



Geoethics and pedagogy of mountain and risk: the case of transhumance in Sila (Southern Italy)

Marcello Bernardo (1), Francesco Muto (2), and Francesco De Pascale (1)

(1) University of Calabria, Department of Languages and Educational Sciences, Cosenza, Italy (bernardo@unical.it, francesco.depascale@unical.it), (2) University of Calabria, Department of Biology, Ecology and Earth Sciences, Cosenza, Italy (francesco.muto@unical.it)

Geoethics and Geography, as “channels” between the social and physical sciences, interact between areas of knowledge which allow quantitative measurement and others which instead mainly rely on qualitative considerations. Due to their educational values and the methodological possibilities they open up, such possibilities for interaction would be most valuable in educational environment, as they would represent a significant step toward educational-methodological settings that permit the acquisition of skills and competencies of immediate spendability, for example the importance of “knowing how to translate quantitative elements into qualitative and vice-verse”. In a context of alternation between quantity and quality, the concept of resource is open to a multiplicity of ideas. If we consider the mountains as a resource, ideas develop from that of the riches of the mountains as being measurable through quantitative indexes (but not always) and reach one of the mountains as a whole as a resource, valuable mainly through qualitative criteria (but not only). This game between quantity and quality leads to informed evaluation of environmental conditions and human actions. In addition, the signs of the past, etiche into the mountains and often still influential in the present, constitute the fourth dimension of space, of which the teaching of Geography can not do without. However, the exploration of time also concerns the future, especially with regard the ethics of responsibility: it investigates the consequences of choices made in the present and how they can affect the future. Due to its many specificities (especially, but not exclusively, in terms of resources and risks), planning for a mountainous territory lends to an inexhaustible series of educational applications.

The building of an “education about the mountains” project for primary and secondary school children through a series of learning units, from direct and indirect observation to territorial analysis, could bring out the range of perceptions that mountains can arouse in a child or pre-adolescent: from images of sadness and unhappiness to others of joy and elation. Perception is, of course, the first operational level and is essential in the exploration and understanding of space. This exploration and understanding is initially based on sensory perceptions and is then added to by perceptions of the environmental condition of the mountains, the weaknesses and risks, the links to history and to demographic, economic, social and cultural trends.

The school, traditionally delegated to the training of the boy, can contribute to the acquisition of a new consciousness that can change the current image that the public has of the mountain and the phenomena connected with it as, indeed, the transhumance. Transhumance is a technical term of the pastoral economy, the “best” that is to point out a typical aspect of life, almost symbiotic, leading, for the whole year, men and flocks, with a double seasonal allocation, in mountain and plain, and a dual path (outward and return), almost always quite long, and for particular routes. In Calabria, the most significant and sustained transhumance settled between Sila plateau and Crotona plains.