

**Catherine Chomarat-Ruiz, *Landscapings of Representation*
(habilitation in “Philosophy and sociology”, *viva voce*, 11 January 2011)**

The text published corresponds to the viva voce of the thesis for the habilitation of Catherine Chomarat-Ruiz, delivered on 11 January 2011, at the École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage de Versailles-Marseille. It was prepared under the direction of Jacques Leenhardt (supervisor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales). She was granted this diploma by a jury made up of Augustin Berque (supervisor at the EHESS, Paris), Pierre Donadieu (professor at the École nationale supérieure du paysage of Versailles-Marseille), Michaël Jakob (professor at the Haute école du paysage, d'ingénierie et d'architecture, Geneva), Monique Mosser (research engineer at the CNRS., André Chastel Centre, Paris) and Claude Reichler (professor at the university of Lausanne). After having briefly reminded the audience of the content of the thesis submitted last June, this viva explains what is the situation of "landscapetics" - a unitary science of landscape introduced by herself - and of her scientific programme for the next six years.

Le texte publié correspond au discours de soutenance d'habilitation à diriger des recherches de Catherine Chomarat-Ruiz, prononcé le 11 janvier 2011, à l'École nationale supérieure du paysage de Versailles-Marseille. Préparé sous la responsabilité scientifique de Jacques Leenhardt (directeur d'études à l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales), ce diplôme lui a été accordé par un jury composé d'Augustin Berque (directeur d'études à l'EHESS, Paris), de Pierre Donadieu (professeur à l'École nationale supérieure du paysage de Versailles-Marseille), de Michaël Jakob (professeur à la Haute école du paysage, d'ingénierie et d'architecture, Genève), de Monique Mosser (ingénieur de recherches au CNRS., Centre André Chastel, Paris) et de Claude Reichler (professeur à l'université de Lausanne). Après avoir brièvement rappelé le contenu du dossier déposé en juin dernier, ce discours expose ce qu'il en est de la «paysagétique » - science unitaire du paysage dont elle instruit l'hypothèse - et de son programme scientifique pour les six ans à venir

Introduction

First of all, I want to thank you all for being part of the jury for my Higher Degree in Research and for being here, today, for this *viva voce*.

In this ploy, I chose, from the point of view of my research, to synthesize my scientific and administrative commitment, since the aim of a habilitation (in French: HDR – “Habilitation à diriger des recherches”) is to carry out the accreditation to supervise research in a way which has to be as innovative as possible and, to manage a research team. In order to fully ensure, and to prevent this project from weakening, I am going to develop what came out of this landscape’s science of which I teach the thesis. Thus, I will explain my advances since last June, which was the submission date for my work to the EHESSⁱ, in other words my scientific programme for the years to come, its inscription in the LAREPⁱⁱ, from the point of view of my *Doctorants* (PH.D students) and the possible links with the works of my fellow researchers and practitioners – also, considering my teaching within the ENSPⁱⁱⁱ,

my landscape and master's students.

I – Abstract

My habilitation work is made up of two books – which deal with the inherent space conception of some peculiar parks from the 19th and 20th centuries – a translation of one of the eldest treatise on ornamental gardens – *l'Agricultura de Jardines*, by Gregorio de los Ríos, 1592 –, of a selection of articles gathered in 4 constituent moments of my career since my *Doctorat* (PH.D), namely “Textuality” (1994-96), the “Political and Artistic Referents” (1995-2009), “Gardens' History and Aesthetics” (2004-2010), “Landscape Epistemology and sciences”. Without forgetting a document that synthesizes these publications and achievements, and recounts the itinerary that starts from the “First experiences in Research and Teaching” and lead to my current senior lecturer position (1987-2007-...)

As the keystone of the whole, the latter document attests of an atypical course. Atypical in the way this progression leads from teaching philosophy to the history of gardens and landscape planning, then to epistemology (including at the EHESI^v, in relation with the representation of urban landscape, seminar by Jacques Leenhardt – my “guarantor” for the habilitation). Atypical also, because it intertwines my activity as a Professor (teaching and research) with the representation of the ENSP with the DGER^v (2007), the directorship of the LAREP (2008), the creation of the electronic journal *Projets de paysages* (2009)... Above all, this progression is atypical because of the objects we can meet: gardens, parks, landscapes, landscape planning... And finally, it is atypical because of the various disciplinary fields convoked over the course of a line which snakes from the aesthetics (of the rhetoric of literary texts) to the epistemology of the science of landscape (landscape planning) to an ethical and political interrogation concerning our world.

