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PhD Political Theory (cycle XXII)
Thesis Summary

OUT OF THE WILD

A Garden-based Theory of Biodiversity Conservation

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The script proposes a solution to the collective action problem of biodiversity conservation. The focus is particularly on botanical biodiversity: thus, on the conservation of a diversity of plant species. The solution provided is theoretical, but its practical applicability is nonetheless one of its main strengths. We propose to stage the conservation of botanical biodiversity in the context of gardens.

We refer not just to private residential gardens, but also small-to medium restoration sites, city parks, public gardens, yards, cloisters, nurseries, orchards, small-to-medium agricultural fields, terraces, etc. We exclude from the rubric of gardens intensely cultivated, massive agricultural fields attended to mostly by machines rather than humans.

Botanical biodiversity is defined as the number of genetic variations within and among plant species. We argue that humans, both as individuals and as a species, have reasons to conserve botanical biodiversity because of valuable features it possesses. Such features are valuable anthropocentrically: reasons for conserving botanical biodiversity are thus related to the contribution that it can make to human well-being, in both its material and spiritual dimension.

A diversity of plant species provides humans not only with diverse nutritional and medical opportunities (including opportunities to discover new medicines), but also with diverse opportunities for scientific, aesthetic, and generally intellectual stimulation and involvement. The loss of botanical biodiversity, on the other hand, deprives humans of objects, experiences, and relations that are (and, so we argue, can further be made) relevant to the narrative articulation and preservation of our identity, both as individuals and as a species, because conducive to an increasingly deeper understanding and more authentic acceptance of our station within the wider workings of things.

Such understanding and authentic acceptance we posit as constitutive elements of a life well lived; and argue that their are best achieved by coupling scientific and aesthetic contemplation of plant species and specimens with active engagement with them. In other words, not only the contemplation of botanical biodiversity, but also the hands-on practice

of conserving it can contribute to human well-being, and indeed be a constitutive element of a life well-lived, insofar as it enables and requires, as we shall argue, the development and exercise of a number of virtuous character traits, attitudes, and dispositions on the side of those who engage in and with it. Garden-based practices of conservation, in other words, enable and require the perfecting of our *ethos,* both as individuals and as a species[1].

There is a distinctive sort of ethical value in the practice of conserving plant species; and there is a *unique* sort of ethical value, so we maintain, in conserving plant species in gardens and through garden practices. We thus argue that not just botanical species and specimens, but also gardens and garden practices are irreplaceable parts of a life well-lived; and that we (each of us humans) have decisive reasons to conserve plant species by growing plant specimens in gardens; and to promote garden-based experiences of and relations with plants species and specimens, because of the many and profound ways in which our life will be enriched thereby. On this account, ethical value depends on prudential value: we have decisive ethical reasons to bring about and/or maintain certain objects and/or conditions because they make our lives go better. In fact, on the present account of the word, "ethical" points to a dimension that includes every dimension of value relevant to the issue of how one should live, encompassing the prudential, the aesthetical, the moral/altruistic, and the perfectionist.

Of those, the last three can in turn be informing elements of the first. Prudential value relates to considerations about what makes one's life a life well lived *in one's own perspective*: and thus has to do with one's own well-being. Aesthetical value may have to do with considerations regarding the narrative pattern given by one to one's own life (say, its overall balance, or its Dadaistic incongruence, or adventurousness), as well as with considerations relating to the personal "style" with which one approaches the world, with considerations about the degree of aesthetic sensibility one manifests towards the world, and about the particular things that in fact are available for one to appreciate aesthetically. Altruistic/moral value has to do with one's treatment of others: exercises of altruism respond to a psychological inclination of the agent, to the effect that she regards benefits to others as being beneficial to herself, and finds in that sufficient reason to benefit those others; while exercises of morality are rather denoted by impartialist modes of evaluation when it comes to others, and may be articulated in the language of obligations. Perfectionist value has to do with considerations regarding one's self-improvement - an improvement marked by an increasingly deeper understanding and authentic acceptance

[1] The ethical perfection of the human species is to be understood as referring to the aggregate and collective ethical perfection of individuals. There is no assumption that there exists something like "the human ethos": whether there indeed is such thing, is a matter we leave open. If there was, or if there ever is to be, however, its being perfected would inevitably require significant amounts of cooperation among individual specimens of the human species; and successful cooperation of any kind requires that a commitment to act in a concerted fashion be secured from the ontologically distinct individuals involved. It is through the separate ethos and activity of each individual that any collectivity operates.

of oneself and one's place within the wider workings of things, and by the development and exercise of virtuous ways to look at and be in the world.

