

Kant and Culture

Studies on Kant's Philosophy of Culture

edited by
Tommaso Morawski



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Indice

Introduction	7
<i>Tommaso Morawski</i>	
Origine, sviluppo e autolimitazione della <i>Kultur</i> in Kant: una lettura del <i>Mutmaßlicher Anfang</i>	11
<i>Nuria Sánchez Madrid</i>	
Per un'etica cosmopolitica. La <i>cultura della virtù</i> in Kant	31
<i>Carmelo Alessio Meli</i>	
Le massime del <i>sensus communis logicus</i> . Note sul concetto di massima e sulla cultura delle facoltà a partire da un "episodio" della <i>Critica della facoltà di giudizio</i>	67
<i>Anselmo Aportone</i>	
Le problème de l'adoption de la maxime contraire a la loi morale entre la <i>Critique de la raison pratique</i> et le premier chapitre de <i>La religion dans les limites de la simple raison</i>	93
<i>Filippo Gonnelli</i>	
Technische und moralische Kultur bei Kant	131
<i>Stefan Klingner</i>	
Kultur und Charakter. Kant über die Bestimmung des Menschen	167
<i>Günter Zöller</i>	
The Perfection of Humanity: Kant on Education and Culture	187
<i>Robert B. Loudon</i>	
Animality, Humanity, and Culture in Kant and the Problem of Multicultural Engagement Today	201
<i>Rudolf A. Makkreel</i>	

Kantian Reasons for Moral Relativism	223
<i>Katrin Flikschuh</i>	
Re-mapping Kant's Planetary Consciousness	245
<i>Tommaso Morawski</i>	
Authors	263

Re-mapping Kant's Planetary Consciousness

Tommaso Morawski

1. What does it mean to be in a place?

In the last decades, several scholars and researchers have been focused on the issue of the so-called *spatial turn*, stressing the problem of the embodiment of rationality and pointing out the significant implications, coming from the assumption of this spatial paradigm in the history of ideas and philosophy. In *Putting Science in its Place*, the geographer David Livingstone provides arguments for the way in which the concepts of *space* and *place* may obtain significance in the analysis of Western cultural and scientific discourse. What has been promoted «as scientific objectivity, as *the view from nowhere*, turns out to have always been a *view from somewhere*.»¹ As Livingstone observes, both the intellectual historian and the historian of science ought to challenge the traditional idea of a disembodied rationality, and recognize that the sense of place is necessary to historical understanding – even to the understanding of concepts and ideas – as the sense of time. In his view, there can be no geography of science without the admission that rationality is embodied *somewhere* and connected to a particular «spatial dimension.»²

Understanding the geography of knowledge in opposition to a mere descriptive perspective, I assume in my approach that the *view from somewhere* should be conceived in relation to the way we interpret and negotiate our location in an intersubjective spatial world. As Derek Gregory states, geography «produces the effects it names.»³ Thus,

¹ Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 184.

² Ivi, 12.

³ Gregory, "Palestine and the War on Terror," 183.

it cannot be reduced to a simply descriptive form of knowledge, but must be understood as a poetical and performative activity that writes, reads and constructs the world at the same time. Drawing on Gregory's conceptualization of geography, I will concentrate myself on the work of Immanuel Kant, who emerges as a relevant figure both in the history of philosophy and geography.

I choose to look at Kant for two reasons. The first is strictly geographical, and is connected with Antoine Sylvan Bailly and Jean-Baptiste Racine's concern about the state of contemporary geographical enquiry. According to the French geographers, a long time has passed since geographers made a new discovery *in* space and *on* space.⁴ But Kant lived in a century of geographical and cartographic transformation, prompted by state-sponsored scientific expeditions; he was an outstanding example «in Western thought of a professional philosopher concerned with geography,»⁵ and his masterwork, the *Critique of pure Reason*, presented a new concept of space, understood as a form of intuition.

