

Metageography and the order of time

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The fever of postmodernity seems to have faded away during the first decade of this century. Compared to the amount of publications and the intensity of the debate that had emerged at the end of the 1980s, the presence of this topic in relation to the breakdown of modern intelligibility and its explanatory potential lost strength in critical social theory, but left an indispensable legacy for the contemporary interpretation of the world. If, on the one hand, in some areas, the term "postmodernity" has fallen out of use and any mention of it certainly suggests a fondness for old-fashioned categories of a passé nature, on the other, the feeling, intuition or even the understanding that there was something serious in the order of time, has been guiding important debates in the field of the human sciences to this day. The "reassertion of space in critical social theory", which was one of the concerns of Edward Soja, in his *Postmodern Geographies*, seems to compose this spectrum of legacies of the debate on postmodernity. Therefore, to understand this legacy, we need to understand the theoretical and social context in which it was created. This context of crisis and transformation constitutes the crucial moment based upon which the developmental conditions of metageographies were created. Despite the strong connection between the simultaneously foundational and critical elements of modernity, this chapter aims to observe the emergence of this moment from a point of view more in tune with the crisis of historicity.

From subjectivity to reason in history

Heidegger, in *L'époque des conceptions du monde*, presents a feature of the comparison between Aristotelian physics and Galilean physics to pursue the distinctive element that characterizes modernity. For him, the Aristotelian assumption that the force that moves the physical world is not separate from bodies themselves is essentially a testimony to a non-modern form of consciousness and representation of *Physis*. The consideration and

classification of bodies with respect to their own nature assumes a unity between their impetus or the law that governs its movement and its own particular bodily manifestation. In Aristotelian physics, each body presents a behavior that is defined according to its own internal nature, its primordial force, its *subjectum*. Therefore, bodies are divided according to their particular nature expressed immediately in their movement. And this is why bodies of land cannot present identical behavior or submitted to the same laws that govern the behavior of celestial bodies. According to this perspective, the former tends to follow a straight path to the center of the earth, and the latter are presented based on uniform movements defined according to circular paths. This behavior is unique to the nature of each one of these bodies. Heidegger captures the fundamental rupture with this non-modern form of consciousness in the formulation of the law of inertia elaborated by Galileo. By formulating a generalized formulation that begins with the postulate according to which the "whole body" should be at rest or in constant motion until some force is exerted on it, Galileo Galilei abstracts from the bodily element itself the law that should govern its behavior; it then becomes external to it to dominate it, making itself weigh indistinctly upon all bodies. The universal perspective embedded in this formulation reveals the power of understanding the nature of the physical world through reason and rational principles. Therefore, according to Heidegger, the *subjectum*, separate from the bodies over which it exercises its force of coordination of movement, is seized by the thinking that maintains the power of ordering the world based on the principles of reason. This is the moment in which the modern notion of subject, as an attribute of the thinking and rational being, will be identified with man as carrier of reason - more precisely with the *res cogitans* of Descartes. Consequently, we can also identify the justification for Heidegger to have considered the Cartesian formulation of *cogito ergo sum*, "I think, therefore I am", as one of the first clear manifestations of modern consciousness which reclaims and subsumes existence to methodical thought and reason.

There were many considerations that tried to connect the emergence of modern science, guided by the exclusive principle of subjective reason, to monotheism as the predominant form of cosmological conception. This is



because monotheism would bring the model of a unique and universal reason which falls upon every mundane manifestation, the model of dominance and superiority indistinct from the supreme spirit over bodily existence, the model of modern reason. According to these perspectives, the modern subjectivation of reason would not have been possible based on a cognitive and cosmological structure that does not separate the deity from things, from themselves. In the polytheist configuration of consciousness, the nature of things (and their *subjectum*) is not separate and determined outside the development of the corporeal world. Each divinity adheres to specific behaviors and manifestations of each particular element of the cosmos: the water, the harvest, the wine etc. The creation of the spirit, as a development of the monotheist configuration of consciousness, assumes a separation, which, beyond the methodical separation between subject and object, as a central element of science and modern theory of knowledge, presumes the subordination of nature to man as a principle of social ordering.

In the writings of Adorno and Horkheimer, this separation between man and nature is the structural condition of clarification which is translated into the superiority of reason. Therefore, it is also the normative criterion that develops into the principle of domination as a structuring element of bourgeois sociability and consciousness. The domination of man over nature, as a structuring principle of modern consciousness and a result of the separation between reason and emotion, between spirit and body, or between theory and practice, leads to the domination of man over man himself, whether in the field of social life, with a submissiveness that operates on the moment of work, or in the subjective field of a self-castrating consciousness manifested by the introjection of authority. In Adorno and Horkheimer, the image of Ulysses (the industrious, in *The Odyssey* by Homer), as the "prototype of the bourgeois individual", aims to highlight this new form of consciousness which is developed as a condition of the bourgeois sociability guided by domination. On the path back home, there were several provocations that nature and the primitive universe of impulses and passions imposed on the "industrious Ulysses". Those with the "astuteness of reason", however, one of the great concerns of Hegel in his philosophy of history, subjugated and continually overcame the most primitive impulses that