Prudential evaluations can be affected by considerations relating to the aesthetical, moral/altruistic, and perfectionist dimensions, insofar as a one's self-rating in those dimensions affects one's level of satisfaction with one's life, or aspects of it; nonetheless, the prudential is distinct from those other dimensions of value: one can look back at one's life, and reckon that in it aesthetical, moral/altruistic, and perfectionist values have been maximized, and still see it not as the best life *she* could have lived.

Plants and Value

Whether *plants* have value, what sort of value they have, and thus what sort of reasons we have, not only to admire, but also to respect and to actively conserve them, is a question that has never been philosophically settled; and a topic of special urgency for environmental ethics. There are widespread doubts about there being conclusive moral reasons for humans to conserve plants; indeed, it seems that, morally speaking, we do not and we cannot *owe* anything to plants – the language of obligations seems incongruous when discussing them. The reasons for that has to do with the sort of life plants live: unlike humans and (many) non-human animals, plants are un-minded entities, which have no rationality and indeed no neurological activity of any sort, do not suffer or take pleasure in their experiences, and indeed have no experiences at all because they lack a perspective from which to have them, and/or to assess the proceedings of their existence. It has often been suggested that un-minded entities such as plants are ultimately "mere things"; it has also often be assumed that "mere things" have no entitlement to our moral concern (have no "moral standing"), for they have no interests that we could possibly take into considerations while deliberating over actions and policies that affect them.

Some environmental ethicists have attempted to show that plants are not "mere things" on a par with cars and rocks, and that they indeed are entitled to our moral concern. Traditionally, environmental ethicists have tackled the issue of what is entitled to our moral concern as an issue of moral impartiality. Moral impartiality demands that minded entities such as human and non-human animals be not only admired but also respected and actively protected: because they possess the very same valuable properties that make me and those biologically close to me morally significant in my own eyes (in textbook formulations, rationality, sentience, and a perspective for experience), to deny them my moral concern just on grounds of their not being me or biologically close to me seems to involve a failure of impartiality on my side.

The *bio-centric thesis,* whose main and most famous proponent is Paul Taylor, has attempted to exploit this same justificatory strategy and to ground the recognition of the moral standing of plants on an extension of impartialist moral reasoning to them as well - pointing to an even more basic property, i.e. being alive, which minded and un-minded

living entities all share[2]. Such approach fails, for two main reasons: first, it is hard, by its lights, to recognize the value of plants without also endorsing the controversial - if not downright absurd - view that *all* that is alive has *ipso facto* value as well[3]; second, and related, the approach seems to lack the conceptual resources necessary to operate morally relevant distinctions among the living entities that are recognized as entitled to our moral concern: if being alive is the ultimate ground for such entitlement, questions about the moral status or significance of different alive entities *vis-à-vis* one another become very steep, and perhaps intractable[4].

When it comes to the value of plants, calls for moral impartiality are destined to fail, because the properties that could ground such impartiality (rationality, sentience, a perspective for experience) do not obtain, while the common property that does obtain (being alive) is morally inconclusive. We thus accept that the moral standing of plants cannot just be impartially recognized on grounds of some relevantly valuable property we share with them: and, with that, we accept that plants have no moral standing. We argue, however, that plants are of great ethical value nonetheless: a value that must rather be constructed from within our own life and practices, as individuals and as a species. The value of plants must be learned through the development and exercise of a morally relevant relation between us and them. Such relation must be able to provide us with ethical reasons for entertaining certain positive attitudes towards plants, and for acting in certain ways when it comes to them: in particular, it must provide us with reasons not only to admire, but also to respect, protect, and *conserve* them.

We submit that garden-based processes of cultivation create special relations between humans and botanical particulars, providing us with decisive ethical reasons not only to admire, but also to respect, protect, and conserve them. We have decisive reasons to conserve those elements of botanical biodiversity with which we establish special relations in gardens, and by and through garden practices. The value of plants, much like the value of botanical biodiversity, is thus relational: it is extrinsic not intrinsic. In the absence of an impartially compelling, morally relevant property of plants (let alone botanical biodiversity, gardens, and garden practices), we cannot but refer whatever is good about them to its being good for us humans, both materially and spiritually.

