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Title:

Emotional landscapes in the imagery of Campania university students

Landscape and emotion

This paper will attempt to study the relationship between landscape and emotionalism, which has not been studied enough or in depth by subjects and from different perspectives where the landscape has been understood and studied. Through a research carried out by the Geography Laboratory with students from the Italian region of Campania, which had as main object an Italian landscape where students would have wanted to live for at least six months (except Campania), it came out a process of identitarian emotion

The geographical imagination is a capillary network of emotional spaces and places, where the place is re-created through strong emotional and emotive meaning. The reality is filtered – choosing consciously or unconsciously the received information – through emotion and sentiment, and it is re-edited with all the visions which are part of our cultural background, through a cultural and visual map which belongs to us, grown with and within ourselves, changing representations into symbols. Even when through the glance we all foresee physiologically the same thing, it does “not use itself up through seeing, but through a process of understanding and building a representation in the light of mediators or categories which change through the time”, and which are subjective (Piscitelli 2008, p.99).

Each individual has an inner cartography given by the perception of the physical world he/she lives in. There is an “another” space made of memory, emotions, unconscious, and in the crossover of the spaces we are joined by emotions which the individual feels in front of him/her in the open space. The emotion in front of the space, as Franceschini says “if it is originated by visual recognition or chromatic game elements” may be of “amazement, serenity, calmness, comprehension” while in front of an anthropomorphic space “this emotion is enriched by emotional-identitarian elements (...), on this primordial perception the relationship between landscape and individuals is built” (Franceschini 2007, p. 110). Even the relationship between man and territory “finds its aim not only in the material production of the settlement, but also in the production of the representation of the this settlement. Reality cannot be lived without thinking about the image of this reality” (Raffestin 2005, p. 84).

The landscape is considered as a form impressed on our mind, produced in a complex sensory, cultural, and emotional arrangement which is created

drawing on archetypical images and evocative stimulus (“personality” which we can recognize in the visual of our internal self). It does not depend on the physical extension of the place, it is something which we can recognize in the territory as in our internal self (emotional landscape, memory landscape) as an heterogeneous set of units which work together according to unifying laws which do not modify the individual identities.

At the same time, the landscape related to a physical reality, but especially to a subjectivity, discloses itself as an ambiguous identity which is strongly connected to the *inscape* – an English word which does not have an Italian equivalent word – which may be defined by the individual and the community as an internal landscape, in other words a landscape filtered by the individual cultural background.

In order to use the metaphor of landscape as theatre, where references and symbols become cultural (they enter in the language which produces culture), individuals and society act their own stories, and by relating at the same time to a physical reality and subjectivity, it is cleared an entity (also ambiguous) interrelated to the *inscape*. There is a binary correspondence between landscape and its user, “the changing dynamicity of an objective (light, shadows, seasons) and subjective (moods, emotions, habit-forming and surprise) element is guarantor of the continuous dialogue which is of cultural order, but also of economical and political one” (Capriglione, p. 202).

The landscape become a tale full of emotions and its perception is a reflection of our living. Starting from childhood as the beginning of memory landscape which at first encloses a limited space, one by one it enriches itself with new places, new memories, through experience, travel, new interests, insomuch as it includes and comprises entire spaces of the planet, and becomes an atlas enriched by small and big places, experienced events, unforgettable moments etc...As Turri says, “the landscape is the perceptual reflection of a territorial set formed by elements interconnected between them, of a whole which because of its unique nature we may define landscape”, as theorized by Georg Simmel (Turri E., 1998b, p. 29).

The perception of the landscape

The “perceived” landscape comes from the way in which the man lives and creates the notion of landscape. Starting from the interaction between the eye and the external reality, it breaks itself up in the visual component the “formal one which is based instead on the perception automatisms of the form (Gestalt) as well as in the recreational component centred on emotional/contemplative elements” (Franceschini 2007).

The perception does not limit itself to a “passive sensory reception of the external world, but it is an active mental construction which depends on the memory of the past (previous perceptive experiences, more or less made rational by the conceptual reflection) and by future expectations” (Ottolini p. 8). It is activated by our culture, our predisposition, our passion, our aesthetic

sense, our feeling of time, space and life. The perception of a place comes from different constitutional elements of the territory which are impressive for their evidence, beauty, opulence, uniqueness, or maybe because they repeat itself as distinctive and unmistakable *leitmotifs*. Visual elements, which may be seen in the landscape as particular units that have a symbolical and functional value in the receiver's vision, may be called "*iconemi*" a term created by Turri (Turri 1998).