he had in his corporeal state, reaffirming the dominance and superiority of reason over the shapeless and wild nature, which was presented as an external (coming from the environment or in the shapes of their opponents) or internal threat (represented by the strength of instinctive impulses of a man who aims to hide the features of his repressed animality). The confrontation of the calls of nature, represented in the siren song, without giving into the impulses of the body and passions, and the refusal of the easy animalistic state of man, rejecting the enchantments of Circe, they represent the internalization of the principle of domination that is unique to modern rationality. It is in this perspective that the Freudian subject, far from keeping the foundation and the mental structure of ("universal") man in general, it represents the mental configuration of the bourgeois individual surprisingly well. The three-way division of the Freudian subject (one more of the synthetic triads of modernity) reveals in the *ego* the castration carried out by reason over the most primitive impulses and nature, which accompany humanity. In the social sphere, the exploration of work justifies the extraction of excess and overwork in material states of abundance. The authority that is exercised with the purpose of accumulation and work which is subordinate to the conditions unrelated to material production and to the satisfaction of needs reveal the independence of the principle of domination and violence as principles of social and individual cohesion of bourgeois sociability.

Hegel, to whom Habermas, not by chance, is considered to be the first philosopher to formulate a clear concept of modernity, will give the final touches to the domain of reason in the field of history. The philosophy of the history of Hegel will account for the elaboration, in a clear way aligned with his time, the modern concept of history. For Hegel, history is the field of reason, of the free spirit which is presented in time in pursuit of itself and of its own truth: the path in time of the dominance of reason over shapeless material. Therefore, there is a vectorial component of historical temporality that is defined by advancement and progress, in a temporal record opposed to the record of circularity and repetition unique to nature. This opposition, however, is defined in a contradictory way in the Hegelian system, which does not enable these records to run in a "parallel" way or without touching over the broad course of reason.



"Universal reason" simultaneously makes history the product, the main stage of its limited and particular manifestations and the vehicle for its final realization. In Hegel, the supreme and universal reason which is presented in the purpose of being fulfilled on Earth is essentially revolutionary and, at the same time in which it is manifested in the various configurations that the spirit assumes in this long journey, aiming to supersede each one of them in the name of a higher pursuit and in greater accord with its overall and final content. The suggestion of a spiral image to characterize the dialectical movement of history is, however, only one side of the whole intended in the Hegelian system. The progress of reason moves towards its complete fulfillment, in the "ultimate end of universal history", the moment in which the identity between contents and the form of reason is manifested completely. At the end of history, the identity between spirit and nature, between what is real and irrational, is also presented in a way to reveal the universal in particular, the rational in the real. It is in this sense that history works in the Hegelian system.

The Nietzschean critique, despite debating this order of time, recognizes the assumption of the modern era as the victory of reason (Apollonian) over the body and impulses (located in the Dionysiac dimension). In these terms, in defense of or against the rational order of the world, a meaning is imposed on the interpretation of modernity, and it was on the side of the supremacy of an abstract reason that dominates the world of things. Modernity is thus characterized by the representation of a temporal movement in progress that helped establish the advancement of the rational domain over a nature that was slowly "domesticated" over the course of modernization. The repression of impulses, the shape of the body and social control are aspects connected to the course of achieving a reason that frequently assumes its totalitarian condition. The image of the bourgeois, of the capitalist who gives up enjoying and spending his wealth, who refuses the nonproductive, immediate and present use and consumption of objects that comprise the notion of abundance, who abstains from and suppresses pleasure, entitlement and enjoyment, such as Ulysses, as analyzed by Adorno and Horkheimer, constitutes the essential unity of time in advance pointed towards the future. The social logic that substitutes use, waste (*gaspillage*, in the terms of Georges Bataille), with investment, at the

same time in which it reveals the system of private and social coercions based on modern sociability, locates this self-repressive system in the flow of temporal order which privileges a historic intelligibility of accumulation and progress, which gives up the present in the name of an intangible future, legitimized by the liberal credo of the socialization of the benefits of social abstention.