By these lights, plants, botanical biodiversity, and garden-based practices of conservation are obviously valued for the sake of something else that is of intrinsic value, i.e. a life well lived. However, for a life to be so well lived, plants, botanical biodiversity, and garden-based practices of conservation must be part of it: for they contribute to such life in a way

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[2] See P.W.Taylor, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

[3] The *reduction ad absurdum* is usually accomplished by pointing at viruses and pathogenic bacteria.

[4] There is another serious problem with bio-centric theories *a-là*-Taylor: they presuppose, and extend to plants, a teleological account of well-being that rests on a typically Aristotelian conflation of well-being with perfection. See L.W. Sumner, *The Subjectivity of Welfare,* Ethics 105 (July 1995): 788-790

unique, and there thus is no exchanging them with other objects or practices and live equally well, either as individuals or as a species. Hence they are valuable not just as means, but as irreplaceable parts, of a life well lived; and this distinction (between extrinsic properties instrumental to value and extrinsic properties constitutive of value) shelters them from being relegated (in theory and, what is much worse, in practice) to the role of fungibles that may be abandoned as soon as better alternatives are found, or for the sake of which we should not renounce some of these alternatives. Was that the conclusion we reached, we would have no decisive reasons to respect, protect, and conserve plants and botanical biodiversity, and much less to do so in gardens and through garden practices. We are thus committed to the notion that objects can be valued for their own sake for reasons that relate to extrinsic properties they possess given the relation we, as humans, entertain with them, both as individuals and as a species - and given the sort of individuals and species that we are, the circumstances of our life, our needs, cares, projects, and commitments[5].

Gardens and Environmental Ethics

A focus on gardens and garden practices is unorthodox for environmental ethics. As epitomes of human intervention on nature, gardens have often been considered physical statements of anthropocentric hubris: negative models rather than positive conceptual or practical resources. The reason for this is the discipline's tacit assumption that much of nature's value lies in its being natural, i.e. un-humanized - and, at the limit, "wild"[6]. Valuing nature's only, ultimately, or even just primarily for its naturalness and/or wildness has often been assumed to be the surest route to valuing nature non-anthropocentrically - which has customarily been assumed, in turn, to be most appropriate way to value nature in general. Leaving nature alone, what is also known as 'benign neglect', is accordingly often taken to be right course of action: and the seed of nature's pains is individuated in human interference with its natural course. Such set of assumptions pervades and orients much academic analysis, policy, and public discussion. In the script, we label such set "the wilderness paradigm", and undertake to challenge it. This is done particularly in chapter 2. In alternative to that paradigm, we flesh out and defend an anthropocentric, garden-based, hands-on environmental ethic, geared to the conservation of botanical biodiversity, and to the ethical enterprise of making for ourselves, as individuals and as a species, a life well lived.

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No suggestion is advanced to the effect that the whole of nature should be fragmented into gardens, or that those 'wild' areas of nature, for instance stretches of forests and jungles, in which humans do not dwell and perhaps have never dwelt, should be colonized by

[5] See C.M. Korsgaard, "Two Distinctions in Goodness", in *Recent Work on Intrinsic Value*, eds. T. Ronnow-Rasmussen and M.J. Zimmermann (Amsterdam: 2005), p. 77-96

[6] Eminent environmental philosophers such as P. Taylor, H. Rolston III, and E. Katz are all deeply committed to the value of naturalness, and great fans of the 'wild'.

operative gardeners - or anything of such fantastic sort. We refer our discussions to already humanized areas: whatever is 'wild' (or can plausibly be thus labeled[7]) can and should continue to be 'wild', i.e. left alone.

Our focus is on conserving species, not stretches of untouched landscape. The two things are done differently: roughly, conserving species calls for positive intervention on nature, while conserving stretches of untouched landscape calls for physical disengagement and 'benign neglect'. The 'benign neglect' approach will not do the required job when it comes to conserving botanical biodiversity, and may in fact even be detrimental to the enterprise. That conserving plant species may sometimes amount to leaving stretches of landscape untouched is an empirical contingency - however frequent that may be; but it is by no means a practical necessity[8].

