



# Culture, Creativity, Identity Concept and Issues

*Michela Zucca*

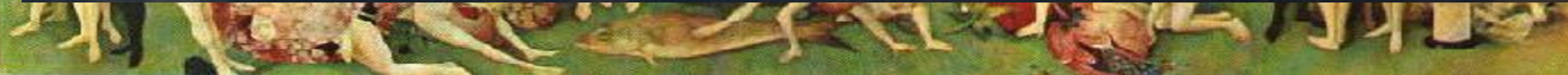




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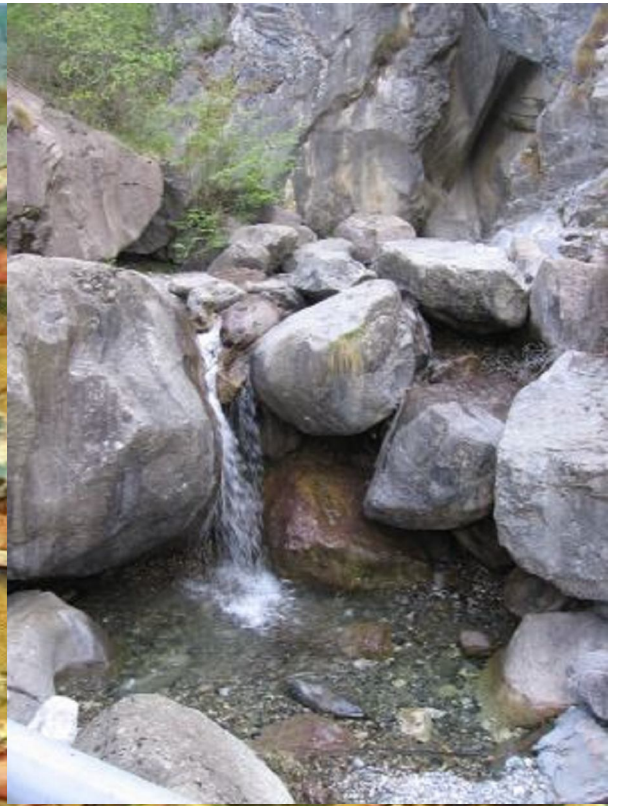
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