



Culture, Creativity, Identity Concept and Issues

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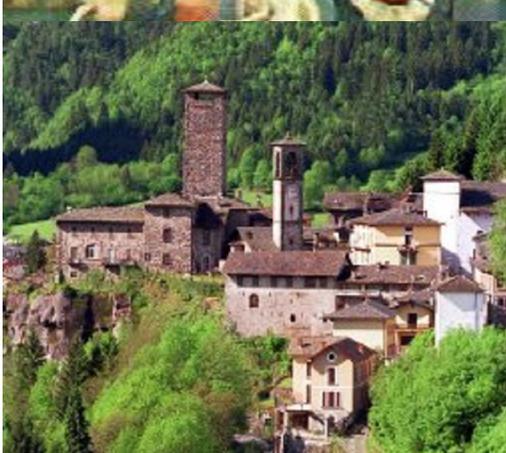
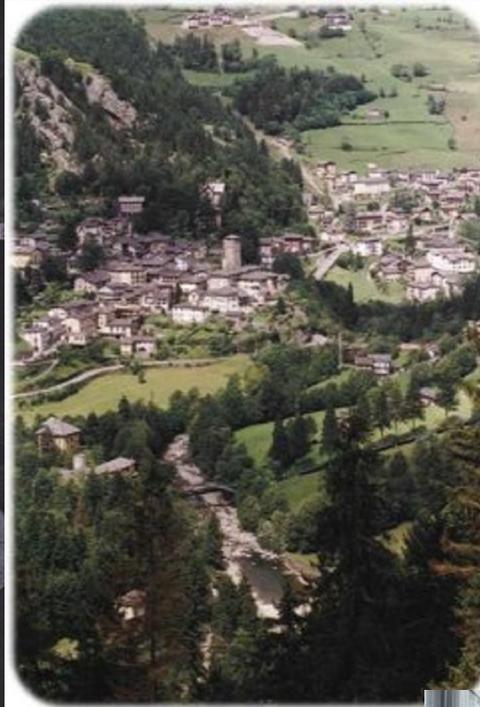