Thus, the purpose of this synthesis is to establish the coherence of a winding route; a coherence which depends on a unique obsession: the written and graphic representation of the real, the questions that brought out from the representation and its real referent and, lastly, from its landscape referent.

Hence the title for this habilitation and the cover of this synthesis report. *Landscapings of Representation* can be read on the cover, while the photograph of a landscape can be seen, the same photograph is emphasized by a frame, and the definition of “landscaping” – that is the “landscape signification of a given space”. Through this nod to *Une et trois chaises* by Joseph Kosuth, I enjoyed questioning what “makes a landscape for an observer”. Is it the real landscape (which nonetheless is photographed), the photographed landscape (that is to say only photographed – framed or not), the landscape grabbed as a space property caught by the eye of an observer (of

which the definition is given)? For the landscape appears to be inseparable from its representation: but is it entirely in its representation, or even only representation?

We shall come back on that question. Now, I would like to deal with “landscapetics”.

II – Landscapetics

The starting point of this intellectual undertaking is double. On the one hand, it is linked to the creation of a garden which once was mine, in the land of Caux and also to the history of gardens – which was a revelation for me. Having started some studies about “Historical Gardens”, “Cultural Heritage”, and about “Landscapes”, I wrote the history of a very particular garden indeed – namely: the *parc à fabriques du baron de Castille* (Uzès).

This study, published in 2005, offered three fascinating issues^{vi}. It showed how the ups and downs which the park went through and its incomprehension were rooted in aesthetic prejudices. On the level of the method, this park study, which cannot be distinguished from an agricultural domain punctuated with small architectural structures, expressed the necessity not to fix what already exists, as well as maintaining the heritage issue at the heart of the matter. In a more precise way, it foresaw what was at stake on a social and economical level for a territorial development and the necessity for an historian to anticipate a certain way of involvement for the inhabitants. In short, the history of gardens showed both its limitations and its possible renewal as long as it was grappling with issues concerning the formal qualities of a space including a national heritage, landscape, and territorial dimension. Then the idea of an epistemology concerning the history of gardens appeared. Two years later, the ground was prepared; these landmarks – this time coming from a musician's park, William Christie – can be found in another book (*Jardin de paradoxes*, 2007)^{vii}.

But you can also find the starting point of landscapetics in my recruitment at the ENSP, in the inherent questions about landscape, and in the type of project that shape it. We know that orders, which for 90% of them come from the State (procurement contracts), is situated on the territorial level – in the landscaping meaning of the term. I have tried to consider the tension between the uniqueness of a (private) park with the notion of the commons (the resources which are held in common) to which the landscape contributes; this being an ethical problem.

I also dealt with the necessity to update some categories which, as equivalents of the Picturesque and the Sublime for the 18th and 19th centuries, would be constituent of an aesthetic for the landscapes of our time (20th-21th centuries). Finally, I faced an epistemological problem. Quoting the 1st article of *the European Landscape Convention* (Florence, 2000)^{viii}, without being confronted to the signification of this “interaction” of natural and cultural factors which characterize the landscape, seemed to me that it came from a kind of intellectual footbridge.

Locating the landscape project between free art and the normativity of sciences – social sciences on the one hand, and natural sciences on the other hand – occurred to me as being particularly poor; barely understandable with regard to this whole combination of operations, between reasoning and method, going from a sensitive approach of a site to the formalisation – literally, a logical and plastic “putting into shape” – of what should be done in order to confer a more satisfying state on it. It is the object itself – the landscape –, the interaction between sciences that might help enlighten the intervention tool on a landscape – the project – and the intervention itself – the landscape achievement –, that a seemed to suffer from a lack of knowledge which can be shared out.