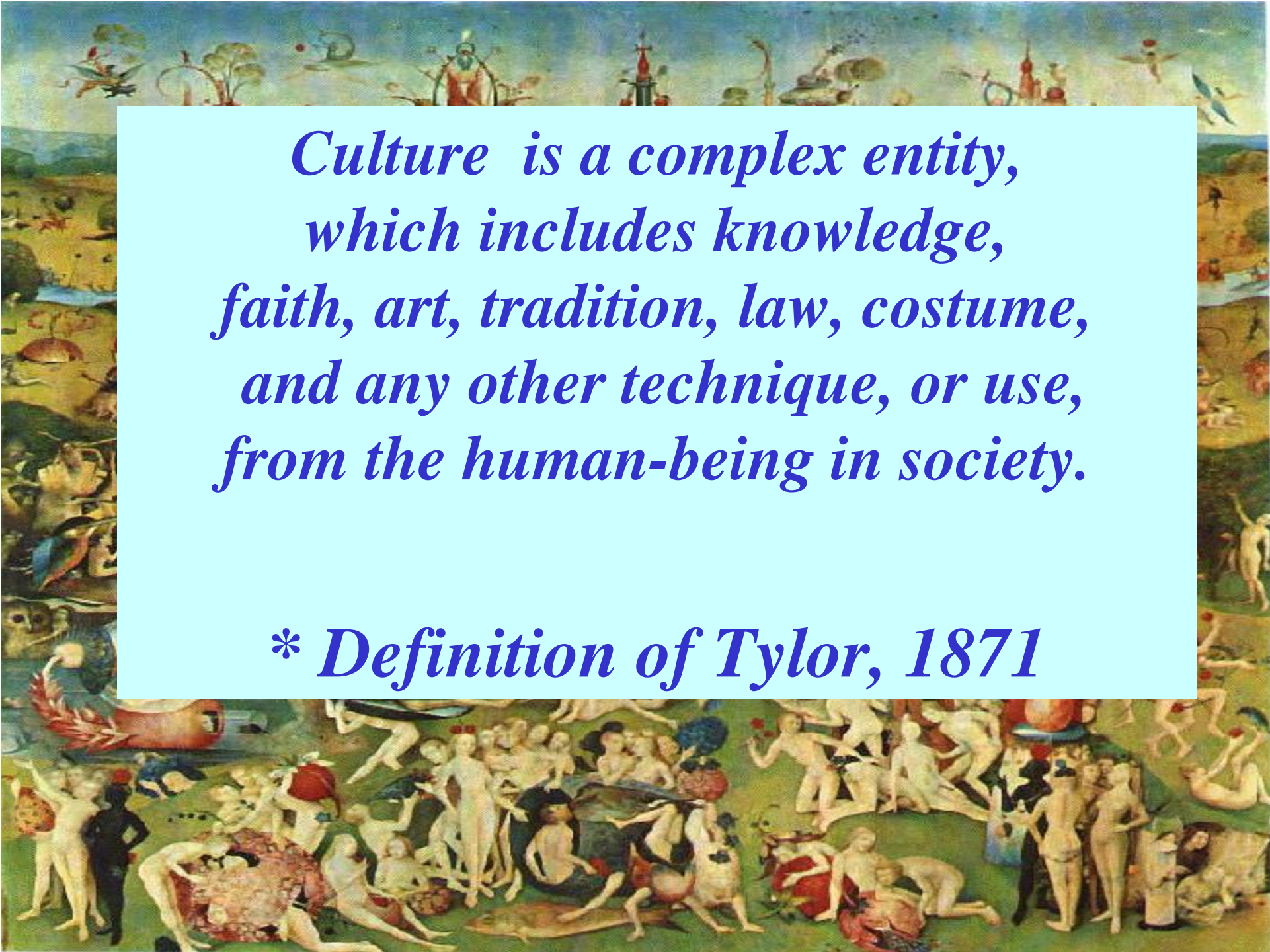
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*Culture is a complex entity,  
which includes knowledge,  
faith, art, tradition, law, costume,  
and any other technique, or use,  
from the human-being in society.*

