



Pic.1: Liz Christy's Community Garden, NY

Emerging paradigm:

How desirable is actually the permaculture concept?

http://academia-danubiana.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Kubo_Emerging_Paradigm.pdf

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Let us make this initial remark:

*In our opinion, it will not be possible to establish the Paradigm of Sustainability as a major solution within the society which also does not promote simultaneously – neither intentionally (i.e. with pro-active stimuli); nor solely declarative, insufficiently (i.e. without adequate policies to achieve this aim) – the holistic, truly personalised development of each individual as the “autonomous personality”.

.*In addition, we could moreover remark that organisation of societal life – its´ conventions which basically have not changed too much since the primeval period of the history (these basically remind the social habits of hunters and gatherers...) – and they are *implicitly (in the broadest, anthropological sense...)* originated also from the “acculturation process” replicating itself within the human-made “*world of artificial*” – i.e. within the domain which then becomes increasingly alienated from its natural – biologically or ethologically rooted – basis.

. This introduces a **fundamental, pressing question**: does human culture follow any kind of *inevitably replicating trajectory, or is it possible, facing the current state of the world, to redirect it?*

The state of the world, we nowadays know – and which is manifested, among others, through symptoms, as are e.g.:

– **disruption of biosphere – environment – at the planetary scale,**

– **globally instable social order,**

– **escalation of material and social disparities, i.e. proliferation of deep poverty in so called developing world, and progressively declining “quality of life” in the developed – “rich” world that threatens or cause direct collapse of everything, we use to**

consider as civilisational achievements, and despite of the fact, that this description represents rather dismal state of the world – context, in which the above mentioned symptoms of crisis are imbedded –

we could and should ask, whether this might be some kind of predestination, toward which we are heading for...?

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2. Sustainability Paradigm Shift – – attested by philosophy.

Karl Popper – important 20th century philosopher, proponent of the critical rationalism, has supposedly formulated following: „The history as such has no sense - to bestow it this is the humane destiny“. Popper has in his work challenged the conception of interconnectedness between theory and observation, which could be described by empiricism. He held that scientific theory, and human knowledge generally, is irreducibly conjectural or hypothetical, and is generated by the creative imagination in order to solve problems that have arisen in specific historio-cultural settings. He contented that theories are not generated by observation, but that observation is made in the light of theories and that the only way a theory can be affected by observation is when it comes in conflict with it.

Popper proposes “the “falsifiability concept” as the landmark of scientific theories, and “falsification” as the empirical method, to replace *verifiability* and *induction* by purely deductive notions.

He further claims that there is actually only one universal method and that this method is not specific to science: the negative method of criticism – *trial and error*. *It is supposed to cover all “products of the human mind”, science, mathematics, philosophy, and art included.*

Our brief and modest conclusion of Popper’s statements could represent quite a stimulus, a starting point for us to challenge recent governance, political practise and especially “economical science” – as “the irrefutable” method to rule the social (and natural)metabolism after the principle of incessant “growth of Growth” towards human prosperity.

It is just Popper’s pertinence to “Critical Rationalism” which might – at the level of philosophy – also prove that the subject of our reflexion – sustainability – is not merely a romantic cry or any kind of activism – but seriously intended interest towards “our common future”⁵, i.e. critical reception of established, supposedly “terminally omnipotent paradigm of growth, could and should be questioned and also “falsified”.

The recent, generally (globally) established (and enforced) political practise *is experimentally tested only when it comes to establishing new modes – based (verily in the metaphysical sense) on the same old narrative – to promote the perpetual growth as the ultimate horizon, which should all mankind’s effort strive for.*

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02.1 Another critical comments to the issue.

Another recent thinkers as e.g. Carolyn Merchant or late E. F. Schumacher⁷ considered, that the 17th century scientific revolution *has shifted science from a focus on understanding nature, or wisdom, towards a focus on manipulating nature, i.e. power, that this emphasis on manipulating nature leads inevitably to manipulate people, as well.* Such a focus togetherwith a stress on quantitative measures has led to critiques that the modern science is unable to recognize important qualitative aspects of the world.

