

COLDIGIOCO: THE ENERGY OF MEMORY

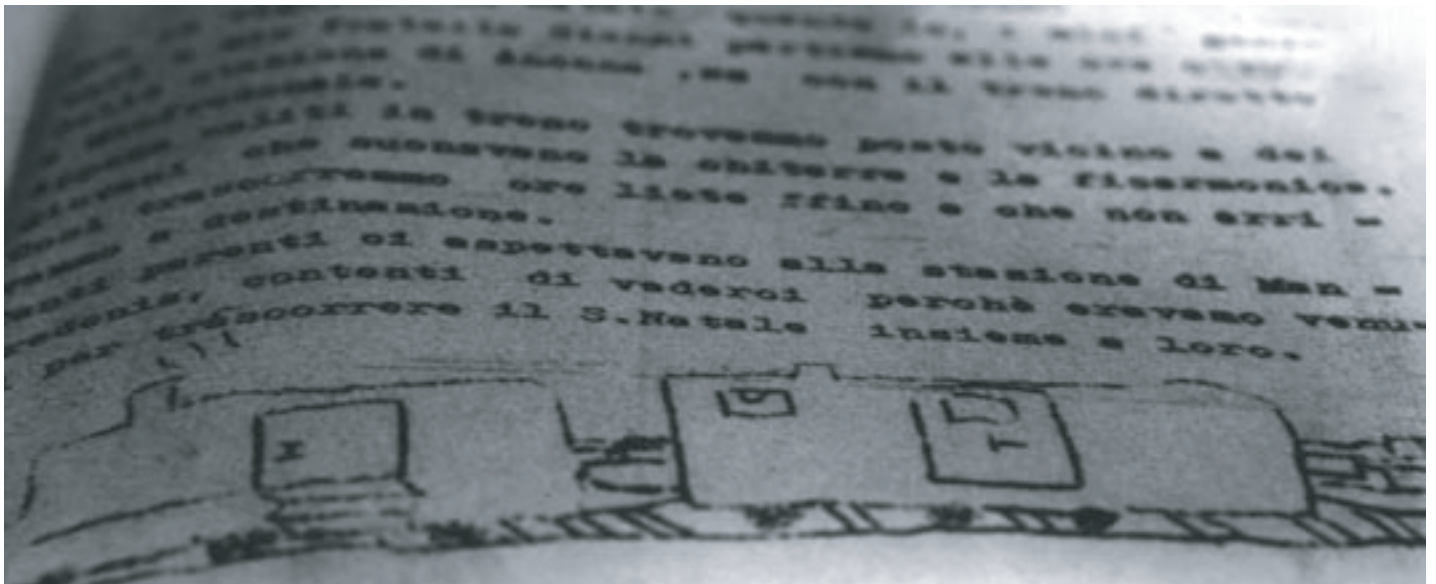
A long time ago, when the school was by now closed down, and the village half-abandoned, by chance Alessandro Montanari happened to be back at that place, while he was searching for somewhere to set up a store where he could keep tools needed for the expedition.

"But, I've been here before", he said once at the site. And not only was the place a familiar one. There was also an old friend, a former schoolmate. "What are you doing here?". "I could ask you the same thing" was the reply.

It was then that it came back to him that, as a small boy, when he went to Primary school in Ancona, the school found itself being involved with a working group carrying out educational and didactic experiments. This is how he found himself among a bunch of city children who were compared with "country" children, rather, who came from an "imaginary" town, "imaginary not just because of the name, Coldigioco (T.N. – in English it could be translated as "Hill of Games"), which had all the elements of poetic invention, while it was and still is the proper name for a village in the Le Marche region"¹.

But also as regards what the newspaper stories said, they told of "the works and school days that were lived with the spirit and practicality of the folk teaching methods of Celestin Freinet: nothing "supernatural", no "pedagogical poem", but compared to how it was, in general and on average, schooling in Italy seemed like idylls, fairy tales"².

