Received: 2 November 2022 | Revised: 24 July 2023 | Accepted: 26 July 2023

DOI: 10.1111/tran.12634

THEMED INTERVENTION

Reclaiming other geographical traditions: The hidden roots of Italian radical geography

Filippo Celata[1] | **Francesca Governa**[2]

[1]Department MEMOTEF, University of Rome La Sapienza, Rome, Italy

[2]Department DIST, Politecnico di Torino, Torino, Italy

Correspondence
Filippo Celata, Department MEMOTEF, University of Rome La Sapienza, Via del Castro Laurenziano 9, Roma, 00161, Italy.
Email: filippo.celata@uniroma1.it

Francesca Governa, Department DIST, Politecnico di Torino, Viale Mattioli 39, Torino 10129, Italy.
Email: francesca.governa@polito.it

Abstract

The article recalls the history of *Geografia Democratica*, a collective of scholars that during the second half of the 1970s sought to dismantle the old deterministic approach and promote a critical and radical turn in Italian academic geography. The aim is to contribute to the ongoing debate about 'other geographical traditions' beyond the Anglo-American hegemony, to highlight the pluriversal roots of contemporary critical geographies and the influence that the transnational circulation of knowledge had in their unfolding, in light of recent quests for a more global geographical imagination. To do so, the article first engages with *Geografia Democratica* as a 'rupture experience' in the mainstream of Italian geography, and then discusses how it intersected or not similar turns that occurred elsewhere, focusing on the mostly implicit dialogue between Italian and Anglo-American critical/radical geographies of the time. By following the controversial story of the collective during and after its short existence, we question its legacy for today's geographical scholarship, and reflect more generally upon the significance of reviving other critical and radical traditions. To highlight the plurality of our disciplinary past, we suggest, is crucial not only to fill the 'asymmetric ignorance' between various traditions, but also to nurture and reposition the present 'worlding' practices of non-Anglophone critical geographers.

KEYWORDS

critical and radical geographies, *Geografia Democratica*, history of geography, Italian geography, other geographical traditions

1 | INTRODUCTION

The article highlights a crucial moment in the history of Italian geography in which a group of geographers attempted to promote a critical and radical turn.[1] In Italy, as in other countries (Barnes & Sheppard, 2019), the 1970s have been a crucial break between the poorly descriptive and 'traditional' discipline of the past, and the attempt to (finally) place geographical knowledge within the framework of the however contested critical social sciences (Soja, 1989). For a rather

This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

The information, practices and views in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG).

© 2023 The Authors. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers).

short period between 1976 and 1981, those attempts converged into the constitution of a collective of critical and radical scholars named *Geografia Democratica* (GD). By following the non-linear story of GD during the second half of the 1970s and after its short existence, and reflecting upon how its attempt intersected or not similar turns occurred elsewhere, we argue that a critical recovery of GD's legacy, its exceptionalism as well as its ambiguities, can contribute to the longstanding attempt to reconstruct a 'critical geography of critical geography' (Berg, 2004).

To put in conversation different critical and radical scholarships and acknowledging the value of their diversity is crucial for tackling the sense of disappointment expressed by many scholars who call for a more collective geographical imagination (Oswin, 2020), to decolonise geographical knowledge (Jazeel, 2016; Radcliffe, 2022; Sundberg, 2014), rediscover 'other geographical traditions' (Ferretti, 2019, 2022), and broaden the disciplinary history (Craggs & Neate, 2020). From this perspective, GD represents a peculiar but important 'national tradition' which almost every Italian geographer knows in general, but few in detail, and that is probably relatively unknown to any non-Italian geographer. To recall such a 'hidden history' (Driver, 2013) is part of our 'moral obligation to narrate plurality in geography's past' (Keighren, 2018, p. 7), helping us 'to understand the specific (and regionally differentiated) contexts through which present-day international geography was produced' (Craggs & Neate, 2020, p. 900), and providing alternative and generative ways to look at the present.

To highlight the multiplicity of genealogies, antecedents, connections and alignments of geographical traditions within and beyond the Anglophone world requires 'not just a history but also a geography of radical geographical knowledge' (Barnes & Sheppard, 2019, p. 5). In this sense, the indisputable influence Anglophone critical and radical geography has had in other places is anything but homogenous: 'the exact way in which it has influenced has been a consequence of specific antecedent conditions—political, social, cultural, institutional, intellectual' (ibid., p. 2). Such influence was 'contingent and variable' not only between but also within countries, so as to prevent hypostasising in Italy as elsewhere, a sole and unique 'national' geographical tradition, critical or otherwise. Adopting a relational perspective on the production and circulation of knowledge allows us to highlight, conversely, the presence of a 'more than national' history forged by encounters and dialogues, both those that actually occurred and those that didn't (Fall & Minca, 2013), which have had and continue to have crucial implications for the variety of ways in which critical and radical geography is practiced (or not) in the few centres and the many peripheries of the 'international debate'.

The experience of GD is indeed problematic and even neglected in Italy. Despite the fact that it is widely considered a crucial moment in the evolution of the discipline, what has to date been published on GD is just a few papers, some of which also caused sharp debates that echoed those that continued for decades among some of its former components (Farinelli, 2006; Quaini, 2006). The living memory regarding GD, on the other hand, is not only scarce nowadays but also epistemologically and politically contested, and hardly objective or detached. This is also why our work is entirely based on written sources and, in particular, on a still unpublished archive of original documents recently assembled by Giuseppe Dematteis, one of the leading figures of GD and critical Italian geography at large.[2] In addition, we rely on various texts occasionally written by GD components as part of the activity of the group or as a later reflection on it.

The article is organised as follows. It first engages with the history of GD as part of the evolution of Italian geography and highlights some of the peculiarities of its attempts to dismantle the old deterministic approach—which in Italy had survived longer than elsewhere—as well as its inconsistencies and ambivalent outcomes. It then reflects upon how the GD experience intertwined with other critical turns occurring elsewhere, and allowed a (mostly implicit and latent) dialogue between Italian and Anglo-American radical/critical geographies of the time. In the final section, we highlight what has remained of the GD ethos in the current practices of Italian geographers in light of recent attempts to transcend contemporary geographies of knowledge and theory production (Sheppard et al., 2013), overcome the 'asymmetric ignorance' outlined by Robinson (2003) between global North and global South scholars—extending it to a 'differently central' or 'differently marginal' position as ours is—and produce a truly 'global' geographical scholarship (Lancione & McFarlane, 2021). We finally suggest that recalling the hidden roots of other radical and critical geographical traditions can contribute to challenging the 'skewed transnationalism' of today's international geography (Van Meeteren, 2019), as well as nurture and reposition the present 'worlding' practices (Müller, 2021) of non-Anglophone critical geographers. By starting from Italy, and drawing parallels with other critical and radical geographies, identifying connections and alignments across both space and time, we argue for the possibility to transcend physical, cultural, epistemological and mental borders, and glimpse the 'many spaces of betweenness from which to imagine, act, and live things differently' (Katz, 2017, p. 597).

2 | THE TURBULENT ROOTS OF ITALIAN RADICAL/CRITICAL GEOGRAPHY: *GEOGRAFIA DEMOCRATICA* (1976–81)

An accomplished history of critical and radical stances within Italian geography, which were, and to some extent continue to be, minoritarian and controversial, has never been written. However, the foundational role of GD in this respect is undisputed. GD has been regarded by its former protagonists (Coppola, 2007; Dematteis, 2021; Quaini, 2007), the few later scholars that attempted to sketch its history (Cavallo, 2007; Celata, 2021a, 2021b), and the even fewer that have occasionally written in English about it (dell'Agnese et al., 2021; Ferretti, 2022; Minca, 2005) as a 'rupture experience', a 'revolutionary practice', a crucial attempt to revive the dull and sterile landscape of the Italian geography of the period. Some of the most significant outputs and evolutions of the discipline in Italy in the last decades are indeed directly or indirectly the inheritance of GD (Minca, 2009). The genesis, articulation and short-lived activity of the collective is therefore relevant per se, and indicative of the peculiarities as well as the difficulties critical/radical geography faced (and in some respect continues to face) in a country like Italy.

GD started holding regular meetings in 1976: 21 meetings took place in only four years, based on previous encounters between scholars belonging to three groups, with different, even if changing, theoretical and epistemological orientations.