As a result, the starting point of landscapetics lied in the intuition that the summoned interdisciplinary horizon was not fully satisfying. And that from now on, the critical mass of texts which are available, questioned the unity of poetic, practical, and theoretical sciences in order to act, share (pass on), and know the landscape.

My first articles and communications which mention these issues date from 2007. For instance, I think about “Art and science to the test of landscape”; or “Can a landscape science encourage the meeting of artists and politics^x?” They were both completed by an answer to a blank call from the ANR, in a common endeavour with another member of the LAREP (Pierre Donadieu), the CNRS, and more precisely the André Chastel Centre (Hervé Brunon), and the INRA – including the team Proximités (Luc Bossuet, André Torre). Our project was not retained. But, from 2008, it has evolved into a seminar, at the EHESS, with Jacques Leenhardt's support, who has become an active member of team, and the help of Augustin Berque^x. It encouraged the firm intention to prepare my habilitation.

The working method to develop this landscapetics also has two sides. A critic side; and a constructive side. In order to understand the landscape in its full complexity, and not to content oneself with terms such as “interaction”, “hybridisation” and other “mixed words”, this “new” science should have been placed, since the definition of its matter, beyond the oppositions nature/culture, art/sciences. In order not to be identified with a paradigmatic discipline in the field of landscape, it had to be distinguished from the scientific disciplines which, from the 19th century, were considered as, or were assimilated to the science of landscape. I think about, among other examples, Alexandre de Humboldt's phytogeography, Jean-Pierre Deffontaines' geo-agronomy, Bernard Fischesser's sitology, Rosario Assunto's aesthetics, the landscape ecology according to Françoise Burel and Jacques Baudry... Consequently, it consisted in undertaking the critic, from the landscape point of view, of the disciplines of each member of our team, in order to spot the epistemological obstacles, the paradigms that might have obstructed the emergence of this meta-science – knowing that it would be situated in the working drawing of what already exists, not in the fantasy of a new encompassing entirety.

On a constructive level, this landscapetics had to be put in relation with the works that have shared an analogue ambition for thirty years or so. I think about the notions of Joëlle Burnouf's anthroposystem, Gérard Chouquer's archaeology, Augustin Berque's mesology, the sense of aesthetics for Massimo Venturi Ferriolo, or the notion of research-project of Alain Findeli – to name but a few.

And simultaneously, we had to pay a particular attention to the landscape theories and the landscape project reasoning insofar as landscapetics combine concepts in order to project and plan – excessiveness, inventive analysis, the planetary garden, the horizon...– and gather concepts aimed at knowing and thinking – the artialisation, the environment, etc.

A short assessment: this work enters its fourth year of existence. It appeared that it was ineffective to try to stop the possible definitions of landscape; but it was a problem only if you focus on the essence rather than on the characteristics of landscape. That the borrowings from the reasoning as much as from the sciences, the sciences of landscape design for instance, engender some difficulty, only in the perspective of primacy over the practical empirical theory. That multiple poaching operated by these same sciences in the fields of sciences of nature and sciences studies were a source of difficulties only on the condition to favour the fantasy of a unity of these three domains over what I would designate through the term “confluence ^{xii}”.

Beyond the loose links between disciplines (outdated multidisciplinary), beyond a conditional re-composition or integration of the scientific fields (unsatisfying interdisciplinary), beyond a corpus of knowledge that transcends the disciplinary borders without strengthening none of the existing disciplines (desirable but limited transdisciplinarity), indeed, we can notice a “confluence.” Under the impact of a political and ethical incitement for the preservation of biodiversity for a greater welfare of humans and non-humans, an exhortation partially announced by the *Rio Convention* (1992) and the *European Landscape Convention* (2000), the development of a know-how associating sciences, techniques, and landscape arts emerges and theorizes itself from now on, on an international scale, in the fields of the sciences of landscape design.