The second reason, is linked to the question *What does it mean to orient oneself in thinking?*, which is the title of one of Kant's most famous essays. Regarding it, Deleuze observes that from this question «it appears that thought itself presupposes axes and orientation according to which it develops, that it has a geography before having a history, and that it traces dimensions before constructing systems.»⁶ Following Deleuze's observation, I will examine the correlation between Kant's philosophical text and his metaphorical use of geographical concepts, with the goal of determining the imaginative geography behind his philosophical work.

2. Kant's *imaginative geography* and its (geo)-critical comprehension

Since, as it is well known, Kant has never left Königsberg, except for the short period he spent as a tutor in Judtschen, *prima facie* it seems that it should be easy to determine the spatial and local factors that influenced his philosophical thought. Indeed, it would be sufficient to

⁴ Bailly, and Racine "Les géographes ont-ils jamais trouvé le Nord?."

⁵ May, *Kant's Concept of Geography*, 3.

⁶ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 127.

reconstruct his geography from the perspective of a report of the few places he visited.⁷ However, such a perspective ignores alternative vectors and occludes the understanding of Kant's embodiment within the frame of a general comprehension of geography as a web of discursive and visual practices that articulate location in an over-regional and intersubjective scenario. In the *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* there are some interesting remarks about Kant's own relationship with his birth city, that could enable a deeper understanding of his sedentary life, indicating the geographical models of his philosophizing at the same time:

A large city such as Königsberg on the river Pregel, which is the centre of a kingdom, in which the provincial councils of the government are located, which has a university (for cultivation of the sciences) and which has also the right location for maritime commerce – a city which, by way of rivers, has the advantages of commerce both with the interior of the country and with neighbouring and distant lands of different languages and customs, can well be taken as an appropriate place for broadening one's knowledge of human as well as of the world, where this knowledge can be acquired without even traveling.⁸

For Kant, Königsberg's location and its socio-political structure perfectly embody the urban model of an enlightened city: a city where everyday life encourages knowledge of men and the world, without having to travel. In this respect, we can assume that two different ways of referring to the spatial dimension of the city coexist: the first, more concrete, is connected with the *actual place* of Kant's personal experience; the second, more abstract, embraces the world's *open space*. It is this oscillation between the enclosed *place* and the open *space* that suggests a *geo-critically* oriented approach to Kant's geography of knowledge; that is, an approach, that does not aim to map a particular segment of geographical space (the area of Königsberg), but to analyze the relation between his «direct polysensorial perceptions and the intertextual construction that makes up [his] personal encyclopaedia»⁹ of the world.

⁷ See the map of Kant's travels drawn by Werner Stark at: http://www.online.uni-marburg.de/kant_old/webseite/bio_reis.htm#Stationen, accessed September 10.9. 2019.

⁸ Anth, AA 7: 121.

⁹ Westphal, *Geocriticism*, 152.

The idea to investigate the connection between Kant's philosophy and the intertextual construction of his «geographical consciousness,»¹⁰ is grounded on a simple argument: if Kant never left Königsberg, his inner landscape of the globe could not have been fed by personal observation and experience. Therefore, his image of the world-space depends on external sources, namely the stratification of readings, conversations and discourses, partially prompted by the success of the systematically empirical style of exploration that he could find in the reports of explorers such as James Cook or Georg Forster.¹¹ Kant explains this clearly in his lectures on *Physical Geography*:

Ideally, we should concern ourselves only with our own experience, but this is not sufficient to enable us to know everything; as far as time is concerned, human beings live for only a short interval and can therefore experience only a little for themselves, but as for space, even if a person travels, he is still not in a position to observe or perceive a great many things. Therefore, we must necessarily also have recourse to the experiences of others. But these experiences will have to be reliable, and for his reason written information is preferable to that passed on merely by word of mouth.¹²

It is the reliable experience of others that integrates and orients Kant's everyday life-space, providing contents and references for conceiving and representing the shape of the Earth in a mythical and imaginative space. As Gregory observes, imaginative geographies «are global as well as local,» since they «articulate not simply the differences between this place and that, inscribing different images of here and there, but they also shape the way in which, from our particular perspective, we conceive of the separation between them.» In this sense, the «global is not the *universal*, but is itself a situated construction.»¹³

Gregory's statement seems justified particularly when applied to Kant's imaginative representation of the world and to the paradoxical

¹⁰ Besse, *Face au monde*, 7-8.