Critique and crisis of modernization

The promises of teleological modernity not only were not fulfilled but also gave no sign that they were still executable in the short term. Therefore, a strong element of social cohesion and justification of the modern program started to be lost. The rupture from the horizon of expectations of modernity breaks down the legitimacy of the great enterprise of rationalization that characterized its time. For Henri Lefebvre, *reproducing the social relations of production*, as a purpose that supersedes production in the economic field, signals this loss of connections with the universe of legitimate purposes that the discourse of modernity would have elaborated about itself. The analyses of the Krisis group that underwent the *collapse of modernization*, observed based on the crisis of the real processes of valuation, and by the critique of the working world, which is designed, above all, with the crisis of the capacity of "inclusion" and engagement of the work force in real processes of valuation, also point towards a weakness of the theoretical and social justification of modernization. When mountains of accumulated work start to be destroyed in crises or wars, only and exclusively as a condition for fulfilling new lucrative inversions and with the purpose of present and future accumulation, the declared purposes of production admit to being false. When the financial capital loses all connections to the processes of real valuation, incapable of promoting global levels of accumulation according to socially acceptable profit rates for the produced mass of values, the supposed "benefits" of accumulation or even their capacity of maintaining social order collapse in the face of a process that is associated to the crisis of modernization. The certainties with respect to progress as the irreparable order of time are devoid of a general crisis of representation. Crisis and critique of reason go hand in hand. And even the cohesion surrounding the



structure of Freudian subjectivity crumbles. The loss of meaning of reason, in the face of its ineffectiveness as a universal (and not class) principle, does not eliminate the set of self-repressive norms, but breaks apart the unified links surrounding it. This loss of substance coupled with whole reason, which is simultaneously internal and external, places it entirely in other state, as a strange substance which is imposed from the outside for the exercise of its dominance. The rejection of rational principles as an element of coherent unification of the subject and social cohesion originates the fragmentation of subjectivity and the social body, in time and space.

The first effect of this rupture from the structure of intelligibility of modernity can be perceived in the crisis of historicity. The historical horizon of fulfilling the spirit, reason, justice, the truth and other values taken as universal weaken in innumerable particular projects when it simply does not cease to exist. The society of abundance, already achieved, did not lead to complete satisfaction of desires and needs. The stake on a future that develops from present struggles ceased to be a part of the social mystique which, in part, justified the movements of the most diverse natures - today, social articulation of a revolutionary nature is residual and exacerbated sectarian individualism is one of the main features of social conservatism; moreover, many social and leftist party movements abandoned the utopian horizon of the revolution and the construction of a radically different future with respect to the present. The perspective of capitalist valuation shifted from the level of the real economy and currently takes place without strong connections to production time. The financialization of the economy determines the fictional time of the instantaneous as a basic temporality of accumulation. The employees of this "casino economy" deal with simultaneous purchase and sale time and no longer with successive valuation time. This temporality is transported to daily life and the reference of historical time is lost as a parameter of life and social organization.

The loss of historical temporality as a parameter for life or valuation and the dissolution of causal links praised by modernity (such as those which are defined between production and valuation or between work and compensation, for example) suggest a break in the chains between the signified and the

signifier which served as parameters of validation of messages also in the arts, philosophy, science and social life. Guy Debord condemns the spectacle as the most advanced stage of the developments of the logic of complete commodification. The spectacle, in support of accumulation, destructures social modern organization seated in the relation between use value and exchange value. The "seems to have" supersedes "to have" as a form of exponentially superseding "to be". This detachment that operates at the foundation of social organization was well illustrated in an example given by David Harvey regarding the success of sales achieved by a factory of imitation car phones in the 1980s. The simulation, the simulacrum and the spectacle appear in the world of signs, such as the universe of the autonomized signified and independent of their signifiers. Measures and calculations, as attributes of reason and instruments of modernization, stop working as socially valid parameters. Speculation in the financial and productive markets, the monopolistic behavior that advances on all markets and the revenue aspect of an economy that is increasingly supported by patents and by intellectual property reveal the empire of the unmeasured as a substitute for the laws of classic econometrics. The rupture from the temporal horizon of modernity, the crisis of the rational parameters of calculation, the separation of the chains between signified and signifier detonate the normative stake of the classic and neoclassical economy founded in the half hypothetical and half real *homoeconomicus* figure. In the new economy that has been developed, there is no more space for long term planning, whether in the scope of the company, of one's personal life or even of the State. The current limits of predictability, however, do not affect only the presumption of a calculating, selfish individual who acts according to the principles of reason and who is at the foundation of neoclassical economic theory, the State itself is developed based on the crisis that removes Keynesian planning. The dissolution of social well-being and the horizon proposed by the Fordist expansion deconstructed the field of intelligibility upon which the historical modern perspective is seated. In the field of architecture, the rupture from the standards of modernism, and above all from Corbusian modernism, promoted the denial of rational coherence that aimed to join form, function and structure; it promoted the abandonment of the principles of the economy applied to edification and suggested a retrieval of the ornament out of its original context. This detachment from form did not take



