

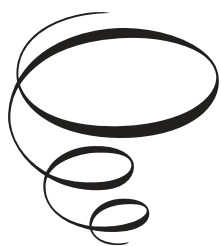
Truth and Experience:

Between Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

Edited by

Dorthe Jørgensen, Gaetano Chiurazzi
and Søren Tinning

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE CONTRIBUTION OF HEIDEGGER'S PHILOSOPHY TO GEOGRAPHY

ERNESTO C. SFERRAZZA PAPA

Introduction

The analysis of the connections between philosophy and geography has rapidly gained in interest in recent years, especially thanks to the works of authors such as Claude Raffestin, David Harvey, Peter Sloterdijk, Stuart Elden, and Jeff Malpas,¹ just to mention the leading figures in these kinds of studies. Even the research of important Italian scholars such as Giuseppe Dematteis, Franco Farinelli, and Claudio Minca has focused on the study of possible relations between philosophy and geography.² The rapid development of similar studies is due mostly to the “new” global conditions in which our society grows and lives, but also to the theoretical necessity of overcoming the lack of communication between these disciplines. In this sense, philosophic thought paradoxically has never engaged geographic studies in a significant way. This truly is a paradox, if one considers Strabo's *Geographica*, one of the first examples of a systematic elaboration of geographic thought, in which not only are the “elective affinities” between geography and philosophy highlighted, but the comparison of these two disciplines is erected as a general methodology to study the universality of knowledge. In regards to this, Strabo clearly states that

The science of Geography, which I now propose to investigate, is, I think, quite as much as any other science, a concern of the philosopher.³

Strabo's plea to consider geography as a new field of study for philosophers, if not *the* field of study, apparently has gone unheard and overlooked. Indeed, if we look briefly at the history of philosophy, we notice that only a few authors seem to have shown interest in geographic

knowledge. Although there are some notable exceptions: Kant, for instance, rigorously taught geography for many years and wrote the voluminous *Physische Geographie* (1802). To a lesser extent, Hegel also took an interest in geography: starting from his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1821), he embraced the idea, suggested by Ritter, a colleague at the University of Berlin, of the necessity of including geographic elements in the formulation of a universal history of the spirit:

This geographical substratum needs to be intended, instead of an external circumstance, as a determined constitution which is different and in compliance with the nature of the populations that appear in it.⁴

How should we interpret this lack of interest of philosophical thought towards geography? Considering this shortcoming in a more profound way, it is undeniable that philosophical thought has always paid much more attention to disciplines like History, Art, Mathematics, as well as to scientific disciplines like Biology and Physics, but at the same time it is also true that there is an enduring presence of “geographic” concepts within the philosophical debate. Indeed, philosophy, throughout its history, has used terms, concepts, and intuitions that belong to geographic knowledge. That geography has primarily a gnoseologic character, and therefore is a possible subject for philosophic speculation, is again stressed by Strabo who, in conformity with a typical *topos* of ancient philosophy, couples knowledge with happiness, and in this way, consequently, geography with happiness:

Wide learning, which alone makes it possible to undertake a work on geography, is possessed solely by the man who has investigated things both human and divine – knowledge of which, they say, constitutes philosophy. And so, too, the utility is manifold, not only as regards the activities of statesmen and commanders but also as regards knowledge both of the heavens and of things on land and sea, animals, plants, fruits, and everything else to be seen in various regions – the utility of geography, I say, presupposes in the geographer the same philosopher, the man who busies himself with the investigation of the art of life, that is, of happiness.⁵

Strabo asserts an idea of geography *as* a form of philosophy, thus fully identifying the experience of the geographer with that of the philosopher, and, in this way, the truth of geography with the truth of philosophy: if geography is an experience of knowledge, isn't philosophy also, etymologically speaking, simply “love for knowledge”? A point of view, like the one resembled by Strabo, that could be defined as “ontologic”: philosophy *is* geography, as a form of investigation of what exists in the

world. Nevertheless, although this perspective accords to geography the solemnity of philosophic thought, it still doesn't explain the intersections and the connections existing between these two apparently autonomous disciplines. This aspect is relevant and decisive, as it allows us to explore the potentialities that geographical and philosophical knowledge have for the individual. What kind of truth does geographical knowledge transmit to the individual? What kind of possible "dangers" could be lurking in the geographical experience? Which possible role can be assumed by philosophic thought in order to engage such issues?

