

Geography's anarchist continent: discontinuity in the history of geographic thought¹

O continente libertário da geografia: descontinuidade na história do pensamento geográfico

El continente libertario de la geografía: discontinuidad en la historia del pensamiento geográfico



José Vandério Cirqueira

Instituto Federal de Brasília – Brasília – Distrito Federal – Brasil

vanderioifg@gmail.com

Abstract: The history of Geography accumulates multiple discontinuous matrices that depart from the regularity of the official scientific and academic knowledge. The continent of anarchist thought and practice is among them. Official historiography, when narrating the theoretical manifestations of geographical thought, privileged orthodox contributions, suppressing, sometimes silencing or even neglecting, other less conventional conceptions, which in this work are considered heterodox. A diversity of non-hegemonic productions of knowledge was formed around classic anarchist geographers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, finding nourishment in less conventional legacies of the past and projecting paradigmatic reorganization and even ruptures in the present. Such body of anarchist ideals and telluric practices, constituted within the past of Geography, currently translates into what is today called anarchist geography. The source of such continent is born from the works of Élisée Reclus, Léon Metchnikoff and Piotr Kropotkin, and leaves to geographic knowledge a still unexplored relentless flow of

¹ A great part of the reflections in this article is a result of the doctoral research entitled *Geograficidade libertária em Élisée Reclus: contribuição heterodoxa à história da geografia*, advised by Dr. Eliseu Savério Sposito, developed at PPGG, at UNESP Presidente Prudente, defended in October 2015.

contributions. A continent of dissident ideas within the discursive discontinuities of the history of Geography.

Keywords: Anarchist geography. History of geography. Discontinuity

Resumo: Na história da geografia acumulam-se múltiplas matrizes descontínuas à regularidade do saber científico e acadêmico oficial. Dentre elas, está o continente do pensamento e prática libertária. A historiografia oficial, ao narrar as manifestações teóricas do pensamento geográfico, privilegiou as contribuições de caráter ortodoxo, suprimindo, às vezes silenciando, ou mesmo negligenciando, demais concepções menos convencionais, tidas, neste trabalho, como heterodoxas. Em torno de personagens anarquistas clássicos da geografia, do final do século XIX e início do século XX, constituiu-se uma diversidade de produções de caráter não hegemônico do saber, nutrindo-se de heranças menos convencionais do passado, projetando reorganização paradigmática ou mesmo rupturas no presente. Esse corpo de ideais e de práticas telúricas de caráter libertário, constituídas no passado da geografia, se traduz, atualmente, no que hoje se convencionou denominar de geografia libertária. A fonte deste continente nasce das obras de Élisée Reclus, Léon Metchnikoff e Piotr Kropotkin, legando para o saber geográfico um caudaloso fluxo de contribuição ainda pouco explorado. Um continente de ideias dissidentes no bojo das discontinuidades discursivas da história da geografia.

Palavras-chave: Geografia libertária. História da geografia. Descontinuidade.

Resumen: En la historia de la geografia se acumulan múltiples matrices discontinuas a la regularidad del saber científico y académico oficial. Entre ellas, está el continente del pensamiento y práctica libertaria. La historiografía oficial, al narrar las manifestaciones teóricas del pensamiento geográfico, privilegió las contribuciones de carácter ortodoxo, suprimiendo, a veces silenciando, o mismo siendo negligente con demás concepciones, menos convencionales, vistas en ese trabajo, como heterodoxas. Alrededor de personajes anarquistas clásicos de la geografía, del final del siglo XIX e inicio del siglo XX, se constituyó una diversidad de

producciones de carácter no hegemónico del saber, nutriéndose de herencias menos convencionales del pasado, proyectando reorganización paradigmática o mismo rupturas en el presente. Ese cuerpo de ideas y de prácticas telúricas de carácter libertario, constituidas en el pasado de la geografía, es traducido, actualmente, en lo que hoy se convencionó llamar geografía libertaria. La fuente de este continente nace e las obras de Élisée Reclus, Léon Metchnikoff e Pior Kropotkin, legando para el saber geográfico caudaloso flujo de contribución aún poco explorada. Un continente de ideas disidentes, dentro de las discontinuidades discursivas de la historia de la geografía.

Palabras clave: Geografía libertaria. Historia de la geografía. Discontinuidad.

Initial words

Heterodox geographies originate from the countercurrents. They are counterpoints to the various orthodox geographies, identified by Lacoste (1988, p. 26) as: “the geography of the officers [...], the geography of the leaders of the state apparatus [...], the geography of the explorers, [...] the geography of the staffs,” which are referred to here as orthodox geographies. Santos (1978, p. 15) warns of the “relationship between the expansion of geography and that of colonization. The impetus given to colonization and the role it played in our discipline would have been a factor in its development”.

The appropriation of such valuable epistemological heritage of geography has been taken to the extreme as a means of imposing state power, whereas Raffestin (1993, p. 17) argued that geography ceased to be political in order to become State geography, since “a true geography can only be a geography of power or of powers”. The incorporation of the State into political geography dealt with “a one-dimensional geography, which is not acceptable as there are multiple powers manifested in regional and local strategies” (Raffestin, 1993, p. 17). Following this genealogy of state power, Rudolf Kjellen (1864-1922) would create the concept of geopolitics, consolidating the orthodox tradition in geographical thinking. This culminated in “the 1930s, a series of authors, under the direction of Karl Haushofer [1869-1946], who elaborated the geographical thinking of the Nazi state, usable by any authoritarian state” (Raffestin, 1993, p. 19).