*\* Definition of Tylor, 1871*



# Alpine and Jonkoping Regions

- Ancient history but unknown to its inhabitants
- Artistic heritage but undervalued and unexploited
- Old and rich cultural patrimony
- Transition economy from manufacture and agriculture to services
- Specialisation on high quality production (design, furniture)
- Cluster economy and cooperation among enterprises
- Small family business
- Hard working tradition
- Low level workers
- Brain drain
- Strong religious tradition
- Young people moving out
- Tourism is not thought as a real activity: no investments on research, innovation, training, organisation of cultural events for guests, participation
- No real will to change lifestyle to support tourism




**For thousands of years,  
Europe was populated and  
runned by peasants**

*Today they represent only  
6% of workforce*



**Mountain economy  
was a kind of mixed,  
multiprofessional economy**

*People had developed special skills.  
Multitask abilities were exploited  
depending on season, territory, culture*



**It was an highly creative, modern way of life, a puzzle and nomadic form of economy, based on innovation, adaptation to the market, long distance travelling and satisfaction of demands coming from the most different cultures and social environments**



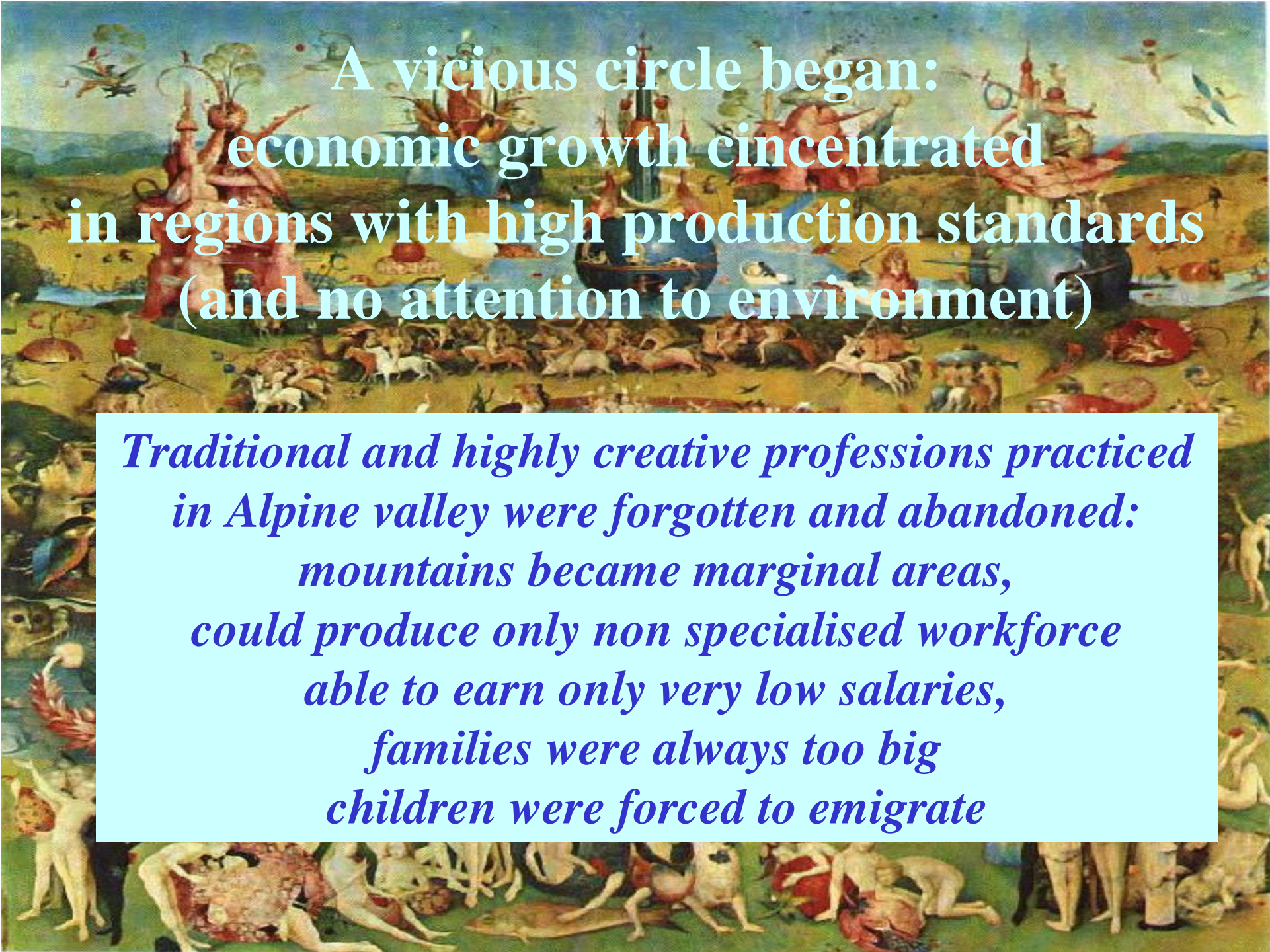


**It was a kind of economy  
based on strong sense of  
identity with an high level of  
creativity and innovation**

***But it could not survive  
the depopulation crisis***

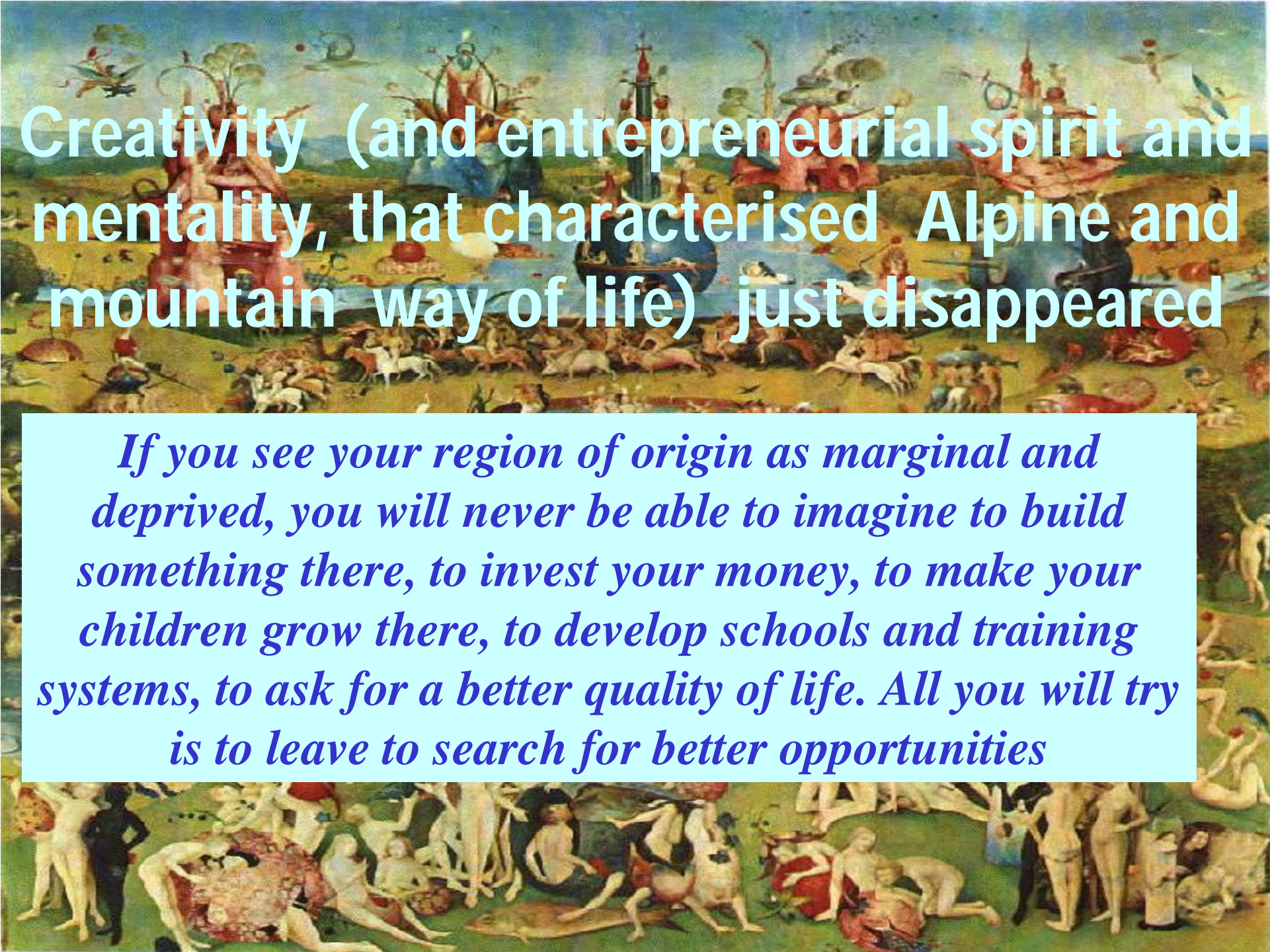


**Capitalist system is a fairly recent development in most of rural territories Southern Europe (but also in the “marginal areas” of Europe) and one consequence of diffusion of market economy in fragile regions has been economic, social, demographic and ecological imbalance**



A vicious circle began:  
economic growth concentrated  
in regions with high production standards  
(and no attention to environment)

*Traditional and highly creative professions practiced  
in Alpine valley were forgotten and abandoned:  
mountains became marginal areas,  
could produce only non specialised workforce  
able to earn only very low salaries,  
families were always too big  
children were forced to emigrate*