Having established these premises, at least three possible lines of investigation can now be considered. The first one is based on an epistemological analysis of the scientific status of geography, committed to the formulation of a "Philosophy of Geography." The second one analyzes the role and the meaning of geographical concepts (space, place, *milieu*) in a perspective that can be defined as hermeneutic-phenomenological. The third and the last is the analysis of the relation between political geography and political philosophy, aimed at investigating the biopolitical role of geographic concepts. It may be unnecessary to indicate the various intersections and conjunctions of these different approaches. Therefore, rather than attempting an overarching analysis of all three of them in an excessively brief and biased manner, we think it preferable to focus solely on the hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, specifically addressing the work of Martin Heidegger, as the leading figure of this particular tradition in Western philosophy. It has been contended, maybe in a hyperbolic manner, that "Heidegger's philosophy invites us to rethink the entire field of geography."⁶ Undoubtedly, Heidegger's speculation invites us to reconsider the man-territory, man-space, man-environment relations as bifold and in which the very essence of individuals is involved, thus shifting, as Eric Dardel would put it, from geography to geographicity,⁷ from the description of the world to the experience of the world. The aim of this essay is to scrutinize the contribution that Heideggerian philosophy can make to geography.

Geographical elements in Heidegger's philosophy

We have already mentioned that philosophy has always reflected on concepts that belong semantically to the discursive universe of geography. In regards to this, one has simply to look at the role that the concept of "space" has played in philosophic thought. From Aristotle to Augustine, from Descartes to Leibniz, from Kant to Wittgenstein, the list of all of the philosophers who have dealt with problems involving space is never-

ending. Apart from this, philosophy has actually not dealt much with the role that these concepts represent in the experience of the individual. For this reason, we believe that, from this particular standpoint, philosophy apparently has not been able to deal with the right questions: What is space for a subject? Is it possible to have a space that is neutral, innocent, and uncontaminated by the subject that perceives, lives, and populates it? These questions reflect the widely discussed *space/place* difference. If the historical reconstruction proposed by Edward Casey is true,⁸ then philosophy has always shown some sort of benevolence towards the former (*space*), thus inducing it to ignore, or at least consider less important, the latter (*place*). Philosophy has always preferred what we may define as a “Cartesian” approach, that is to say the description of an aseptic, mathematized, quantifiable space, rather than reflecting on a spatial concept that is strongly related to the personal and subjective experience of the individual. Even in a purely geographical framework there has been a certain discrepancy between a qualitative and quantitative vision of geography, each corresponding to a different vision of the world, of the individual and of the role of the individual in the world. For this reason, the particular way in which Jeff Malpas and Stuart Elden read Heidegger’s thought is very interesting, as it considers the problematization of the very notion of *place* as the basis where geographical and philosophical thought both meet and collide.

An article written by Casey leads us,⁹ from its very title, to the core of the problem we are dealing with: “What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?” In other words: how can philosophy think an intrinsically geographical experience like the “being-in” of what Casey defines, paraphrasing Kierkegaard, as “*the geographical self*”? Indeed, most of Martin Heidegger’s thought was committed to this issue. Certain scholars, such as Malpas,¹⁰ have even interpreted Heidegger’s philosophy as a continuous ontological and phenomenological problematization of the concept of *place*, from *Sein und Zeit* to the last “episodic” essays, arguing that Heidegger’s philosophy is more concerned with spatiality than temporality. But in order to approach Heidegger’s engagement with the concept of space in an appropriate and meaningful manner, one has first to consider §12 of *Sein und Zeit*, where a preliminary sketching of *being-in* takes place. In that section, Heidegger describes the *Being-in-the-World* as an “[a] *priori* necessary constitution of Da-sein,”¹¹ pointing out the suggestive connection between the verb to be, *bin*, and the locative adverb *bei*, *by*. In this sense, the *Dasein* is always something that has a localized structure, even though Heidegger prudently states that “[the] spatiality of being-in-the-world first gives the presuppositions for working out the

phenomenon of the spatiality of the world and for asking about the ontological problem of space.”¹² To determine what you can find being-in a determined space or a given environment, is an act marked by the experience of ready-at-hand (*Zuhandenheit*) as being-close, being handy (*zur Hand*) to *Dasein*. As stressed by Malpas, the question about being handy to *Dasein* implies the question of space: “the idea that being and presence are connected is especially significant for the inquiry into the connection between being and place.”¹³ Still maintaining this Heideggerian line of thought, Edward Relph has attempted to lay foundations for a geography on phenomenological grounds, asserting that “a place is not just the ‘where’ of something; it is the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon.”¹⁴ In other words, it is for this reason that geographical knowledge can be considered as such only when it is able to account for the meaning that space has for the individual, thus binding together the idea of space with the experience of space in which individuals live. Consequently, geography does not deal with a meaningless space, but with a space that is lived, consciously perceived, and historically determined: in this way, some of the concepts of Heidegger's philosophy reflect this original conception of geographic knowledge, considered as “[a] profound and immediate experience of the world that is filled with meaning, and as such is the very basis of human existence.”¹⁵