This small example of German political geography is not the only one to promote orthodox geography, but the most explicit one. In the case of the French tradition, as evidenced by Paul Vidal de La Blache, there would also be a State geography, although it is more closely linked to government ideological apparatuses, such as the academic tradition. It would be an eminently university geography, but in its epistemological intricacies it is at the service of the French civilizing colonial project.

The way dominant historiography spells out the evolutionary course of geographical knowledge makes it orthodox and official, a one-dimensional geography, subject to the paradigmatic mold of: *knowing how to think space to know how to produce Power in it*. Confronting those definitions is the anarchist, heterodox paradigm: *knowing how to think space to know how to organize it, to know how to struggle within it* and produce the power of self-managed freedoms, based on the synthesis made by Lacoste (1988).

An Orthodox and Official History

Tatham (1959, p. 198) argues that “no science can claim a greater genealogy than geography.” For this author, ancient geography emerged in connection with three closely related activities: “exploration, which precipitated the compilation of facts related to the earth’s surface; the elaboration of charts and maps of known areas; the study of the collected material”.

It is important to note that the contributions extending from Anaximander (610 BC – 546 BC) to Eratosthenes (276 BC – 194 BC) were linked to the need to decipher Earth measurements, to produce a representative system based on mathematical projections, to identify climate zones, and to describe the surface of the land (CLAVAL, 2006). As for Herodotus (485 BC – 425 BC), Eratosthenes, and Strabo (63 BC – ?), they added the domain of human actions, in which, as Lacoste (1988) points out, Herodotus made not only history but also a geography committed to humans beings, seeing space as a strategic factor. This also occurred with Strabo, who, at the service of the Roman government, produced an inventory of various peoples in the empire and its peripheries, prioritizing the center rather than its hinterland, although he is known for introducing the regional perspective of analysis of geographical knowledge. Of all, Ptolemy (AD 90 – c. 168) is the most central thinker. Having lived on the threshold of antiquity, he was responsible for developing a compilation of all the accumulations produced at that

time. He was also the link between Western and Arabic knowledges, and helped spread the geocentric model and the coordinate system that lasted until the paradigm break brought forth by the Copernican revolution.

Regarding the medieval heritage, Ptolemy's orthodox thinking, which adhered to the Platonic idealist system and to Aristotle's radical empiricism (384 BC – 322 BC), served as a support to the Christian paradigm of scholasticism, spread by St. Augustine (354 – 430) and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274). Official geographical knowledge has been restricted to the limited soliloquies of Cosmas Indicopleustes (? – 550) and Isidore of Seville (560 – 636) (Claval, 2006), just to name a few, who reaffirmed the Ptolemaic paradigm of the flat Earth and center of the universe.

In the Renaissance, geographic knowledge landed on the shores of geographical exploration, taking the directions of the great overseas travels pushed by hasards winds, based on the approach given by Lacoste (1990), bearing the hopes of what Dardel (1952) calls heroic geographies and geographies of plain vent, expression coined by Lucien Febvre.

Enlightenment and rationalism would bring intense epistemological debates to geographical knowledge. The first of them, as Tatham (1959) points out, is linked to the works of Anton Friedrich Büsching (1724-1793) and Edme Mentelle (1730-1815), who sought to deepen dualism in geography by consolidating the political-statistical perspective, with regional descriptions submitted to the rigid quantitative explanatory system. This political-statistical school would confront the *Reine* Geography school, which touted the superiority of physical-natural phenomena as foundations of geographical knowledge, having as its spokesmen Polykarp Leyser (1552 – 1610), Athanasius Kircher (1601 – 1680), Johann Christoph Gatterer (1727 – 1799), among others.

The idealistic paradigm of rationalist character fueled by geographical exceptionalism (Schaefer, 1953) created by Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) and also, to some extent, initiated by Scottish cartographer John Pinkerton (1758 – 1826), who sought to sepa-

rate and specify the fields of geography and history as distinct knowledges, established the foundations of analytical geography of chorographic methodology. The object is the differentiation of the landscape, demarcated by the teleological metaphysics of the contemplation of forms, a system that echoed in the comparative geography of Karl Ritter (1779 – 1859) (Moreira, 2009) and Alfred Hettner's (1859 – 1941) neo-Kantism, with its differentiation of areas, later synthesized as nomothetic and idiographic procedure of the regional geography paradigm (Hartshorne, 1978).

Kant's contribution to geographical knowledge is, however, even deeper, as the work *Kant, Kantismo e Geografia*, organized by Vitte (2014), demonstrates. Kant was responsible for defining the epistemological field of geography, valuing the space category as a central object of study of geographical science, delving into the theoretical-methodological debate of the universal categories time (corresponding to history) and space (corresponding to geography).

With this *rhetorical turn* of the methodological procedures of geographical over natural analysis, Kant would provide all the solid foundations for building the vigorous institutional building of geography. The institutionalization of geographical science by their putative priests, Alexander von Humboldt (1769 – 1859) and Karl Ritter (1779 – 1859), as Capel (1981) points out, grounded the integration of sparse and numerous theoretical-methodological paths by means of the exercise of synthesis of geographic knowledge. They founded the interspersed mesh of geography as modern science, remaining unabated until the systematization of regional geography and human geography by Paul Vidal de La Blache (1845 – 1918).

The epistemological debate linked to logical empiricism and romanticism has given direction to the new paradigm of the natural sciences: evolutionism. According to Vitte (2009), Darwinism will be constituted from the influence of natural philosophy, based on the contributions of Humboldt.

