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

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Abstract

Geothics and Geography, as “channels” between the social and physical sciences, interact between areas of knowledge which allow quantitative measurement and others which instead rely on qualitative considerations. Due to their educational values and the methodological possibilities they open up, such possibilities for interaction can be most clearly observed in an educational environment, as they would represent a significant step toward educational-methodological settings that permit the acquisition of skills and competencies of immediate applicability, for example the importance of “knowing how to translate quantitative elements into qualitative and vice versa” (Cacciari, 2010), and the management of such knowledge 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 territory, the potential of the environment to the potential environmental and economic, and the mountain could be considered as a source of awareness of the importance of a healthy environment education that shall be given in the future. The project involved the administration of a questionnaire to pupils on transhumance to verify the initial knowledge of the topic. From the answers to the questionnaire - some pupils possessed a superficial knowledge of the phenomenon. In fact, they found themselves in the past to observe large herds of cows, in passing, but really did not know the real reason why they were to move. Subsequently, it was held in a lecture in class supported by some slides in Microsoft Powerpoint and from watching some movies, explained what transhumance was and because it was practiced. Starting from the basic definition of transhumance and tradition, we have shown, always so simple, what was the historical evolution of the phenomenon and the current transhumance paths. The paths of transhumance were crossed directly by pupils in Cerenzia, Southern Italy, on the occasion of the educational output; seemed clear, before the teaching, the need for a visual representation of the phenomenon, and the project of study, and the areas where it has spread and more established.

Methodology

A Learning Unit to fifth class pupils of primary school, Istituto Comprensivo “Cico Simonetta” of Cacciu, Calabria region, Southern Italy, was realized. Cacciu, located in the presilana area, is still crossed by those few shepherds who still practice transhumance. The project was drawn up and designed by three of us (Muto, De Pascale and De Pascale). The main aim of the project was to achieve a greater awareness of the correspondence between the landscape and its environmental and economic potential, understood as the relations of the relationship between education and human environment, with particular reference to the mountain, to the qualitative and natural resources that characterize it. The theme of transhumance, closely related to the mountain because of the exploitation of complementarities between different natural environments (mountain pastures and grassy plains), founds at the beginning some concerns in the teachers of Cacciu primary school, a sign of a lack of awareness of the landscape values (aesthetic and economic) of the mountain and a lack of awareness of the importance of a healthy environment education that shall be given in the future. The project involved the administration of a questionnaire to pupils on transhumance to verify the initial knowledge of the topic. From the answers to the questionnaire - some pupils possessed a superficial knowledge of the phenomenon. In fact, they found themselves in the past to observe large herds of cows, in passing, but really did not know the real reason why they were to move. Subsequently, it was held in a lecture in class supported by some slides in Microsoft Powerpoint and from watching some movies, explained what transhumance was and because it was practiced. Starting from the basic definition of transhumance and tradition, we have shown, always so simple, what was the historical evolution of the phenomenon and the current transhumance paths. The paths of transhumance were crossed directly by pupils in Cerenzia, Southern Italy, on the occasion of the educational output; seemed clear, before the teaching, the need for a visual representation of the phenomenon, and the project of study, and the areas where it has spread and more established.

Results

The final test on transhumance completed by pupils, it turned out that those were impressed and fascinated by a practice, like that of transhumance, which as a whole knew little. The children have learned a lot from this educational project. They have “discovered” a world, pastoral, all new except for those two or three children who have grandparents who held this job. From the answers to the two questions of the questionnaire it emerged that the pupils had a superficial knowledge of the phenomenon, showed positive feelings and gratification by children. There who simply liked the teaching experience, who was impressed by the “giant” bull and “how to put the bolas into the stomach of cows, bulls and calves”, who is happy to have acquired a terminology not unknown, connected to transhumance, who would redo the experience again, who would propose to do transhumance with other people and finally, there are those who, like Michele, who would grow up to be a shepherd. By comparing the knowledge emerged in the input questionnaire and in the output questionnaire, it found a medium / superficial degree of knowledge of the students in the responses to the input test.

Conclusions

The school and educational facilities, traditionally delegated to the training of the pupils, could contribute to the acquisition of a new consciousness, which can change the current image that the public has of the mountain and the phenomena connected with it, as, indeed, the transhumance. The mountain, in fact, is increasingly perceived as a place that is less necessary, perhaps even an accessory. In contrast, only a careful observation of the phenomenology of space mountain allows a constructive approach to education for whoever is who breaks from the company (Consoli, 2008).

References