The first of the three groups was based in Milan. Its leading figure was Lucio Gambi, at the time already an established scholar, and still considered as the 'father' for a younger generation of 'rebels'. Gambi was 'a classical product of the socialist and libertarian culture' which, through the *Partito d'Azione* (Action Party), had a crucial role in anti-fascist resistance (Ferretti, 2022, p. 1836). His fierce criticisms of the conservativism and socio-political irrelevance of Italian geography—an exemplary title of this provocative stance is his *Geografia regione depressa* (Geography as a backward region) (Gambi, 1962/1973)—had led to his 'splendid isolation' from the disciplinary mainstream (dell'Agnese et al., 2021), as did his historicist approach to geography.

The second group was from Turin. Its most active member was Giuseppe Dematteis, a quite unusual (at least compared with the Anglo-American canon) critical geographer whose most important book, *Le metafore della terra* (1985), never translated into English, has been acknowledged by Juliet Fall and Claudio Minca as 'a manifesto of critical geography *ante litteram*, with at its core a number of issues and topics that subsequently became mainstream in international English-speaking geography several years later' (2013, p. 564).[3] The Turin group shared an eclectic inspiration, in which a rather heterodox neo-Marxist perspective deeply intertwined with Turin's politics and economics of the 1970s; that is, the strong presence of the *Partito Comunista Italiano* in local and regional governments, the role of leftist movements and the harsh social and political conflicts, the legacy of the 'one company town' and the labour movement (Tranfaglia & Mantelli, 1999).

The third group came from Genoa where the first and last meetings of GD took place. Its main, if not only, component was Massimo Quaini, who in 1974 published *Marxismo e Geografia* (translated into Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, and English in 1982), one of the first geographical books worldwide that engages explicitly with Marx, published just a few months after the publication of David Harvey's *Social justice and the city* (which was translated into Italian in 1978). Quaini was also to become the chief editor of the only radical geographical journal that ever existed in Italy: *Hérodote Italia* (1978–84), some sort of Italian branch of the French journal *Hérodote* (Figure 1), and a direct, although debated, filiation of GD.

GD was later joined by a conspicuous number of geographers from Naples, like Pasquale Coppola (Rossi, 2008) and Bologna, like Franco Farinelli—after the transfer of Gambi to Bologna University—as well as Venice, Florence, Urbino and Palermo. Similarly to what happened elsewhere, the impetus was also due to a few 'catalytic individuals' (Barnes & Sheppard, 2019, p. 2), including—quite extraordinarily for the period—several female scholars such as Teresa Isenburg and Maria Carazzi (Milan), Anna Segre (Turin), Franca Canigiani (Florence), Paola Bonora (Bologna), Lida Viganoni (Naples), and others.

In a late reflection on the experience, Pasquale Coppola (2007) wrote that GD aimed 'at opposing the signs and reasons for a normalization of the world and its readings' (p. 270). Like their contemporary critical and radical geographers in other countries during the 1970s (Barnes & Sheppard, 2019; Ferretti, 2021; Withers, 2007), GD scholars attempted to defy the disciplinary *status quo* starting from a fierce criticism of the mainstream of that period, whether it was the trivially descriptive approaches or the quantitative elaborations of the 'new geography'. They proposed instead a radically different geographical praxis, aiming to tackle social, political and economic problems of 'late capitalism' (see: V.A., 1975) through an approach that we can vaguely define as neo-Marxist. However, while in Anglo-American geographies Marxism (especially in the USA) provided an alternative frame of reference on which to theoretically define a radical perspective (Peet, 1977), and the anything but consolatory and at times subversive vision of radical geography was about to

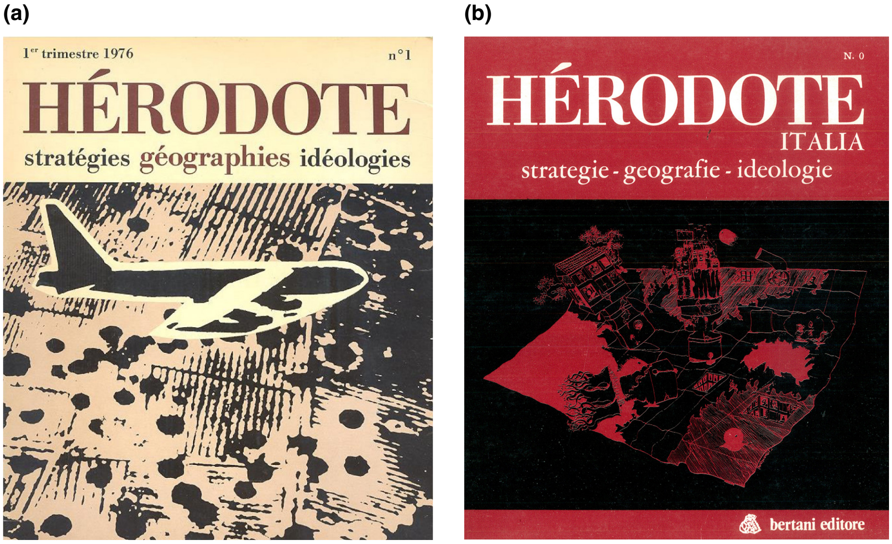

FIGURE 1 Covers of the first issues of the journals *Hérodote*, published in France since 1976, and *Hérodote Italia*, published in Italy since 1978.

become—through an apparent paradox—mainstream (Kitchin, 2005), in Italy this never happened, and a purely Marxist geography was more nuanced, and minoritarian, as well as other critical stances.

In what is probably the closest document to some sort of *manifesto*, shared and signed by all of its (at the time) 32 members,[4] GD declares itself being rooted in 'that tradition which—starting with the Enlightenment, passing through the theoretical and methodological contributions of Marxism', the lesson of the past few scholars 'engaged in solving the problems posed by the geographical environment to human organizations', and of those 'regional geographers with a historicist orientation', conceives geographical formations 'as a matter of social relations, investigates its transformations as part of economic and political processes, and see the territory as a historical fact, which can be consciously transformed acting from within those processes and maintaining at the same time a critical consciousness' (Geografia Democratica, 1979, p. 197). While all members shared a sincere antifascist and leftist orientation, almost inexistent in the Italian geography of that period, the political positions of GD were indeed variegated and vaguely defined. According to Ferretti (2022), such vagueness served to mediate between the two main political positions represented in GD: on the one hand, a non-dogmatic understanding of Marxist theory and method; on the other hand, the federalist and anti-authoritarian republicanism exemplified by Carlo Cattaneo.[5]

Notwithstanding these political differences, such a generous effort to put geographical research at the services of the 'working masses', of the 'struggle for a more just society', and not of those 'dominant groups' that use such knowledge to 'expropriate, exploit and marginalize other social groups'—as the *manifesto* cited above continues—was part of a moment of a collective change, both inside and outside academia. If compared with the sterile and reactionary stance of the Italian geography of the time, the programme was potentially revolutionary. However, the attempt also had its internal weaknesses and ambivalences, and was soon to be 'watered down' by the crisis of radicalism, the political disengagement, and the 'backwash' that followed the 1960s and 1970s socio-political struggles.

3 | THE POLITICS AND PRAXIS OF THE ITALIAN WAY OF BEING CRITICAL

3.1 | Subverting or substituting the academic oligarchy?

GD politics and praxis were first and foremost defined in opposition to the Italian academic *milieu* of the 1970s. What in Italy is particularly evident is that any attempt to renovate the contents of geographical scholarship must also, and primarily, address the conditions for its reproduction within the academia. As already mentioned, the ideologies and epistemologies of GD members were quite diverse. Besides the closeness to the students' and workers' struggles of the time, and the refusal to consider geographical knowledge apolitical and neutral, the main *trait d'union* of the group was the radical intolerance towards the mainstream geography dominant in Italian universities.