The concepts of *space* and *place*, considered as important *filis-rouges* of Heidegger's philosophy, appear however to be somehow problematic. From a philosophical point of view, the contrast between the concepts of *space* and *place* represents a way to keep at a distance their physical counterparts that usually shape the collective imaginary. However, issues that are even more critical emerge when these problematics are considered from a political angle. It may be inappropriate in this particular theoretical context to investigate all of the connections that existed between Heidegger and Nazism, although it is well known that Heidegger joined the NSPD, was nominated rector in Freiburg in 1933 and a year later resigned his post. Nevertheless, the possible political meaning of Heidegger's concept of *place* has to be at least taken into account. It is universally accepted that Hitler's political ideology, as Stuart Elden has pointed out, insisted on the notion of *Lebensraum* to endorse his warlike and racial theories.

The notion of *Lebensraum* – living space or room for the German Volk – was an important issue for Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, where he talked about the restrictions on the German living space, and that the solution to this was not to be sought in merely colonial acquisitions – the ‘place in the sun’

claims of previous generations since unification. Germany, because of its late emergence as a unified nation-state, lagged behind its European neighbours in colonization. But the aim was not simply to dispossess and catch them up. Rather the living space was to be attained through an expansion of the German territory itself, a greater magnitude.¹⁶

Therefore, on one hand we have a concept of *place* as a space inhabited and lived by the subject, which leads us to think about the relationship between the individual and the world as well as the environment surrounding him: a relevant topic for any perspective in social and human geography. On the other hand, the same notion of *place*, and consequently the critique of the concept of *space* it implies, leads to a political reflection on how to think our world and how the individual relates with it politically. These are the two main branches of the Heideggerian thought on space: a kind of reflection that, as we will see, could make a fundamental contribution to the debate on social and political geography.

Dwelling

The article by Casey we quoted before, explicitly oriented towards the investigation of “[the] nature of the human subject who is oriented and situated in place,”¹⁷ recognizes in Heidegger’s philosophy a typical case in which a dialogue between philosophy and geography is possible.¹⁸ The idea that occupies a pivotal role in the relationship between philosophy and geography is Heidegger’s concept of “dwelling.” In *Sein und Zeit*, he writes:

Being-in designates a constitution of being of Dasein, and is an *existential*. But we cannot understand by this the objective presence of a material thing (the human body) ‘in’ a being objectively present. Nor does the term being-in designate a spatial ‘in one another’ of two things objectively present, any more than the world ‘in’ primordially means a spatial relation of this kind. ‘In’ stems from *innan-*, to live, *habitare*, to dwell. ‘An’ means I am used to, familiar with, I take care of something. It has the meaning of *colo* in the sense of *habito* and *diligo*. We characterized this being to whom being-in belongs in this meaning as the being which I myself always am.¹⁹

In this text from 1927, it is already clear how Heidegger defines *dwelling*, being-dweller, as the specific way of being of *Da-sein*. According to Casey, this is the foundation of Heidegger’s thought on dwelling; but most of all it represents the possibility of formulating a different notion of space, that is radically different from the Cartesian idea of *spatio* and of

extensio. Heidegger deals again with this topic in an essay from the 50s that goes under the significant title of "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." In this text, Heidegger offers interesting cues. He thinks together dwelling and building, but somehow inverting the order of terms in which they are usually conceived. According to Heidegger it is not *dwelling* that comes from *building*, rather it is that *building* finds its reason in *dwelling*, because "[to] build is in itself already to dwell."²⁰ Although building and dwelling – Heidegger notes that in formal German *bauen*, building, is expressed as *buan*, dwelling – are not a mere being-in but an actual caring. But what does "caring" mean for dwelling in the Earth?

