

Therapeutic Landscapes or the promotion of the diversity for human well-being

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JME hosts a selection of texts presented to the international conference on Therapeutic Landscapes, held in Genoa on 26th-27th October 2006 (see the program below), in the building of the Faculty of Architecture.

The relationship between man and the natural environment during the last century has been increasingly degrading, this is evident in diffused individual and social malaise. We are now beginning to perceive how far human societies have become removed from natural context. This physical and cultural disengagement has produced negative consequences on well-being, especially in urban populations. Anti - social behaviours, aggression, pathologies are caused by unknown factors, indicating the existence of a “cryptically” different illness which seems invisible to superficial and transitory social analysis. We believe that part of that illness is caused by life styles, more or less consciously adopted by modern societies and that the exclusion of nature from environmental contexts determines some of the main pathologies, concerning the physical and psychological human spheres. Re-connecting man to his natural environmental context seems today an urgent need; we believe that landscapes (intended as spatial significant configurations, as necessary man-nature links) must be accessible in urban and semi-urban areas. We intend Therapeutic Landscapes to mean all the natural or semi-natural areas that are able to help man in the recovery of the links with his natural environment, to overcome the missing well-being link that we can't reach through non-eco-systemic services. The conference aimed to seek ideas and methodologies which will facilitate the debate on therapeutic landscapes, seen as instruments in the maintenance or recovery of human physical well-being and collateral benefits (through mental and physical health). The conference also pointed to create a permanent forum through which it will be possible to open a channel for communicating and sharing theoretical contributions and applications, to increase the level of integration between the individual domains of the different competent disciplines (such as medicine, psychology, ecology, geography, eco-semiotic, planning, landscape architecture, anthropology, sociology, and so on): the publication of this selection is one way to diffuse some of its contents and probably Genoa's conference will be the first of other initiatives on therapeutic landscapes, in Italy.

The conference has shown a description of the theoretical and applicative scenario of this theme, that is common and transversal to different actually mostly separated disciplines. During the conference and particularly in the posters presentation, it had been possible to see many different projects and listen to managing proposals, which can be suitable to urban and sub-urban degraded green areas and to new extra-urban contest for therapeutic landscapes, associated to sanitarian centres or recreational facilities, natural parks and cultural landscapes.

See more complete proceedings on: Ghersi, A. (edited by). 2007. *Paesaggi Terapeutici come conservare la diversità per il “Ben-Essere” dell'uomo, Therapeutic Landscapes or the promotion of the diversity for human well-being*. Firenze.