In short, three elements have to be remembered in order to improve. To justify the creation of a science, since the 20th century, we have been defining a new case study, a particular method, and a pertinent disciplinary field. This three-year work confirms that, first of all, what epistemologists know well, it is an obsolete approach of sciences from which landscapetics get away, just like other corresponding scientific elaborations have escaped before – on that point, I refer to the works of Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent^{xii}. The second element is linked to the uniqueness of this undertaking, in other words to the epistemic confluence which, perhaps, confers to this emerging

landscapetics a paradigmatic function towards knowledge and know-hows. So, landscapetics are no longer on the stage of the study of the interrelations between different disciplinary fields – poetic, practical, and theoretical sciences – that have studied the landscapes. This transdisciplinarity, treating all sciences on an equal footing, ignores the game of forces that animate or lead them. It is rather the multidisciplinary study of this epistemic confluence that, under the impact of a politico-ethical decision, on the one hand, happen to succeed on the level of the borrowings made by the landscape designers – from the sciences, techniques, and arts in terms of reasoning, problematic, concepts, theories –, in order to conceive and achieve the landscape and, on the other hand, on the level of the sciences of landscape design, which endeavour to theorize these borrowings in order to elaborate a disciplinary domain and its own particular scientific tools.

III – The scientific programme of the years to come

Thus, there is still a lot to be done and achieved in order to grasp this landscapetics, and one should quickly publish, under the shape of a collective work, and not a lone instigator article –“Towards a landscape *metascience*^{xiii}” – the work accomplished at the EHESS... For the moment, I would like to expand my habilitation's synthesis report by mentioning the leads that make up my scientific programme.

From an ethical point of view, which is at the start of this reflection, I need, in the first place, to work this idea of the landscape as a common welfare linked with the environmental ethic, which was born in the Anglo-Saxon countries and notably studied by the research team of Catherine Larrère, Paris I. A review article will enlighten what the sciences of landscape design could keep from the ancient moral philosophy and take back from the environment sciences, in order to create a unique ethical position. A landscape humanism which would entrust human beings with the task of “supporting the living”? The hypothesis is taken from Jacques Leenhardt and it is about enriching my articles entitled “What do gardeners, landscapists, and artists pass us on about landscapes?” and “Could landscape criticism be scientific^{xiv}?”

It is also necessary to expose the categories of contemporary landscape aesthetics. Firstly, we should define more accurately in what the notions of chaos, entropy, and catastrophe designate and allow us to describe the landscapes of our time. Also, to better understand in what measure these borrowings, by artists, from the contemporary physics in order to characterize space, time, and the shapes of our landscapes, represents the two sides of the Picturesque and the Sublime, which the gardens and landscapes theoreticians borrowed as much as from the physics, from the mathematics, and from painting^{xv}. Thus, it would be the article entitled “Time and

temporality of depicted landscapes” that would be detailed^{xvi}. Secondly, we should confront these notions to the “bio-aesthetics” idea, capable of expressing the landscapes' health, through shapes, colours, textures – and in conformity with what is recommended by Odile and Henri Décamps' ecology. This time, I think about “Aesthetics for an in-between world”. This historicity and this pertinence of the aesthetic categories that we are searching could be the subject of a conference gathering practitioners (artists and landscape designers), physicists, landscape ecologists, as well as theoreticians who have cleared the ground of this issue: Hervé Brunon, Michaël Jakob, Monique Mosser and Massimo Venturi Ferriolo...

Finally, it is essential to elaborate the epistemological section of this landscapetics. If redefining the landscape is no longer an essential matter, we have to characterize its properties as an object, see what type of scientific matter is involved, because the landscape is to be matched up with Michel Serres' notion of “quasi-object”, or the one of the “hairy” object forged by Bruno Latour, or even the determination of a so-called object with a “blurred outline” according to Gérard Chouquer. These are the borrowings from philosophy, pragmatic sociology, and archaeo-geography that have to be thought over.

From the point of view of reasoning and methods, we have to think about the articulation of an approach grasping the landscape as seen by the body (the felt landscape), with a project reasoning and logic which build the landscape (the conceived landscape), methods analysing the landscape productions themselves and as being perceived – either at the scale of a work (the built landscape), or at the scale of a territory (the planned landscape), but always as being judged. In other words, it is a matter of enunciating the conjunction between a phenomenological approach coming from philosophy, and methods inspired by the sciences of conception, critical reading or the evaluation of the landscape state policies based on socio-geographical investigations. You would have recognized the nod to Jean-Marc Besse's works, to the publications of Philippe Boudon on architecturology, and the one of André Corboz for the description/critic of the landscape productions, to Pierre Donadieu on the abduction and the project.