Mortals dwell in that they save the earth – taking the word in the old sense still known to Lessing. Saving does not only snatch something from a danger. To save really means to set something free (*freilassen*) into its own presencing. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it, which is merely one step from spoliation.²¹

Heidegger's *saving* and *caring* imply a concept of space that cannot coincide with the neutral and aseptic Cartesian space. Dwelling, as the fundamental way of being of what is mortal, involves in itself a concept of space – that is neither *spatium* nor *extensio* – on which the very experience of the individual relies: dwelling and building, the latter being considered as well as a form of dwelling, reveal and make possible for the individual its true essence. Therefore, the idea of space as a geometric and mathematic reduction of the world, like *spatium* or *extensio*, is replaced by the idea of place. Place is the space that opens itself towards building, where building represents the foundation and the disposition of spaces. In this way, Man is located in space only when it populates a place, that is when its being-in implies the consciousness that it needs to care for its spatial dimension. Therefore, dwelling, that is not a mere "inhabiting," is an original way of being that determines the very essence of men as such. This all can be verified starting from the linguistic analysis of the term we use to describe these actions. Heidegger states:

We do not merely dwell – that would be virtual inactivity – we practice a profession, we do business, we travel and lodge on the way, now here, now there. *Bauen* originally means to dwell. Where the word *bauen* still speaks in its original sense it also says *how far* the nature of dwelling reaches. That is, *bauen*, *buan*, *bhu*, *beo* are our word *bin* in the versions: *ich bin*, I am, *du bist*, you are, the imperative form *bis*, be. What then does *ich bin* mean? The old word *bauen*, to which the *bin* belongs, answers: *ich bin*, *du bist* mean: I dwell, you dwell. The way in which you are and I am, the

manner in which we humans are on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell.²²

The recognition of dwelling as the fundamental dimension of the human being recalls the idea of the spatial dimension of the being-in explained in *Sein und Zeit* (§ 23). What interests us is that compared to *Sein und Zeit*, here Heidegger clearly focuses on concepts like space, spatiality, place, position: concepts usually codified within the discursive universe of geography. And not only because, as Heidegger explained in *Sein und Zeit*, the space that opens to the worldliness of the World implies that the Being-in is innerworldly or world-dependent (*welthörig*); but mainly because the being of man is inevitably constituted by its capacity for making its existence authentic, starting from the possibility of an authentic spatial experience, of an authentic man–nature relationship. This particular issue of Heidegger’s philosophy therefore deals with the relation between man and space; and the fact that the space he discusses simply is not the traditional three-dimensional space is exhibited by the distinction he makes between space and place. Here the *listening* to the original meaning of these words is again, according to Heidegger, illuminating:

What the word for space, *Raum*, *Rum*, designates is said by its ancient meaning. *Raum* means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for (*etwas Eingeräumtes*), something that – namely within a boundary, Greek *πέρας*.²³

The place is something that makes room, as something from which space receives its essence: “The spaces through which we go daily are provided for by locations.”²⁴ In this sense, Heidegger can reassert in terms of means–end the relation between building and dwelling, because “[building], by virtue of constructing locations, is a founding and joining of spaces,”²⁵ meaning that building is the creation of a direct connection between men and the surrounding world they live in.

Positionality and maps

We argued that the notion of dwelling represents one of the crucial points of Heidegger’s thought and of the relation between philosophical and geographical reflection. As shown in Relph’s studies, dwelling defines a specific way of being-in-the-World, as the fundamental experience of the subject. Dwelling constitutes the most authentic kind of man–world relationship; a relationship that reveals itself as having concern for the world, for the surrounding environment and the places we dwell in. This

requires, obviously, a specific vision of the world that the individual experiences. Nevertheless, according to Heidegger, these considerations do not represent a mere diagnosis of modernity, but a severe critique of it. We could also affirm, beyond Heidegger's thought and considering the contemporary practices of government of spaces and territories, that man is no longer capable of dwelling or, in other words, is not capable of having an authentic relation with the world. This can be considered as an issue precisely of a geographic nature: because it involves a certain way of describing and representing the world. At the same time, this also relates to man's own political existence, as shown by Elden's analysis of the contribution of Heidegger's thought to geography. Elden was the first to put emphasis on a particular idea developed by Heidegger in the *Beiträge*, a collection of essays written at the end of the 30s: the concept of *Machenschaft* (machination), that Heidegger will later further develop during the 50s in the renowned questioning of the problems concerning technology. Machination, that is "[the] essential swaying of beingness,"²⁶ holds within itself objectiveness, in the sense of the perception of space intended impersonally as extension: "[the] interpretation of beings as representable and re-presented."²⁷ In other words machination is, to summarize the aphoristic and rather difficult reflections Heidegger enclosed in his *Beiträge*, the reduction of the world to a series of facts that are perfectly calculable and comparable. As a direct consequence, the world is reduced to a picture and the space of lived experience is turned into a mere geo-graphic product. We will see how Franco Farinelli's philosophical-geographical reflection will be molded after Heidegger's concept of world picture. With the help of Elden's analysis, we now want to explore what the relations between machination and lived experience – or objectivity and subjectivity – consist of: we will deal again with the *vexata quaestio* of *space/place*.