A Solution to the Problem of Conservation

It is argued that solving the interpersonal collective action problem of conserving botanical biodiversity depends on two main moves: first, giving a new physiognomy to the game, by changing the system of incentives that confront the individuals involved – making the loss of plant specimens and species primarily a *personal* rather than a collective problem; and second, giving a new ethical physiognomy to those individuals, with the ultimate objective of avoiding that intrapersonal defection in the individual block interpersonal cooperation among individuals. In the case of a commitment to garden-based conservation of botanical biodiversity, people have to stick to their personal commitment to their gardens and plants individually, if the auspicated social outcome of biodiversity conservation is to result collectively. This amounts to a call for resolute choice[9], on the side of individuals, in favor of the practice, and not just the outcomes, of conservation[10]; and this, in turn, is to advocate a great role to the perfectionist dimension within prudential evaluations of plants, botanical biodiversity, and the practice of conservation. The intrapersonal solution to the interpersonal collective-action problem of conserving botanical biodiversity will come in the

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[7] Our sense of the 'wild' is probably best captured by the definition provided in the opening paragraph of the U.S. 1964 Wilderness Act, in which "wilderness" is: "an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain….retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable".

[8] Another conflation that should be avoided is between garden-based biodiversity conservation and restoration ecology. The latter is obviously one gardening-like activity: however, it aims at returning a site to some original state, after significant disturbance (anthropogenic or not) has occurred. While a gardener *may* of course decide to devote his plot and efforts to restoring the nature that was there before he arrived, there is obviously no insurance that he will do so, and much less is there any presumption that he *should* do so.

[9] Resolute choice requires regimenting future choices to an originally adopted plan, imposing on oneself an internally constraining commitment to a freely undertaken project. The rationality of resolute choice is argued for by E.F. McClennen, in *Rationality and Dynamic Choice: Foundational Explorations* (Cambridge Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[10] The distinction is modeled on J. Elster's distinction between outcome and process oriented prudential benefits, in "Rationality, Morality, and Collective Action", *Ethics*, Vol. 96, No. 1. (Oct, 1985)

form of suitable character traits, attitudes, and dispositions, as these may be developed and exercised by individuals who choose resolutely, making their commitment to the practice of conservation less contingent on the behavior of others, as well as their own deliberative inconsistency. We introduce such solution in chapter 1, and then substantiate it in chapter 3 and 4.

Staging the conservation of botanical biodiversity in gardens can change both the physiognomy of the game being played, and the ethical physiognomy of the individuals playing it. Gardens are meant to ease up the collective action problem under scrutiny by articulating the commons (land, water, botanical biodiversity) into manageable units, stimulating an economy of local consumption, decentralizing conservation, and motivating individuals to it by keying their efforts to clear and present increases in their well-being. Preserving the commons is most easily accomplished when the system of incentives is not imposed from above, but is rather inherent in a particular way of life organized around shared social and cultural practices (be those practices pursued for the sake of some further, commonly shared value, or in order to further a variety of interests, objectives, and projects that individuals may entertain); when the affected environment is small and easy to survey; when cooperation must be ongoing rather than one-shot or episodic; when those who defect and cause environmental damage must bear the consequences and costs themselves; and, more generally, when the distribution of both benefits and liabilities resulting from cooperation is perceived to be fair. These conditions are all fulfilled in a garden-based economy driven by principles of local consumption. Such economy, as argued in chapter 4, is efficient, sustainable, and fair.

Moreover, and more importantly, garden-based practices of conservation, being such that they enable and require resolute choice on the side of the individuals involved, are those most conducive to the development and exercise of non-calculative, and yet prudentially sound generators of positive environmental behavior: character traits, attitudes, dispositions, and ways to look at and be in the world that may enable and require us not just to admire, but also to respect, protect, and conserve our natural environment - in short, environmental virtues.

Gardens and Virtues

On this view, gardens are places in which a diversity of plant species is conserved (this being their direct quantitative contribution to the goal of biodiversity conservation), as well as places in which virtuous attitudes toward such plant specimens and species, and indeed toward nature at large, can be developed and exercised through hands-on, everyday engagement - attitudes which may then be extended beyond gardens and biodiversity conservation, across contexts and themes (this being their indirect, qualitative contribution to the general goal of environmental protection).