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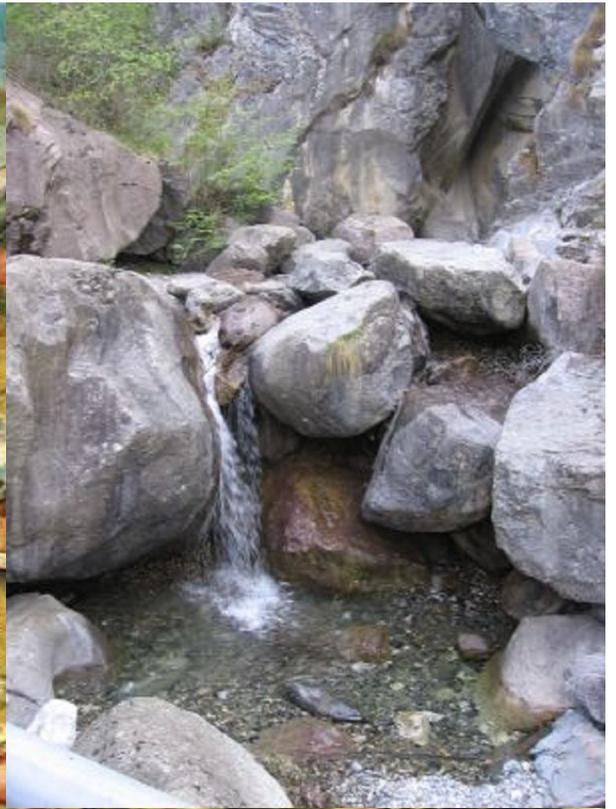
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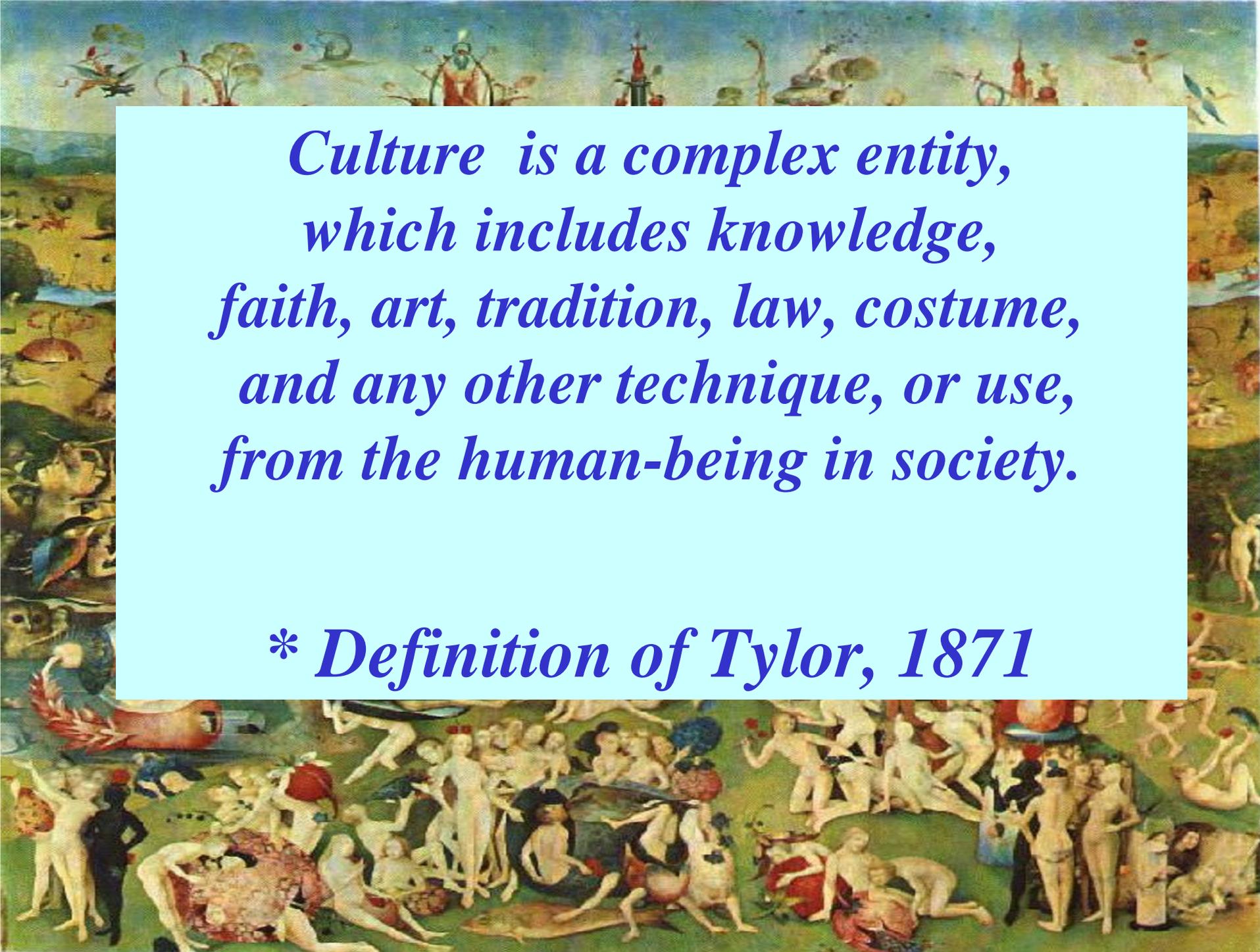
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*Culture is a complex entity,
which includes knowledge,
faith, art, tradition, law, costume,
and any other technique, or use,
from the human-being in society.*

** 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

A highly detailed Renaissance-style painting depicting a fantastical landscape. In the center, a large globe sits on a pedestal. To the left, a large, ornate red castle with multiple towers stands on a hill. The foreground and middle ground are filled with a vast number of small figures, many of whom appear to be peasants or laborers, engaged in various activities. There are also numerous animals, including horses, dogs, and birds. The background shows a hazy, distant landscape with more structures and flying creatures. The overall scene is one of a busy, populated world.