In relation to Ritter, it is important to highlight his permanent dependence on the teleological explanation of the world, which, unlike Humboldt, as Vitte (2010) demonstrates, surpassed his ontological metaphysics of the explanation of nature at the dawn of industrial modernity. Ritter's comparative geography bears the historical character as a differential element, structured by the finalism and the physical determinations of the earth on human beings. Besides, he emphasizes the intense relationships that mark the way the subjects react and transform nature, bringing to the foreground the deep connection between the organic nature and the political organization of the territory.

According to Capel (1981), Ritter specifies the object of geography as the study of the earth's surface, which is seen as the stage of human relations. Such notion is shared with Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744 - 1803), which Ritter absorbed from Johann Reinhold Forster (1729 - 1798), Georg Forster (1754 - 1794) and Johann August Zeune (1778 - 1853), who devoted themselves to the study of geographical or regional individualities by the notion of wholeness or ensemble.

For Tatham (1959, p. 211), "the concept of regional individuality, derived from the ideas of Zeune and the Forsters, combined with the concept of *ganzkeit* or ensemble, according to Kant, became one of the motifs of [Ritter's] *Erdkunde*." Ritter uses the concept of *Erdkunde* [the science of the earth] to specify the mastery of the comparative method, which resonated deeply in Élisée Reclus, in his *Erdkunde*, the *Nouvelle Géographie Universelle*. This inheritance made possible the fragmentary paradigm of industrial modernity, Friedrich Ratzel's human and political geography (1844 - 1904), Reclus's social and political geography, and La Blache's human and regional geography (1845 - 1918).

It is possible to note the essentially orthodox character bequeathed by Ritter to Ratzel, Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833 - 1905), Rudolf Kjellen (1864 - 1922), Halford John Mackinder (1861 - 1947), Karl Haushofer (1869 - 1946) and La Blache. These authors maintained the tradition of subjecting geographical academic pro-

duction to the sieve of the dominant apparatus of the modern state. To promote the paradigmatic transformation of geographical knowledge, they exercised strong selective interference with other geographies. By outlining a cohesive scientific field, they presented the object of geographical study as exempt from the dimension of power and the strategies of transformation, use and control of space.

Oscar Peschel (1826 – 1875) defined geography as a systematic and empirical science, and in this classificatory course, deeply criticized the political, social and historical adherence of Ritter's geography, seeking to consolidate a readily physical geography (Claval, 2006). According to Tatham (1959, p. 221), Peschel's contribution "was so extraordinary and the possibilities of investigation opened by it so seductive that, for some time, the study of terrain forms became the dominant part of geography [...]". Ratzel would be responsible for restoring the value of human studies in late 19th century geography.

Because they are official university geographies, they have gained the right to inventory other geographies bordering academic boundaries, building in their own impressions, discourses, classifications, nominations, and narratives, paving the way or closing it for eventual dialogue with heterodox productions.

It is important to point out that the imperial, territorialist and even totalitarian matrix present in the geography of Richthofen, Mackinder, Kjellen and Haushofer is the direct result of the industrial paradigm based on the imperial capitalism of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, taken to the most extreme consequences of colonialist, imperialist and fascist practices of all kinds. Indirectly, this model is tributary to the epistemological path born of Kant's idealistic endowments, within the scope of the exceptionality of space and integrated with the liberal enlightenment development project.

The theoretical foundations of natural philosophy evidenced by the nascent evolutionary paradigm would be direct bases for the formation of Ratzel's human and political geography, as it is sur-

rounded by the fertile intellectual context stemming from Charles Darwin's groundbreaking theory (1809 – 1882), Herbert Spencer's (1820 – 1903) social evolutionism, and the ecology of Ernst Haeckel (1834 – 1919). Capel (1981, p. 278) emphasizes that "the impact of positivist and evolutionist ideas has been particularly intense in German geography, due to the relatively early institutionalization of this science in the country".

Ratzel, and even more decisively, La Blache, played a key role in the evolution of geography in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Tatham (1959) points out. The former played a revolutionary role for the quality of his work, which was mistakenly understood by historiography as a synthesis of imperialist geography by, not paying attention to Ratzel's effort to define laws specific to the scientific field of geography. Even these most prominent geographers also have their heterodox contributions stifled by official historiography.

In La Blache's particular case, besides being the faithful prototype of the academic geographer, with exhaustive work in the consolidation of official geography, his contributions were very important for the systematization of geographical knowledge. His human geography, regional tradition, and the rediscovery of political geography (Lacoste 1979) methodologically strengthened geography, leaving a huge legacy.

Haesbaert, Pereira and Ribeiro (2012) have recently presented a rich work called *Vidal, Vidais*, which proposes a re-reading of Vidal, further reinforcing the theoretical diversity of this geography classic by translating classic, unknown and paradigmatic texts of the great French geographer. They demystified the fictional conflict Ratzel (determinist) and La Blache (possibilist) created by Lucien Febvre [1878 – 1956], emphasizing that there were serious misconceptions of historiography when narrating who Vidal actually was.

The misconceptions began, according to them, with the understanding of the concept of region as an obstacle, made by Lacoste. It was only with the works of Claval, Gomes, Robic, among others, that these mistakes were remedied. "In general we can say that

the history of geographical thinking *canonized* Vidal's geography by reducing it to a *single* version, based on some articles" (Haesbaert; Pereira; Ribeiro, 2012, p. 13). They argue that it is necessary to de-canonize Vidal by evaluating one or the many "Vidais", considering the dynamic and multiple character of his extensive work, to the point of claiming that he is "an author engaged in the socio-economic, historical and (geo)political context of his time" (p. 14). In turn, Robic (2009) demonstrates that, despite ideological differences between Vidal and Reclus, there are many similarities between their geographies. For her, the two were the greatest French classical geographers, responsible for the creative impulse of knowledge in the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century. And the greater approximation between the two, as well as their greatest contributions, are linked to the innovative qualification they give to the concept of space-time.