¹¹ As Werner Stark, the editor of the *Physical Geography* for the German Edition of Kant's collected writings (*Kant's gesammelte Schriften*), has observed, around two-third of the Holstein Manuscript – a text written by Kant himself at the beginning of his career and donated to the Count Friedrich Karl Ludwig von Holstein at the beginning of the 1770's – «consists of excerpts from, textbooks, travel descriptions, and other works» (Stark, «Kant's Lectures,» 76).

¹² PG, AA 9: 159.

¹³ Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, 204.

situation of a philosopher who has been travelling without moving. Building on these considerations, in the following paragraphs I will focus my attention on the spatial dimension of Kant's philosophy, as well as on his special status as a practicing geographer who developed a cosmopolitan philosophical system in a cultural epoch that «was national and local and international.»¹⁴ For it can be said that Enlightenment and the «attitude of world openness»¹⁵ cultivated by cosmopolitan culture are exemplified in Kant's ideas¹⁶ and his work illustrates at best how the geographical processes of global exploration, oceanic navigation and terrestrial encounter, prompted new forms of «planetary awareness» and «geo-literary consciousness.»¹⁷

3. The map and the architectonic archive of the world-whole

We can easily imagine Kant, looking out of the window of his room while seeking the way of conceiving and representing the world-space that stands beyond the perceptual limits of his being embodied in a place. Moreover, we can presume that it is in response to this very concern over staging the «world-as-exhibition»¹⁸ that Kant, in the *Introduction* to the *Physical Geography*, evokes the necessity of a preliminary plan, which, depending on a non-conceptual model of spatial disposition, anticipates our future experience in the world-space:

The physical description of the earth is thus the first part of knowledge of the world. It belongs to an idea that one might call a *propaedeutic* for *knowledge of the world*. Instruction in this still seems to be very deficient. Nonetheless, it is precisely from this that we may derive the most useful application for all manner of circumstances in life. Consequently, it is necessary to learn the physical description of the earth as a knowledge that can be completed and corrected with the help of experience. What this instruction and general survey does, is to anticipate our future experience in the world, giving us, as it were, a pre-formed

¹⁴ Whithers, *Placing Enlightenment*, 7.

¹⁵ Delanty, *The Cosmopolitan Imagination*, 29.

¹⁶ Since his first lectures on *Physical geography*, Kant maintains that: «The rational taste of our enlightened times has presumably become so general that one can assume that one will find only a few persons who are indifferent to the Earth's natural peculiarities in regions outside their own» (EACG, AA 2: 3).

¹⁷ Whithers, "The Enlightenment and Geographies of Cosmopolitanism," 45.

¹⁸ Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, 15.

conception of everything. We say of someone who has travelled widely that he has seen the world. But knowledge of the world is more than merely seeing it. Anyone who wants to derive benefit from a journey must make a plan in advance, and not regard the world merely as an object of the outer sense.¹⁹

As the Italian geographer Franco Farinelli has claimed, the word *plan* is deeply connected with the cartographic logic. Similar to the map, the plan is a project on the world; and the project of every map is to anticipate and transform the face of the earth according to its own image²⁰. If we follow Farinelli's argument, while assuming, at the same time, that Kant's *mythical* image of the globe depends on external and preferably written sources, then «there remains the question of knowing if it is equally possible to represent the earth as a system of regions oriented only by the resource of discourse, without recourse to a map which would permit, in a worst-case scenario, the organization of space on a human scale in order to understand that which, in reality, unfolds on a planetary scale.»²¹ As Marcuzzi points out, examining the relation between the discursive practices which constitute Kant's personal geographical encyclopaedia, and the articulation of a preliminary cartographic space of representation, is an obligatory step to understanding Kant's conceptualization of geography as the first and propaedeutic part of the knowledge of the world. The lack of maps in Kant's texts may suggest that the preliminary space to which he called the attention should not be assimilated to a cartographic image. Nevertheless, it is also true that Kant refers to geographical maps in many of his works,²² providing evidence for his continuous reflection about their nature and utility for the representation of the world-whole.