place only with buildings, but also in its relation to its surroundings: the standout building and, in some cases, with the aim of substituting the city. On the level of urbanism, the change of traditional planning standards and the greater openness to the encroachment of private capital in the so-called urban reordering projects have fragmented social space and deepened the chasm of segregation. Therefore, on the trail of the deep transformations that affect the space-time relation beginning at the end of the 20th century, the social structure has been reorganized around parameters extraneous to the logical body of modernity. The temporal linearity of a history regarded as a paradigm of progress and spatial cohesion disseminated by centralized state planning, as the structuring elements of the old forms of social cohesion and modern subjectivity, give way to the breakdown of the history and fragmentation of space. In this universe of correlations, the figure of Lacanian schizophrenia, employed by Jameson to characterize this time of deep alterations in the field of modern intelligibility, it is admitted as the substitute of a paranoid universe. While this last image suggests the figure of a modernity conceived from the recognition of a complete reason, from which everything originates and to which everything converges, a world in which any minimum manifestation points towards the rational meanings of existence, the image of schizophrenia points towards the impossibility of the very formation of subjectivity in the terms in which it was conceived by modernity. Therefore, based on the derivation of adopted psychoanalytical metaphors, if the loss of meanings seems, by opposition, to characterize the period of crisis that we have been experiencing since the 1980s, the hypersignificance would have guided the ideological discourse that preceded it. The image of a modernity that moves towards progress as a synonym of supreme good and truth, the reading of the universality of reason in the infinite particular manifestations and the convergence of isolated movements in consonance with the great destiny of humanity formed the ideological soup in which everything pointed towards a single truth, revealed in the great end of universal history. This is what constituted the mental environment of modernity. If, after the crisis, on the one hand, we have a loss of references, in the breaking of the chains between signified and signifiers, on the other, despite the critique of the current condition, it is necessary to recognize that in modernity and in high modernism the



plenitude of meanings forged based on the hypersignificance of paranoid nature would suggest a reason with totalitarian features.

Space, Geography and Metageography

From the 1950s on, the strong presence of the State in the orchestration of life and the economy seemed to bring with it the expectation of complete control over the variables of history and the movement of society. The effort to assert the reign of a bureaucracy that embodied and applied the principles of reason, by self-proclaiming the supreme manifestation and vehicle of reason, aimed, with an iron fist, to arbitrarily shut down history as Hegel had done in his system. This first mistake of historical temporality brought with it, in the rehearsed statistical order, a conception of space adapted to its purposes: a space that represents the end of antagonisms and contradictions understood as elements of an order though imperfect as it is historical. The position and realization of reason on Earth should thus produce a space according to the reign of supreme logic, fairness, equality and justice; in other words, the image and form of perfection of a dominated world in agreement with the principles of reason. Here, the rational distribution of the elements, functions, objects and actions is the symbol of dominance which is the goal of reason, the representation of the victory of logic over history. The elaboration of the urban plan and construction of Brasília perhaps had revealed the clearest intention of a rationality that intended to put an end to history producing a space, distinguishing, in its internal forms, dispositions and logics a state hegemony at the end of the great edifice of modernity. The renewing movement of Geography, which occurred post-war, also found in this moment a field conducive to the legitimation of a discipline in crisis. This legitimacy would be pursued here in the utilitarianism and servitude of academic production for the purposes of territorial and regional planning. The links of the so-called *New Geography* with a *raison d'État* are thus very explicit and it was in this environment that quantitative or grid-based Geography, mainly in its American version, was developed. At this moment, the revival of the models of the classic and neoclassical regional economy gave priority to, above all, the founding



principle of spatial balance. The assumption and objective of the models to be applied, in pursuit of balance and its representation, advocated a statistical and ahistorical space where the reason of the state ordering of society reigns. The models by Von Thünen, Alfred Weber, Christaller and Lösch served as the inspiration for an expressive perspective of the post-war geographical production.

Here, the reaffirmation of the principles of the neoclassical economy in the scope of spatial science, instead of renewing thought and regional studies attributing them to the critical potential that allow them to understand the world beyond utilitarian assumptions embedded in every bourgeois science, annihilated through its foundation the tradition of a regional science that is still maturing. The supposedly neutral, scalar and atemporal principles of spatial balance and equivalence were superimposed upon the traditional notions, concepts and categories of the previous regional science. The traditional scale and the difference of areas, as founding elements of the region until then, were abandoned as valid criteria and principles for regional delimitation and study. An abstract space, as a pure form, surface or extension, entirely interchangeable in their equal and empty parts, is the assumption of a conception that weighs on the dethroning of particularities, history and unequal contents as strong elements of the traditional regional conception. Since, according to the tradition of regional thought in Geography, the region is the field of the specific and the particular,¹ the models of spatial economy can be treated as the antithesis of the region and of regional science. Along this path, the deprivation of meaning in the studies of traditional Geography had a previously known purpose in the scope of territorial strategy: that of proclaiming the reign of reason right at the moment of greatest strength of the exercise of state hegemony; proclaiming the end of difference, inequalities and contradictions that move history; proclaiming, in sum, the very end of history based on the extension of the state dominance of reason over space. When the differences were incorporated into the scope of the quantitative analyses, they fulfilled the ideological-strategic principle of basal balance and homogeneity. When not treated as inessential data, the differences were situated in the field of appearance, reaffirming flat and homogeneous space as an assumption and starting point of the analysis and reality. In the