The subject who lives in a particular place has a different perception from the occasional visitor's one, because the inhabitant "gives to the places different meanings, so a featureless place may become the place of memories, the place of socio-cultural identities where the most qualifying adjectives are used for describing it" (Turri 1998b, p. 29). The perception level represents the mirror of our own territorial conscience, in other words in the landscape we may find the reflection of our action, our living and working in the territory. The territory is intended as a space where we act, we identify ourselves, where social relationships are developed, memories, interests, a starting point for understanding of world. Therefore, the landscape - in the visual perception - becomes image, representation, where the man creates his own references, his own symbols.

Even in the European Convention about the landscape (L. n. 14 del 9 January 2006), it appears an unambiguous definition of landscape which takes into account the perception, where the term *Landscape* "designates a particular part of the territory, as it has been perceived by the population, whose character comes from the action of natural and/or human factors and their inter-relationships". After years, it is claimed that the landscape is constituted by the perception of the territory that a subject who lives and attends for different reasons has, and additionally it seems clear through the lines that people have the right to live in a landscape which is pleasant to them.

The Research

The research has been carried out with 75 students of the third year of the Educational Sciences Faculty Geography Laboratory who live in Campania. It has been shown a short film in class which shows Italian regions (a virtual journey) with spectacular shot from a bird's eye perspective of the territory, accompanied by a rich comment about landscape historical and artistic aspects, realized by the Italian Touring Club. The students had to answer to the following questions: In which of these represented landscape would you like to live for at least six months (except Campania)? Almost everyone chose a regional landscape which has elements and features similar to the Campania landscape, the recognition through an emotional and visual element which has already been stored in their imagery. The option of the Florence's landscape has found correspondence in the urban map of Naples (fig. 1-2); Emilia Romagna's landscapes with Salernitan coast (fig. 3) and some of the settlement of the Picentini Mountains (fig. 4); those of the Liguria with the Sorrento

coast/Praiano/Vico Equense/Cetara/Erchie (fig. 5); Sicily landscapes with the Amalfi-Sorrento Coast and the recurrence of vegetation elements (fig. 6); Sardinia landscapes with the Campania Islands physiognomy (fig. 7); Sardinia landscapes with Emerald Grotto-Atrani/Blue Grotto-Capri (fig. 8); Sardinia landscapes /Castles in Campania (fig. 9).

The relationship between emotion and landscape has not become explicit through the channel of the visual emotion (characterized by the reciprocity between the landscape image and visual perception dynamics), but through the identitarian emotion which is featured by the interaction between images, memory, and project (for instance start living in a specific place), intended as the overlapping of an individual and social perception, where sense of belonging, social identification, and homesickness have appeared.

The emotional landscape has been a journey (virtual) which has enabled the observation of the territory and the opportunity to taste the otherness, which respond to the self-representation compared to the world, a *here* where we find ourselves and a *somewhere else* compared to where we place ourselves. It has started a process of re-creation of the physical territory, where what has prevailed has been “the lived experience” of the place through its image, a kind of bottomland of the distant and the close: “an extraordinary *collage* of standardization and particular, where the fluency of signifiers” has allowed to extrapolate, “in the forms of pure aesthetic cannibalism” (Scurti 2003, p. 603-604), landscape portions in a sensory circle which includes smells, tastes, gradient, social attitudes which constituted the emotional background (already experienced in the lived place) through the revelation of natural landscape. A “synthesis and integration of contents and values of the territory, sometimes hidden, sometimes evident but not expected, which all together create an offer of suggestions” (Gregori 2007, p. 14).

The research has highlighted the way in which the emotion is one of the building element of the landscape concept and, at the same time, it influences in a critical way the empirical characteristics of the same. Investigating the landscape omitting the emotion which it gives to its users, means to observe and describe it only for its pure physical features, while the landscape is and has something more (Franceschini 2007). In order to design and protect the landscape, it is necessary to code even the emotional elements which feature it, with the aim of creating a new type of cartography investigation: “emotional maps” which activate our intention to live in that particular landscape. They represent “a path, a full personal conceptual map, and at the same time collective and sharable” (Gregori 2007). Indeed, by overlapping and putting side by side the emotional data, physical-numerical data (anthropoid pressure and biological variety, for instance) and cultural data (historical-intellectual interest), we would be able to sum cognitive elements essential to design new human actions in the landscape, and also essential to create strategies for the protection of the open space. By putting in connection the typology of surface with the emotional state that they generate, it is possible to develop a territorial intelligence for aims such as preservation,

guardianship, and it is possible to have a more efficient control of and on the landscape.