This enterprise will take time, will be collective, and will follow different paths. One of them will consist in dealing with the organisation and publication of seminars in *Projets de paysages*, like it was the case for the critical reading. That work would benefit from being completed by a paper on “Rhetoric, poetics, and interpretations: from the literary texts to the landscape projects”; a programme for which I would willingly beg Claude Riechler. The latest online publication includes a section on phenomenology and landscape versus painting (supervised by Eliane Escoubas); this journal should offer a second one, more oriented on the landscape project (headed by Jean-Marc Besse?) The LAREP's collective work on the landscape project for *les éditions QUAE* opens another

way. Here, my own research work meets and is fuelled by the ones of my colleagues. The goal is to surpass the question implemented in “Could landscape criticism be scientific?”, the idea presiding in “Borges/Thays: Prolegomena to an abductive poetics of the world”, or the analysis of a rhetoric inherent to the landscape project, as it was introduced in “Under the poets' influence: rhetoric of a landscape architect for the use of the political”, or in “Peculiar inscriptions and commonplace. For the *Poetics of an urban space?* ^{xvii}” It consists in writing a book on the sciences of landscape design and conception.

This work will partly add up the task which consists in studying the imported concepts from the social sciences (heterotopia), and natural science (the sustainability of the living systems) or created by landscapers (the garden in movement, the incommensurable), in order to know, think, project the landscape. Then, we will have to lean towards the landscapers' texts (reflexive texts or supportive texts, for instance), and check the educational programmes of the ENSP and other landscape schools, the European ones notably, and revisit the theories of an elaborated landscape, mostly these last thirty years. This work takes place in the continuation of all that I have written since 2007.

The ethic and aesthetic sides of these works should be soon dealt with (2011-2012), the epistemological section will take more time (2011-2016). So, I assume that, within 5 or 6 years, the landscapetics will have succeeded in, from a metadisciplinary perspective, witnessing and report on this contemporary confluence – this gravity centre – from various scientific fields towards the sciences of landscape design. Perhaps may I bet that the scientific study of landscape will not be torn between a paradigm coming from the ecology (the landscape as an environment), from socio-geography (the landscape as a territory), or a certain form of spirituality (the landscape as Nature). The landscapetics, having shown what it is possible to do in order to go beyond that moment of the history of sciences linked to interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, it is this notion which, in a sort of epistemological reversal, will be paradigmatic for other fields of knowledge...

Below this bet on the future, I will end on two ideas. The written and graphic representation will go on to be, even as a watermark, the theoretical and practical posture thanks to which I attempt to know, understand, and think a common world. And be that as it may of this paradigmatic challenge, the scientific programme of landscapetics, outlined on the occasion of this habilitation, will contribute, I hope, to enlighten the teaching of the project in its articulation with the other knowledge and know-how, and with the research. I think about my own research works, the ones of my PH.D students who, perhaps, will be comforted in the coming of their Doctorate like I advocated in “What is a Doctorate concerning Landscape^{xviii}?” And naturally, I also think of the works of the teachers-researchers of the ENSP in relation with the whole of the colleagues and students... May the LAREP and the ENSP work as a place of questioning, of debate, or even of ferocious criticism of this landscapetics! I thank you

for your attention.