scope of Grid-based or Quantitative Geography, the difference, such as the antipode of the vital principle of spatial balance and homogeneity, was frequently referenced (when it happened) as an expository resource, treated as an illusion-creating image or the normative criterion established in a backwards manner: the negative element for demonstrating balance and the replacement of the principle of assumed homogeneity. In models that are abstract or in their applications, the distribution of differences aims to reaffirm the general law of balance. When this does not happen, and a coincidence is not observed among the elements of the model and the elements of reality, the latter should be placed in order of planning action, which should adjust reality to the plan, annihilating or ordering the differences.

The critique of this line of geographical thinking of quantitative renewal thus emerges from the perception that state planning was more linked to promoting the conditions of accumulation on a new level of capitalism of what is linked to the annihilation of social and spatial inequalities. Whether on urban and regional scales, whether on national and global scales, the persistent sociospatial inequality and even the deepening of social contradictions revealed another side of post-war statism. From this point of view, history was kept alive and a perspective of the so-called Active Geography, due to the affinity for movement of this history, saved the dialectic from Hegel, as Marx had done through him. In this context, the theory of unequal developments, of a strong Marxist inspiration and anchored in some works by Lenin, were renewed on the basis of the reconstruction of Geography. The influence of the French revolution on Geography in Brazil was decisive. Critical Brazilian Geography was thus consolidated in the 1970s and 1980s essentially as a Marxist Geography.²

Much of the importance of this perspective was due to its performance in the field of epistemology. The "critique" that described this view was not aimed only at the world and the social processes being analyzed, but, based on the new possibilities created in this field. It was also heavily aimed at the discipline itself, in an overwhelming critique of the so-called Classical Geography and the American perspective of the quantitative renewal. The understanding that the conception of space considered within the scope of American Grid-based Geography, which was consistent with an abstract space, without content,

without movement and without history, was part of a strategy of reproducing social relations of production that would further deepen socio-spatial inequalities, which was only possible due to the effort of consolidating the theoretical contribution of Critical Geography. This perspective understood that, on the one hand, the abstract conception of space promoted by the quantitative perspective masked the inequality and the fundamental spatial conditions of the social regime of accumulation in effect and that, on the other hand, the implementation of plans and policies founded on spatial models produced by this perspective represented, in an effort which is unique to the practice of planning, the establishment of abstract space such that it figured in the models and thus the promotion of the conditions for reproducing the (anti)social model of capitalism administrated. Planning frequently led to a *tabula rasa* of social space, transforming it into the concrete abstraction originated in laboratories and research of pragmatic science. This draining of the social and differential contents of space by force of the planning action was the result of the developments of the quantitative and neoclassical conception of space. This entire movement, in a process of inversion, however, shifted the critique of quantitative or grid-based Geography on the purely epistemological level and demanded the recognition that the abstract concept of space as an empty plan was established, through planning, in the social life of cities and in the destruction of traditional and community spaces directly affected by the violence of state planning. The production or reproduction of space through planning consists of the annihilation of the history of space. Therefore, this collusion between science and planning removed the barriers represented by the force of tradition and by the inadequacy of past elements, orders and configurations, which served the purposes of capital accumulation very well in a sort of primitive accumulation of space.³ It is about the recognition of a complex strategy of liberation of new or old spaces for the joint accumulation of power and capital which is accomplished in the preparation of a new temporal intelligibility.

The miscarriage of history at this moment of global social life thus represented, on the level of conceptions as well as on the level of reality, the effort to eternalize capitalism as a regime of accumulation and social regulation,



or at least, the condition connected to the strategies for the quickest capital reproduction.⁴ Hence, this is why this perspective is founded on the critique of the classical and neoclassical notion of spatial balance, repeatedly used by Matrix Geography of American origin. Critical Geography thus restored history as a privileged field of social development and development of the categories for interpreting the most current life conditions. Its affinity for history, while a source of various debates within the disciplinary field of geographical science, enabled the advancement of geographical production in the sense that it was consolidated as a critical social science. The abandonment of the classical regional paradigm took place together with the critique of the neoclassical assumption of spatial balance. The regional difference as an authorizing principle of the investigation was resumed in other terms and this was due, in large part, to the theoretical leap represented in the conception that space is a product of human action and that, therefore, it should be considered a dynamic element of social reality. The paradigm of space production gave coherence to the adoption of the notion of unequal development, interpreted simultaneously as the product and condition of capital accumulation, which appears here as a normative parameter for social ordering and for new studies of Human Geography.