Discursive discontinuities in geographic thinking

The geographies of Léon Metchnikoff (1838 – 1888) [1889], Élisée Reclus (1830 – 1905) [1905], Piotr Kropotkin (1842 – 1921) [1892, 1910], since they were not directly linked to official academy, promoted the consolidation of certain discursive regularity: anarchist geography. In this case, a classic anarchist geography, in some particular ways different from the latest anarchist, autonomist (SOUZA, 2015, 2017), queer, postcolonial, etc., which belong to the continent of dissident geographies (CIRQUEIRA, 2018).

In the midst of this regular discourse, paradoxically, there are discursive discontinuities regarding the contiguity initiated by Ratzelian and Lablachean geography, breaking with their respective paradigms by means of the libertarian paradigm of the communist

² "For these and other reasons, we believe that Vidalian geography, with all its comings and goings, represented a cutting-edge scientific perspective on the French intellectual environment at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, still providing important rereadings and debates – as usually happens with every author deserving the adjective 'classic'" (Haesbaert; Pereira; Ribeiro, 2012, p. 15).

³ "Reclus and Vidal de la Blache share the same sensibility when relativizing the value of places by societies. They make similar judgments about the historical variety of relations between men and the environment." (ROBIC, 2009, p. 306, our translation). Original language: French.

and internationalist organization of space, as well as the axiomatic understanding of the notion of state, power and territory.

Anarchist geography stems from the critique of geographical knowledge as a field of power in the service of the State, the hierarchical instruments of territorial domination, capital and colonialism. Through the works and combative posture of Reclus, Metchnikoff and Kropotkin, discontinuity would occur in the apparent regular epistemological reflection that was in place in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, because it was focused on this *functional oscillation*, using Foucault's words (2007), within the field of geographic knowledge.

This discontinuous movement, with its specific decision rule set in the face of a regulated model, suffered various censures due to the involvement of the aforementioned anarchist geographers and their companions with anarchist and anti-authoritarian militancy. Thus, such way of thinking failed to echo through the official academy and was not recognized by the academic community as a possible new paradigm. Therefore, as the perspective of anarchism was presented to geography, it sounded discontinuous in relation to the paradigm (evolutionism) in use within the nineteenth century discursive regularity of the discipline. This way, it failed to shake the structures and did not even achieve the point of being seen as a revolutionary movement of paradigmatic transformation of the field of geographic knowledge.

This discursive discontinuity is based on two central pillars: the discourse of freedoms, which aims at the spatial organization of horizontal power; and the discourse of balance, related to the self-management of the territory. These discursive modalities sounded essentially incompatible with the geographic project of the time, which was tied to the social, market and national state projects at play.

The topic of the discontinuities within the field of knowledge and science is brought to the foreground by four main authors. Given their epistemological varieties, there is some consensus regarding the critique of the sciences and their rationalistic dogmatic

model, and regarding the movement of deconstruction of canonical historiographical discourse. Bachelard (1996, 2006) begins the discussion by presenting discursive discontinuity processes in the epistemologies of scientific knowledge. Then, Foucault (2007, 2012) approaches these discontinuities within the discursive regularity, suggesting the substitution of historical study for the archaeological study of knowledge. These discussions are continued by Kuhn (1971), who tackles discontinuity based on paradigmatic breaks as the driving forces of knowledge revolution. Finally, Feyerabend (2011) develops a strong critique of the sacralization of science and the evolution of knowledge through the rationalistic hypothetical-deductive method, stressing the perspective in his *Against Method*.

This deconstruction process stems from Friedrich Nietzsche's (1844 – 1900) (2001) critique of science and its rational mechanisms for explaining reality. Reclus, despite harshly criticizing the aristocratism present in Nietzsche's speech, emphasizes the role of his critique of scientific rationalism as a positive feature. He argues against the supposed scientific neutrality and teleology as the meaning of society, defending science in the service of life rather than power. Foucault (2012) points out that the deconstruction process undertaken by Karl Marx (1818 – 1883) was incomplete compared to that of Nietzsche, due to the first having operated in search of a global history, suppressing all social differences in favor of a unique value system, coherent with the western civilizing project and recreating a new regular discursive teleology.

Among the various discontinuities, the anarchist paradigm conceived by the matrix of classical anarchist geographies, repudiates the hegemony of imperial and academic geography. In such discontinuity, it is relevant to note the presence of unconventional elements such as the discourse of anarchist freedoms, libertarian federalism, decentralization and self-management of the local and regional communes, and the recognition of the traditional peoples and their territorial practices. Another significant factor is the criticism of ethnocentric colonial rule, the emphasis on imperial oppression and the dependence of geographic knowledge on

the spectra of *nation-state*, *civilization* and *progress*, among others. These characteristics made the idea of the geography of freedoms incompatible (Creagh, 2011) with the traditionally adopted model. An anticolonial geography, which denounced social exploitation, territorial domination and the hegemonic hierarchies brought by capital and the modern State, was not part of the plans of the traditional historiography of the time.