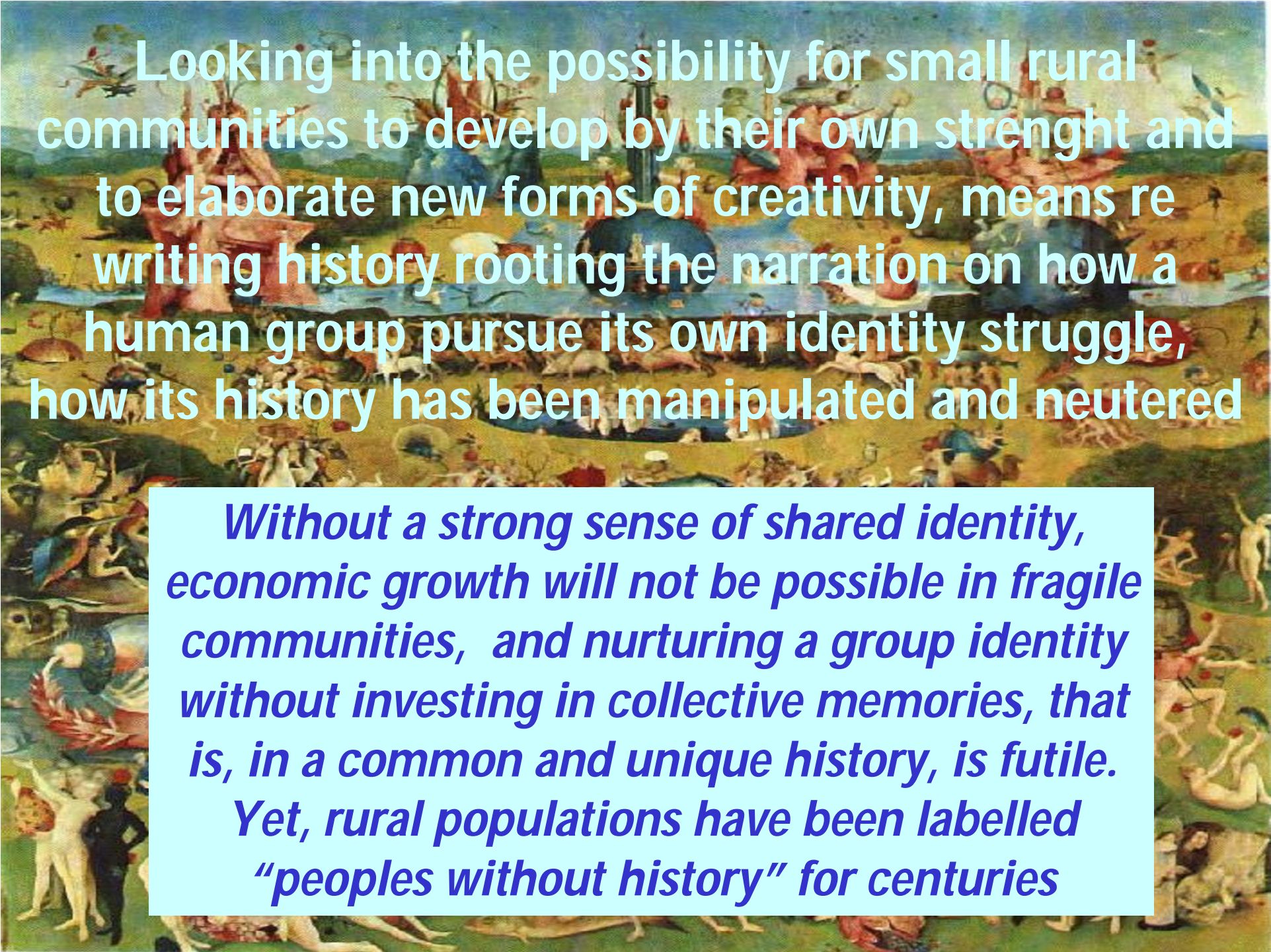
Creativity (and entrepreneurial spirit and mentality, that characterised Alpine and mountain way of life) just disappeared

*If you see your region of origin as marginal and deprived, you will never be able to imagine to build something there, to invest your money, to make your children grow there, to develop schools and training systems, to ask for a better quality of life. All you will try is to leave to search for better opportunities*