In the 1980s, when the crisis of the State of Keynesian inclination and the crisis of Fordism appeared to be imposed as inevitable themes and paradigms in the human sciences, presented a question on the primacy of historical intelligibility, on the rational parameters of evaluating and guiding society and even on modern subjectivity as one of the pillars of social and historical order. The questions about the meaning of truth and the notion of representation undermined scientific objectivity as a paradigm for knowledge production.⁵ Artistic formalism and post-modernism in architecture reinforced the split between subjectivity and the concrete world taken as exterior. In an analysis by Fredric Jameson, this loss of the notion and the pretension for the constitution of the whole (whether of a contradictory whole, or an identical whole) finds a concrete abstraction carried out by the independence of money in the financialized economy, the effective impulse that appears to give support to the



new manifestations of a consciousness apart from the real world. This was the context in which phenomenology gained strength in the geographical discourse.

While in Philosophy, the authors of the perspective known as post-structuralist gained importance based on a radical critique of reason, history and the contempt that modern science and consciousness demonstrated for the body and space, Critical Geography had not separated or formulated a critique of their affinity for the categories of history and maintained, in most of their productions, the belief in temporal-categorical development based on the present. Despite its great importance, the strong influence of Althusserian structuralism in Marxist geographical thought worked as more than a factor of understanding the discipline with the field already critical of modern rationality and subjectivity. Frequently, based on this, Critical Geography was accused of using an author who did not bring any contribution to geographical thought in the foundation of its reflections, since Marx, according to this perspective, had never referred to the importance of space for critique or for social comprehension. As a response to these accusations, many geographers dove into the pursuit of space and a Geography in the works of Marx. Others, however, in accepting the premises of the anti-Marxist critique, tried "to spatialize" the theory of Marx. The energy spent on this debate of little external relevance (outside the disciplinary or academic field) ended up removing strength from the critical renewal that had begun some decades before. Many consider that this movement assumed the dimension of a self-boycott elaborated in a deaf manner for decades within the Marxist perspective of Geography. Others interpret this movement as the moment of consolidation of a trajectory that had already totaled three decades. Independently of this, however, it is worth noting that while Critical Geography debated internally or even pursued a place in the field of critical social theory, phenomenology gained strength among geographers.

The context of the phenomenological valuing of subjectivity also appears as one more source of critique that was directed at Marxist Geography. On the one hand, the broad diffusion of the idea that Geography and Marxist theory did not consider subjectivity (and, therefore, brought a "skewed view" of reality), pointed towards a limit for the pretension of giving an all-encompassing

treatment of reality on the part of this Geography and theory (structural and defining pretension of the theory and method of Marx). On the other hand, the very segmentation of objective reality and subjectivity proposed by phenomenology (as a type of redefinition of the Kantian legacy), the emergence of the practical and social environment that gave support to this perspective and the incapacity of formulating an adequate response to this accusation on the part of the perspectives of Critical Geography promoted a polarization between addressing the issues relative to subjectivity, expected of the phenomenological perspectives, and the materialist approach, from a common materialism separate from its conditions connected to consciousness, linked to Marxist currents. This polarization, false within the Marxist method, constituted the most widespread form of recognition of the debate between materialism and phenomenology, helping to promote the sterilization of the Marxist proposal, elaborated in the scope of post-war Critical Geography, in many of its views.

The recognition of the elements implied in the crisis of the history associated to a critical and radical perspective with respect to historicity itself and its meaning are at the foundation of the re-elaboration of contemporary thought in a part of Geography. This movement, however, does not occur with segmentation between the different critical perspectives presented up to this point, but it also does not occur through simple addition, as if these proposals were complementary and not contradictory.

The intellectual environment of post-structuralism and *Post-modern Geographies*, which Edward Soja discusses, brings from Nietzsche a radical and thorough critique of history and reason. As understood by Henri Lefebvre, it is possible to extract from Nietzschean thinking the proposal of abandonment and overtaking of history and the condition of historical societies. It is about a type of non-dialectical breakthrough of history (*überwinden*) which is opposed to the Hegelian-Marxist breakthrough (*aufheben*). This Nietzschean breakthrough (*Überwindung*), which in no aspect can be considered conservative, "throws away" what preceded it and moves towards a record that is elaborated in a relation of independence with what came before it or is simultaneous with it. Therefore, this proposal brings in its method that which it adopts as its object, content or purpose: it abandons as form and content the historical intelligibility

of progress, reason and spirit. It is not about a perspective attached to the internal developments of movement, which it wants to abandon. It thus brings an orientation towards thorough practice and critique. From this perspective, inspired by the Nietzschean philosophy and in the shift from the opposition between the Apollonian (reason, serenity and sobriety) and the Dionysian (passions, dance, inebriation and insanity), body, desire and space are revived, constrained and covered by the historical rationality of spiritual progress and elevation.