**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***

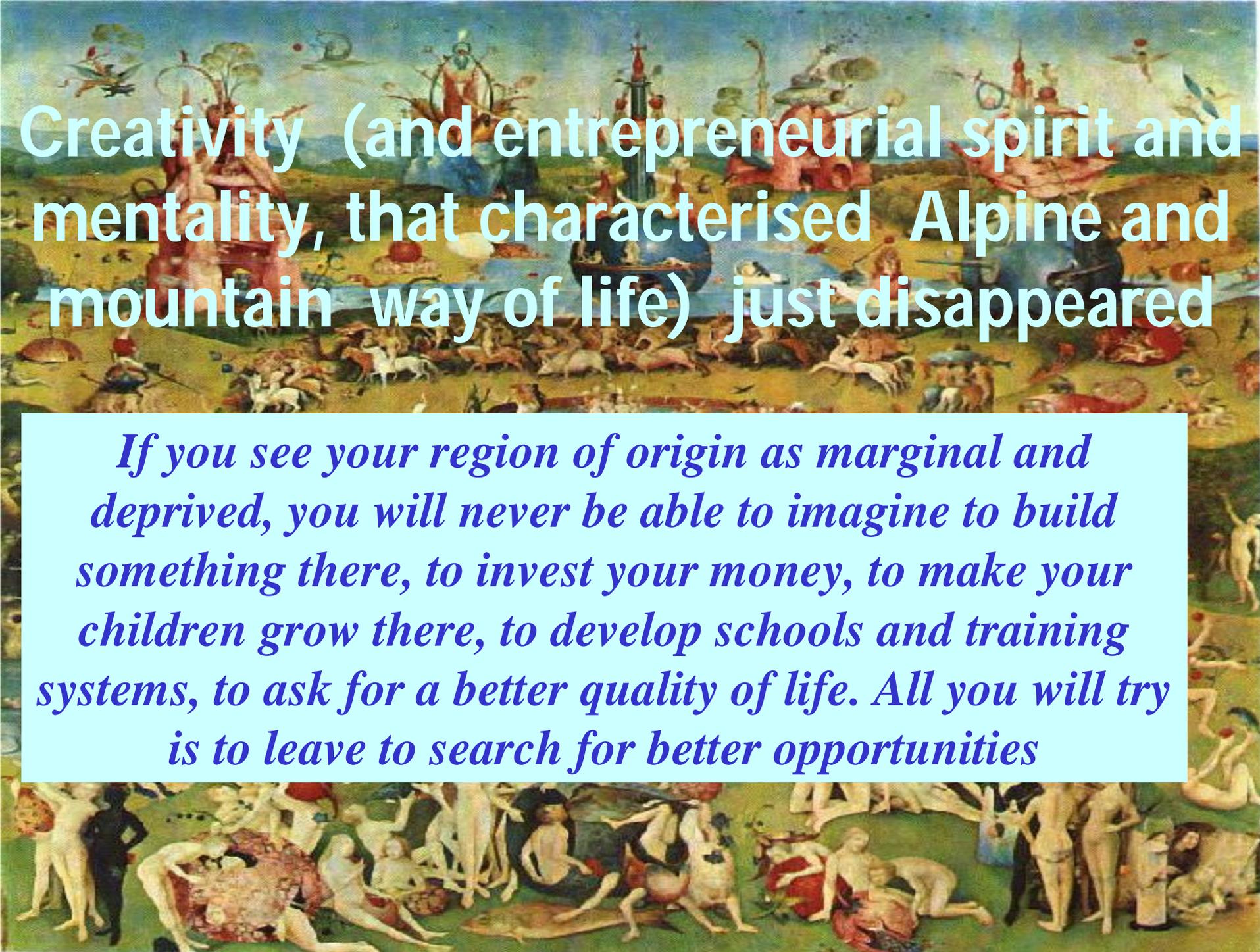


Capitalist system is a fairly recent development in most of rural territories Southern Europe (but also in the “marginal areas” of Europe) and one consequence of diffusion of market economy in fragile regions has been economic, social, demographic and ecological imbalance