It would be a bad mistake to try to find a clear distinction, a radical difference between machination and lived experience within Heidegger's thought: in spite of their difference, they share the same genesis. "Lived experience corresponds to machination, a correspondence which was long held back and only now finally emerges."²⁸ In spite of their widely accepted antithesis, these two phenomena pertain to each other, as they have the same historical origin: that is to say the Latin interpretation of the Greek *physys* as *nature*. This semantic shift corresponds to a process of constant technification of the world for which, as Elden suggests, "nature is destroyed because it is separated from human beings, it is seen as a separate realm from human existence."²⁹ According to Heidegger, the advent of the technological era was made possible by a precise conception

of the world that, in the essay “The Question Concerning Technology,” was identified with nature as *Be-stand*, as the conception of nature as something purely exploitable and usable. Heidegger states this condition with the term *Gestell*, “[the] way of revealing which holds sway in the essence of modern technology and which is itself nothing technological.”³⁰ The positionality, the im-position, the pro-vocation of nature as a never-ending source of resources, and the reduction of the world to a group of calculable data are phenomena that, according to Heidegger, define the modern condition. But most of all, positionality, im-position, pro-vocation, reduction, are independent phenomena, connected to an absolutely mutual cause–effect relationship. Even mankind may now incur the metaphysical risk of being treated as an expendable resource. The comparison here is shocking, mostly if we think about the political dimension Heidegger operates in: “Agriculture is now a mechanized food industry, in essence the same as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the blockading and starving of countries, the same as the production of hydrogen bombs.”³¹ This is because, unlike what we may deduce from a first, brief glimpse, to reduce nature to a simple resource does not actually have an economic purpose, but more a “managing” one: through the devices of machination and positionality, the world becomes something that can be perfectly ordered. As a matter of fact, ordering “[not] only assaults the materials and forces of nature with a conscripting. Requisitioning assaults at the same time the destiny of the human.”³² The political consequences of this *Weltanschauung* have been analyzed through geographical lenses, especially by Elden and Malpas. The former studied the political implications of Heidegger’s thought and interpreted the politics of Nazi Germany within the frame of Heidegger’s notion of calculability.³³ The latter insisted on the political value of concepts such as being-in-the-world and dwelling, relating them to the reflections of geographers like Vidal de la Blanch and Ratzel.³⁴ These notable studies maintain the thesis according to which, from Heidegger to the most recent contributions to geography, an increased awareness of a more topological concept of space capable of taking into account the phenomenological ground that brings together subject and object, individuals and the world in which they dwell, has been witnessed. In this sense, the connection between geography and philosophy become evident, and Strabo’s words sound almost prophetic.

Calculability and imposition lead us to the last Heideggerian text we would like to discuss: the essay “The Age of the World Picture,” published in the collection *Holzwege*. In this essay, the theme of calculability returns, though expressed in a different way. Calculation allows

individuals to depict being, to have a clear picture of it. Beings are objectified so as to be clearly represented. This process of objectification, that according to Heidegger characterizes the whole history of Metaphysics, starts with Cartesian philosophy in which, as we noticed already, space is reduced to mere extension:

What it is to be is for the first time defined as the objectiveness of representing, and truth is first defined as the certainty of representing, in the metaphysics of Descartes. The title of Descartes's principal work reads: *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (Meditation on first Philosophy). Πρώτη φιλοσοφία is the designation coined by Aristotle for what is later called metaphysics. The whole of modern metaphysics taken together, Nietzsche included, maintains itself within the interpretation of what it is to be and of truth that was prepared by Descartes.³⁵

With Descartes, a new conception of being was born, which allowed man to depict it and to conceive it as a picture. Therefore, in the modern age, "[the] Being of whatever is, is sought and found in the representedness of the latter."³⁶ But this representedness of being causes men to think of themselves as the primary term of every true-relation with being: on one hand, an explicit subjectivism is established, but at the same time being becomes a pure quantifiable and measurable object. In the age of the picture of the world, objectivism and subjectivism belong and come together: man becomes *subjectum* and the world becomes disposable and therefore conquered. An Italian geographer, Franco Farinelli, studied the important implications of this insight for geography.