Perceptions akin to those of C. Popper could be found also in the work of another Austrianborn philosopher - **Paul K. Feyerabend** - he advocates treating science as an ideology, the entity such as religion, magic and mythology, and considers the dominance of science in society authoritarian and unjustified.

He proposed the idea of epistemological anarchism, which holds that there are no useful and exception-free methodological rules governing the progress of science or the growth of knowledge, and that the idea that science can or should operate according to universal and fixed rules is unrealistic, pernicious and detrimental to science itself.

Finally we may not forget the prominent contribution, referring to the *limited potentiality of science to be "objective"*, which has been made by **Thomas S. Kuhn** in his **profoundly influential book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions"**⁹ Purpose of our concise and modest introduction is appeal on the readers – **young academics to resist the rigid pressure which represent recent, extremely fragmentised science, and be active in searching for more qualitative, holistic point of view, while naturally keeping standards of the necessary acribia.**

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02.2 Economy “as recently practised” has an overestimated scope of validity.

When we notice the ancient – already Aristotelian – distinction between the terms “oikonomia” and „chrematistics“, it is the matter of irony, that there exists by far more extensive economical research that either handles issues of financial flows within the economy (e. g. growth, GDP...), or is concentrated on consumption, commerce and financial markets, in comparison to the one, that studies **the terms of economy administration** (**See: oikos+nomos**) or **those of the environment!**

As stated, **this modus operandi entirely dominates over all other (already known) alternatives, despite of all balance losses, and although it can be obviously – in sense of Poppers conclusions – falsified i.e. proven false.**

*This dominant modus operandi is perpetually favoured and promoted (and yes, even forced) as the supposedly “the best known, or the sole option”, and it is advocated for its ostensible potential for multiplying wealth. **The balance losses, neglecting or ignoring e.g. externalities of such a developmental process** (the externalities will be commented in detail further on) **are either not taken into account by major economical practise – otherwise dominated by calculations.***

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02.3 Economic and ecologic fallacies of the major theory.

The theoretical model of homo oeconomicus – the necessary variable of recently favoured economical equations has been accomplished as by far too simple to be relevantly valid within these calculations. Humans do not act exclusively in a rational way – e.g. *the externalities are too often not included. Just this errancy has been lately stressed on the April conference of INET in Berlin by its supporter and sponsor George Soros. „Soros – himself a world-renowned financier, critics thus have come from the respected insider – challenged the abstract, entirely rational model of man used in recently prevailing paradigm.*

The dismal situation has been summed up by the following words: *“Economists draught the faulty maps, leading us though the world in a wrong way. Why?” They have been, inter alia, too close to the mighty people and their money”¹⁵ – this opinion has been pronounced in Berlin by the executive director of INET, Robert Johnson. Conflict of these two paradigms – of the already established and the emerging one – shows the comprehensive, Oscar-winning documentary film – *Inside Job – exploring the background of the last decade’s financial crisis. Despite of the dubious tendency of continuous Growth, proven as unjustifiable already by means of the first thermodynamic law, acute problem represents how the produced “wealth” is distributed.* We can easily observe that it is the crucial point with*

regards to the instability of the heavily preferred (and promoted in Barnum-like way¹⁶) approach to the reality: the true “state of the world”, its´ realistic considerations are manipulated by all means, the broad public is misled to participate in this hazardous venture and corrupted with promises of never-ending entertainment and available consumption – we can use the hyperbole saying – **people thus become shareholders of the future global catastrophe.**

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The whole – in major political practise imbedded – mystification is clearly a kind of pyramid (Ponzi) scheme, but exactly the above mentioned externalities of such an extent that will affect all the people – those staying aside as well, are carefully kept hidden. Rather than to look for the absencing evidence as missing within the field of science, it is possible to view it from the opposite aspect, possibly caused by the existential pressure – the power of direct (or status connected – indirect) material incentives (either of personal or institutional character) – which could engage/subvert the scientific acribia (admittedly impartial, according to its´ original intentions) into the arena of interspecies competition.

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As reason could be observed the preference of the ideologically desirable outcomes in favour of those implied as controversial ones, it clarifies eloquently also the “silence of experts” (either stifled or “pushed-by-conjuncturalism”) - e.g. in respect of the last decade’s financial crisis.