In *History and natural description of the most noteworthy occurrences of the earthquake that struck a large part of the Earth on the year 1755*, Kant claims that among all the regions of the earth «the western coasts have suffered from more incidents» because they are «steeper than the eastern and northern coasts». An observation, that can easily be «confirmed by a glance at the map as well as the reports of Dampier, who, on

¹⁹ PG, AA 9: 157.

²⁰ Farinelli, *I segni del mondo*, 77.

²¹ Marcuzzi, "Writing Space", 129.

²² See for example GSE, AA 2: 231.

all his maritime journeys found this to be almost universal.»²³ This passage partially substantiates what we saw above, namely that maps, as well as the pieces of information compiled by voyagers and explorers, are two inseparable and interdependent elements of what we may call Kant's geographical knowledge. Yet, if we read between the lines of his *Physical Geography*, it seems as if the former has an epistemological supremacy over the latter. In fact, while talking about the utility of geography for cultivating understanding, Kant notes:

There can hardly be a nation where common sense extends so generally, and down to the lowest classes, than is the case with the English. This is due to the newspapers, for their reading presupposes an extensive mental picture of the whole surface of the earth. Otherwise all the news they contained would be a matter of indifference to us, for we should be unable to utilize these reports in any way.²⁴

There is only one gateway to the world-space for the situated reader, or listener, or student who intends to deal with information about «phaenomena that occurs simultaneously in space.»²⁵ This gateway is the cartographic gaze, «an all seeing eye that views everywhere at the same time,»²⁶ and whose conceptualization is dominated by what Gregory calls «the problematic of visualization.»²⁷ With its homogeneous and isotropic representation of the terrestrial sphere, the plain surface of the *tabula* provides a synoptic image of the space explored and described by voyagers: this is a preliminary space which permits the mental disposal of objects in their proper location. The map and its visual plain emerge here as cognitive tools capable of articulating the spatial character of those objects, which the subject cannot directly perceive, both for the purpose of description and for that of experimental thought. Thus, again, it is the cartographic *Erdbeschreibung*, that is, the space of representation through which we organize and situate the intertextual stratification of our planetary exploration on human scale, that carries out the task of mediating our embodied understanding of the world-as-exhibition.

²³ GNVE, AA 1: 459.

²⁴ PG, AA 9: 163.

²⁵ PG, AA 9: 160.

²⁶ Pickles, *A History of Spaces*, 80.

²⁷ Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations*, 15.

To examine Kant's conceptualisation of maps and mapmaking in greater detail, while considering their connection to both the preliminary imaginative space of the world-whole, and to the discursive content of Enlightenment's geographical knowledge, it may be useful to examine how, in Kant's view, geography describes the earth according to space.

In the *Introduction* of his *Physical Geography* Kant sketches different kinds of geography (physical, mathematical, political, moral, theological, and mercantile) and offers a preliminary account of mathematical geography as a necessary prolegomenon for physical geography. In his opinion, mathematical geography comprises «the shape, which as Newton established is that of a spheroid,» and the «size and motion of the earth, as well as its relation to the solar system.»²⁸

As Eric Forbes has shown, in the eighteenth-century mathematical geography was also called mathematical cosmography, an ambiguous term which constituted the broad conceptual fusion of astronomy, geography and cartography, and which possessed a terrestrial as well as a celestial component.²⁹ By adopting mathematical precognition in the realm of geography Enlightenment geographers could draw imaginary lines of longitude and latitude «on the surface of a sphere on which we normally do not distinguish anything.»³⁰ Setting a meridian was then the primary act of global representation. Practical because the geometric expression of location is never ambiguous, in so far as each place exists only in one fixed position; imaginative in terms of signifying origin, ends and directions on a turning sphere. Moreover, it is the graticule that establishes the epistemological truth of geographic representations, promoting a «unified and geometrical philosophy of mapmaking,»³¹ as we can surmise from Samuel Johnson's paradigmatic definition of maps as «a geographical picture on which lands and seas are delineated according to longitude and latitude.»³²

To understand Kant's conceptualization of maps as a spatial representation of the preliminary space of geography, we need now to examine to what extent geography's mathematical precognition, which

²⁸ PG, AA 9: 164.