The need to struggle against the academic organisation of power also ought to respond to very practical, material conditions. The 'leftist' orientation of GD members was in fact problematic because only two of them were already full professors (Gambi and Dematteis), while the 'oligarchy' which decided who should access academic positions was almost exclusively composed of reactionary or conservative academicians. This issue was repeatedly discussed during almost every GD meeting and became a sort of reference for every move they made, whether it was successful or not. However, this is also one of GD's most debatable legacies. Indeed, the strategy was not to subvert such an oligarchic regime, but to open a more pluralist field, convincing the 'moderated' components of the establishment to allow other voices to be eared. Such strategy, somehow kindred with a Gattopardesque political attitude quite common in Italian power circles and also in academia—namely, that everything must change so that everything stays the same—inevitably limited the depth of GD's revolutionary intents. As dell'Agnese et al. (2021) lamented, whereas some 'heretical geographers' of the time have in the following years 'gained power', they have not done much to challenge the academic system against which they had joined together:

> Their political engagement, both inside and outside of academia, has been largely watered down, if not entirely disappeared. Whether this *imbroglio* of personal intellectual and career trajectories, intellectual ambitions and political commitment has been the result of a strategic appeasement towards 'the establishment' on the part of many protagonists of that season of critical thought, or, instead, the consequence of their penetration and related 'normalisation' in the core of the discipline, is a question that remains unanswered.
>
> (p. 211)

Indeed, while the changes introduced by GD in terms of issues, approaches and openness towards social problems had a profound and long-lasting effect on the renewal of geographical research in Italy, they did not produce any clearly defined paradigmatic shift, despite this being GD's primary aim. Moreover, due to its internal diversity, as well as a good degree of personalism, the group always struggled to express itself as a 'collective'. This is shown, for example, by the difficulties in deciding the aims and contents of a textbook they repeatedly planned to write together, but never did; or by the fact that *Hérodote Italia* was in the end launched by a small subgroup, while GD refused the journal to be considered its 'house organ'. Those controversies, the fact that many members of GD continued to be stigmatised and denied a permanent academic position, and the unresolved tension between strengthening or not strategic alliances with those (powerful) Italian geographers who were sympathetic towards GD but distant from its original spirit, led to the break-up of the collective in 1980–81.[6]

3.2 | For a geography that must be 'critical and operational'

In 1966, referring to Carlo Cattaneo, Lucio Gambi wrote: 'geography is made up of a hub of specific problems and exists in relation to these problems' (Gambi, 1966/1973, p. 205), so that addressing pragmatically specific societal issues is the necessary assumption of the civic and social responsibility of every geographer. This stance was totally embraced by GD members, as shown by the proceedings of a geographical congress organised in Varese in 1980 by the president of the Association of Italian Geographers, Giacomo Corna Pellegrini, to reflect on 'The status of the geographical research in Italy, 1960–1980'. As Dematteis wrote on that occasion:

> To test if geography has a future, one could try to do in the next few years what has largely been lacking up to now, that is, a geography that is both *critical* and *operational*. Critical because it does not only accept to represent reality in the name of a power or a pre-defined social order, without exercising a reflection and a judgment ... Operational because it does not limit to debate and criticise, but wants to practically enter into the geographical conditions of spatial change ... with the social forces involved in the transformation.
>
> (1980a, p. 489)

This somehow 'critically heterodox' claim is further discussed by Dematteis in *Le metafore della terra* (1985), whose main argument is about the role metaphors can play in unmasking the 'normal(ising) geography' that serves merely powerful interests, rendering even the imagining of alternative worlds impossible. According to Dematteis, the critical potentialities of geography are part of its constitutive (and generative) ambivalence: like Janus, the two-faced god, geography is always, at the same time, conservative and radically subversive. Recognising this ambivalence is a political gesture leading to change; hiding it neutralises the critical potentialities of geography and normalises socio-spatial relations. A 'metaphorical geography', Dematteis maintained, lies in that ambivalence, combining what is and what could be, debating certainties, questioning the undisputed and indisputable data with which geographers operate, deconstructing geographic categories, unveiling the unsaid, naming alternatives and revealing the unexpected and the unseen. This quite ambitious programme, which is nothing but politicising geographical knowledge, highlights the intimate links between critical and operational stances, but also the fact that only the practice of a rigorous critique can lead geography, like other social sciences, to reveal its political and social relevance (Coppola, 2009).

Most GD components never ceased to remark on the need to navigate between operational and critical intents. In 1976, for example, the Turin group wrote to the other GD members: 'We realized that, if we want to be "organic" to the class movement, it is not enough to develop a critical knowledge, but we need at the same time to be the technicians of some "practical knowledge"'.[7] On the one hand, this attempt was prefigurative of the more recent debates about public geography, civic engagement, research activism and so on. From a more theoretical point of view, the strain between critical and operational stances is at the centre of the work of Pasquale Coppola (1997, 2009). By referring to Hannah Arendt and utopian theories, as well as to the *Reine Geographie* and Elysée Réclus, Coppola searched for a normative dimension of geographical knowledge and underlined its ethical and civic content, somehow echoing critical realism (Sayer, 1997) as well as the so-called normative turn in the Anglophone radical geography (Olson & Sayer, 2009; Smith, 2009).

On the other hand, a balance between critical and operational stances is not easy to find and preserve. Indeed, the (tense) equilibrium achieved during the 1970s due to the intensity and pervasiveness of the socio-political struggles of the time, as well as the role played by leftist parties in local governments, trickled down during the 1980s. Gradually, the research of some of the previous 'rebels' became more explicitly policy oriented, and such a shift was conceived as a natural evolution of GD, a sort of continuation of its double (and ambivalent) stances (Bonora, 2007; Dematteis, 2007, 2008). Accordingly, such an operational attitude gradually began to overshade the critical one. Fall and Minca (2013) reconstructed this transition especially in Dematteis' work, highlighting a disconnection between *Le metafore della terra* ('delightfully subversive in its project for the future', p. 548) and his subsequent writings (not really mainstream, but certainly less controversial, and a clear expression of a more operational perspective). In a later reflection on the problematic balance between critical and operational stances, Dematteis (2021) maintains that geography ought not only to challenge dominant imaginaries, but also continue the centuries-old tradition of producing 'regional descriptions', representations and 'projects' (p. 26), although those must be 'imaginative and open' (p. 6), evocative of alternative futures, and transformative of existing social/power relations.[8]

The relationship between geography and public policies was in fact a central preoccupation of many GD members from its very first meetings. Geographers, they argued, must even actively seek to work for (local) public authorities through consultancy (contracts) and joint research activities. Surprisingly, the communist Quaini was among the most pressing in this regard, while Gambi was the most perplexed. In one of his books of the time, Quaini engaged critically with his—as well as other Italian radical geographers'—main source of inspiration: Yves Lacoste and French radical geography (Fall, 2007). Applied geographical knowledge, Quaini agreed with Lacoste, often serves the reproduction of dominant social relations, but can and must be practiced differently to serve the empowerment of the working class (Quaini, 1978).

The search for a balance between critical and operational stances, as well as the debate about the relationships between geography and public policies—echoing the famous question by David Harvey (1974) 'What kind of geography for what kind of public policies?'—was also related to the weak public recognition of geography. Differently from other countries, the discipline was not only culturally irrelevant in Italy, but also completely detached from both the institutional sphere and civil society. Therefore, geographers had to demonstrate their 'usefulness', this usefulness being performed in quite different ways, from more trivial works of applied or policy-oriented geography, to more 'critically oriented' forms of social and political engagement (Governa, 2014).

3.3 | Breaking or reconciling with the past?

Such a 'critical and operational' orientation also led many GD members, even the most Marxist, to express a certain intolerance towards theoretical abstraction, or at least to emphasise the need for a close interlink between theorising, empirical research and socio-political action. The 'grand narrative' of Marxism and its excessive structuralism, according to Dematteis (and following Gambi), was to be complemented by 'a geography of problems', of 'territorial actors and their values' (2021, p. 3).

This operation ought also to be based on the recovery of the descriptive regional methods geographers had been practising for centuries, a tradition that Dematteis defines as 'glorious' and that, he continues, goes from Herodotus to the Enlightenment, and then to the French regional geography of Vidal de la Blache, in a sort of extravagant and heterogenous mingling. While in France de la Blache was considered as conservative by the same scholars in touch with GD,[9] such a legacy also served in Italy to emphasise the specificity of geography vis-à-vis other disciplines, in an attempt to 'defend' the role of a marginal and marginalised scholarship within an academic system that was (and still is) rigidly organised according to strict disciplinary boundaries. The regional description, Dematteis wrote in this respect, 'is the essential core of geography—what it does alone, which other disciplines do not', and consequently it is the only *raison d'etre* of geographical scholarship, without which the discipline 'ceases to exist' (1986, p. 100).