Tip for compulsory reading: perspicacious reasoning that warns before the present “*tragedy of economization of the education*” could be found in texts of Austrian philosopher Conrad P. Liessmann¹⁸.

3. Design – the constructive strategy for the artificial world.

Author, directly focused on the design theory (*though on the design of artefacts*) – **Clive Dilnot, noted that design represents a means of ordering the world rather than merely of shaping individual artefacts/environments. It exceeds purely formal games– though too often only putatively aesthetical – that are generally connected with reception of design within the lay - consumers public.**

As it is not limited to the phenomenal, the designed artefacts structurally contain an information record imbedded – about how the worldstructure looks like, and if we consider just the psychological aspects of our existence, **we could the way round say (while using a Jungian concept) that artefacts/environments also serve as requisites/stages for our individuation. These testify the ways we perceive the world – how we respond to it – in the presence and in the future.**

The designed artefacts also “forecast” the way we transform the world –with the future prospects.

Just considering sustainability, Dilnot contends literally that *it is “a project of history – the largest and most significant one the mankind will (eventually) [author’s note] undertake this century”*

History, after Dilnot, does not mean our past but our future, our history-to come .He insists on conceiving sustainability just in this way, because as **he states literally –“we, humans still hopelessly confuse the question of sustainability and nature and this confusion will be the cause of much future unhappiness”**. Dilnot farther contends, that there is our insufficient or misled ability to grasp adequately the potential of nature to support our existence: **“What has failed us is not nature, but how we have acted vis-à-vis that which we are most immediately consequent or dependent upon, which is not nature which we increasingly engage with in any case at one remove but artifice²⁴”**. **“The un-sustainability now built into the world as a structural aspect of its functioning is a consequence of how we have failed to accept our dependency on the systems of artifice – technical, economic, political – by which we secure our relations to the natural and artificial environment”**, argues Dilnot further in the respective text. We can, once again, attempt to conclude this by means of paraphrasing the next book title: **it is not “Nature”, but the (supposedly) everlastingly continuing “Growth” which has its (sic...) “natural” limits.**

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4| The green light at the end of a tunnel.

Since we have just pointed out that every design process (hereby also constitutive process when creating works of permaculture) contains inevitably the intention of the world's future – *where the future should be either sustainable or there will be probably no future at all (i.e. not such as used to be humane).*

Facing the state of affairs the most conspicuous actuality appears that despite all the arguments already known (and gathered here in this modest enumeration) so little has been done to implement them into reality, to test them and eventually to improve them.

It proves that the identical “zero sum game” will be kept as the generally utilised developmental scheme also in the future and “the players” will keep the belief, to get somehow to the next level of constantly shrinking number of the fellow participants.

There are seemingly two principal tendencies of the human's social conduct – the competition and cooperation. And it is still the way of competition – since the long past until now – which seems to be habitual for the mankind. Although “the civilisational pendulum” moves now just towards this peak of amplitude – just because of its kinetic essence – it will move contrariwise someday. Nevertheless, the tragic message about such a fact is that a lot of Earth's wealth and Earth's biodiversity will meanwhile disappear irrecoverably; our existence will become poorer or put differently:

The later we begin to act sustainably, the less will remain from the planetary wealth for our future subsistence, in every sense.

04.1 Importance of succession:

Every journey begins with some first step.

When we will look at the Rules of Conduct for users and visitors of the first community garden in New York²⁶ (Fig.1), we can see that they promote quite strict rules for the respective community.

This is perhaps quite remarkable in the American advanced individualistic milieu – as it is probably only possible way how to protect a garden before, so to speak, "Tragedy of Commons syndrome", which would otherwise there probably, occurred.

But the message of such gardens – their socially-communal accented profiling – either does not necessarily mean the gardens must remind a kind of “hortus pauperis”.

Especially the American ones – as we can see in the case of Hazel Heights P-patch garden, one of ca. seventy others (Pic.5) - are designed by professionals; they are not supported only by community but also by local government bodies - e.g. – Department of Neighborhoods in Seattle.

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04.2 The Discreet Charm of Urban Gardens...