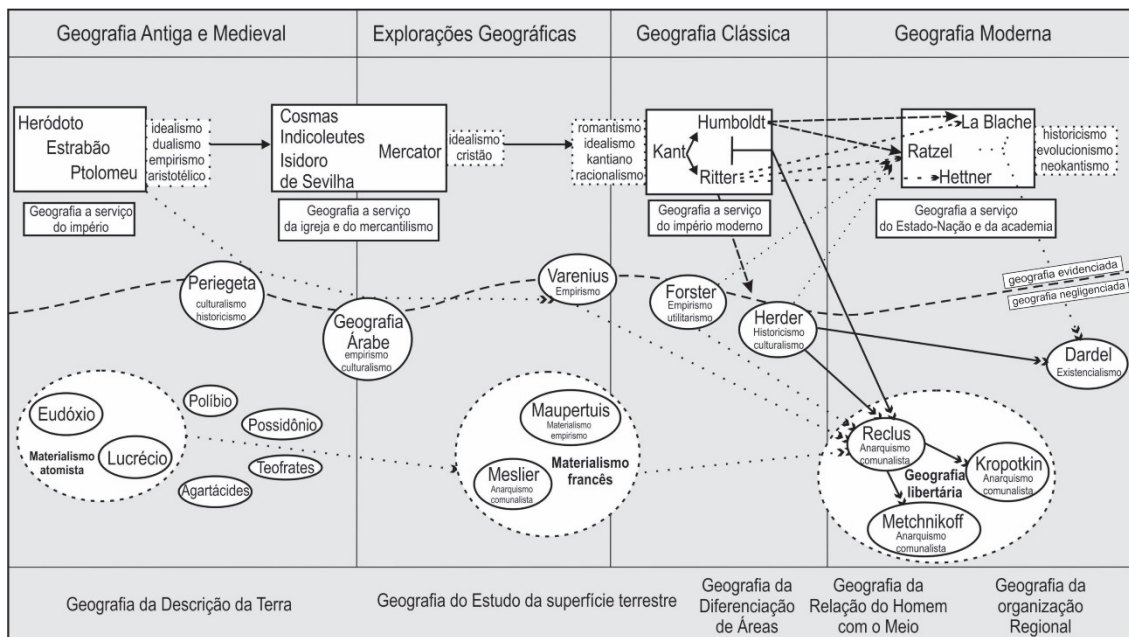
In the archaeological exercise of anarchist geography, it is possible to note that it emerged as an enclave amidst the historical progressivity inherited from the classic Kant-Humboldt-Ritter legacy, on the threshold of Ratzel-La Blache-Hettner's modern heritage. Such archaeological territory is indirectly linked to the distant immaterial territories of geographical knowledge, both on the side of the most evident and neglected geographies, such as the fragments of Herodotus' geopolitical analysis, the description of landscapes and of the subjects made by Strabo, and the legacy of Ptolemy's spatial representation.

The archaeological knowledge territories represented by Reclus (1830 – 1905), Kropotkin (1842 – 1921), Charles Perron (1837 – 1909), Metchnikoff (1838 – 1888) and Mikhail Dragomanov (1841 – 1895), to name a few, form the continent of anarchist geography and the discursive regularity of dissident geography, located under official historiography (Cirqueira, 2018). This continent is, however, discontinuous in relation to orthodox regularity, even though it has absorbed theoretical and methodological assumptions made by Kant, Ritter and Humboldt. The anarchist matrix was contemporary with mainstream academic geography and attempted to promote debate with such modern knowledge territory represented by Ratzel, Hettner, and La Blache.

Official scientific discourse was traced according to the arrangement pursued by the dominant ideology of the academy or by the interests that govern the production of geographical knowledge. These interests were tributaries of the empires of antiquity, forming the epistemic vein of dualist Socratic-Platonic idealism and Aristotelian empiricism. This epistemic vein was assimilated,

reconfigured, and continued by the Judeo-Christian tradition, with scholasticism as a movement for assimilation and decantation of the classical Greco-Roman *episteme* (Onfray, 2008). In turn, Christian idealism culminated in Kantian idealism, and the geography that was at the service of the church and of mercantilism would then be at the service of modern empires. Several epistemes from the institutionalization of geography were incorporated, as a result of the ongoing movement of fragmentation within knowledge arising from industrial modernity. Nevertheless, as a whole, the official path of geographical knowledge linked to the open idealism in the past remained.

Table 1 - Regularity and discursive discontinuity in geography



Source: Pinto (2014).

On the other hand, in the case of the continent of anarchist geography, its discursive path of transformation is much more rugged, endowed with unevenness, course changes, faults and epistemological barriers. This does not mean that it is not indirectly linked to the transitional periods experienced by the history

of geography, for no knowledge can develop disconnected from the intellectual manifestations of its time. What happens is that it works in a different way, by building underground relationships with epistemologies that counter dominant orthodoxy (Cirqueira, 2018).

These geographies of the distant past of geographical knowledge maintained relationships with and criticized the thought of their time. What makes them unorthodox is, in part, the fact that they anticipated or made innovative contributions to the field of geographical knowledge, which, by being neglected for having transmitted ideas that were heterodox at the time, were in some cases recovered later on. An emblematic case is the existentialism of Éric Dardel (1899 – 1967) and John Kirtland Wright (1891 – 1969), which kept archaeological fragments of Herder's thought and had a relationship with the phenomenological-existential generation of the first half of the twentieth century, indirectly projecting the emerging humanist and cultural geography post-1980s.