**We have to try to make the brain work (and it is a big effort...!)**

*If a social group is not ready for innovation (and, in other words, we can call innovation creativity) there will be no possibility for evolution and development of new skills and ideas. We have to build the cultural and anthropological possibility to elaborate new visions of life in a cultural context to raise the sense of self esteem*



Looking into the possibility for small rural communities to develop by their own strength and to elaborate new forms of creativity, means re writing history rooting the narration on how a human group pursue its own identity struggle, how its history has been manipulated and neutered

*Without a strong sense of shared identity, economic growth will not be possible in fragile communities, and nurturing a group identity without investing in collective memories, that is, in a common and unique history, is futile. Yet, rural populations have been labelled "peoples without history" for centuries*



Conservation and transmission of memory,  
within different generations,  
is the basic characteristic of culture

*Without communication,  
transmission of memories,  
culture can not exist.*



# Tradition & Modern

Nostalgia is meaningless and, if considered as an approach, is methodologically wrong.

Real life requires others.

*Building something “authentic”,  
deeply linked with the territory,  
is a high-sophisticated act.*

*But it is a high value touristic factor.*





# Building a Cultural Bridge

*How to start a successful innovation process? First of all demonstrating that what you are doing, or want to improve, is linked with the past. It is connected with traditions that were supposed to be lost, as well with the common memory.*



**One of the ways in which you can re-evaluate traditional wisdom is by means of the identity economy, which is at once technology-oriented and rooted in the history of a community as well as based on innovative forms of advertising. It combines high margins of profit, respect and appreciation of local identities, social growth. It is along this line that several communities are working to brand their products as traditional**





**Culture  
is a tool to create a  
Local  
Development  
Strategy**



**The methodology to improve  
creativity and start  
development process based on  
reinforcing identity in small  
rural communities:  
research/action**

A detailed Renaissance painting of a fantastical landscape. In the center, a river flows through a lush, green valley. On the left, a large, ornate structure with a red facade and a tall, thin tower stands prominently. To the right, another similar structure is visible. The foreground is filled with a large, diverse crowd of people, some appearing to be in a state of distress or conflict. The background features rolling hills and a sky with various flying creatures and architectural elements. The overall scene is rich in detail and color, typical of the Northern Renaissance style.