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- i The “EHESS” stands for the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris).
 - ii “LAREP” is an acronym that designates the Laboratoire de Recherche de l’École du Paysage de Versailles-Marseille.
 - iii “ENSP” means École Nationale Supérieure du Paysage de Versailles-Marseille.
 - iv The seminar that leads to the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales is entitled “Fondements épistémologique d’une nouvelle science du paysage”, the programme is available on
 - v The “DGER” designates the Direction Générale de l’Enseignement et de la Recherche du Ministère de l’Agriculture et de la Pêche.
 - vi Chomarat-Ruiz, C., *Le jardin et le parc de Castille. Concevoir l’espace, approcher les lieux*, Paris-Besançon, les Editions de l’Imprimeur, 2005.
 - vii Chomarat-Ruiz, C., *Jardin de paradoxes*, “Postface” by William Christie, Arles, Actes Sud, September 2007.
 - viii *The European Landscape Convention*, Florence, article 1, 2000, can be consulted at the following address:
<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/FR/treaties/html/176.htm>
 - ix Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Art and science to the test of landscape”, for the 3rd Congress of the Société Française d’Histoire des Sciences et des techniques (SFHST), session organized by Solange Gonzales and Anne-Lise Rey, 4-6 September, 2008. <http://www.sfhst.org/>
Partial publication in *Projets de paysage*, 24/02/2010, URL :
http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/l_art_et_la_sciences_a_l_epreuve_du_paysage
Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Can a landscape science encourage the meeting of artists and politics?”, Conference *Paysage et politique: le regard de l’artiste*, organized by Isabelle Trivisani-Moreau, University of Angers, Centre d’Etudes et de Recherches sur Imaginaires, Ecritures et Cultures, 5 & 6 June 2008.
<http://www.univ-angers.fr>
 - x For the year 2010-2011, this seminar’s programme can be consulted at the following address:
<http://www.ehess.fr/fr/enseignement/enseignements/2010/ue/24/>
 - xi The idea of “confluence” should be distinguished from the one of “convergence”. For a critical reading of the latter, see Bensaude-Vincent, B., *Les Vertiges de la technoscience*, Paris, éditions de la Découverte, 2009, Chapter 5 “De l’interdisciplinarité à la convergence”.
 - xii On that matter, see for example, Bensaude-Vincent, B., *Les Vertiges de la technoscience, op. cit.*, chapters 4 “Un concept démystificateur”, and 6 “Des politiques visionnaires et culturelles.”
 - xiii Brunon, H., Chomarat-Ruiz, C., Donadieu, P., and Torre, A., “Towards a landscape *metascience*” in *Projets de paysage*, 26/06/09 URL :
http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/pour_une_metascience_du_paysage
 - xiv Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “What do gardeners, landscapists, and artists pass us on about landscapes?”, Jean Hubert days, on the theme “Heritage and landscapes”, Direction des archives, du patrimoine et des musées de Seine-et-Marne, 30 November 2007; acts’ publication in *Les cahiers Jean Hubert n°3*, 2009.
 - xv It is about, notably, Robert Smithson. See Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Time and temporality ow depicted landscapes”, in *Temps, rythmes, mesures... Figures du temps dans les sciences et les arts*, International conference organized by L. Dahan-Gaida, B. Abraham, P. Payen de la Garanderie, Y. Abrioux for the Maison des sciences de l’homme et de l’environnement Nicolas Ledoux and by the University of Franche-Comté, 2-5 December 2009. Acts’ publication in *Épistémocritique*, late 2010.
www.epistemocritique.org/2010
 - xvi *Ibid.*
 - xvii Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Could landscape criticism be scientific? In *Projets de paysage*, 13/12/2008. URL:
http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/la_critique_de_paysage_peut_elle_etre_scientifique
Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Borges/Thays: Prolegomena to an abductive poetics of the world”, Quarto Colloquio internacional de literatura comparada, organizado pour el departamento de letras de la Universidad Catolica de Argentina, Buenos Aires, 2, 3 & 4 sept. 2009. Publication at the éditions de l’UCLA. 2011.
URL : <http://www.uca.edu.ar> <http://coloquioborgesfrancia.blogspot.com/>
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<http://www.ccic-cerisy.asso.fr/poesie10.html> - Catherine CHOMARAT-RUIZ

Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “Peculiar inscriptions and commonplace. For the *Poetics of an urban space?*”, in *Littératures et espaces publics*, international conference, University of Concordia - Musée d’Art contemporain de Montréal, organised by Marc-André Brouillette, 15 & 16 October 2010.

^{xviii} Chomarat-Ruiz, C., “What is a Doctorate concerning Landscape?”, in *Projets de paysage*, 30/03/2009 URL :

http://www.projetsdepaysage.fr/fr/what_is_a_doctorate_concerning_landscape

Chomarat-Ruiz, C. “What is a Doctorat concerning Landscape?”, in *Landscape & Ruins, planning and design for regeneration of derelict places*, conference organised by the ECLAS, Gènes, 23-26 September 2009; Firenze, Alinea editor, 2009.
