THE *BACKSTAGE OF THE LANDSCAPE-CULTURAL MOSAIC:* INVISIBLE, INACCESSIBLE, INEXISTENT

This year's conference has a provocative title. We have used the television word "*backstage*" rather than the Italian word "*retroscena*" because we feel that this word has been greatly, and also to a large extent, negatively labelled, much in the same way as with the expression "*dietro le quinte"* ("*behind the scenes).*" *Backstage* still preserves its technical meaning without negatively signifying something which should not be viewed by the profane audience. The presentation of what happens before, behind and around the show always arouses a certain amount of curiosity. It also can transmit the charm of something which, though not forbidden, is at least something that is reserved in nature. It is no coincidence therefore that television programs nowadays often use the *backstage* in order to revive the interest upon the general audience. Another advantageous aspect of the *backstage* is that this should not represent the end-product but rather the phases which regard the project and workmanship which are often episodic in nature and which do not necessarily possess a temporal connection and a degree of logic. The comparison between the final and orderly structure and the various phases of the construction therefore becomes truly instructive.

In the case of the landscape-cultural mosaic what immediately springs to mind is the attempt to look for the comparison between images and descriptions from the past. This is required when the reconstruction of the present is often frozen in a formal state of perfection and it does not allow for the potentiality of representations and alternative uses. In other situations there is the final decadence of the past that from a point of no return will lead to the final destruction and to the definitive loss of memory. Historical centres and cities of art often succumb to the first part of these processes and end up becoming beautiful locations which are void of any type of soul. On the contrary many infrastructures, such as discarded railroads and roads tend to empty and disappear.

It is nice to be able to travel along the path that has brought us to the present state by gathering along the way a temporal confusion and at the same time reconstructing the sequence of events. The explanatory charts that now accompany us during our visits to larger and smaller cities are quite often embellished by this type of documentation which reinvigorates the pleasure of the curious visitor who does not stop in front of the simple vision of the present state. The reconstruction of the past is also the key to reading and understanding the present scenario. One can also appraise the potentialities of those projects which look towards the future.

In the landscape-cultural mosaic architectural emergencies are perceived in a rather strong manner. Nevertheless, they stand out on the *backstage* of non-emergent buildings that share the background. The study of these grey masses, the understanding of their values, their decadence, their renewal and their revitalization is an important aspect for the complete understanding of the cultural mosaic: they are in fact places which are inhabited by people during their daily lives without which we could not even appraise the cultural phenomena.

The same literary landscapes represent disconnected, incoherent and blended fragments of the real mosaic. It is suggestive to find splinters within the shreds of reality. They are so different within the dimensions and relations and are sparse and heterogeneous. The opposite is that the cinematographic representation of the screen-play's landscape breaks down it into scenes that occur in different places and in different successions that come together once the movie reaches its final phase.

The theatre scenes suggest another method of analysis; in urbanism one often physically or socially looks at the construction of scenes and bulkheads that separate what must be seen and lived from what must remain hidden and ignored. An emblematic example of this was witnessed during its birth and its death: the Berlin Wall. The 19th and 20th century demolitions were also quite often accompanied by the seclusion of surviving structures with incongruous links that are revealed as soon as one wanders around the scene and views it from the opposite side.

The mitigation of the effects of infrastructures on urban and rural landscape runs along this same line with the only difference being that in this case the positive part should be on the other side of the barrier whereas little or no care is given to whomever finds him/herself travelling along a road or railroad. One therefore tends to regret the romantic times of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century when railroads and panoramic roads were being built. To revisit and to revaluate these structures that permitted the availability (even though somewhat artificial in nature) of the landscape-environmental mosaic can certainly be the object of this conference.

How much should be left in the *backstage* and how much should be brought forward has always been the object of cultural debate. Literary experience wanders between the obscene realism of fashionable medieval literature and the refined *understatement* of Manzoni; travel guides try to adapt a first part of trivial but important news with a refined cultural second part. Ancient guides were often less antiseptic in nature than contemporary ones and dealt with practical suggestions on how to treat coachmen and innkeepers in order to not be deceived.