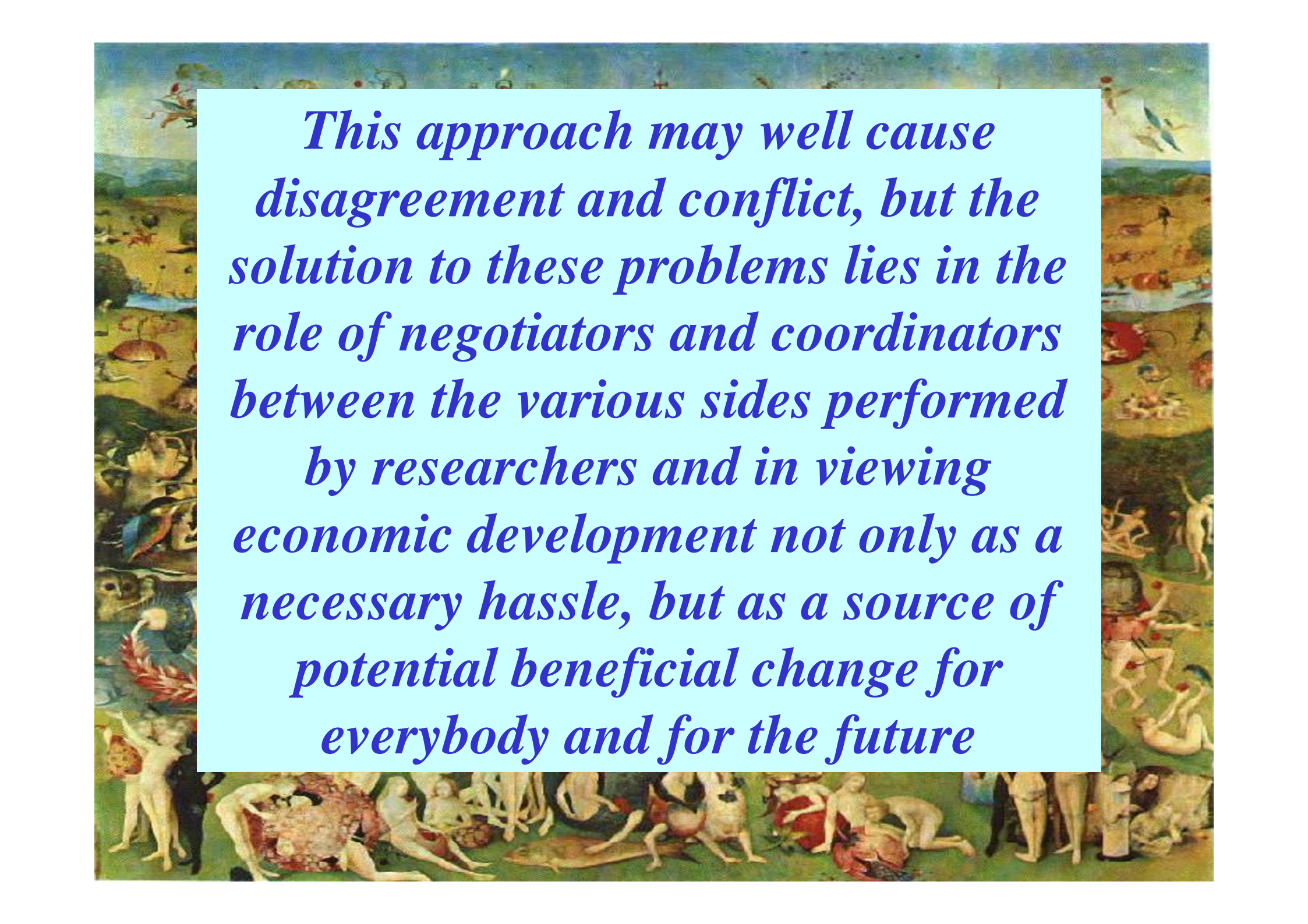
**Role of professional  
researchers and economist is  
very important**

*But only if they work with  
ordinary people  
and make them part  
of the process of development*



**Constant, specialized training is needed for all people involved in this kind of project: authorities, entrepreneurs, new employees, teachers, etc. The whole population should share the progresses and outcomes of this programme. Researchers and professional have to realise that these tasks are not irrelevant to their career goals. Widespread participation of ordinary citizens will allow them to take matters in their own hands.**



The background of the slide is a detailed, colorful painting depicting a chaotic and somewhat grotesque scene. In the foreground, several figures are engaged in various activities, some appearing to be in a state of distress or conflict. There are animals, including a large, multi-headed creature and a dog-like animal. The scene is set in a landscape with a body of water and a sky filled with birds. The overall tone is one of disorder and suffering.

*This approach may well cause disagreement and conflict, but the solution to these problems lies in the role of negotiators and coordinators between the various sides performed by researchers and in viewing economic development not only as a necessary hassle, but as a source of potential beneficial change for everybody and for the future*




*In addition to a strong cultural identity,  
almost all European localities,  
especially outside big metropolitan  
concentrations, own important potential  
resources, which could (should) be used  
as a basis for a process of sustainable  
local development  
based on identity and creativity.*






**The potential resources of the place may take diverse forms, such as regional products and natural production systems where rural and agro-tourism and handicraft activity play a relevant role, matched with technical innovation. Furthermore, the territory and the community living there own a history and a cultural heritage, which also constitute, in themselves, an important resource for the development of the locality.**





**The marginal and fragile regions of this continent must decide to cooperate by exchanging their local experience in promoting sustainable development based on their local resources, namely their history, cultural heritage, handicraft activity, rural and agro-tourism, and other regional products and activities. Only exchanging experience and good practices, only unite themselves in a European project, their weak voices will be heard: and their needs will be recognised and understood on European and political level**





**But remember:**  
**development is not made**  
*for* **people;**  
**development is made**  
*with and for* **people**



THANK YOU