

Draft

The memory of the Earth: Geoscape, Nature and the poetic of the Anthropocene.

The paper aims to show the relationship between micro and macro narratives in the time of the new geo-heritage.

About Anthropocene

In 2011, the Geological Society of America, titled his conference: “From Archean to Anthropocene: The past is the key to the future”. The idea that the planet and humanity have entered into a new geological epoch is emerging in the Geological Sciences year after year. At present (2014) the Working Group on Anthropocene (AWG), as part of Geological Sciences International, is working on a ratification of the Anthropocene as the official unit of the Geological Time Scale globally recognized. As Bruno Latour would say: “the Anthropocene is entering progressively in the space of public things, becoming a matter of fact, capable of acting through his reseau of glocal connections.” The Anthropocene can be defined - a time where the human being, the *Anthropos*, is considered the decisive geological force - and witnesses the transition to a new era in the history of Earth. The adoption of the geosphere as a last frontier reached by human power puts an end to the image of the planet as an effective projection of Nature. From a place of overwhelming forces, the Earth becomes a space of memory, where to look and keep track of past creative power of Nature.

Geo-heritage

However, even if the Anthropocene is a powerful theoretical category, able to determine the global space, it must localize in the friction of the local space, by narratives and practices, in order to exist and be recognized. This perspective includes the idea of a geo-heritage, able to narrate the history of the Earth and its power as Nature, through a new category of micro space signifiers: geosites. Geology and underground become the way to a new institutional and emotional sense of place. A descent into hell marked by expertise and scientific knowledge, necessary to make a correct exegesis of the places and create new techno-nature, where the geo-diversity becomes a new paradigm. Geosites can thus be regarded as local hubs of a living system of heritage and memory. A system that shows the planet as an organic whole, marked by its non-human crises. Geo-Parks The paper investigates the nature of this new geo-heritage, which links micro and macro space, and how this heritage develops in the new idea of Geo-Parks. Actually Natural Parks have an important role in the creation of new heritage. The establishment of new regulatory and discursive regimes can deeply change the relations between communities, territories and economic strategies. From this point of view, under the narrative of environmental protection, Natural Parks become an anthropological place where new essentialisms take shape and reinforce the separation between Nature and Culture. Moreover these public spaces become also political spaces which can generate conflicts about the idea of Nature: from the concept of *Antropozoico* and the beauty of geology, described by Antonio Stoppani in his book *Il Bel Paese* in 1876, to the new ethics of the Anthropocene, described by Crutzen, where rocks become incipit for a new look at sites as moral spaces. The Geo-Parks with their landscapes and atmospheres, emanations of an absolute Nature, appear at the same time full of human practices. Those practices uncover new geological sites and envelop them in personal and thick aesthetic. In this perspective the Geo-Parks are already a vast European network sponsored by UNESCO.

The Park of Gypsum Mountain

The paper presents a research carried out in the Park of Gypsum Mountain, in Northern Italy (Italy), a context centered on geological features which become the frame for narratives about places. This site has recently become a new Geo-Park, part of a project sponsored by UNESCO in the creation of a larger Geo-Apennines Park (ERAGP Emilia Romagna Apennines Geo-Park): a place of geo-heritage at continental and global level. Rocks, faults, fossils, caves and other geological objects arise as powerful entities that evoke and materialize new cosmographies, remote times and spaces. The geological narrative of Gypsum as a rock makes it the incipit for a new vision of the entire Mediterranean as a geo-historical and biological macro space. But it makes it also the echo of a new ecological morality of life based on memory turned into stone. Thanks to the human discovery and definition of the site, its landscape turns into a new Geo-scape transfusing the presence of telluric forces of creation in every single rock. Its surfaces and its depths are upgraded by a new aesthetic: a kind of mythographical process evoking the past and bringing out new epiphanies and sacredness. A strange type of en plein air museography of the Creation of the Earth made by Nature. A space where glacial time goes on stage, though containing new human and poetic narratives. An absolute Nature flows out of this process, as well as an eponymous Nature of Romagna Nation, to build a new identity and new autochthony projects. In this proliferation of Nature, Geo-Parks and protected areas foster the research of new poetic patterns, binding together human and non-human, micro and macro spaces. They also promote the investigation of the changing relationship between landscapes and taskscape.