

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AND CREATIVE PRACTICES – SOME USEFULL NOTES FOR REGIONAL CONTEXT

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## **Abstract**

The text deals with two concepts that have started to make career in the regional studies domain. Thus, the cultural landscape and the creativity are the main concepts organizing the article. After reviewing some perspectives on landscape and its factors, there is a short analyze of different classification systems for the cultural and creative industries. The purpose of this kind of approach is to introduce the opportunity of using the terms into regional speaking.

**Keywords:** landscape, creativity, culture, city

## **The landscape – minimal outlines**

Situated between urbanism and cultural geography, urban cultural landscape is a syntagm that became well known during the last decades. We find it in programatic documents, in macro-regional policies or in academic studies and researches. Derived from the englobing cultural landscape that means „ a landscape shaped by human activity” (Grefe, 2008), urban cultural landscape can be considered as its most complex sample, if we agree that city is the product that synthesise the human action upon space, with a well defined territorial concentration.

As geographers, we see in urban cultural landscape the result of continuous stratification of the vectors of space organisation. More precisely, it is a permanent conjugation

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of determiners – man and environment – through their sub-systems – culture, faith, politics, economy, land management, buildings etc – that became triggering factors. Under these circumstances, landscape is the accurate copy of a continuous both synchronic and diachronic organisation created by the society structures within a space. Mentalities and spiritual acquisitions as well as historic, economic, political and natural limits and opportunities are involved and reflected in its creation. This continuous adjustment that human community establishes with its environment finds its materialization in the elements of landscape: morphostructure, (vernacular) local architecture, urban texture, height or dominant colour, functionality, etc. The invisible part in the shape of landscape is represented by the flows and the articulations that take place between the space components that configure it – an invisible but active geography acting as a driving force responsible for the entire landscape product; a relational geography, incompletely able to be mapped or only by means of some of measurable structures – man, buildings, economic efficiency, etc. The urban landscape is the visible face of a complex entity where one can find mismatches due to the different speed and inertia of urban factors and ultimately to their relational de-structuration.

From some other point of view, urban landscape is a form of visualisation as well as a form of materialisation (Greffé, 2008). But visualisation doesn't have a strict correlation with materialisation. The degree of culture and the habit to work with images at a large-scale may promote a supra-materialist visualisation, some kind of view of landscape from behind the landscape. Ingold says that urban cultural landscape is « an alternative mode of understanding based on the premise of our engagement with the world rather than our detachment from it» (Ingold, 1993). Through this definition Ingold wants acknowledge the role of our „relation”with the objects of landscape. Cognitive and affective involvement of the subject is the key of perceptual geography which acknowledges the constitutive principles of landscape – the visible and the invisible, the materiality and the relation, similar to the reaction induced by a cake at first sight: a partial information through the visual perception that can be completed after we know its ingredients and we taste it.

In a functionalist note, the specialized Romanian literature includes in the urban landscape three main categories of material structures – the residential, the economic functionality ( transportation, industry, trade) and the social-cultural (loisir, universities, theatres, green areas, churches, etc). The concret-material proportion between all these is a matter of political and historic evolutive context. Nevertheless, one thing is sure: no matter what landscape level we choose, the interference with the others is not excluded, though, methodologically, the analysis is dissociated. As the spiritual-religious

dimension is always present in the list of human activities and following the same logics of derivation from the main cultural landscape, the ecclesiastic landscape is the result of materialisation of religious practices within a space. Therefore, as Greffé says, it is a form of visualisation and materialisation. The definition of this type of landscape has all the features of urban space, both also sharing most of the rules of constitution together with the place of worship as material structuring. For the ecclesiastic landscape, Ingold's “key” becomes a priority and the reception and decoding of such a landscape requires knowledge of how faith operates, of flows of religious nature and of the relation between various “agents” and the urban church space. The reference of ecclesiastic landscape at the level of city is easier because of the density of objects that define it, but it is configured in any inhabited place where the community stability built along time, at least one religious edifice, meaning a church. This last one becomes the quantifiable marker that communicates to the landscape reader a whole arsenal of visible and invisible relations.

How can we read this landscape? The opinions are divided. Is here an unique or a multiple scale, according to the number of users? Probably both answers are correct but for the purpose of our approach, and mediating between these extreme parts, we selected several categories of users whose interest for the ecclesiastic urban landscape reveals also a kind of relation with it - architects, tourists, public administration and power and faithful public.