The geography of Reclus, marked by communist anarchism, is linked to the archaeological territories of Kropotkin, Perron and Metchnikoff, forming the anarchist continent of geography. This continent directly absorbed the contributions of Humboldt and Ritter's romanticism and rationalism, as well as Herder's historicism, especially its contribution to the notion of space as conditionality and cultural identity in the historical formation of the nation. Indirectly, the empiricism in Reclus and Kropotkin comes from the propositions of Forster's chorological utilitarianism and the descriptive systematization of Bernardo Varenius (1622 – 1650). These two contributions stand on the threshold of the historiography receiving more or less evidence. This frontier position stems from the fact that these works have not been widely spread in the face of geographical knowledge.

But there is another axis of composition, paradoxically contrary to the idealistic tradition of geographical knowledge: the atomistic materialistic dimension. According to Onfray (2008), this foundation had been initiated by Democritus, following a very

long tradition, which goes through Lucretius and Epicurus. Much of what Metchnikoff (1889) and Reclus (1869, 1905) argue in the midst of a dialectic of nature holds archaeological fragments of Lucretius's (99AD – 55 BC) atomistic materialistic comprehension that stems from his *On the nature of things* (LUCRÈCE, 1964). The foundation of nature based on atomist dialectic is identified in this work. In Lucretian materialism, material immanence and the interactive and dialectical relationship between things and the world permeate the eternal creative-destructive-transformative movement of phenomena. The whole is subject to the atomist dialectic of movement.

In ancient times, materialism did not achieve sufficient perpetuity; it was drastically fought, neglected and desecrated by the *hegemonic* Platonic tradition. Only with Marx and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) would the dialectical materialism whose source has its origins in Democritus be recovered through the work *The German Ideology* (1974) and other works, setting precedents for later uses of the socialist strands, including Pierre Joseph Proudhon's (1809 – 1865) libertarian socialism [predating Marx], Bakunin, Reclus and Kropotkin.

Between the atomistic materialism of antiquity and the dialectical materialism of socialism in modernity there are *anomalies*, using the expression adopted by Kuhn (1971), which decisively better made up the materialism built by the anarchist continent, as it was present in the whole debate on nature, its contingency and organicity. Those elements were totally absent in the original Marxist discussion. The presence of nature as the founding concept of materialism, launched by Lucretius (99 BC – 55 BC), would reflect on the island compositions of Polybius (203 BC – 120 BC), Possidon (135 BC – 51 BC), Theophrates (372 BC – 287 BC) and Agartacides (170 BC – 100 BC), which reached the far continent of French materialism after overcoming the extensive oceans of knowledge fragmentation. Their direct representatives are Jean Meslier (1664 – 1729) and Pierre Maupertuis (1698 – 1759), and their indirect representatives are Julien de La Mettrie (1709 – 1751) and Baron

D'Holbach (1723 – 1789), who linked their radical materialism to the immanence of nature. French materialism would set a precedent for the French socialist tradition to debate the relationship between society and nature, the consequent class struggles and the social dynamics of space transformation through the processes of revolt, as highlighted by Reclus (2002) when analyzing the French Revolution and the Paris Commune not only by the historical scope, but above all the geographical scope. As a marginal episteme transmitted through subterranean thought, it is difficult to capture the role of French materialism in the composition of the concept of man, woman [Wosllstonecraft (2016), who claims the rights of women in the context of the Enlightenment], nature and freedom within geography's anarchist continent.

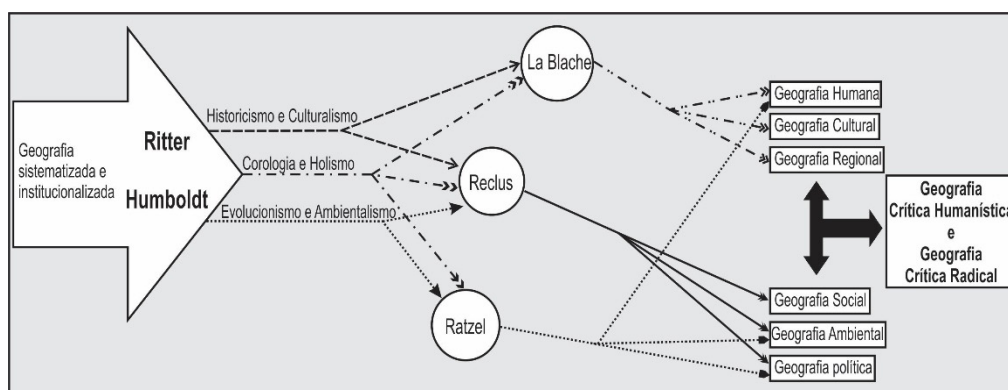
In a general sense, this anarchist continent has been permeated by the paradigm of the study of the differentiation of areas, the relationship of men and women with the environment, and also by the study of the organization of space, because it is parallel to the regional propositions of the Lablachean matrix. Thus, even outside the official boundary of geography, they are integrated with the academic echoes that the dominant matrix has produced. Official historiography has attempted not to reveal the role of the anarchist paradigm, yet underground and indirectly this geography reflected the conformation of new geographies as they went through the radicalization phase of the post-1970s, or even earlier, with Situationism and spatial and urban drift theory.⁴

The historicist and culturalist episteme was produced from the movement of institutionalization of geography, reflecting directly on La Blache and Reclus. The chorological and holistic *episteme* marked the work of Reclus, Ratzel and La Blache. The evolutionist and environmentalist *episteme* was decisive in the composition of Ratzel's and Reclus's work. These *epistemes* were reflected by La Blache and Ratzel in the area of human geography, within the mo-

⁴ "The names of Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem, among others, would give a new course to geographical thinking, opening new veins for dissent to focus on spatial knowledge, mainly through the foundations of drift theory, a composition that has not received due attention from nascent critical geography at the peak of the deconstructionist movement of 68, and which deserves, to this day, to have its role reviewed, with its practices too much alive in the territories of autonomy, the okupas, the barricades, the uprisings, the libertarian unsubmitive practices in the slums and insurged rural settlements." (Cirqueira, 2018, p. 79).

vement of fragmentation of geographical thought, and for cultural and regional geography, also for La Blache's rich legacy. In Reclus, on the other hand, geography would be reflected directly on the area of social, environmental and political geography, being the last two areas the main reflection of Ratzel's work.