This revival of Nietzschean philosophy is bundled with historical ruptures which occurred at the end of the 20th century and marked a new perspective for a social critique and for the role of Geography. However, in the line of thought of Lefebvre, it gains importance in the face of other perspectives, which extract from Hegel an understanding of the role and place of the State (based on the logical-philosophical and political horizon of finalizing history) and from Marx the critique of capital reproduction and the very exercise of bureaucratic power in the determination of life (understanding crisis as the substantial content of the exercise of this critique). Therefore, the Lefebvrian dialectic developed to understand the social, power and capital dynamic from the end of the 20th century on brings a very particular benchmark. The third term here is not the result or a synthesis of the two previous terms nor is it derived from its contradictions. It is also a working term in this triadic dialectic. It is as if one tried to "dialectize" the relation between the previous dialectic, represented here by the relation between Marx and Hegel, and the presence of the third term, represented here by the Nietzschean perspective. It is possible to extract a corresponding movement from the book *Formal Logic-Dialectical Logic* (mainly based on the preface written for the second edition, more than twenty years after its release, in 1969).⁶ The possibility, or even the project, of understanding the dialectic as logic suggests a third term in the relation between the (dialectical) movement of content (of the world and history) and formal logic, mainly when it tends towards hypostatized and abstract isolation of the formalism. In Geography, this possibility promoted the conditions for a radical critique of Quantitative Geography which supersedes the field of the epistemological debate and invades the critical depths of what is real. This

critique is presented in the recognition of the notion of abstract space not only as an ideological detour or a barrier to the understanding of the complexity of the processes involved in the dynamic of space production, but as a strategic element that surpasses the universe of consciousness and the epistemological field. By understanding that abstraction contained in a conception of space (a conception in which it is merely restrained or an extension of others to their contents: a Cartesian plan, therefore) is realized through planning, annihilating the preterit and historical contents of this space and promoting the conditions of social reproduction of capital, the requirement of (dialectical) confrontation is placed between a formal logic which is defined with respect to space and the dialectic itself which comprises the contents of social space. This dialectical relation, borne out of the contradiction between logics (formal logic and dialectical logic) which develops beyond the epistemic field as a given of reality, contains the Lefebvrian project which surpasses a conventional apprehension of the modern dialectic. The dialectic between formal logic and dialectical logic is, in this conditions, the third term of the triad. But this project only finds the possibility of advancing towards a radical critique of history and historicity, which is the element here that makes the project of Lefebvrian breakthrough concrete and, at the same time, constitutes the basis for the metageography program, based on the categories found at other points of the work by Henri Lefebvre. Hence, the meeting of Geography with the critical categories of daily life, social reproduction, the metaphilosophical project, critique of the State, the bureaucratic society of directed consumption, urban society among others constituted the field of superseding the critical renewal of the second half of the 20th century. These categories enabled Geography to understand the planning and pragmatic spatial science not only as promoters of a process of primitive accumulation which dethrones the old traditional contents of space in the name of capital accumulation, but as part of a continuous strategy of valuation which articulates the State and capital surrounding a dynamic of space production; a dynamic based on which not only the spaces that are still not capitalist become targets of the sanitizing action of planning, but also the spaces already affected and established by typically capitalist configurations in previous valuation cycles. The apparently unlimited reiteration of a process of the strategic removal of space, according to which the destruction and annihilation of social and



historical contents of space as a replaced condition of accumulation always suggests a new beginning from zero, focuses on the validity of evolutionary schemes and replaces a more cyclic (repetitive) than linear temporality in progress. The observation of the unbridled replacement of this strategy suggests, really, a non-historic and temporally non-cumulative intelligibility. This consists of a difference between production and reproduction of space as a crucial given for understanding the need for metageographies. The change from the record of production to space reproduction comprises, in the field of the real, the crisis of historical intelligibility and, in the field of critique, the overcoming of historicity as an exclusive axis of radical knowledge, even with respect to the critique of planning and pragmatic spatial science. The notion of reproduction enhances the critique of the strategic role of the abstract concept of space. The perspective of reproduction, which becomes an important part of the theoretical tools for observing the rupture of modern intelligibility from historical temporality, also enables the shift of the debate with respect to the relation between formal logic and dialectical logic with respect to space (which, later, can be identified according to the terms of concrete abstraction) for the field of critique of history and historicity.

The crisis of historicity and the horizon of expectations of modernity restricted some perspectives more strongly attached to the field of the development of the philosophy of history. Recognizing the circularity of the replacement of strategies connected to social reproduction (including here the reproduction of urban space) reduced the expectations of revolutionary transformation associated to the views that bet almost exclusively on the immanent developments of history itself. Hence, this theory, to the extent to which it does not abandon the critical positioning, should better situate the role of praxis and political action beyond the domain of a philosophy of history. At the same time, the Nietzschean perspective enabled here, in its relation with the dialectic of Marx and Hegel, this operation towards a radical and thorough critique pointing out not only a historical breakthrough of history itself, but the need to consider a non-dialectical breakthrough (an abandonment) of history itself and historicity. Here resides the recognition of the work of social forces erased in the course of rationalization of the world, suppressed by history and

