landscape) obeys emotional rules, whether they are the grain of narcissism that lies inherent to Humans, or more sophisticated ones, such as creating transitional objects and areas. Beyond allowing those who personify the power to augment their narcissist wants, institutions actually celebrate themselves and trade with people with more or less noble aims, mainly by shaping urbanscapes.

What matters more, however, is the contrast between the pervasive presence of power in the city, on the one hand, whose signs are visibly fixed everywhere, in buildings, monuments, infrastructures, utilities, street names, monitoring devices, sirens' howling, policemen, and so on, and its propensity, on the other hand, to conceal its daily exercise behind some sort of curtain, thus further enhancing the imaginative mechanisms that lies at the basis of the aesthetic and creative experiences: even if one might wonder if its ultimate goal is to empower people in dealing effectively with them, or to an-aestheticize them (Griffero, 2019). This is the peculiarity of powerscape: to be the scene of power's game of showing while concealing itself, thus creating a sort of chiaroscuro that fosters imagination.

Socioscape follows. Hüttermann's (2013) notion is relevant to the aims of this paper because of its explicit reference to both social relationships and their pulsating daily rhythms, thus suggesting another link with the aesthetic[28]. "The concept of the socioscape – he writes – sums up the way the social networks and ethnic groups of the global city live side by side and follow one another in daily rhythms" (p. 10). The crowd's rhythm, like any other kind of rhythm, is analogous to the play of light and shade referred to above because of recurring appearances and disappearances of bodies, sounds, colors, objects, and so on, from and beyond a multiplicity of horizons, so that imagination can devise repetitions, variations and pauses. Commenting Ravel's *Boléro*, one of the most obstinate and stirring rhythmic musical pieces, Luigi Dei significantly said:

> The *Boléro* is also a metaphor of our life: oppositions and contrasts, dialog and seduction, love and disillusion, quality and quantity, expected events and surprises. In short, our way of evolving on time, like in the *Boléro*, in the alternation of the empty – the music – and the void – the pauses. (Interview with Rossana de Caro, 2014: 11; my translation).

[28] Thought turns to Musil's (1979/1930) and Lefebvre's (1992) pages on Vienna's and Paris's urban life.

Within the perceived variations of countless urban rhythms, especially slow ones, such as the circadian or the seasonal rhythms and the liturgies of power, and the frenetic rhythms of social life, imagination germinates, as a sort of fringe effect, similarly to what happens to Ulrich, the *man without qualities*, who experiences the contrast between the intense rhythms of Vienna's public life, even during the World War I, and the sluggish routines of the then declining upper-class, thus inducing him to devise other possible conditions.

9. Conclusions

The above journey around creativity, from abduction to urbanscape, can be summarized as follows:

a) topological space has a constitutive role in abduction, which is the logical seedbed of creativity. This serves to say that abduction does not merely happen *in* space, but happens *through* space. In an a-spatial dimension, the mind is able to perform only deduction and induction, while being unable to devise hypotheses beyond given algebraic structures;

b) 'transitional areas' are needed to allow people to move towards the unknown. The most sophisticated transitional area is landscape;

c) the suitable kind of landscape for fostering creativity entails 'proper' aesthetic value, viz. openness to new though imaginary spaces of unfettered freedom;

d) the expedient for bestowing landscape with such esthetic value is to seize on discontinuities within it – practicing *epoché*, indeed – whether they are visual barriers, alternations of empty and full, light and shade, sounds and silence, assortments of rhythms, or other interruptions;

e) urbanscape is the most suitable device for practicing that exercise, thanks to the paramount density, variety and artificiality of the features just enumerated above;

f) power's self-displayed-and-dissimulated, though pervasive presence multiplies the chances for *epoché*, hence creativity[29];

g) the joining of urbanscape and the aesthetic economy turns the city into the 'creativity *dispositif*' par excellence.

On the normative plane, some major lessons follow:

a) territory is the topological space that all living species make daily experience of, given its direct tie to their needs. The reciprocal position of all sorts of items allows (and induces) them to give sense and value to the real world. As regards reflexive subjects, it is conducive to problem-solving paths, however, namely inventiveness (in its literal meaning) rather than creativity. To allow this latter to come into play, a landscape layer is needed to re-signify the territory. In that event, policies and practices of territorial & urban design play a crucial didactic role, because the tension that they create between the familiar and the strange – between domestication and foreignization (Korusiewicz, 2015) – induces people to wonder about new possible systems of meaning (Verganti, 2016; Concilio, Tosoni, 2019). Also physical interventions produce important differences and, maybe, cracks, but, unlike design, they are quite irreversible, thus hindering people from flirting with abduction;

b) since only landscape bestowed with 'proper' aesthetical value is conducive to creativity, urban & territorial design (along with urban & territorial management) must meet with 'proper' aesthetical canons: not only for dwellings' and transient persons' enjoyment (which is anyway an important topic), but also to make room for abduction beyond it. In this sense, urban & territorial design, not only works, like any other kind of design, as a sort of curtain for triggering imagination but, owing to its operative aims, it also channels imagination towards creativity.

Finally, two main conclusions follow on the epistemological plane:

[29] Redfield, Singer (1954) epitomized this mechanism as "heterogenesis".

a) all the above indicates that the aesthetic ensues creativity on the logical-syntactic dimension, whereas it is a prerequisite for the development of creativity on the pragmatic dimension: a paradigmatic example of how complex systems work;

b) the contraposition between aestheticism and rationalism is fictitious for creativity, because it lies precisely on the though complex join between the two and, more generally, between the syntactic and the pragmatic dimension of everyday life.

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