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*



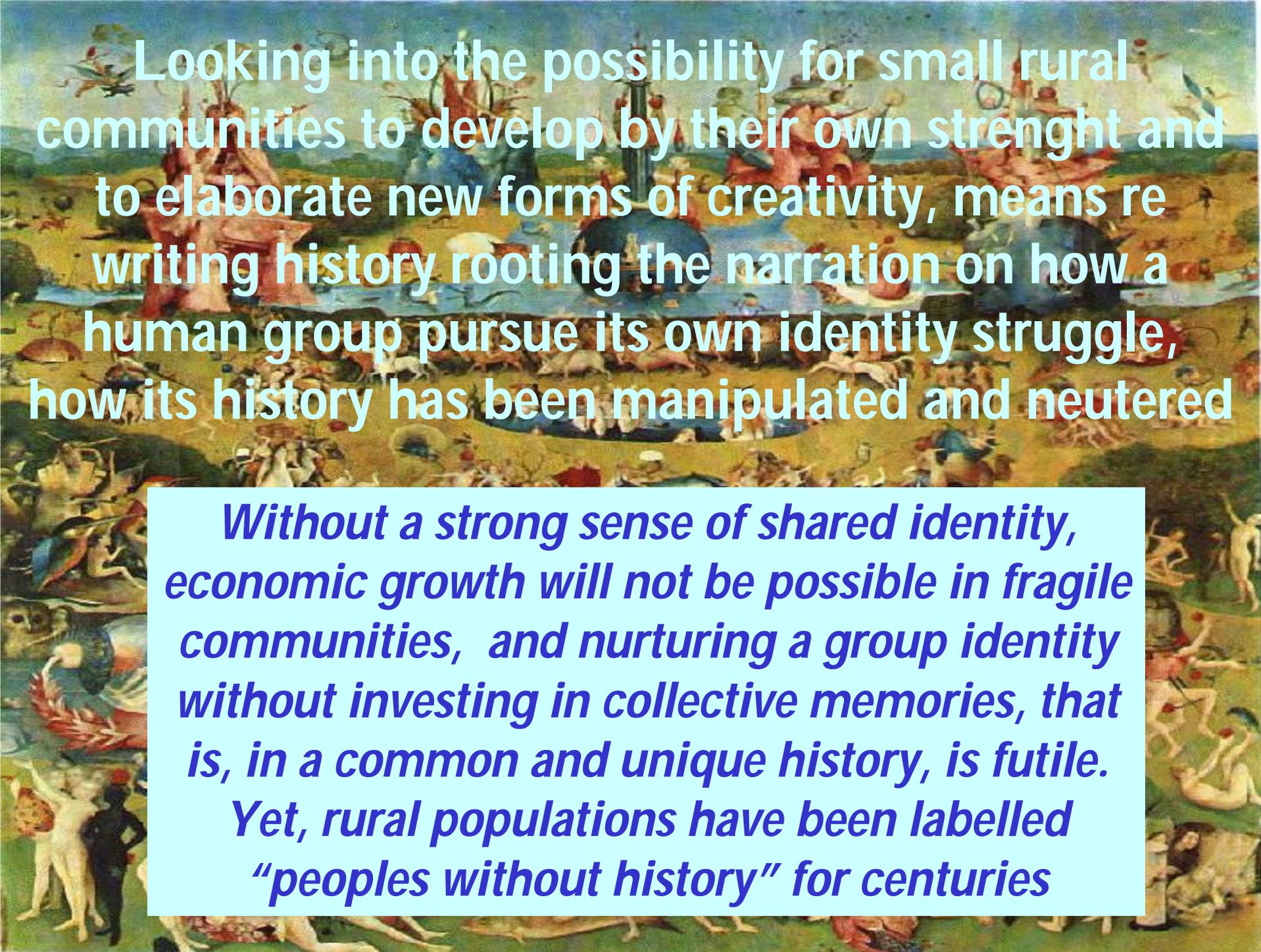
Creativity (and entrepreneurial spirit and mentality, that characterised Alpine and mountain way of life) just disappeared