Recovering such an 'older' tradition also had some internal objectives. According to the *Hérodote Italia* collective (1981), for example, the traditional regional methods were in fact only apparently endorsed by orthodox Italian geographers of the time, but not really practised and therefore betrayed. The reasons for such betrayal, according to the collective, were to be found in the increasing complexity of the post-war socio-political scenario, which did not allow for a (supposedly) neutral, a-critical and purely 'ecological' approach to fieldwork, such as the one which was popular during Fascism and before. Advocating such an 'older' tradition, to which even the most subversive GD members always remained deeply attached, was therefore both a theoretical stance and a tactic, but inevitably rendered their subversive intents ambivalent.

3.4 | Italian radical geography on the ground

In 1979, GD decided to finally 'come out', that is, to officialise its existence through the organisation of a large scientific event. The conference *L'inchiesta sul terreno in geografia* (Fieldwork in geography; Canigiani et al., 1981) is the first, and actually the only, direct outcome of the GD experience.

Readers who are familiar with the history of Anglophone radical geography can easily appreciate the extraordinary affinities, despite the lack of any direct relationship, with what was happening in the USA or the UK, and also the differences. The idea of a conference on fieldwork was actually suggested by two members of both the GD and *Hérodote Italia* collectives—Sergio Conti and Anna Segre—inspired by the 'geographical expeditions' William Bunge organised in the deprived neighbourhoods of Detroit in the early 1970s (Quaini, 2007, p. 242). However, except for a few hints to Bunge, Harvey or the journal *Antipode*, in the work of many GD members and the material produced by the group, references to Anglophone debates are rare. This lack also has a reason which may seem trivial but is actually crucial: language. Massimo Quaini, for example, did not speak English and could only read the few English works that were translated into Italian or French. He actually engages with both Bunge and Harvey only in 1982, in the afterword to the English translation of his *Marxismo e Geografia* (Geography and Marxism, edited by David Kaplan), proposing a synthesis between the two which, at the time, may have probably sounded complicated.

Again, the choice to focus the conference on fieldwork also had a more tactical and academic-political intent. Internally, it served as a compromise between the diverse articulations of GD—despite the perplexities of some members, particularly Gambi, who refused to give the conference's introductory speech. Externally, the appeal to the 'glorious tradition' of the 'regional description' aimed at 'catching the more traditional geographers off guard', as Dematteis wrote to Gambi in order to justify such a choice.[10] The aim was, additionally, to provide a critique of the supposedly 'new geography' based on quantitative techniques that were also prominent at the time. The strategy was successful: 196 geographers attended the meeting, of which only 32 were GD members. A few non-Italian geographers were also invited, all of whom were from either France or Spain.

The conference organised by GD was an extraordinary anticipation of the 'return to the field', which was at the core of the work of many radical/critical geographers throughout the following years. According to the positions expressed by GD members, fieldwork ought not to be empiricist, technocratic or neutral, but overtly critical (Dematteis, 1981), conducted *with* and *for* its object (Hérodote Italia, 1981), and sensitive to the transcalar, social and power relations that produce specific material conditions (Dematteis, 2021). However, being unable and apparently not really interested in promoting a broader radical/critical turn, also due to the strategic need to smooth out internal and external conflicts, such a 'return to the field' risked paradoxically legitimising the continuation of the sterile descriptivism that GD was born to overthrow. The proceedings of the conference (Canigiani et al., 1981) clearly show the paradox: many of the contributions collected were written by scholars who had nothing to do with GD, lacked the theoretical and methodological tools needed to adopt a critical perspective, and did not share any social engagement nor a political and civic attitude at least consistent with GD's ethos. As a result, controversies and debates such as those about extensive versus intensive research methods, Marxism and critical realism, structuralism versus empiricism (Sayer, 1982; Smith, 1987), remained for the most part undercover in Italy. Very different praxis seemed to be considered not in opposition with each other, but rather only practical orientations that could proceed side by side, depending on the approach of each single scholar. What is certain is that, with the end of GD, the pursuit of a radical/critical turn in Italy ceased to be (and never became again) a collective endeavour.

The reconciliation culminated 1 year after with the participation of many members of GD at the already mentioned conference held in Varese, despite the perplexities of Gambi again. While such a 'peaceful coexistence' among various theoretical and political perspectives may recall the subsequent reconciliations, or even the more recent invitations to 'engaged pluralism' in (Anglophone) geographical scholarship (Barnes & Sheppard, 2010), in Italy the agreement achieved on that occasion inevitably functioned as a compromise between innovators and conservatives. In fact, after that, the various more or the less critical streams of Italian geographical scholarship could be easily absorbed (or subsumed) during the 1980s into what was indeed heralded as a broad and supposedly 'revolutionary' paradigmatic shift: an evolutionary, 'complex', ecological and social approach to regional geography based on Ludwig von Bertalanffy's 'general system theory' (Dematteis, 2008; Vallega, 1989). It goes beyond the possibilities and aims of this article to discuss such a 'systemic turn', which was rather a-critical and ecumenical. What is relevant here is that it inevitably increased the distance between the Italian and international geographical debates in which very different turns occurred, particularly the rise of post-structuralist geographies.

3.5 | Reading Foucault in Italy: An early (and missed) opportunity

A particular anticipation of what might have been, as well as a (missed) encounter, is the one between Italian radical geography and Michel Foucault. In 1976, Foucault took part in an interview with the geographers of the radical French journal *Hérodote*. However, the famous 'Questions from Michel Foucault to Hérodote' only received a few dismissive answers (Fall, 2007). The only Francophone geographer who took Foucault seriously—Claude Raffestin, particularly in his book *Pour une géographie du pouvoir* (Raffestin, 1980)—was indeed marginalised from France. Raffestin's book, on the other hand, was soon translated and well received in Italy, as part of an intense interaction between himself and Italian geographers (particularly from Turin) which continued for years. Raffestin (1997) asked himself (and his French colleagues) if Foucault could have revolutionised geography, and answered (tragically) yes, if (French-speaking) geographers had only accepted 'the gift he offered'. While, as it is well known, at least part of critical Anglophone geography has enthusiastically appropriated Foucault (Crampton & Elden, 2007), the philosopher was not only dismissed by French geographers for a long period, but Raffestin himself was heavily criticised for his use of Foucault (Fall, 2007).

In 1980, the questions from Foucault were translated and published in *Hérodote Italia* (Figure 2) and sent to 300 Italian geographers, but received even fewer answers (only three). The only significant one is from Dematteis. In his answer,

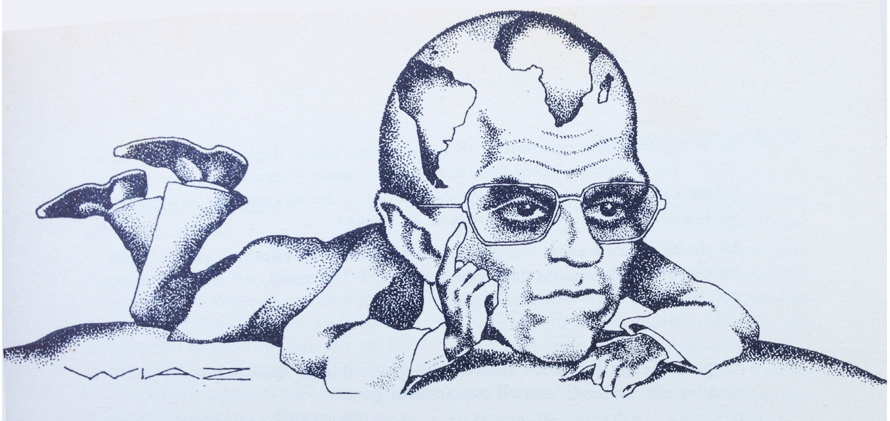

FIGURE 2 Foucault and geography. *Source*: *Hérodote Italia*, 2/3, 1980, p. 7.

significatively titled *Tra Hérodote e Foucault c'è di mezzo Marx* (Between Hérodote and Foucault lies Marx), he wrote: 'if Foucault is to get along with *Hérodote*, he must somehow agree with Marx'; that is, to subordinate his decentred and micro-political theory of power to some 'general rule' of 'global domination'; otherwise the philosopher 'can only be of interest for some phenomenological geographers' (1980b, p. 11).