The urban gardens (especially if they are permaculture works) are the mostly suitable examples to understand that especially in highly urbanized, artificial, by technology dominated environment where it is rather improbable to introduce the permaculture methods “in extenso”, we can successfully accent the *perma-cultural dimension*, i.e. also the social dimension of this phenomenon.

We can see it at samples – and not only at Liz Christy’s Garden – *their influence, as of the “social putty” is of the same importance, as it helps to promote (and to proliferate) certain social attitudes at the positive and informal basis.*

Perhaps it might represent a possibility to promote the paradigmatic shift in the incremental, evolutionary way.

In addition, it is probably a litmus paper for testing the level of peoples’ political accommodation – *their acceptance of the participatory approach towards utilization of the important common – free space – within the residential tissues.*

As the performance scope of urban/community gardens shows, their value is predominantly symbolic – they serve as true “dissemination points” for socially sustainable alternatives to the otherwise mostly destructive impacts of our being in the urban milieu.

The strong, *historically rooted American tradition* of volunteering and as a certain form of compensation of strong individualism on the other side their goals are defined with unusually straight determination, they are deeply worked out as well legally, as in organisational terms and rules of conduct or use.

European context, on the other side – as this continent is characterized by long tradition of social movements (collective societal concept...), and therefore has far more developed the institution of welfare state – the social aspects of the gardening here prevail over the in US accentuated food security²⁸, which can be found explicitly, i.a. in Seattle – the respective communal gardening program covered in Washington’s capital city by The Department of Neighborhoods stresses food security as the unambiguous part of the city governments’ official policies.

The practice is still not so rigorous in the case of Europe: e.g. the well-known “Prinzessinnengärten” in Berlin, Kreuzberg or e.g. its’ pendant “Prazelenina” in Prague, exist more as complementary phenomena than demarcating themselves towards the urban context.

While the **German garden feature vivid discussion programs often with the alternative keynote speakers and it has not any strict borders, meanwhile Czech “Prazelenina” (in English freely: The Primeval Veggies) still has a sheet-metal fence** and offer rather a tentative, leisure program with the pro-social touch. **The avant-garde lifestyle touch is present in both cases.**

Such gardens incorporate emerging subculture, and proliferate, as stated before the mode of participation, cooperation and – after sociologist Christa Mueller – they even incorporate political and ideological aspects.

They serve as relaxation and meeting areas for mothers with children they might include shops with vegetables and beverages and serve as natural centers of social life for their users.

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...

Though these plots have not the potential for subsistence – the only functional places for subsistence urban gardening are supposedly Detroit, MI and Cuban Havana – both stages of “economic catastrophe” – urban gardening of subsistence became there a “sheer way out of need”.

At the same time, it is obvious, that because of its character – dissociating oneself from the dependence on hierarchy, enthroned by the major capitalistic economy and resultant social arrangements – of course it will be difficult to promote this alternative. We must be aware of the fact, that there is still plentiful public, which hopes to gain winnings in the pyramid scheme, which could and will have, *due to the economic application of game theory mentioned earlier but a very limited handful of winners.* And that is the reason why, *between the recent, invalid but still established paradigm and the visionary, though in terms of sustainability vitally prospective paradigm, rules a truly “exists memetical warfare”*

Somebody (perhaps it was the anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss) should state “that among all species, it is the human which mostly tend to “pathological interpretations of reality without having for it the least reason”.

The following paragraph could serve as a powerful argument, supporting this statement: So called “ecological colonialism”, which had shown itself reciprocally, resulted in change of whole countries’ ecosystems and subsequently also their identity (artifice) – just think about Ireland before potatoes – or in reverse direction, spreading of cereal crops (as barley, wheat and rye) across the whole North America has changed this territories irrevocably. And since we are focused on the permaculture “gardening” (i.e. a considerably smaller scale of intervention and garden has also aesthetic connotations) – the following example will document the extreme ridiculousness of such steps in the past.

Just because it had been supposed that New York City would become this way more cultivated, when there would nest every kind of bird, mentioned in the works of Shakespeare.

European starling – the avian pest, omnipresent nowadays across the Northern subcontinent, has been naturalized just there and the “Shakespearian plants” followed subsequently. Is it not just the brilliant example of pathological interpretation of reality through the misunderstood cultural schemes?