### The “agents” of landscape

The architects are those to which success or failure of urban landscape is most frequently attributed, regardless of its genesis. They often present and see cities in a kind of perspective called *à vol d'oiseau* (Ioan, 2003), in the tradition of the beau-art school. Without a direct connection with the act of urban building, “this conical plunged perspective shows us how the city would be seen from the top, where in fact it will be seen only by birds.” Then, where does this attraction for a type of perspective that deceives the viewer come from, putting him into a position where he will never be ever” (Ioan, 2003)? Urban landscape would be, in this case, what is seen as a whole, a panorama-town zenithally and globally observed. Expressing simultaneously a profound human aspiration, the one of willingness to visually cover its own creation, urban architectural perspective is extremely useful for catching the inner structure and the texture of the landscape.

*Townsmen*, inhabitants or tourists, are the second category of agents of landscape. Unlike the panoramic view of the architect, the landscape caught by the urban passer-by

is an „immediate” cut, in permanent change. City is taken to pieces and consumed by pieces, depending on the land (geographic) angle in which the person is situated. In this case, the instrument that structures the urban reality is just his view and reality is perceived as a show of the daily town seen by the human eye. Then, the city landscape is experienced at the step pace, integrating time in its perception. (Chenet-Faugeras, 2007). Among users-viewers, a separate category emerges, that of the tourist – passer-by whose perception of the landscape matters more and more in the contemporary world. From the urban edifice, the consumer- tourist observes and selects those parts of landscape were turned into cliché that strategy and touristic brand. But the engine of landscape practice every day” agents calling the landscape into being as they make it relevant for their own lives, strategies and projects!” (Rose, 2002). Therefore, public policy makers are an important factor in the landscape maintenance and functioning, regardless of its nature. The adoption and the funding of master plans, the negotiations with political stake and the city management are attributes of the public and administrative power. This must be the mediator between the townsman’s expectations and the solution offered by the technicians.

### Creativity as a new agent of landscape

Creativity appears in the regional discourse/speech/oration/debate in the middle of the 1990s. The activity fields involving artistic or scientific creativity are: architecture and urban regeneration, art and design, performing arts, video and film, photography, industrial inventions/discovery/research (work) and artificial intelligence, media, fashion and clothing design/dress designing, traditional crafts, cultural tourism, music, advertising, software and video interactive games, print and bindery, web design. Shortly, creative practices refers to/targets/includes everything produced by artistic and scientific creativity and having practical/industrial potential, what that means they enter into economic/money circulation, generating value, public incomings/proceeds/revenues/gains/resources, creating/providing jobs and profit, helping/contributing/facilitating the regional and national development. However, there is no universal/single/common ranging of the creative activities.

Figure 1.1 Different classification systems for the cultural and creative industries

1. DCMS Model	2. Symbolic Texts Model	3. Concentric Circles Model
Advertising Architecture Art and antiques market Crafts Design Fashion Film and video Music Performing arts Publishing Software Television and radio Video and computer games	<b>Core cultural industries</b> Advertising Film Internet Music Publishing Television and radio Video and computer games  <b>Peripheral cultural industries</b> Creative arts  <b>Borderline cultural industries</b> Consumer electronics Fashion Software Sport	<b>Core creative arts</b> Literature Music Performing arts Visual arts  <b>Other core cultural industries</b> Film Museums and libraries  <b>Wider cultural industries</b> Heritage services Publishing Sound recording Television and radio Video and computer games  <b>Related industries</b> Advertising Architecture Design Fashion
4. WIPO Copyright Model	5. UNESCO Institute for Statistics Model	6. Americans for the Arts Model
<b>Core copyright industries</b> Advertising Collecting societies Film and video Music Performing arts Publishing Software Television and radio Visual and graphic art  <b>Partial copyright industries</b> Architecture Clothing, footwear Design Fashion Household goods Toys	<b>Interdependent copyright industries</b> Blank recording material Consumer electronics Musical instruments Paper Photocopiers, photographic equipment  <b>Industries in core cultural domains</b> Museums, galleries, libraries Performing arts Festivals Visual arts, crafts Design Publishing Television, radio Film and video Photography Interactive media  <b>Industries in expanded cultural domains</b> Musical instruments Sound equipment Architecture Advertising Printing equipment Software Audiovisual hardware	Advertising Architecture Arts schools and services Design Film Museums, zoos Music Performing arts Publishing Television and radio Visual arts

(source: <http://crebiz.eu/index.php/news/98-emerging-trends-for-the-creative-industries-report>)

However, the creative industries should be considered as an inter-related part of the creative economy, that is as UNESCO say “recognizing cultural activities and processes as the core of a powerful new economy, it is also concerned with manifestations of creativity in domains that would not be understood as ‘cultural’.”(UNESCO, 2013, 20)

Concerning their location and the impact on the cultural landscape, obviously, cities became hubs for creative entities. Generally speaking, cities are viewed like decisive factors of the new creative economy, being the places that can sustain intellectual production and creativity, offering both the required infrastructure and the market.

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