According to Farinelli, geography is the description precisely of that very world which the individual *is in*, in a Heideggerian way, thought as the description of the experience observed in the moment when, according to Wittgenstein, the ontological equivalence between the world and the totality of the facts is stated. In this sense, philosophy almost turns out to be the natural development of geographic knowledge, which, instead, represents "[the] original form of Western knowledge."³⁷ Far from being a purely descriptive discipline, geography appears from its very origins as a performative and creative activity *precisely because* it is a descriptive activity. Farinelli states:

For too long it has been said that Geography was the knowledge that tells *where* the things are without noticing that actually, by doing it, Geography was telling *what* things are. And it was telling it as Cartography, as an underlying and silent meaning, appealing to the absolute power of the map, which doesn't allow any critique or correction.³⁸

A further explanation is required in order to understand the specific features of Farinelli's study. The history of geography, as the history of all disciplines, has experienced many internal disputes that helped define its boundaries, possibilities, and fields of application. The reduction of geography to a simple mapping of the existent world, and the consideration of cartography as "[universal] geodetic tools in order to guarantee what it has been discovered,"³⁹ used to be customary until Ritter and Von Humboldt, following Kant's teaching, assigned the ambitious role of a "critique" of geographic reason to the renewed discipline of geography. Centuries later, debate concerning the theoretical foundations of geography fired up again in the second half of the twentieth century, in the form of the contraposition of Bunge against Walmsley,⁴⁰ object against subject, quantitative geography against the recognition of the individual experience within the acquisition of geographic knowledge. Farinelli takes a stand in this debate: his research, as a matter of fact, is driven by the consideration of geography as a kind of knowledge that orientates "[the] patterns and figures of thought."⁴¹ The *pioneering* role led by Western thought ensures that the fundamental problem of the geographic thought is, ultimately, the problem concerning truth. In this sense, the story of Christopher Columbus is exemplary. In his third journey, Columbus started doubting that the lands he had reached were Cathay. The sailor from Genoa started wondering whether it really was a new world. Still, the maps by Toscanelli, the greatest cosmographer of that time, proved Columbus's intuition wrong. And Columbus, says Farinelli, takes a philosophically crucial action: "just to make the earth in compliance with its cartographic image, *he kicks the world*."⁴² With a gesture that in some way reminds us of Heidegger's essay about the picture of the world, Columbus conceived the truth not as the truth of the experience, but rather as the truth of the picture, and on the truth of the picture, that acts as a way of anticipating reality, he builds his experience. The truth Columbus believes is, in short, the result of a "transcendental fallaciousness,"⁴³: *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*. According to Maurizio Ferraris "there is nothing social outside the text."⁴⁴ The creation of the social object takes place through the following rule:

$$\text{Social Object} = \text{Inscribed Act.}^{45}$$

In this sense, we could legitimately talk about the hegemony of the text (paper, maps) over reality (the World). Regarding to this, Ritter used the suggestive expression "cartographic dictatorship," but we could more modestly talk about the "truth of the map," or the abolition of the "subject of geographic knowledge."⁴⁶ But in this way, according to Farinelli, a

dangerous proximity between truth and violence is established: the map becomes the definitive codification of a state of the world, thus a condition of the world that impedes any kind of alteration in the subject/object relationship. This, consequently, “tightens not only the object but also the way to refer to it,”⁴⁷ a truth-procedure that had already been exposed, although in a different context, by Nietzsche, for whom the necessity that something is true does not imply that it actually is.⁴⁸ In similar terms Farinelli defines – in the globalized world that pretends to be recognized no longer as a map but as a globe – what he believes to be the irrevocable necessity of deconstructing the “domain of the map.”⁴⁹ In other words, Farinelli defends the necessity to replace the cartographic models with other models of geographic description, thus shattering the topographic appearance “from which it’s impossible to deduce anything.”⁵⁰ There is an abysmal gap between world and map, reality and picture, between a conception of space permeated with the lived experience of individuals and a neutral concept of a perfectly representable space. Only the violence of the cartographic gesture can produce the total flattening of the former onto the latter, determining one only possible ‘truth’, and thus denying the possibility of an authentic geographic experience for the subject. Far more radically than in the case of Baudrillard, for whom there is a sort of “precedence” of the picture (*simulacrum*) on the object represented, Farinelli states that “[by] now chart and territory can’t be distinguished as the second took completely the form and nature of the first,”⁵¹ exactly as described in Borge’s tale *On Exactitude in Science*. But as in Borge’s story, the map, *that* map, is impious, here as well the world claims its reality, its unavoidable facticity, and this model of “cartographic dictatorship,” through globalization and fluidization of information, is definitely doomed to a crisis.⁵²