²⁹ See Forbes, "Mathematical Cosmography," 417-418.

³⁰ PG, AA 9: 171.

³¹ Edney, "Cartography Without Progress," 78.

³² Edney, "Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography and Map Making," 172.

makes an accurate representation of the spherical shape of the world possible, mediates the flow of information gathered from the reports of global explorations and transoceanic navigations.

Despite the strong link between cartography and mathematical cosmography, which lay at the core of eighteenth-century geography, Kant – as May states – «did not conceive or define geography as a branch of mathematics. Mathematics is an indispensable tool in geography, but the latter is not a mathematical discipline. Kant defined geography as the description of the whole earth, and thought of it as a propaedeutic to both life and science.»³³ To substantiate May's claim, we need to consider that, in his *Physical Geography*, Kant divides the knowledge of the lands we can find on the planetary surface, according to criteria, which are not geometrical, but rather connected to the practices of exploration. According to Kant the inhabitable world is divided in:

- 1) Lands whose extent and interior are known to us.
- 2) Lands which we know only in part.
- 3) Lands of which only the coasts are known.
- 4) Lands that have genuinely been seen but not found again.
- 5) Lands that were known to the ancients but which now appear to be lost.
- 6) Finally, lands the existence of which is only conjectured.³⁴

If we assume that in Kant's view the map is a spatial rather than narrative and textual presentation, then we can expect that it should mediate, as a network of trust and credibility, between the different levels of knowledge of lands and continents we have, by outlining and differentiating those we know completely, from those we know in part or we can't find any more, and incorporating those we still don't know. A task that emerges in an exemplary way, if we look at James Cook's *General Chart*, where the interior of the American continent has been left blank, in anticipation of future discoveries; or if we consider what Kant writes about Peru, which had «been observed only by the shore and which von Roden was the first to mark on a map.»³⁵ In this respect, Enlightenment's maps are different from medieval *mappamundi*, where the T-O structure itself precluded the addition of new continents, and the space external to the *oecumene* was «generally conceptualized as

³³ May, *Kant's Concept of Geography*, 56.

³⁴ PG, AA 9: 228.

³⁵ PG, AA 9: 230.

a mysterious cosmology populated by some external authority, heavenly hosts, or more sinister figures of myth and imagination.»³⁶ After the discovery of the Americas, in fact, the new worlds appeared on the map as empty and free spaces, open to the incorporations of lands and to the integration of ancient authority with empirical discovery. This incorporation was made possible by the graticule that encompassed the globe, known and unknown, in one synoptic image.

In his investigation of Enlightenment's geography, the historian of cartography Matthew Edney presents a clear picture of eighteenth-century cartography. In his view, the idealized conception that lay at the core of Enlightenment's geographical representation, is that of a comprehensive archive constructed through the practices of reconnaissance and mapping:

The map's ideological equivalency with the world was defined by its visible graticule of parallels and meridian, which replicates the invisible parallels and meridians that score the earth's surface [...]. The map's graticule thus established the structural correctness of the conceptual geographical archive. Graticules were uniformly precise and internally coherent; they could reconstruct the world at any scale, from the entire globe to, in principle, its tiniest portion. The knowledge space of the graticule is flexible and allows geographical data produced by the European reconnaissance of the world – whatever their scale and extent – to be related and reconciled to each other, so as to recapitulate the world's geography. The scale independency of Enlightenment's archive was manifested in the reformulation of geography's subdivision by subject (mathematical, human, physical) rather than the traditional subdivision by scale (topography, corography, and geography).³⁷

As suggested by Edney's investigation of Enlightenment's mapmaking, the preliminary space described by Kant in his lectures on *Physical Geography* is none other than the cartographic space, which anticipates the shape of the globe, providing a universal archive for the amount of geographical information and anthropological evidences revealed by global explorations. In the *Introduction* of Kant's *Physical Geography*, we can find a confirmation of the overlapping between the encyclopaedic model of the map-archive and the architectonic structure of the world-whole as system. As Kant claims,

³⁶ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, 241.