Table 2 – Reflections of Ratzel's, Reclus's and La Blache's geography in current geography



Source: Pinto (2014).

All these areas constituted an effervescent and renewed discursive context in geography, marked by renewal and new directions, flowing into the paradigmatic break that the paths of humanistic critical geography and radical critical geography entail. The discontinuities promoted by Reclus and even Kropotkin would reflect more directly on the radical critical paradigm, for in the period in which they were presented they failed to penetrate the dominant paradigm, and, when geography entered the renewal movement, new precedents were opened for recognition and for the reuse of certain notions that had been neglected.

It is important to highlight that these three names – Ratzel, Reclus and La Blache – are central representatives both in the reflection of new areas of geography and in the movement of redirection of their paradigms, for having led several kinds of discursive discontinuities. On the other hand, many other archaeological exercises can be done that give rise to other important paradigmatic redirections within geography.

Final remarks

It is necessary to emphasize what was outside the official prism of historiography, and in this exercise there are considerable unorthodox discontinuities to rethink the paths that geographical knowledge made until today, and which may, depending on how the history of geography concealed certain contributions, interfere with the paradigmatic revolution of knowledge by delaying, subtracting, or eliminating the renewal of thought.

Another important element is the need to provoke a dialectical discussion between the dominant academic knowledge of geography – based on its official *status*, endowed with the loudest speaking voice –, and the unorthodox knowledge – outside the hegemonic territorial domains of thought – whose voice is muffled or even muted, building its domain separately, adverse and independent. These discontinuous gaps bring divergent proposals to dominant knowledge, as is the case with the contributions of anarchists.

Therefore, it is essential to raise the discussion about how the formation of the anarchist paradigm occurred in geography, and how this process reflected on the geographical discourse of dissent.

References

BACHELARD, G. **A FORMAÇÃO DO ESPÍRITO CIENTÍFICO: CONTRIBUIÇÃO PARA UMA PSICANÁLISE DO CONHECIMENTO.** RIO DE JANEIRO: CONTRAPONTO, 1996.

BACHELARD, G. **A EPISTEMOLOGIA.** LISBOA: 70, 2006.

CAPEL, H. **FILOSOFÍA Y CIENCIA EN LA GEOGRAFÍA CONTEMPORÁNEA: UNA INTRODUCCIÓN A LA GEOGRAFÍA.** BARCELONA: TEMAS UNIVERSITARIOS, 1981.

- CIRQUEIRA, J. V. **GEOGRAFIAS SUBTERRÂNEAS: PARA ENSINAR UMA PRÁTICA GEOGRÁFICA NAS TRINCHEIRAS DA ANARQUIA.** PORTO ALEGRE: DERIVA. UNIÃO DA VITÓRIA: MONSTRO DOS MARES, 2018.
- CLAVAL, P. **HISTÓRIA DA GEOGRAFIA.** LISBOA: EDIÇÕES 70, 2006.
- CREAGH, R. O QUE É UMA GEOGRAFIA DAS LIBERDADES? IN: COELHO, P. A. **ÉLISÉE RECLUS E A GEOGRAFIA DAS LIBERDADES.** SÃO PAULO: IMAGINÁRIO, 2011. P. 23-34.
- DARDEL, E. **L'HOMME ET LA TERRE: NATURE DE LA RÉALITÉ GÉOGRAPHIQUE.** PARIS: PUF, 1952.
- FEYERABEND, P. **CONTRA O MÉTODO.** 2. ED. SÃO PAULO: EDITORA UNESP, 2011.
- FOUCAULT, M. **A ARQUEOLOGIA DO SABER.** 8. ED. RIO DE JANEIRO: FORENSE UNIVERSITÁRIA, 2012.
- FOUCAULT, M. **AS PALAVRAS E AS COISAS.** 9. ED. SÃO PAULO: MARTINS FONTES, 2007.
- HAESBAERT, H.; PEREIRA, S. N.; RIBEIRO, G. (ORG.). **VIDAL, VIDAIS: TEXTOS DE GEOGRAFIA HUMANA, REGIONAL E POLÍTICA.** RIO DE JANEIRO: BERTRAND BRASIL, 2012.
- HARTSHORNE, R. **PROPÓSITOS E NATUREZA DA GEOGRAFIA.** SÃO PAULO: HUCITEC, 1978.
- KROPOTKIN, P. **CHAMPS, USINES ET ATELIERS: OU L'INDUSTRIE COMBINÉE AVEC L'AGRICULTURE, ET LE TRAVAIL CÉRÉBRAL AVEC LE TRAVAIL MANUEL.** PARIS: STOCK, 1910.
- KROPOTKIN, PIOTR. **LA CONQUÊTE DU PAIN.** PARIS: TRESSE E STOCK, 1892.
- KUHN, T. S. **LA ESTRUCTURA DE LAS REVOLUCIONES CIENTÍFICAS.** MÉXICO: FONDO DE CULTURA ECONÓMICA, 1971.
- LACOSTE, Y. **A GEOGRAFIA, ISSO SERVE, EM PRIMEIRO LUGAR, PARA FAZER A GUERRA.** CAMPINAS: PAPIRUS, 1988.
- LACOSTE, Y. À BAS VIDAL!... VIVA VIDAL! **HÉRODOTE,** N. 16, P. 68-91, 1979.