Even today the tourist is a multifunctional animal and responds well to the multi-functionality of places: the study of this vertical integration is a constituent element of the landscape-cultural backstage. However, when one speaks of multifunctional initiatives such as wine-gastronomy one can expect a bit of realism and the capability of also looking behind the scenes: how many are industrial products, how many are routine structures that support the few authentic elements?

What is more sophisticated though are those elements which appear then disappear behind the scenes as a result of the change in the scale of perception. With respect to the fruition of the extra-urban landscape one tends to consider something which is correct in nature (*politically correct*) such as the scale of cycling and horseback riding tourism. These are scales that are different from those that deal with trekking. However most often the scale is that of the motorist and, not per chance and realistically-speaking, that of the Italian Touring Club. As is the case with many other similar publishers, this gives us an indication of the panoramic traits of roads and highways. The comparative study of the description of the landscapes and the different scales and speeds that reflect on the rest areas is important in order to appraise the

cultural impact of the informative tools (and also of physical supports) on the fruition of the landscape.

We can look at the three terms of the subtitle. In the theory of systems two fundamental actions are distinguishable: attainability and observation. The first one indicates the possibility of intervening on the system in order to perform experiments or better, to dominate it. The second one indicates the possibility of observing the system's evolution. There are four sub-systems: the central part is observable and attainable. Then there are two partial sections: attainable but non-observable and observable but non-attainable. There is then a final a part that should perhaps not even exist in that it is at the same time neither attainable nor observable. The three terms of the subtitle recall the three incomplete parts of the system: invisible and inaccessible for the first two and non-existent for the last one. In the *backstage* we talk more about the observable part which is non-attainable. We also try to understand which are the actions and the methods that are required to shape it as we perceive it or we believe to perceive it. In greater terms we think about the capability of modifying the reality's perception in order to be able to see what could not be seen before.

With regards to the non-existent part we can only hope that well-prepared intuitions will be able to lead us into developing tools of intervention (including non-intervention) and knowledge.

Our examination of reality can be simplified and reduced if we take into consideration one character at a time. It can become richer and more complex as we slowly investigate the existing relations among the elementary characters. In theory, there is no limit to the complexity that one can obtain. What is probably required though are sensible limits in order that knowledge and planning be possible. The idea that all *stake-holders* should be involved in every decision is apparently the maximum point that can be reached in democracy when in reality it carries the germs of immobilization and the reaction towards the decisiveness.

We have already observed that the relation of a particular interest is the temporal one. It is perceived by the evolutionary dynamics and analysis of the factors that have conditioned it. As a variation of investigation we can study those decisions that are not directly operational but that modify the behaviour of those subjects that will subsequently make choices. There are many variations that are related to information, education and propaganda.

We also observe that a high-level of attainability (and therefore high possibility of intervention) can generate excessive levels of trust in control methods and can therefore weaken normal precautions. This has already happened in the past and now forces interventions of restoration and safeguard. These interventions might be condemned in the future when the socio-cultural pendulum will sway in the other direction.

The conference will contain general lectures (the majority of them will be selected from submitted proposals of papers) in which the themes of the research will be outlined and paradigmatic examples shall be presented. The program will be based on the following 12 specialized parallel sessions:

1 Project and perception of the landscape
      1.1 Behind the scenes of the "beautiful landscape"
      1.2 Landscapes in art, landscapes of art
      1.3 Idea-project-reality
      1.4 Reality without project

2 History and evolution of rural and urban systems
      2.1 The mitigation between screen and improvement
      2.2 The urban fabric: values and evaluation
      2.3 Decomposition and reconstruction of the landscape-cultural mosaic
      2.4 Evolution and intertemporal comparisons

3 The landscape in culture and in economics
      3.1 Transmission of ideas and cultural tourism
      3.2 Multi-functionality and wine-gastronomic chains
      3.3 Resources and landscape-cultural sustainability
      3.4 Opportunity and criticism in the exploitation of the landscape

N.B.: indicate the session in which you wish to present your paper. Please also indicate an alternative section as a second choice.