Fig. 1 Firenze

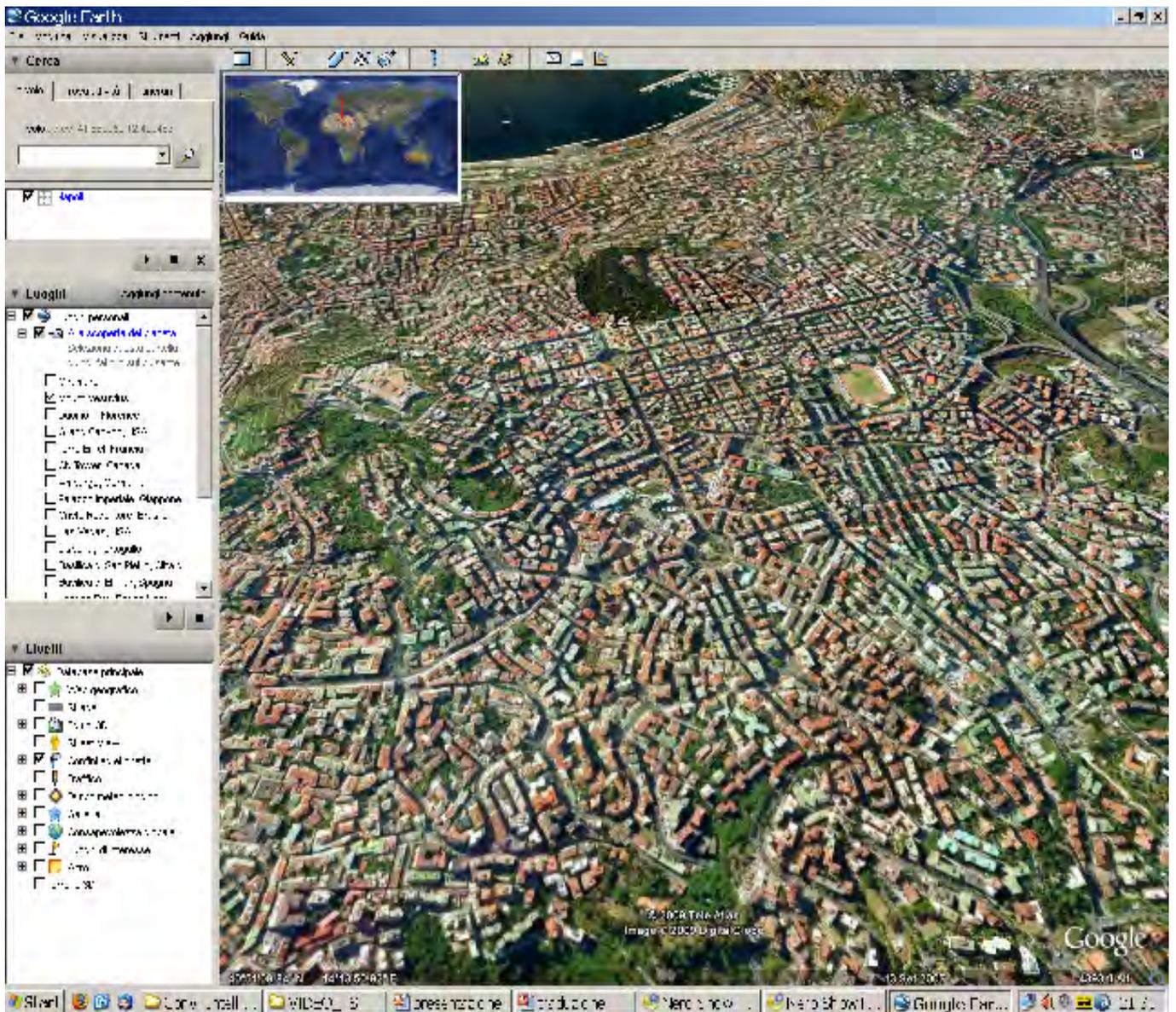


Fig. 2 Pianta di Napoli



Fig. 3 Emilia Romagna / costa salernitana



Fig. 4 Emilia Romagna/Monti picentini/ Giffoni



Fig. 5 Liguria/costiera sorrentina/praiano/vicoequense/cetara/erchie



Fig. 6 Sicilia/costiera amalfitana-sorrentina/ricorrenza elementi di vegetazione



Fig. 7 Sardegna/sole campane



Fig. 8 Sardegna/Grotta dello smeraldo Atrani/grotta azzurra -Capri



Fig. 9 Sardegna/castelli in Campania (Arechi)

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