LACOSTE, Y. **PAYSAGES POLITIQUES: BRAUDEL, GRACQ, RECLUS...** PARIS: LE LIVRE DE POCHE, 1990.

LUCRÈCE, T. C. **DE LA NATURE.** PARIS: GARNIER, 1964.

MARX, K.; ENGELS, F. **A IDEOLOGIA ALEMÃ: CRÍTICA DA FILOSOFIA ALEMÃ MAIS RECENTE NA PESSOA DOS SEUS REPRESENTANTES FEUERBACH, B. BAUER E STIRNER, E DO SOCIALISMO ETC.** LISBOA: PRESENÇA, 1974.

METCHNIKOFF, L. **LA CIVILISATION ET LES GRANDS FLEUVES HISTORIQUES.** PARIS: HACHETTE, 1889.

MOREIRA, R. **PARA ONDE VAI O PENSAMENTO GEOGRÁFICO? POR UMA EPISTEMOLOGIA CRÍTICA.** SÃO PAULO: CONTEXTO, 2009.

NIETZSCHE, F. **A GAIA CIÊNCIA.** SÃO PAULO: COMPANHIA DAS LETRAS, 2001.

ONFRAY, M. **CONTRA-HISTÓRIA DA FILOSOFIA: AS SABEDORIAS ANTIGAS.** SÃO PAULO: MARTINS FONTES, 2008. (v. 1).

PINTO, J. V. C. **GEOGRAFICIDADE LIBERTÁRIA EM ÉLISÉE RECLUS: CONTRIBUIÇÃO HETERODOXA À HISTÓRIA DA GEOGRAFIA.** 2014. 527 F. TESE (DOUTORADO) - PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM GEOGRAFIA, UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL PAULISTA, 2014.

RAFFESTIN, C. **POR UMA GEOGRAFIA DO PODER.** SÃO PAULO: ÁTICA, 1993.

RECLUS, É. **A EVOLUÇÃO, A REVOLUÇÃO E O IDEAL ANARQUISTA.** SÃO PAULO: IMAGINÁRIO, 2002.

RECLUS, É. **L'HOMME ET LA TERRE.** PARIS: LIBRAIRIE UNIVERSELLE, 1905. 6 TOMES.

RECLUS, É. LA TERRE. **DESCRIPTION DES PHÉNOMÈNES DE LA VIE DU GLOBE: L'OCÉAN, L'ATMOSPHÈRE, LA VIE.** PARIS: HACHETTE, 1869. TOME 2.

ROBIC, M-C. DE LA RELATIVITÉ... ÉLISÉE RECLUS, PAUL VIDAL DE LA BLACHE ET L'ESPACE-TEMPS. IN.: BORD, J-P. *ET AL.* (ÉD.). **ÉLISÉE RECLUS: PAUL VIDAL DE LA BLACHE. LE GÉOGRAPHE, LA CITÉ ET LE MONDE HIER ET AUJOURD'HUI (AUTOUR DE 1905).** PARIS: L'HARMATTAN, 2009.

SANTOS, M. **POR UMA GEOGRAFIA NOVA.** SÃO PAULO: HUCITEC, 1978.

SOUZA, M. L. **DOS ESPAÇOS DE CONTROLE AOS TERRITÓRIOS DISSIDENTES: ESCRITOS DE DIVULGAÇÃO CIENTÍFICA E ANÁLISE POLÍTICA.** RIO DE JANEIRO: CONSEQUÊNCIA, 2015.

SOUZA, M. L. **POR UMA GEOGRAFIA LIBERTÁRIA.** RIO DE JANEIRO: CONSEQUÊNCIA, 2018.

SCHAEFER, F. K. EXCEPTIONALISM IN GEOGRAPHY: A METHODOLOGICAL EXAMINATION. **ANNALS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS**, v. 43, n. 3, p. 226-249, SEP. 1953.

TATHAM, G. A GEOGRAFIA NO SÉCULO DEZENOVE. **BOLETIM GEOGRÁFICO**, ANO XVII, n. 150, p. 198-226, MAIO/JUN. 1959.

VITTE, L. C. AS INFLUÊNCIAS DA FILOSOFIA NATURAL E DA NATURPHILOSOPHIE NA CONTRIBUIÇÃO DO DARWINISMO: ELEMENTOS PARA UMA FILOSOFIA DA GEOGRAFIA FÍSICA MODERNA. **BOLETIM GOIANO DE GEOGRAFIA**, GOIÂNIA, v. 29, n. 1, p. 13-32, JAN./JUN. 2009.

VITTE, L. C. KANT, GOETHE E ALEXANDER HUMBOLDT: ESTÉTICA E PAISAGEM NA GÊNESE DA GEOGRAFIA FÍSICA MODERNA. **ACTA GEOGRÁFICA**, BOA VISTA, v. 4, n. 8, p. 7-14, JUL./DEZ. 2010.

VITTE, L. C. (ORG.) **KANT, KANTISMO E A GEOGRAFIA: HISTÓRIAS, PERCALÇOS E POSSIBILIDADES INVESTIGATIVAS.** CURITIBA: APPRIS, 2014.

WOLLSTONECRAFT, M. **REIVINDICAÇÃO DOS DIREITOS DA MULHER.** SÃO PAULO: BOITEMPO, 2016.

Received for publication on January 28, 2020

Accepted for publication on February 15, 2020

Published on 14 March, 2020