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



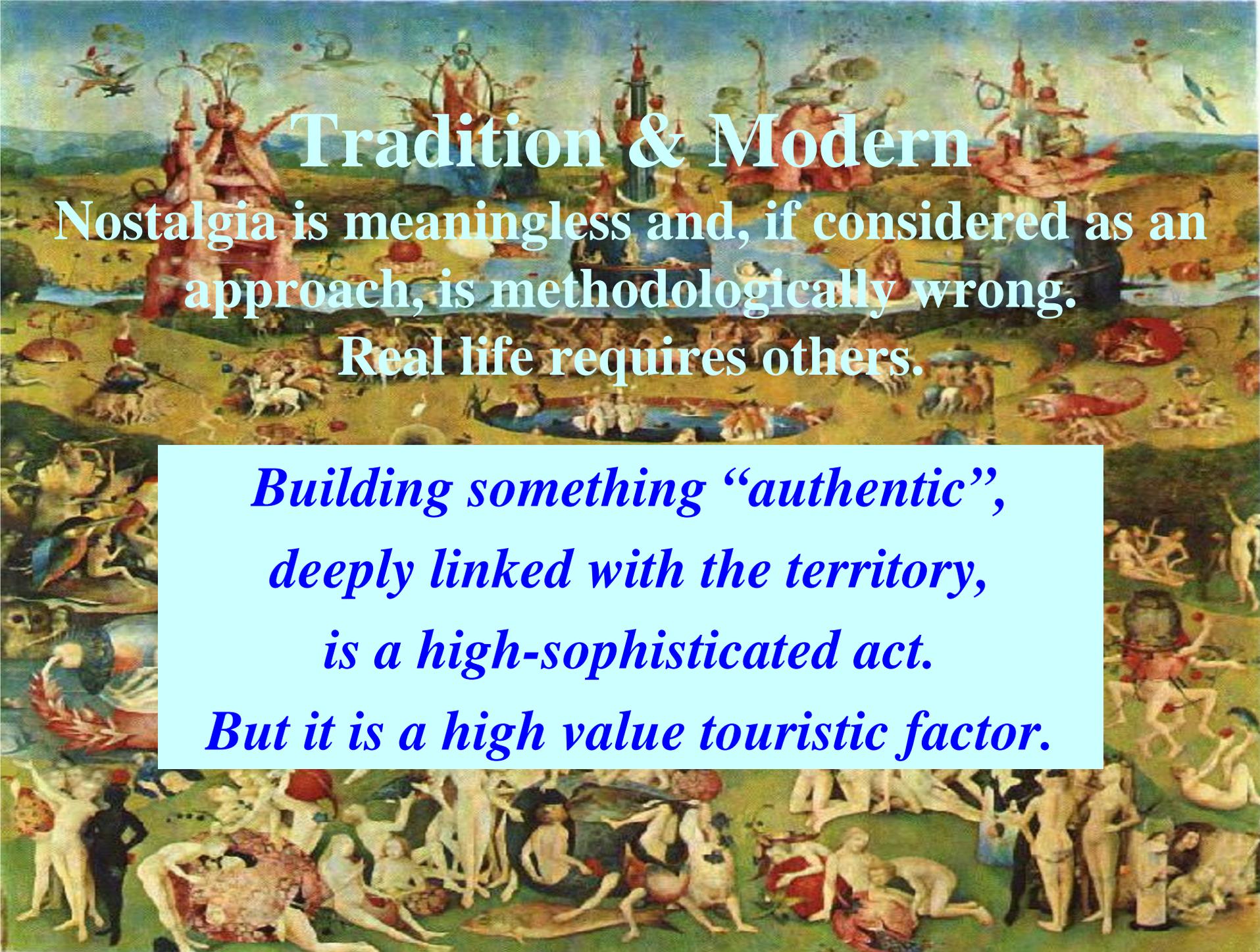
Looking into the possibility for small rural communities to develop by their own strength and to elaborate new forms of creativity, means re writing history rooting the narration on how a human group pursue its own identity struggle, how its history has been manipulated and neutered

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**



**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.





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