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Danny Woo International District Community Gardens, International District, Seattle, Minnesota.

The Smith Tower can be seen in the background, on the left.

Photo Joe Mabel (10th May 2007)
Retrieved: 25/05/2012)

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Pic.3: Community garden at High Point Seattle, WA, USA),
Photo: ©Mithun, Juan Hernandez, 20

The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™) was created to promote sustainable land development and management practices that can apply to sites with and without buildings including various spaces of public use etc.

See:<http://www.sustainablesites.org/cases/show.php?id=11>

Retrieved: 25/05/2012)

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Pic.4: Ibid. Here we can see the High Point neighbourhoods' street scene.

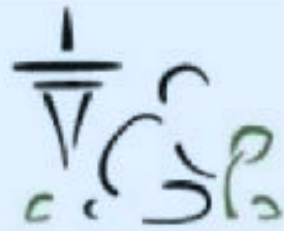
Especially notable are bioswales (rain gardens) for treating storm water runoff from street
(Photo: ©Architectsea, 2011)

The neighbourhood redevelopment plan of Highpoint has been recognized with some of the most prestigious land use and development awards, among them the 2007 ULI Global Award of Excellence, the 2007 EPA National Award for Smart Growth, and the 2007 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

(See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HighPoint,_Seattle
Retrieved: 25/05/2012)

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P-Patch Trust

Building Gardens, Growing Communities



Hazel Heights P-Patch (in development)

P-Patch Trust property since 2004

Pic.5: P-Patch31 Trust

This trust works to acquire, build, Preserve and protect community gardens in Seattle's neighbourhoods.

Through, advocacy, leadership and partnerships, the Trust expands access to community gardening across economic, racial, ethnic, ability and gender lines; builds community and promotes organic gardening.

Trust seeks to break urban isolation by providing opportunities for people to garden together, learn from each other, to develop a sense of neighbourhood, and create a more liveable urban environment.

(See: <http://www.ppatchtrust.org/projects/>
Retrieved: 05/27/2012)

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**Pic6.-7.: The timeline
of metamorphosis:**

**Prinzessingärten
in Berlin, Kreuzberg**



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Pic.8-10: Entirely within the “left-wing genius loci” of Berlin-Kreuzberg:

The area has been revitalized within a collective voluntary action. Besides of the gardening itself, dissemination and advising activities, and serving as a social magnet, this district is also known for the commitment of broad public to the civic-political issues

See: <http://prinzessinnengarten.net/>))

Retrieved: 05/27/2012

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5. What has the permaculture to do with this all?

Permaculture (*which is among others also strategy of designing*) has been developed with the intention to find generally harmless, socially viable, equitable, pleasing and justified methods of subsistence, maximally based on observation of ecosystems' behaviour.

It is of highly systemic character – therefore it strives for integrative coexistence with *The Natural* although it does not imitate it necessarily and its development shows the cyclic behaviour of natural .processes

The humane i.e. artificial processes, on the other hand –
– mostly tend to proceed within the linear time, subjected (in a linear or exponential manner) to the growth/collapse tendency.

Let's remind once again the threat lying in the lone fact that *the humane/artificial domain shows tendency for an unbounded growth and it replicate itself excessively through* metabolic acts and processes – deploying its 'own natural and therefore starving basis – as resource for transmutation.

This natural basis – often not renewable resources –
– thus become scarce and therefore objects of the severe competition for their control, distribution and utilisation.

We can say following: the insatiable desire after the resources is the main motivation of the competitive aspect of humane behaviour.

Even the opposite – complementary, behavioural strategy –
– the cooperation, serves often at the end to the same purpose.

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Undoubtedly, the phenomenon of permaculture as it was established already earlier, has the broad range of various benign traits, widely rendered to the humane sustainment, mitigation of both – the environmental conditions as well as the societal and cultural milieu of the mankind. This justifies the permaculture (since it accommodates according to the climatic and environmental conditions) as a global, wide-scope tool of sustainment, despite of the pertinacious attitudes, so symptomatic for "the period of paradigm shift" .

We have the Manual - now we should to exercise it over.