Conclusions

I would like to conclude my brief overview of the possible readings of Heidegger as a geographer with a few considerations, in order to sketch out a statement of intents. I believe that Heidegger’s reflections as I presented them – aimed mostly at analyzing the possible contents of the German philosopher’s thoughts about the notion of *place* – may not be useful solely in a geographical perspective. Far from being merely academic practice, they can also be useful in the contemporary age in which the individual lives and operates. First of all, they demonstrate how pointless it is to remain isolated in a single academic field, revealing the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the theme of space. In this

chapter I decided to delimit this particular approach within the boundaries of the geographical and philosophical fields, but in reality it is worth extending it in order to include historical, political, juridical, architectural, and religious domains. Some aspects of Heidegger's philosophy are absolutely crucial in this sense and the present chapter engages broadly with three of its fundamental themes. First of all, the concept of being-in-the-world, which renders possible a wide investigation about the role and the responsibilities that individuals must assume towards the world they live in. Secondly, the theme of dwelling. A topic that leads us down to the current political fights for the rights to have a home and to live decently. Here, again, Heidegger's philosophy may prove to be full of unexpressed potentialities. Lastly, the question concerning the picture. This theme is crucial to geography, since it brings into question – or at least it opens a question concerning – the problem of cartography. As Brian Harley explained, using the conceptual tools offered by Foucault's work, cartography cannot be considered “[over] politics that regard the construction and control of knowledge.”⁵³ In this way, we can try to answer Farinelli's question about the prevailing of the cartographic reason: why can't we free ourselves from the veritative logic enclosed in the maps? “The reason why charts can be so persuasive by spreading their messages lies in the fact that rules of society and rules of measurement and transcription of the territory find their legitimacy in the same image.”⁵⁴ Heidegger's problem of the picture becomes cartographic and the geographic problem of the map becomes something that implies a truth-value, thus having political implications of crucial importance. This opens the possibility to doubt the logic of the map, thus questioning the fact that space and time can be systematized according to a pre-established and conventional order decided by power, and through which power legitimates itself. The relationship between power and knowledge, the fulcrum of Michel Foucault's work,⁵⁵ could be reconsidered according to this perspective.

These are just some of the possible directions for future research that the relation between Heidegger's thought and the concepts of the semantic universe of geography might suggest. I believe that the unexpressed capacities of the thought of an author like Heidegger can be explicated through the use of the conceptual lenses offered by other disciplines. By doing this, we may discover concepts that have been forgotten and disused for long time and that will now find fertile ground for application and experimentation within philosophical and political analysis, which in the present times of crisis are more than necessary.

Notes

¹ See Elden, S. 2000. "Rethinking the *Polis*. Implications of Heidegger's questioning the political." *Political Geography* 19: 407-422. Idem, 2001. *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of a Spatial History*. London: Continuum. Idem, 2005. "Contributions to geography? The spaces of Heidegger's *Beiträge*." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23: 811-827. Idem, 2006. "National Socialism and the politics of calculation." *Social & Cultural Geography* 7 (5): 753-769. Harvey, D. 1989. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell. Malpas, J. 2004. *Place and Experience. A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Idem, 2008a. *Heidegger's Topology. Being, Place, World*. Cambridge-London: MIT Press. Raffestin, C. 1980. *Pour une géographie du pouvoir*. Paris: Librairies techniques. Sloterdijk, P. 2011. *Bubbles: Spheres Volume I: Microspherology*. Translated by W. Hoban. Cambridge: MIT Press and Idem, 2014. *Globes: Spheres Volume II: Macrospherology*. Translated by W. Hoban. Cambridge: MIT Press.

² See Dematteis, G. 1985. *Le metafore della Terra. La geografia umana tra mito e scienza*. Milano: Feltrinelli. Farinelli, F. 2003. *Geografia. Un'introduzione ai modelli del mondo*. Torino: Einaudi. Idem, 2007. *L'invenzione della terra*. Palermo: Sellerio. Idem, 2009. *La crisi della ragione cartografica*. Torino: Einaudi. Minca, C. 2001. "Postmoderno e geografia." In *Introduzione alla geografia postmoderna*. Edited by Claudio Minca, 1-84. Padova: CEDAM. Minca, C., and Bialasiewicz, L., 2004. *Spazio e politica. Riflessioni di geografia critica*. Padova: CEDAM.

³ Strabo. 1917. *Geography*. Translated by H. L. Jones. New York: G. P. Putnam's, I, 3.