However, Foucault is frequently cited in the work of Italian radical geographers of the time, particularly in their critique of the 'normal(ising)' geography practised by orthodox geographers, and their supine acquiescence to power (Quaini, 1978). Moreover, the label *Geografia Democratica* was an explicit reference to the Foucault-inspired Italian collectives of *Medicina*, *Psichiatria* or *Geologia democratica* (Quaini, 2007).

One of the most extraordinary and 'hidden' manifestations of this plot is in the afterword that Quaini wrote for the English translation of his *Geography and Marxism* (1982), while what was later defined Post-Marxism was still in its infancy. Quaini criticises orthodox Marxism and—quoting Harvey's *Social justice and the city* (1973)—proposes a synthesis with humanistic and phenomenological geography. The programme, Quaini argued, should be to bridge the gap between scientific geography and the 'spatial imaginary' of 'social subjects', in favour of a 'critical paradigm' that must be based on an 'alliance' between the final conclusions of Marx, and 'the research that Foucault and others are conducting in France' (1982, p. 171).

The journey of 'French theory' around various geographies and turns is also illustrative of the contested evolution of Italian geography after the end of GD, which we can only briefly mention here as it is prefigurative of other 'missing encounters' with Anglophone geography. One of the crucial moments in this regard was the conference on 'Post-modern Geographical Praxis' organised by Claudio Minca in Venice in 1999: one of the few occasions in which Italian geographers could directly engage with many of their leading Anglophone counterparts. The event, however, proved that a proper encounter between these two worlds was challenging, if not impossible, as both were developing along too distant, although sometimes parallel, pathways (Minca, 2000).

In later interventions, Quaini denounces 'the disheartening spectacle of a European philosophy returning to Europe after being watered down on the shores of the Pacific!' (2005, p. 887), and juxtaposes (or mistakes) post-modernism and the cultural turn in geography with the a-critical, a-political, deterministic and 'culturalistic' geography practised in France or Italy by, for example, Paul Claval or Giacomo Corna Pellegrini (Quaini, 2003). Dematteis firmly refuses to allow any association of his *Metafore della terra* to postmodern geography, which he accuses—quoting realist scholars such as Maurizio Ferraris and Hilary Putnam—to be only interested in deconstruction, and being 'irresponsible' and 'apparently devoid of any prescriptive ambition' (Dematteis, 2003, p. 950). The biased way in which previous GD members dismissed the attempt to build a bridge between Italian critical geography and Anglophone postmodern geography brutally interrupted in the bud, and never really allowed to be born, a dialogue with a somehow defined 'cultural turn' in Anglophone geography. Probably this failure is also related to the contested nature of postmodern philosophy in Italy.[11]

The Venetian event proved moreover that any potential dialogue between Anglophone and Italian geography was, at the end of the 1990s, unbearably hierarchical: the former had already gained a dominant position within the so-called 'international debate', from which Italian scholars were basically absent. At the same time, the event also marked the beginning of a new era in which a new community of scholars was in the making who 'are forced continually and inescapably to dialogue/work on two parallel levels—within the context of their own national geographies, with their rules, logics, and languages, but also within the broader international (read Anglo-American) context, with its own logics and its own particular *lingua franca*' (Minca, 2000, p. 287). However, in Italy this shift has rarely led to any serious, widespread debate about how to reposition the past and present of the 'national tradition' in a transnational context, how this tradition differs from or relates to others, leaving it up to any single individual to navigate in such chaos, and producing a variety of very peculiar academic subjects.

4 | WRITING AND WORLDING CRITICAL GEOGRAPHY FROM ITALY

What does it mean to be a critical geographer in Italy, and write critical geographies from Italy? This rather blunt question is not only relevant to Italian geographers. It intertwines with ongoing debates about the uneven spatialities of knowledge production, the reclaimed positionality of scholars contributing to the so-called 'international debate' from the (various) peripheries, the challenge of publishing in the not-so-international journals, the adoption of English as the *lingua franca* and its consequences in terms of normalisation of research and writing, the tension between the pressures towards 'internationalisation' and the preservation of supposedly 'national' legacies (Garcia-Ramon, 2003; Gutierrez & Lopez-Nieva, 2001; McFarlane, 2022; Müller, 2021; Sheppard et al., 2013).

Mapping a somehow coherent figure of Italian geography is still, as Claudio Minca wrote in 2009, 'a rather difficult task' due to the 'seemingly scattered nature of much of the research produced by Italian geographers' (p. 611). According to Minca, Italian geography in the aftermath of the 1970s has been specially marked by a 'double absence', that is, the absence of any legible, codified Italian tradition, and the distance from the canons of Anglophone (critical) geography. Such double absence was at the same time a possibility and a limit. On the one hand, it permitted 'a small group of individuals', who were all more or less actively involved in the GD collective, to express themselves freely allowing, particularly during the 1980s, 'the emergence of moments of exceptional brilliance, in a sea of rather poor scholarship' (Minca, 2005, p. 929). On the other hand, it deprived subsequent generations of any solid ground on which to cultivate a proper alternative, as well as a unified target, against which such an alternative could be opposed to.

These circumstances continued to act both as a possibility and a constraint in more recent times. The most distinctive feature of the last years is the unprecedented practice from some geographers based in Italy to publish in English and then attempt to become part of the 'international' debate, while also continuing to write more or less regularly in Italian; that is, practising some sort of multi-tiered academic citizenship (Aalbers & Rossi, 2007). Such an opening needs to be carefully contextualised as part of a problematic, multilinear, conflictual subsumption of other geographical traditions into the Anglophone universe, marked by both light and shadow (see, for instance, the different accounts by Kong and Qian (2019) and Müller (2021)). This shift, probably less intense in Italy than in other 'semi-peripheral' countries, is due to many different causes: the attractiveness of Anglophone geographies to anyone approaching the discipline from a critical or radical perspective, the pressure to publish in 'top' journals induced by new research and career evaluation methods, the return to Italy of geographers who had started their careers abroad, and the rise of new generations of scholars who are somehow 'born global'.

The relationships of those transnational Italian geographers with their domestic tradition are tenuous, often problematic and certainly un-systematic. They are often trapped in between the 'present absence' of an Italian tradition, and the mimesis of Anglophone models of research and publishing; the need to have a career in Italy (which still often crucially depends on purely local logics) and the quest for a more global audience not just, as Müller (2021) maintained, 'with respect to the odds of getting published, but, even more so, with respect to getting read, cited and—that most prized thing of all—making a difference in academic debates' (p. 1441). Instead of contributing with a specific 'Italian perspective' to a worldwide geographical debate, writing critical geography from Italy risks becoming just the addition of a few indistinguishable voices to an already orchestrated choir. If the outcomes of those non-Anglophone 'incursions' into the 'international' debate are probably increasingly less limited to adding a few (Southern) case studies to the map, a truly transnational critical imagination or global geographical scholarship seems still to be out of reach, since the canons of writing, publishing and citing continues to be confined within the boundaries of the Anglo-American hegemony.

From this perspective, writing today 'from elsewhere' about other critical and radical geographical traditions performs several crucial tasks. Re-reading the experience of GD, in particular, and drawing parallels between the roots of radical geography in Italy and in other countries, aims first at allowing non-Italian scholars to acknowledge and eventually include this history in their archive. However, it is not only an (albeit strongly needed) historiographical account of the plurality of our disciplinary past, but it also serves as some sort of anchor or lifeline for today's Italian critical scholars in their turbulent navigation towards more transnational forms of academic citizenship. In fact, despite the failure of the GD experience in producing a clear radical shift, which had continued to be stubbornly sought by some, while others have quieted down in a weary ecumenism, this experience laid the tracks for those who approached geography in the following years from a critical perspective, however defined, in a semi-peripheral and somewhat closed context like Italy. Recovering this tradition, albeit contested and contestable, requires not considering the reasons of the past (still claimed by some of the protagonists of GD at the time), but reclaiming its legacy for today's positionality of Italian critical geographers, laboriously stretched across various geographical and temporal boundaries.