³⁷ Edney, "Reconsidering Enlightenment Geography and Map Making", 165.

we need to become acquainted with the objects of our experience as a whole. Thereby our knowledge is not an aggregation but a system; for in a system the whole is prior to the parts, while in an aggregation the parts have priority. It is the same in all branches of knowledge that produce an understanding of connections, as with the *Encyclopaedia*, where the whole becomes apparent only when seen in context. Idea[s] are architectonic; they create the sciences. Anyone intending to build a house, for instance, will first form a conception of the whole, from which all the parts will subsequently be deduced. In the same way, our present introduction serves as an idea for knowledge of the world. What we are doing here is making an architectonic concept for ourselves, which is a concept whereby the manifold parts are derived from the whole. The whole, in our case, is the world, the stage for all our experiences. Contact with people and travel broaden all our knowledge. Such contact will teach us about people, but it requires a great deal of time if the purpose is to be attained. However, if we are prepared in advance by [appropriate] instruction, then we have a conceptual whole by means of which we can learn about people. We are then in a position to allocate to every experience its class and its place within the whole. By travel we extend our knowledge of the external world, which is, however, of little use unless one has previously had a suitable preparatory exercise.³⁸

It is on the basis of this conceptualization of the map-archive as an instrument to construct spaces of representation which regulate the organization and disposal of geographical knowledge, that we can now examine how Kant's geographical consciousness of a planetary world-space has influenced his understanding of philosophy.

4. The island, the ocean, and the geography of reason

The issue of cartographic metaphors runs to the very heart of western imagination and it is no coincidence if the sphere and the map have become the main instruments of the human geography's genealogies.³⁹ The sphere embodies our cosmological landscape, it is the icon which «represents the essence of our holistic existence.»⁴⁰ The map, refers to a space of representation, which since modernity has been involved both in the ordering of knowledge – as for example when

³⁸ PG, AA 9: 157.

³⁹ See Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*.

⁴⁰ Woodward, "The Image of the spherical World," 2.

Carl von Linné characterized his taxonomic system as a *mappa naturae*, or again when Denis Diderot and Jean Baptiste d’Alembert described their *Encyclopédie* as «a kind of world map which is to show the principal countries, their position and their mutual dependence, the road that leads directly from one to the other»⁴¹ – and in the coding of national and social spaces according to an Euclidean *geopolitical* geometry – as in the most significant example of the Treaty of Tordesillas when an abstract geometric system was used to define a global area of control.⁴²

The best way to put the instruments of what we may call a geographical *metaphorology* to the test, is to consider what Kant writes in the pivotal chapter of his first *Critique: On the Ground of Distinction of all Objects in General in Phenomena and Noumena*:

We have now not only travelled through the land of pure understanding, and carefully inspected each part of it, but we have also surveyed it, and determined the place for each thing in it. This however, is an island, and enclosed in unalterable boundaries by nature itself. It is the land of truth (a charming name), surrounded by a broad and stormy ocean, the true seat of illusion, where many a fog bank and melting iceberg pretend to be new lands and, ceaselessly deceiving with empty hopes the voyager looking around for new discoveries, entwine him in adventures from which he can never escape and yet also never bring to an end. But before we venture out on this sea, to search through all its breadth and become certain of whether there is to hope for in it, it will be useful first to cast yet another glance at the map of the land that we would not leave, and to ask, first, whether we could not be satisfied with what it contains, or even must be satisfied with it out of necessity, if there is no other ground on which we could build; and, second, by what title we occupy even this it securely against all hostile claims.⁴³

The first thing we recognize in this passage is the strong opposition between the inhabitable and measurable land of experience, and the impulse to sail the ocean of metaphysics. Such an opposition is constructed in analogy to the imaginative distinction between spaces of state control on land and spaces outside state control on the ocean. As Paul Carter observes, the era of European expansion and coloni-

⁴¹ D’Alembert, “Discours Préliminaire”, quoted in Whilters, “Geography in its Time,” 256.