Once the past had returned with all clarity, one single thought remained nailed in Alessandro Montanari's head: and the old school became his home.



Photo> DANILO COGNIGNI

Having returned from America, he had felt the need to construct the future building upon rock, onto something solid, protected by the varnish of memory. But Alessandro Montanari’s wisdom knew how to and how he could understand the value of the whole experience, in all its many manifestations. And his home became the outpost of a village of science, where his teacher, his schoolmates, his friends, his students, in one way or another would have followed him.

¹ Giovanna LEGATTI, Coldigioco, Movimento di cooperazione educativa, 2001, p.9.
² IBID.

Alessandro Montanari, born at Ancona, graduated in Geology in 1979 at the University of Urbino and he then moved to the USA, where in 1986, he achieved his Ph.D. at The University of California (Berkeley). He returned to Italy in 1992 with his family and settled near Apiro (MC). Here, together with his American artist wife, Paula Metallo, his mentor Walter Alvarez and his wife Milly (Berkeley) and his colleague David Bice (Carlton College) founded the Geological Observatory of Coldigioco, a private scientific-cultural centre visited mostly by young researchers and students coming from various European and American universities, as well as, institutes.

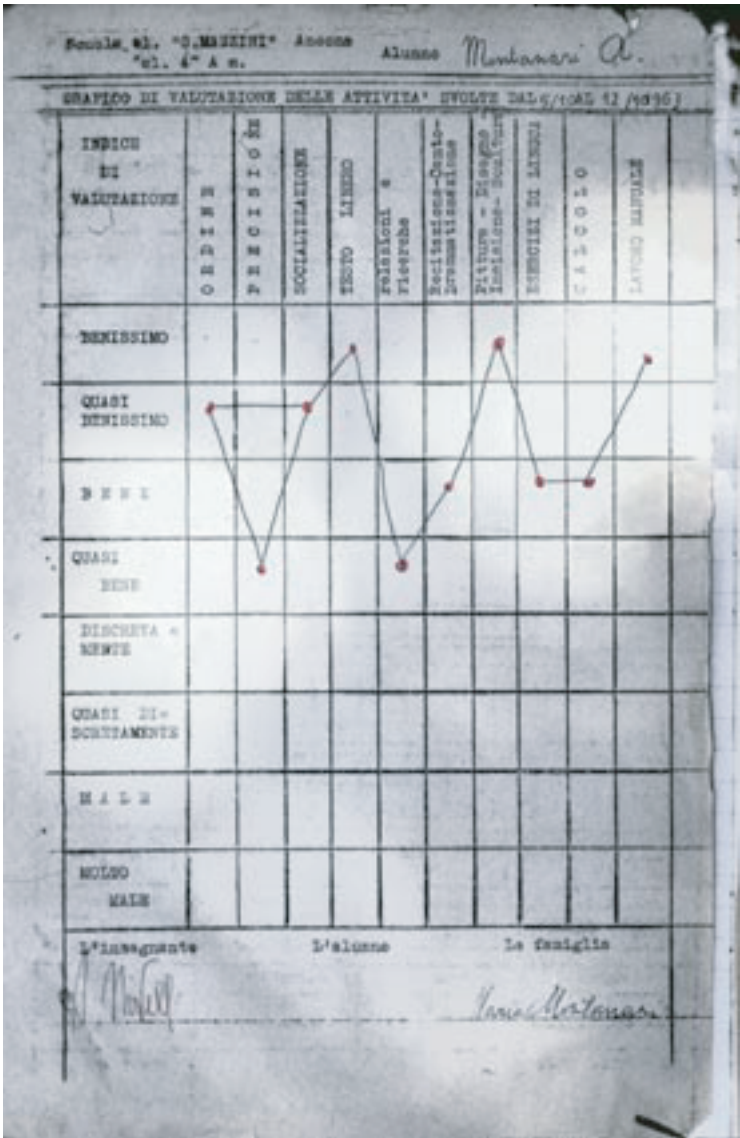


Photo: DANILO COGNIGNI