The biographies of many geographers are today very mobile, composed of research experiences in Italy and abroad, departures and returns, intertwined with the curiosity and attraction of some geographers from various generations towards Anglophone critical geographies. These mobilities, of both bodies and ideas, intertwine life histories and experiences, bridge languages and approaches, celebrate impurity and hybridity, ask for care and reciprocity, imply gains and losses, intersect trajectories and embody a strategy of encounter, which is still far from being clearly defined and realised. The inherent 'globalism' of some of today's Italian geographers is by now a biographical path, but at the same time an epistemological as well as a political choice. It is not merely an issue of adherence, nor simply a gesture towards the adoption of English as the *lingua franca*. It is a struggle to be conducted individually and collectively both beyond and within a multiplicity of borders.

In this, drawing parallels between Anglophone critical and radical geographies and other similar national traditions is particularly salient when it comes to countries where critical stances like those dominant in the Anglophone world are often far from being peacefully accepted, and risk being still marginalised, not (only) because they are heterodox, but because they are heterotrophic, accused of being imported from elsewhere, invasive and disruptive. The experience of GD outlined in the previous sections highlights a different story and calls for overcoming binary distinctions such as native/alien or national/international.

By referring not to abstract constructs, but to the relational unfolding of any research praxis, some still apparently indisputable issues, such as the maintenance of 'national traditions' and the adequacy of the national scale as the right container to catch geographical approaches, show cracks and ask to be questioned, as it has been done, for example, by reframing the ambivalent (and ambiguous) relationships between geography and area studies (Jazeel, 2016; Sidaway, 2013; Sidaway et al., 2016). While surely the national still play a role in power relations both within countries (for example, in bordering strategies aimed to exclude/include from academia) and at supranational scales (for example, in the difficulties many non-Anglo-American geographers face in entering into the citadel), our argument is more theoretical and at the same time ethical and political. If what is at stake is a 'global urban theory' and the opening of critical geographical imaginations (Lancione & McFarlane, 2021; Robinson, 2022), how can we imagine and practice the relations between the national and the global? So far, in Italy, as probably elsewhere, the answers to this question have been dismissive and characterised by awkward attempts to 'save' a supposedly unified 'Italian' geography, ignoring its pluriversal past, and without reflecting properly on the consequences of internationalisation on the contents of (critical) geographical scholarship. By recovering the history of GD, we suggest a different answer, one according to which 'our own' tradition must not be protected, but critically reclaimed, revived and enacted as a possible way to be, at the same time, radically positioned and radically open, transcalar rather than multi-tiered. The ultimate ambition is to contribute—from Italy as from elsewhere—to overcome the physical, cultural, historical, epistemological and mental boundaries in which we still move, defying the 'abyssal thinking' (de Sousa Santos, 2007) and the myriad of distinctions, visible and invisible, which limit our ability to imagine alternatives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank Giuseppe Dematteis for the invaluable work he did in assembling the archive of original material about *Geografia Democratica* upon which this article is predominantly based, and Michele Lancione, Colin McFarlane, Claudio Minca, and the anonymous reviewer, for the precious support they gave us in developing the article. The usual disclaimer applies.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data sharing not applicable—no new data generated.

ORCID

Filippo Celata https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4030-3244

ENDNOTES

[1] Similarly to Ferretti (2020), we adopt the expression 'critical and radical geography' at large to comprehend every critical stance in geographical scholarship. This broad understanding skips searching for a strict correspondence in the meaning of these expressions between the Anglo-American and 'other' geographies, and acknowledges the issues of languages and translation as part of a longstanding debate on the so-called Anglo-American hegemony in geography (Belina, 2005; Garcia-Ramon, 2003; Gutierrez & Lopez-Nieva, 2001; Kitchin, 2005; Müller, 2021).

[2] The archive includes the minutes of the meetings and some letters exchanged between the various scholars involved in GD, complemented by a synthesis of this material compiled by Giuseppe Dematteis, and referred to in the footnotes as 'Dematteis's notes', pp. 1–57. The archive will soon be deposited and accessible at the historical archives of the Società Geografica Italiana in Rome (Italy). The authors also had several conversations through the years with some of the GD components, on both public and private occasions, nevertheless getting a feeling of crushing into a wall made of inconsistencies, occlusions and resentments. In previous works, both the authors of this article undertook to reconstruct a history of GD and its contemporary legacy, also based on interviews, e-mail exchanges and informal conversations with former GD members (see: Celata, 2021a, 2021b; Governa, 2007) which, however, left many questions unanswered.

[3] As noted by Fall and Minca (2013), the label 'critical geography' makes Dematteis' stance understandable to English-speaking geographers; moreover, Dematteis himself defined his geography as 'critical' (Dematteis, 1985: 165, endnote VII).

[4] The text first appeared on the fourth page of the first announcement for the only scientific event organised by *Geografia Democratica* as a collective, in 1979 (the event is discussed in the next section), and was published in the second issue of the journal *Hérodote Italia*.

[5] Carlo Cattaneo was a prominent figure of the Italian *Risorgimento* of the nineteenth century that lead to the formation of the Italian nation-state. According to Thom (2001), he shared the Enlightenment reformers' ideals for empirically informed, 'scientific' policy-making. But he can hardly be classified in just one stream of thinking: he was a positivist, a man of Romanticism, a liberal and a democratic federalist. The manifold legacy of Carlo Cattaneo is also related to the democratic reconstruction after fascism and to various democratic politicians, thinkers and experiences (such as Piero Gobetti, Luigi Einaudi, Norberto Bobbio, the already mentioned 'Partito d'Azione' and the Resistance movement 'Giustizia e Libertà'). Norberto Bobbio (1971) presented the philosophy of Carlo Cattaneo as a 'militant philosophy', basically an anti-metaphysical, anti-dogmatic and deeply libertarian 'assemblage' of advice, doubts and stimuli for progressive political action.

[6] In the material prepared for one of its very last meetings, in 1980, Dematteis clearly envisioned the risk that GD had ultimately 'opposed the academic logic only in words' or, worse, could become just 'one of the various tiny academic *mafias*, furthermore with a progressive trademark (!)'. 'Which part of our program can we actually realize', he asked, 'if we accept tactically to operate within the logic of the university and of the geographic corporation?' (Dematteis' notes, p. 52).

[7] Letter of the Turin group to *Geografia Democratica*, November 1976 (Dematteis' notes, p. 8).

[8] The ambiguity of this position, that according to the review of *Le Metafore della terra* written by Franco Farinelli (1987) is nothing but a weak critique to positivism, is further discussed in Fall and Minca (2013).

[9] Yves Lacoste, for instance, in the first edition of *La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre* (Lacoste, 1976), reproached Vidal for his apolitical idea of geography. However, this negative judgement was later revised by Lacoste, so as to promote in 1994 the re-edition of *La France de l'Est* (originally published by Vidal in 1917); a self-critique of Lacoste in this regard was also published in *Hérodote* in Lacoste (1979).

[10] Letter of Giuseppe Dematteis to Lucio Gambi, 25 July 1978 (Dematteis' notes, p. 38).

[11] See, in particular, the controversies between Gianni Vattimo, the theoretician of 'weak thought' (Vattimo & Rovatti, 1983), and Maurizio Ferraris, a former student of Vattimo and subsequently one of the main advocates of the so-called 'new realism' (Ferraris, 2012), who were both professors of philosophy at the University of Turin.

REFERENCES

Aalbers, M.B. & Rossi, U. (2007) A coming community: Young geographers coping with multi-tier spaces of academic publishing across Europe. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 8(2), 283–302. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360701360220

Barnes, T.J. & Sheppard, E. (2010) 'Nothing includes everything': Towards engaged pluralism in Anglophone economic geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34(2), 193–214. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132509343728

Barnes, T.J. & Sheppard, E. (Eds.). (2019) *Spatial histories of radical geography: North America and beyond*. Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Belina, B. (2005) Anglophones: If you want us to understand you, you will have to speak understandably! *Antipode*, 37(5), 853–855. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0066-4812.2005.00534.x

Berg, L.D. (2004) Scaling knowledge: Towards a critical geography of critical geographies. *Geoforum*, 35(5), 553–558. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2004.01.005

Bobbio, N. (1971) *Una filosofia militante. Studi su Carlo Cattaneo [A militant philosophy. Studies on Carlo Cattaneo]*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi.