⁴² See Branch, *The Cartographic State*.

⁴³ KrV, A 235-236/B 294-295.

zing expeditions was characterized by the project of reconceptualising the coasts around the planet as «*coastlines*.»⁴⁴ These lines became fundamental images of reasoning for the geographical discourse. They were constructed between points in the mind, so as to signify firm separations between land space (the space that could be enclosed, and incorporated within the boundaries of sovereign states) and the non-territory of the ocean space (unmappable and liquid space in between). In this context of elemental division, the image of the island gains an exceptional status, which defines its material space as a «locus of imagination.»⁴⁵ While the geopolitical boundaries of continental land are subjected to historical changes and modifications, the boundaries of the island, completely surrounded by the sea, appear naturally resistant to any artificial modification.

Assuming the paradigmatic meaning of this geographical metaphors, we can expect that in the island of truth and in the ocean of dialectic illusion, two different kinds of cartographic logic take place. In the first case, we witness a cartography of immanence which translates the political geometry of state sovereignty, while in the second case the metaphysical curiosity for new lands of exploration prompts a cartography of transcendence. The instrument that the philosopher uses to explore and survey the territory of pure understanding is a «map of land» and the legal title by which he can exhibit the well-founded possession of knowledge on the ground of experience are those we can find assembled in the *table of categories*. But the map of the island of truth is valid only within the island: «*instabilis tellus, innabilis unda*.»⁴⁶ Not coincidentally Kant, in the early *Essay on the maladies of the head*, writes about the craziness of those who, overlooking the «judgment of experience,» pretend to measure «the length of the ocean.»⁴⁷ It is impossible to survey the ocean as we survey the land not only because the sublime sight of the former exceeds the aesthetic limits of our «comprehension,»⁴⁸ but also because the *mare liberum* doesn't belong to the objects of our possession.

In the chapter *On the Ground of Distinction of all Objects in General in Phenomena and Noumena* Kant apparently does not explain how the

⁴⁴ Carter, "Dark with Excess of Bright", 125.

⁴⁵ Cosgrove, "Review of J. R. Gillis", 302.

⁴⁶ KrV, A 726/B 754.

⁴⁷ VKK, AA 2: 268.

⁴⁸ KU, AA 5: 252.

philosopher can move through the liquid space of the ocean. Nevertheless, we can find hints of the cartographic logic which rules the sea navigation in the *Prolegomena to any future Metaphysics*, where Kant distances his cartographic project from Hume's empirical mental geography, accusing the Scottish's sceptical philosopher of not being able to determine how far this research can potentially be carried:

Hume also foresaw nothing of any such possible formal science, but deposited his ship on the beach (of scepticism) for safekeeping, where it could then lie and rot, whereas it is important to me to give it a pilot, who, provided with complete sea-charts and a compass, might safely navigate the ship wherever seems good to him, following sound principles of the helmsman's art drawn from a knowledge of the globe.⁴⁹

The fact that Kant here evokes the combination of sea charts and compass as instruments for a safe philosophical navigation is extremely significant of the distance between his architectonic geography of knowledge and Hume's *local geography*. As Fredric Jameson has shown, the advent of instruments such as compass, sextant, and theodolite, introduced a new dimension into sea charts; a dimension which transformed the problematic of the itinerary and allowed explorers to pose the problem of a genuine cognitive mapping in relationship to «a new geographical totality: the globe.»⁵⁰ Almost parallel with the improvements in the design and construction of astronomical and nautical instruments, throughout the sixteenth century the Earth started to be represented as a «terraqeous globe, in which land and water are not two different spherical bodies but together constitute a unique ball, whose centre is the centre of the world.»⁵¹ In short, Kant belongs to the first generation for whom the terrestrial globe ceased to be what it had been and instead became something continuous, homogenous and isotropic.