⁴ Hegel, G. F. W. 1996, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte (1822-1823) (Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte, Band 12)*. Edited by K. H. Ilting, K. Brehmer, and H. N. Seelmann. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 106.

⁵ Strabo, *Geography*, I, 3-4.

⁶ Tanca, M. 2012. *Geografia e Filosofia. Materiali di lavoro*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 158.

⁷ See Dardel, È. 1986. *L'uomo e la terra: natura della realtà geografica*. Translated by C. Copeta. Milano: UNICOPLI.

⁸ See Casey, E. S. 1997. *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁹ See Casey, E. 2001. "Between geography and philosophy: What does it mean to be in the place-world?" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, no. XCI: 683-693.

¹⁰ See Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*.

¹¹ Heidegger, M. 1996. *Being and Time*. Translated by J. Stambaugh. Albany: State University of New York Press, 50.

¹² *Ibid.*, 102.

¹³ Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology*, 13.

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- ¹⁴ Relph, E. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Limited, 3.
- ¹⁵ Ibid. 5.
- ¹⁶ Elden, "National Socialism and the politics of calculation," 759.
- ¹⁷ Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy," 683.
- ¹⁸ The same aspect is analyzed in Resta, C. 1996. *Il luogo e le vie. Geografie del pensiero in Martin Heidegger*. Milano: Franco Angeli.
- ¹⁹ *Being and Time*, 50-51.
- ²⁰ Heidegger, M. 1971. "Building Dwelling Thinking." In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Translated by A. Hofstadter. New York: Harper&Row, 144.
- ²¹ Ibid., 148.
- ²² Ibid., 145.
- ²³ Ibid., 152.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 154.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 156.
- ²⁶ Heidegger, M. 1989. *Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis) (Gesamtausgabe, Band 65)*. Edited by Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 127.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 108-109.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 132.
- ²⁹ Elden, "Contributions to geography?" 819.
- ³⁰ Heidegger, M. 1977. "The Question Concerning Technology." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by W. Lovitt, New York & London: Garland Publishing, 20.
- ³¹ Heidegger, M. 2012. *Bremen and Freiburg Lectures*. Translated by A. J. Mitchell. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 27.
- ³² Ibid., 31.
- ³³ See Elden, "Rethinking the *Polis*," and "National Socialism and the politics of calculation."
- ³⁴ See Malpas, J. 2008b. "Heidegger, Geography, and Politics." *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2: 185-213.
- ³⁵ Heidegger, M. 1977. "The Age of the World Picture." In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Translated by W. Lovitt, New York & London: Garland Publishing, 127.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 130.
- ³⁷ Farinelli, *Geografia*, 9.
- ³⁸ Ibid., 37.
- ³⁹ Sloterdijk, P. 2008. *L'ultima sfera. Breve storia filosofica della globalizzazione*. Translated by B. Agnese. Roma: Carocci, 100.
- ⁴⁰ See Bunge, W. 1962. *Theoretical Geography*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Walmsley, J. 1989. *Abitare la città: la dimensione personale dello spazio*. Translated by Sabina Visintin. Torino: Ulisse.
- ⁴¹ Farinelli, *Geografia*, 9.
- ⁴² Ibid., 19.
- ⁴³ Ferraris, M. 2001. *Il mondo esterno*. Milano: Bompiani, 182

⁴⁴ Ferraris, M. 2013. *Documentality. Why It Is Necessary to Leave Traces*. Translated by Richard Davies. New York: Fordham University Press, 131

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 120-174.

⁴⁶ Farinelli, *Geografia*, 55.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁸ See Nietzsche, F. 1971. *Frammenti postumi 1887-1888*. Translated by Sossio Giametta. Milano: Adelphi.

⁴⁹ Farinelli, *Geografia*. 163. See also Harley, B. 2001. *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*. Edited by Paul Laxton. Baltimore-London: J. Hopkins University Press.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

⁵² See Farinelli, F. 2009. *La crisi della ragione cartografica*. Torino: Einaudi.

⁵³ Harley, B. 1989. "Deconstructing the map." In *Introduzione alla geografia postmoderna*, Edited by Claudio Minca, 237-258. Padova: CEDAM, 238.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁵⁵ For a 'Heideggerian' interpretation of Foucault's thought, see Elden, S., *Mapping the Present: Heidegger, Foucault and the Project of a Spatial History*. Concerning the relation between Foucault and geography, see Crampton, J. and Elden, S. (eds.) 2007. *Space, Knowledge, Power: Foucault and Geography*. Aldershot: Burlington.