Bonora, P. (2007) Territorialità attiva, partecipazione, alternative allo sviluppo [Active territoriality, participation, alternatives to development]. In: Dansero, E., Di Meglio, G., Donini, E. & Governa, F. (Eds.) *Geografia, società, politica: La ricerca in geografia come impegno sociale [Geography, society, politics: Geographical research as social engagement]*. Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli, pp. 255–260

Canigiani, F., Carazzi, M. & Grottanelli, E. (Eds.). (1981) *L'inchiesta sul terreno in geografia [Fieldwork in Geography]*. Torino, Italy: Giappichelli.

Cavallo, F. (2007) Quelle insegne un po' scomode e parecchio ingombranti. Appunti su Geografia Democratica [Those rather thorny and very cumbersome posters. Notes on Geografia Democratica]. *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 114(1), 1–25.

Celata, F. (2021a) Intorno a Geografia democratica. Fra Marx e Foucault, l'Italia e l'Ammerica [Around Geografia Democratica. Between Marx and Foucault, Italy and 'Ammerica']. In: Cevasco, R., Gemignani, C.A., Poli, D. & Rossi, L. (Eds.) *Il pensiero critico fra geografia e scienza del territorio. Scritti su Massimo Quaini [Critical thinking between geography and spatial science: Writings on Massimo Quaini]*. Firenze, Italy: Firenze University Press, pp. 37–48.

Celata, F. (2021b) Dopo Geografia democratica: Considerazioni eretiche sulle geografie critiche laterali di Giuseppe Dematteis [After Geografia Democratica: Heretical reflections on the critical lateral geographies of Giuseppe Dematteis]. *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 128(4), 144–149. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0066-4812.2005.00534.x

Coppola, P. (1997) *Geografia politica delle regioni italiane [Political geography of the Italian regions]*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi.

Coppola, P. (2007) Foto di gruppo arrabbiato e felice [Angry and happy in an old group picture]. In: Dansero, E., Di Meglio, G., Donini, E. & Governa, F. (Eds.) *Geografia, società, politica [Geography, society, politics]*. Franco Angeli: Milano, Italy, pp. 269–273.

Coppola, P. (2009) Geografia e impegno civile [Geography and civic engagement]. *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, XIII(II), 7–11.

Craggs, R. & Neate, H. (2020) What happens if we start from Nigeria? Diversifying histories of geography. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 110(3), 899–916. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2019.1631748

Crampton, J.W. & Elden, S. (2007) *Space, knowledge and power: Foucault and geography*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.

de Sousa Santos, B. (2007) Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledges. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, 30(1), 45–89. Available from: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315634876-14

dell'Agnese, E., Minca, C. & di Friedberg, M.S. (2021) Italian critical geographies: A historical perspective. In: Berg, L.D., Best, U., Gilmartin, M. & Larsen, H.G. (Eds.) *Placing critical geography: Historical geographies of critical geography*. London, UK: Routledge, pp. 202–222.

Dematteis, G. (1980a) La risposta dei geografi ai problemi di conoscenza posti dallo sviluppo della società italiana [Geographers' response to the knowledge problems posed by the development of Italian society]. In: Corna Pellegrini, G. & Brusa, C. (Eds.) *La ricerca geografica in Italia 1960–1980 [The status of the geographical research in Italy, 1960–1980]*. Varese, Italy: Ask Edizioni, pp. 483–489.

Dematteis, G. (1980b) Tra Foucault e Hérodote c'è di mezzo Marx [Between Hérodote and Foucault lies Marx]. *Hérodote Italia*, 2/3, 9–13.

Dematteis, G. (1981) L'inchiesta sul terreno per una conoscenza e una gestione democratica del territorio [On doing fieldwork to know and manage democratically the territory]. In: Canigiani, F., Carrazi, M. & Grottanelli, E. (Eds.) *L'inchiesta sul terreno in geografia [Fieldwork in Geography]*. Torino, Italy: Giappichelli, pp. 1–8.

Dematteis, G. (1985) *Le metafore della terra. La geografia umana tra mito e scienza [The metaphors of the earth. Human geography between myth and science]*. Milano, Italy: Feltrinelli.

Dematteis, G. (1986) Nella testa di Giano. Riflessioni sulla geografia poetica [In the head of Janus. Reflections on poetic geography]. *Urbanistica*, 82, 100–107.

Dematteis, G. (2003) La metafora geografica è postmoderna? [Is geographic metaphor postmodern?]. *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana*, 12(8), 947–954.

Dematteis, G. (2007) Inseguire i fantasmi o stare dentro al mondo? [Chasing ghosts or being inside the world?]. In: Dansero, E., Di Meglio, G., Donini, E. & Governa, F. (Eds.) *Geografia, società, politica [Geography, society, politics]*. Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli, pp. 275–277.

Dematteis, G. (2008) Zeus, le ossa del bue e la verità degli aranci. Biforcazioni geografiche [Zeus, the bones of the ox and the truth of the orange trees. Geographical bifurcations]. *Ambiente, Società, Territorio*, 53(3–4), 3–13.

Dematteis, G. (2021) *Geografia come immaginazione. Tra piacere della scoperta e ricerca di futuri possibili [Geography as imagination. Between the pleasure of discovery and the search for possible futures]*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.

Driver, F. (2013) Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38(3), 420–435. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00529.x

Fall, J. (2007) Lost geographers: Power games and the circulation of ideas within francophone geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(2), 195–216. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132507075369

Fall, J. & Minca, C. (2013) Not a geography of what doesn't exist, but a counter-geography of what does. Rereading Giuseppe Dematteis' *Le Metafore della Terra*. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(4), 542–563. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132512463622

Farinelli, F. (1987) Review to: Giuseppe Dematteis, "Le metafore della terra: La geografia umana tra mito e scienza". *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 94, 211–214.

Farinelli, F. (2006) A proposito di Geografia Democratica [On Geografia Democratica]. *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 113(1), 163–165.

Ferraris, M. (2012) *Manifesto del nuovo realismo*. Roma-Bari, Italy: Laterza. [English translation: *Manifesto of new realism*. New York, NY: Suny].

Ferretti, F. (2019) Rediscovering other geographical traditions. *Geography Compass*, 13(3), 1–15. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12421

Ferretti, F. (2020) Commentary. Book review forum: Spatial history of radical geographies: North America and beyond. *The AAG Review of Books*, 8(4), 236–258. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/2325548X.2020.1781463

Ferretti, F. (2021) History and philosophy of geography II: Rediscovering individuals, fostering interdisciplinarity and renegotiating the 'margins'. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(4), 890–901. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520973750

Ferretti, F. (2022) Indignation, civic virtue, and the right of resistance: Critical geography and antifascism in Italy. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 112(7), 1833–1849. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2022.2036091

Foucault, M. (1976) Des questions de Michel Foucault à Hérodote [Questions from Michel Foucault to Hérodote]. *Hérodote*, 3, 9–10.

Gambi, L. (1962/1973) Geografia regione depressa [Geography as a backward region]. In: Gambi, L. (Ed.) *Una geografia per la storia [A geography for history]*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi, pp. 38–64.

Gambi, L. (1966/1973) Generi di vita o strutture sociali? [Life genres or social structures?]. In: Gambi, L. (Ed.) *Una geografia per la storia [A geography for history]*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi, pp. 197–208.

Garcia-Ramon, M.D. (2003) Globalization and international geography: The questions of languages and scholarly traditions. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27(1), 1–5. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1191/0309132503ph409xx

Geografia Democratica. (1979) Che cos'è Geografia Democratica [What is Geografia Democratica?]. *Hérodote Italia*, 1, 197–199.

Governa, F. (2007) Ricordando Geografia Democratica: Ripensare il passato per immaginare il futuro [Recalling Geografia Democratica: rethinking the past to imagine the future]. In: Dansero, E., Di Meglio, G., Donini, E. & Governa, F. (Eds.) *Geografia, società, politica [Geography, society, politics]*. Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli, pp. 237–240.

Governa, F. (2014) *Tra geografia e politiche. Ripensare lo sviluppo locale [Between geography and policies. Rethinking local development]*. Roma, Italy: Donzelli.

Gutierrez, J. & Lopez-Nieva, P. (2001) Are international journals of human geography really international? *Progress in Human Geography*, 25(1), 53–69. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1191/030913201666823316

Harvey, D. (1973) *Social justice and the city*. London and Baltimora, MD: Edward Arnold and Johns Hopkins University Press.