Stressing the crucial role that gardens and garden practices can play in one's development and exercise of environmentally relevant virtues will shelter us from the risk of looking at the value of gardens as simply derivative from that of the nature that is in them. On the present view, a magical or Edenic garden that has more beautiful plants and more botanical diversity in it, but has enabled and required no human work, is not as valuable as one that has been grown first-hand by someone (and especially if that someone is oneself). There is the value of garden objects (plant specimens and species), and the value of garden practices: the latter too, much like the former, are constitutive elements of a life well-lived. In gardens not just plants, but also characters are cultivated; and indeed in a garden one cultivates ways to be in and to look at the world, and a certain understanding and acceptance of one's place within the wider workings of things, which can be cultivated in no other setting and through no other practice.

In chapter 3, a garden-based virtue theory is elaborated; and a catalogue and description of the virtues whose development and exercise are internal to garden practices is provided. Some of those virtues are especially relevant from a specifically environmental point of view (such as mindfulness), while some others have a more generally ethical, indeed existential resonance (such as Democritean cheerfulness).

Gardens and Participative Environmental Protection

After considering, in chapter 3, the ethical implications of engaging in and with garden practices for individuals, in chapter 4 we consider the social and political implications, for communities and societies, of fostering the engagement of individuals in and with such practices by means of policy. In particular, we investigate the extent to which garden-based policies may be able to integrate the three objectives of ecological sustainability, economic efficiency, and social fairness.

Because well over 50% of the world population (with peaks of 80% in Europe, United States, Australia, Canada, and Japan) lives in urban, sub-urban, or semi-urban agglomerates, and because such figures are destined to increase in the future (considering current urbanization trends in China and India), our discussion is mostly focused on the social and political role that gardens can have in cities, suburbs, towns, and in medium-to-large villages and agglomerations in the so-called "countryside". This is out of the belief that if a garden-based environmental ethic is able to provide orientation and vision for the future of urbanized life, it will have provided policy-makers with an invaluable tool for confronting the challenges that nature is and will keep posing us as an increasingly urbanizing species. Most environmental damage is done, directly and/or indirectly, in and by urban, sub-urban, and semi-urban agglomerates. Ethical, social, and political progress made in and by such agglomerates will reverberate on the fate of both the people and the nature that in such agglomerates are not.

It is argued that designing urba, sub-urban, and semi-urban agglomerates so as to enable garden practices on the side of citizens brings a number of 1) political benefits, among which are inclusion by decentralization, heightened civic engagement and participation, and democratization of environmentally-relevant decision-making and implementation processes; a number of 2) social benefits, related to health, education, community-building, and local identity formation and/or conservation. A public culture of nature may be developed in and through gardens; shared systems of judgments through which to evaluate environmentally-relevant issues; and a system of socially bonding ritualized practices, meant to and capable of connecting people across boundaries of class, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, nationality, and age, fostering social cooperation, sympathy, and solidarity, and the configuration of a set of shared intentions when it comes to the treatment of nature in humanized environments. Moreover, including gardens into urban, sub-urban, and semi-urban planning may have 3) dramatic economic repercussions: economies based on principles of local consumption may substitute, or at least significantly complement, economies based on global import-export, giving a decisive twist to the process of globalization, the consequences of which may be monumental. Consumption patterns may change just as dramatically: vegetable edibles would become readily available to people, curbing environmental costs close to home (such as those related to the transport and packaging of imported goods) as well as far from home (for instance, those related to converting stretches of nature in South Africa to cultivate strawberries for European markets, employing massive amounts of land, artificial irrigation, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, tractors, etc.) Most crucially, meat consumption may drop: and such drop would not only reduce the pain of sentient, non-human animals the world over, but it would also have shockingly positive reverberations on people's health; furthermore, it would entail epical cuts in the intensive growing of soybeans (70% of which is destined to the feeding on livestock we feed on) in tropical areas, ensuring the conservation of critical ecosystems, as well as innumerable species; and just as epical reductions in carbon emissions produced by livestock and by the machinery employed to breed and slaughter - which will limit global climate change. 4) Further benefits accruing from a designed inclusion of gardens into urbanized life will be: absorption of shares of carbon-emissions produced in and by urban, sub-urban, and semi-urban agglomerations and their epiphenomena; insulation of houses and buildings (by including roof- and wall- gardens), with a consequent decrease in energy consumption; absorption of re-utilizable rainfall; limitation of soil erosion; and provision of refuge for animals. Needless to say, botanical biodiversity will be conserved; and the particularity conferred on places by the unique configuration of natural conditions (geologic, geomorphic, climatic, hydrologic, etc.) that defines them will be capitalized on, rather than overcome. Finally, but by no means less important, 5) there will be aesthetical benefits connected to a designed inclusion of gardens into planning: cities, suburbs, towns, and villages will be more interesting, beautiful, and relaxing.