western Logos. Passions, impulses, body and space, not only as elements linked to the logic of capital reproduction, but as realities of life, return with Dionysian strength. Therefore, here also resides an openness to the practice of another nature. The critical perspective posed from the end of the 20th century to Geography is freed from the rigidity of the logic committed to rational and immanent developments of history and is open to the possible/impossible (embedded in the possibility of a breakthrough of historic totality of Reason for a totality that points towards the practice as superseding history). Perhaps here is also one of the meanings which Ana Fani Alessandri Carlos has pursued with the title *Metageography*. A Critical and Radical Geography should also take into account a critique of a Geography that accepts normative parameters in effect as criteria for critical reflection. The utopian component in this project is decisive.

From the point of view of the diagnosis and interpretation of reality, the categories point towards a context of reinforcing the need for a practical-theoretical project that considers these requirements. If the preponderance of time over space marked critical production until this last chapter of the human sciences, it is time to recognize that coercions, contradictions and constraints of all types are realized in and by space and that, therefore, space production constitutes an interest in these disciplines. This recognition involves, in turn, the new meanings of the production of geographical knowledge. If the crisis of historicity goes hand in hand with the crisis of standards and intelligibility in industrial society, it is in the urban that new coercive and intimidating mechanisms are constituted. The dissolution of the proletariat as a revolutionary class also transfers to the urban, the field where there will be social struggles waged and where there new revolutionary utopias will be developed. As another element of the rupture from the paradigms of historical modernity associated to the urban, daily life is carried out as a sphere of coercions, reproduction and creativity in the development of a new project of society. The movement of the record of production, typically connected to the historical field of industrialization, to the record of reproduction, which suggests another field of temporal intelligibility removed for breaking from historical intelligibility,



punctuates space, and not time, as a strong element based on which the dominance of the State and capitalist exploitation are exercised.

Finally, it is worth noting that many contemporary Geographies contribute greatly or are even already part of that which has been understood here as a field of metageography. At the same time in which it is developed as a project, a silent movement required by the material conditions placed on the path of metageography many productions from various geographers and research groups spread, above all, throughout Brazil.

Notes

¹ In order for us not to exclusively keep the material that regional papers inspired by the French perspective originated by Paul Vidal de la Blache on their own offer us, which were normalized in the disciplinary field of Geography, we can recall, among others, the role of Karl Ritter, based on his general comparative geography, and Alfred Hettner, in the pursuit of the objectives of the geographic discipline, in the establishment of an understanding of the difference of space, areas or land surfaces as the foundation of the classical conception of region.

² Perhaps here, the introverted nature of a large part of Brazilian Critical Geography is due to the internal conditions upon which are placed economic growth and the processes of formation of the State, while in central countries, and above all in France, the cradle of the new critical trend of Geography, the more extroverted nature of academic productions in this scope is perhaps due to its relative success in the constitution of a social welfare State, which highlighted inequality on an international level.

³ Cf. Damiani, 2004.

⁴ A good part of this critique was only possible thanks to the work of a group of professors and researchers of the Urban Geography laboratory at USP (LABUR) carried out in the 1990s and 2000s. I would venture to say that even if metageography is based on a critique which is simultaneously epistemological and practical, and if it is substantiated in the dialectical relation between these terms, one of its foundations can be located there, identifying it in the works of LABUR, from this moment, a propensity to supersede the so-called Critical Geography. This means that part of this critique which has been developed based on the Lefebvrian conception of the "concrete abstraction" perhaps should have been located in the text in a section with greater focus and separate from the block in which the analysis of Critical Geography is questioned. But since the aspect of greatest interest for the observation of metageography here constitutes its relation with the order of time, I preferred to maintain the critical potential of this moment still connected to the scope of Critical Geography, since in it is its origin, which complements it.

⁵ Boaventura de Souza Santos, in *Um discurso sobre as ciências na transição para uma ciência pós-moderna* (A discourse on the sciences in the transition to a post-modern science), mentions the highlight that the author of *O fim das certezas* (The end of certainties), the chemist Ilya Prigogine, receives at this time due to her alignment with the crisis that is announced with respect to the modern paradigms of science.

⁶ This book was generally poorly understood and interpreted as a terrible understanding of the Marxist dialectic. The theoretical and methodological proposal of Lefebvre in the book was not, as many thought, to understand or present the Marxist dialectic, or something that he mistakenly would have called dialectical logic, as opposed to formal logic. This understanding was the Reason for which Henri Lefebvre unfairly received frequent critiques for having addressed the dialectic as logic and, therefore, as a mental operation. In his perspective, there was a proposition of superseding the modern dialectic without abandoning the Marxist method, understanding that there would be, beyond the dynamic understood inside the dialectical movement as understood until then, a dialectic, in his terms, between the latter and formal logic.



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