Harvey, D. (1974) What kind of geography for what kind of public policy? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 63, 18–24. Available from: https://doi.org/10.2307/621527

Hérodote Italia. (1981) Fonti e metodi alternativi nell'inchiesta geografica [Alternative sources and methods in geographical research]. In: Canigiani, F., Carazzi, M. & Grottanelli, E. (Eds.) *L'inchiesta sul terreno in geografia [Fieldwork in geography]*. Torino, Italy: Giappichelli, pp. 287–324.

Jazeel, T. (2016) Between area and discipline: Progress, knowledge production and the geographies of geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(5), 649–667. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515609713

Katz, C. (2017) Revisiting minor theory. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 35(4), 596–599. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817718012

Keighren, I.M. (2018) History and philosophy of geography II: The excluded, the evil, and the anarchic. *Progress in Human Geography*, 42(5), 770–778. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517730939

Kitchin, R. (2005) Disrupting and destabilizing Anglo-American and English-language hegemony in geography. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6(1), 1–15. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936052000335937

Kong, L. & Qian, J. (2019) Knowledge circulation in urban geography/urban studies, 1990–2010: Testing the discourse of Anglo-American hegemony through publication and citation patterns. *Urban Studies*, 56(1), 44–80. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098017717205

Lacoste, Y. (1976) *La géographie, ça sert, d'abord, à faire la guerre [Geography is all about making war]*. Paris, France: Éditions Maspero.

Lacoste, Y. (1979) À bas Vidal ? Viva Vidal! [Down with Vidal? Viva Vidal!]. *Hérodote*, 16, 68–81.

Lancione, M. & McFarlane, C. (Eds.). (2021) *Global urbanism: Knowledge, power and the City*. London, UK: Routledge.

McFarlane, C. (2022) Geography in the world. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(1), 2–8. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12497

Minca, C. (2000) Venetian geographical praxis. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18(3), 285–289. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1068/d1803ed

Minca, C. (2005) Italian cultural geography, or the history of a prolific absence. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 6(6), 927–949. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/14649360500353400

Minca, C. (2009) Italian language geography. In: Kitchin, R. & Thrift, N. (Eds.) *International encyclopedia of human geography*, Vol. 5. Oxford, UK: Elsevier, pp. 611–615.

Müller, M. (2021) Worlding geography: From linguistic privilege to decolonial anywheres. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(6), 1440–1466. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520979356

Olson, E. & Sayer, A. (2009) Radical geography and its critical standpoints: Embracing the normative. *Antipode*, 41(1), 180–198. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2008.00661.x

Oswin, N. (2020) An other geography. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 10(1), 9–18. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820619890433

Peet, R. (1977) The development of radical geography in the United States. *Progress in Human Geography*, 1(2), 240–263. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/030913257700100203

Quaini, M. (1974) *Marxismo e geografia*. Firenze, Italy: La Nuova Italia [English translation: Geography and Marxism, Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1982).

Quaini, M. (1978) *Dopo la geografia [After Geography]*. Roma, Italy: L'Espresso.

Quaini, M. (1982) Towards a Marxist geography. In: Quaini, M. (Ed.) *Geography and Marxism*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 144–171.

Quaini, M. (2003) Postmodernismo o rivisitazione critica della modernità? Ovvero è mai esistita una geografia veramente moderna? [Postmodernism or a critical reinterpretation of modernity? Or has a truly modern geography ever existed?]. *Bollettino della Societa Geografica Italiana*, 12-8(4), 981–988.

Quaini, M. (2005) Geografia culturale o geografia critica? Per una discussione sulle più recenti mode culturali in geografia [Cultural geography or critical geography? For a discussion of the latest cultural fashions in geography]. *Bollettino della Societa Geografica Italiana*, 12-10(4), 881–888.

Quaini, M. (2006) La veridica storia del signor Vetrata [The truthfull story of Mr Vetrata]. *Rivista Geografica Italiana*, 113(2), 355–358.

Quaini, M. (2007) Riflessioni post-marxiste sul fantasma di Geografia Democratica [Post-Marxist reflections on the ghost of Geografia Democratica]. In: Dansero, E., Di Meglio, G., Donini, E. & Governa, F. (Eds.) *Geografia, società, politica [Geography, society, politics]*. Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli, pp. 241–254.

Radcliffe, S.A. (2022) *Decolonizing geography: An introduction*. Cambridge, UK: John Wiley & Sons.

Raffestin, C. (1980) *Pour une géographie du pouvoir [For a geography of power]*. Paris, France: Litec.

Raffestin, C. (1997) Foucault aurait-il pu révolutionner la géographie? [Could Foucault have revolutionised geography?]. In: Rotmann, R. (Ed.) *Au risque de Foucault [At the risk of Foucault]*. Paris, France: Centre Georges Pompidou, pp. 141–149.

Robinson, J. (2003) Postcolonialising geography: Tactics and pitfalls. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 24(3), 273–289. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9493.00159

Robinson, J. (2022) *Comparative urbanism: Tactics for global urban studies*. Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Rossi, U. (2008) Pasquale Coppola (1943–2008). *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(6). Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/03091325080320060901

Sayer, A. (1982) Explanation in economic geography: Abstraction versus generalization. *Progress in Human Geography*, 6(1), 68–88. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/030913258200600103

Sayer, A. (1997) Critical realism and the limits to critical social science. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 27(4), 473–488. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5914.00052

Sheppard, E., Leitner, H. & Mariganti, A. (2013) Provincializing global urbanism: A Manifesto. *Urban Geography*, 34(7), 893–900. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2013.807977

Sidaway, J.D. (2013) Geography, globalization, and the problematic of area studies. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 103(4), 984–1002. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2012.660397

Sidaway, J.D., Ho, E.L., Rigg, J.D. & Woon, C.Y. (2016) Area studies and geography: Trajectories and manifesto. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34(5), 777–790. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/026377581665652

Smith, N. (1987) Dangers of the empirical turn: Some reflections upon the CURS initiative. *Antipode*, 19(1), 59–68. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.1987.tb00149.x

Smith, S.J. (2009) Everyday morality: Where radical geography meets normative theory. *Antipode*, 41(1), 206–209. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8330.2008.00664.x

Soja, E.W. (1989) *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. New York, NY: Verso.

Sundberg, J. (2014) Decolonizing posthumanist geographies. *Cultural Geographies*, 21(1), 33–47. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/1474474013486067

Thom, M. (2001) 'Liberty and truth' or 'the sovereignty of reason': Carlo Cattaneo and the place of politics in the modern world. *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 6(2), 178–194. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/13545710122470

Tranfaglia, N. & Mantelli, B. (1999) Apogeo e collasso della 'città fabbrica': Torino dall'autunno caldo alla sconfitta operaia del 1980 [Rise and fall of the 'factory city': Turin from the 'hot fall' to the workers' defeat]. In: Tranfaglia, N. (Ed.) *Storia di Torino. Gli anni della Repubblica [History of Turin. The years of the Republic]*. Torino, Italy: Einaudi, pp. 444–450.

V.A. (1975) *Colloquio sulle basi teoriche della ricerca geografica*. Colloque sur les fondements théoriques de la recherche en Géographie. Dégioz (Valle d'Aosta), 11–12 ottobre 1974. Torino, Italy: Giappichelli.

Vallega, A. (1989) *Compendio di geografia regionale*. [Compendium of regional geography] Milano, Italy: Mursia.

Van Meeteren, M. (2019) On geography's skewed transnationalization, Anglophone hegemony, and qualified optimism toward an engaged pluralist future; a reply to Hassink, Gong and Marques. *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, 23(2), 181–190. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/12265934.2018.1467273

Vattimo, G. & Rovatti, P.A. (Eds.). (1983) *Il pensiero debole*. Milano, Italy: Feltrinelli. [English translation: *Weak though*. New York, NY: Suny].

Withers, C.W.J. (2007) History and philosophy of geography 2004–2005: Biographies, practices, sites. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(1), 67–76. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132507073537

How to cite this article: Celata, F. & Governa, F. (2023) Reclaiming other geographical traditions: The hidden roots of Italian radical geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 00, 1–15. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12634