

THE CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY IN PALERMO

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I think I was the first one to talk, with calculated risk, of a school of thought about cultural geography in Palermo. I spoke about it for the first time during a meeting held at the Sorbonne under the brilliant supervision of Paul Claval. On that occasion I registered the ill-concealed annoyance of some American colleagues on hearing that on the periphery there was a movement towards the new cultural geography which was a breath of fresh air for the geographical knowledge common at the end of the millennium.

Later, with a series of reflections titled, not coincidentally, *La geografia culturale in un frammento di storia locale* [Cultural geography found in a fragment of local history], I tried to identify the combination of internal and external geographical reasons which during the Seventies endorsed the emergence of a renewed interest in the cultural tradition of geography within the academic reality of the University of Palermo. Here on the one hand there was a long-established tradition in anthropological research with a noticeable tendency to the Gramsci approach, and on the other a knowledgeable structuralist experimentalism.

I will not add anything else to what has already been said about the topic. As today even the words 'school of thought' make me feel uncomfortable, or rather they convince me that the phase of emergence is over, and that the will to move to the normalization phase is moving forward. And that will, after having taken all the experiences in intellectually, hand them over to the showcases of the subject's history.

But this approach can not be shared by those who have considered the cultural turn made by geography as the opening of its post modern stage, with all the liberties it allows but also with the prohibition to follow the paths of epistemology still meant in a positivistic sense.

I will just tell you that the adventure is still continuing for me, in the memory of a colleague, Costantino Caldo, who, earlier than many others, was able to see the new perspectives of the geography consciously seen as a human science, grafted onto different cultures and producing meanings rather than just reflecting them.

I am sure that the colleagues I represent here will identify, on this point at least, more with the idea of a path we regenerate day by day than with a school of thought. *Voilà ma route, quelle est la votre? Ainsi répondais-je à ceux qui me demandaint. La route, autrement dit, n'existe pas* (F.W. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*).