The image of a unitary globe, is then the kind of geographical knowledge the metaphysician himself needs to adventure in the ocean of illusions, without pretending to explore new lands presumably situated out of the island of truth. As soon as it is impossible to sail by simply using the political map of a land, the geographer of reason

⁴⁹ Prol, AA 4: 262.

⁵⁰ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 52.

⁵¹ Farinelli, "De nobis ipsis silemus," 376.

must refer to a different kind of orientation in the liquid world of ideas, one that allows him to distinguish between what belongs to the terrain of understanding and what exceeds its natural boundaries. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant claims that:

If I represent the surface of the earth (in accordance with sensible appearance) as a plate, I cannot know how far it extends. But experience teaches me this: that wherever I go, I always see a space around me in which I proceed farther; thus I cognize the limits of my actual knowledge of the earth at any time, but not the boundaries of all possible description of the earth. But if I have gotten as far as knowing that the earth is a sphere and its surface the surface of a sphere, then from a small part of the latter, e.g., from the magnitude of one degree, I can cognize its diameter and, by means of this, the complete boundary, i.e., surface of the earth, determinately and in accordance with *a priori* principles; and although I am ignorant in regard to the objects that this surface might contain, I am not ignorant in regard to the magnitude limits of the domain that contains them.⁵²

As *capacissima figurarum* the spherical globe is the symbol of Kant's transcendental philosophy, whose plan is to determine the limits of our possible knowledge from the inside of experience. Both the exploration of the Earth and the geography of reason need to be founded according to meta-empirical principles which anticipate the form of the whole. Instead, whether we are interested in the structuring of an encyclopaedic *Mappemonde* of sciences or in the *Architectonic of pure reason*, it is only by assuming the symbolic unity of experience that we can refer to a model from which to derive a synoptic point of view of the teleological coexistence of their elements. Then, the map and the sphere are the images of reasoning which free the philosopher Kant from the one-eyed limitation of his embodied rationality, by providing models of orientation, axes and directions, for a universal geography of reason.

⁵² KrV, A 759/B 787.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AA: Akademie-Ausgabe.

Kant's works

Anth: *Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht. Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view.* Translated by Robert Loudon. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

GNVE: *Geschichte und Naturbeschreibung der merkwürdigsten Vorfälle des Erdbebens, welches an dem Ende des 1755ten Jahres einen großen Theil der Erde erschüttert hat.* "History and natural description of the most noteworthy occurrences of the earthquake that struck a large part of the Earth on the year 1755". Translated by Olaf Reinhardt. In *Natural Science*, edited by Eric Watkins, 386-395. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

GSE: *Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen.* "Observations on the feeling of the beautiful and sublime". Translated by Paul Guyer. In *Anthropology, History and Education* edited by Robert Loudon, and Gunther Zöllner, 18-62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

EACG: *Entwurf und Ankündigung eines Collegii der physischen Geographie.* "Plan and announcement of a series of lectures on physical geography with an appendix containing a brief consideration of the question: Whether the West winds in our regions are moist because they travel over a great sea". Translated by Olaf Reinhardt. In *Natural Science*, edited by Eric Watkins, 386-395. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

KrV: *Kritik der reinen Vernunft. Critique of pure reason.* Translated and edited by Paul Guyer, and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

KU: *Kritik der Urteilskraft. Critique of the Power of Judgment.* Translated by Paul Guyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

VKK: *Versuch über die Krankheiten des Kopfes.* "Essay on the maladies of the head". Translated by Holly Wilson. In *Anthropology, History and Education*, edited by Robert Loudon, and Gunther Zöllner, 63-77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

ProI: *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*. "Prolegomena to every future metaphysics that will be able to come forward as science". Translated by Gary Hatfield. In *Theoretical Philosophy after 1781*, edited by Henry Allison, and Peter Heath, 29-170. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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