This is a call to de-centralizing environmental protection to the largest possible extent, leaving policy-making and implementation to the local constituencies that will be: a)- directly affected by such policies, and b)- inevitably more knowledgeable of the ecological and social conditions of locality to which such policies are to apply: of eco-systemic patterns, available resources, natural and social histories, traditional methods of land use and habitation, etc: and of the needs and opportunities those have triggered historically, and still trigger presently, both for people and for the natural environment.

Future urbanized life, if it is to be ecologically sustainable, economically efficient, and socially fair, must be inclusive and participatory. Urban design must encourage the retrieval, renewal, and the creation of spaces in which individuals may communally dwell while acquainting themselves with the workings of nature and natural entities, and experiment with alternative lifestyles marked, at least to some extent, by manual engagement, local consumption, and first-hand political jurisdiction - equipping themselves, through experimentation, confrontation, discussion, and consequent learning, with the tools and skills necessary for replacing standardized, top-down, Hobbesian solutions with customized, bottom-up, Rousseauian webs of practices uniquely suited to the locality in question.

Urban, sub-urban, and semi-urban gardens, whether public, communal, or private, are excellent settings in which to unleash such environmentally relevant socio-political processes. In gardens, community members can work together to unravel complex environmental and socio-political issues involving their constituency; and the more such gardens are designed to cover a communally relevant role (such as absorption of carbon emissions, conservation of local species, production of edibles, collection and redistribution of rainwater, provision of environmental and civic education to the youth and of social inclusion and health benefits to the elderly, encapsulation of features and symbols relevant to the social and cultural identity and distinctiveness of the constituency in question, etc.), the more such cooperative arrangements will be informed by ecological considerations, and characterized by a fair dynamics of shifting externalities.

Gardens are clear, physical, and positive statements of an individual's and/or a community's inclusion and participation in the environmental protection of its locality; they give us (everyone) a say in environmental matters; and the often elusive and indeterminate features of our relation with, obligation towards, and political discourses about our natural environment receive in and through them definite public articulation. We do not only act *in* gardens, but also *through* them, and such acting gives us a voice that in fact enables the articulation of *people's* (my own) politics on environmental matters, the discussion and confrontation of which becomes and stays democratic rather than elitistic.

To flourish, democracy needs forums for informed confrontation and deliberative cooperation among individuals, groups, and communities - in the household, at

neighborhood level, at city level, and then regional, national, indeed global if a global democracy will ever be. Ecological democracy[11] needs such forums to be especially conducive to people learning to focus, discuss, and cooperate on those issues that have general environmental and social bearing for them, critically assessing one another's attitudes and behavior in reference to publicly readable criteria. Because gardens give embodied form to the individual's and the community's relation to their natural environment, they provide a starting point for democratic discussion on such environment, and about one's and others' conception and treatment of it in situations in which it is common, and the benefits and costs that relate to treating it one way or another are common likewise.

It will also be important to design and dislocate gardens in correspondence with areas of historical and symbolic relevance, so as to stimulate a sense of rootedness and civic identification in those who work on or otherwise simply visit them; and never to miss on chances (nor restrain from creating more) to foster in people a sense of *ownership* of the place, and prideful jurisdiction over it, which may be invaluable in motivating efforts at stewardship on their side, as well as the ritualization of such efforts. Gardens could in this way function as crystallizers of a shared social and cultural identity; and could thus be seen as encapsulating values of importance to the community: this would change the standards of decision-making when it came to such places - insulating them, and the nature in them, from real-estate and other speculative considerations, and preserving them as terminals of a shared past, and sources of shared present experiences as well as intentions for the future. This way, particular gardens become repository of the particular set of values that animate a particular constituency, concretized into the urban landscape, available for all to dwell and elaborate on, and to conserve.

[11] See R.T. Hester, *Design for Ecological Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2006.