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# On Boundaries[1]

Abstract. Georgaphy's relation to thinking is much closer than we sometimes would believe. What we traditionally call 'thinking' is based on a spatial metaphoric that visualizes thoughts as solid identities related in absolute space, forming regions or fields. Different traditions of thought differ in the way they conceive the line that surrounds them, for example, as a limit, a boundary or a ditch. In the paper the author tries to find out if thinking has to be limited by such lines. In order to do this, the author balances on the boundary, that is, stays in the paradox. If such a meaningless statement can succeed in becoming meaningful movement, thinking could show that, even though it depends on topo-logic, it can in fact exceed it. This may lead in the direction of a different conception of 'knowledge' and 'communication', a questioning of the idea of an ontology/epistemology, or of politics. They are not fully developd here, but it is presumed that to do this one would need a twofold move: Question the spatial metaphors in which binary oppositions take place to show what is underneath, and, at the same time, trust poetry.

> Nobody who does not think geometrically may enter!
> (Inscription at the gate of the Platonic Academy).

> "It is infinity, which is the original fact: Explain we must, where the finite comes from."
> (F. Nietzsche, 1896, p. 210, Transl. D.R.)

My aim is to undermine what I am writing on: boundary lines. And I shall not confine myself, not fear to experiment. I will try not to write *about* boundaries only, but also *from* boundaries, from out there, from the border regions of geography and the rich lands at the margins of academic papers. Out of the distance the contours of the geography of

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[1] "Why is it that, even thinking most abstractly, we still think in geometrical pictures?" he asked. "I am not thinking in geometrical forms", she told me. For Gunnar Olsson and Vreni Meier who raised the question. An early version of this paper was presented at the Anglo-Austrian Seminar for Geography and Social Theory, Zell/Moos, October 1988

boundaries and the boundaries of geography become visible. And it is not just about, or from, boundaries, but also *on* boundaries that I write, balance on this thin, unstable line in which form and content meet in an affair called geography, line in which they touch in their desire and their refusal to surrender. It is one of these lines, dripping lines, saturated with meaning, boundaries, bounds of convention, limits of the sayable, trace of a dialectic between inside and outside, penumbra in which identity and difference merge, thin line covering vast power, phallolinear mark, this bar, dark bar of rebels, place of taboo, where, demanding all her father's wisdom, she asks to go, led by the trust of the man who refused to lead. Went, gone. Gone? I ask you: Is it not time to slash Janus's face? One sudden stroke, cut with sugar. Is it not time to blow up this bar, cast of our thoughts, form rating so highly?

*In other words*: Is it not time to question the metaphor of the boundary line? Is it not time to question human science's thinking in terms of lines, delimiting immaterial thoughts like material things, locating relations like objects, drawing geographies of ideas...? It is particularly in the best works in social theory, philosophy, and human geography that this becomes clear: the extent to which thinking is bound in the picture of the geometrical line. Is this spatial metaphor appropriate for the subject matter they are concerned with? Does it not, relying on the logic of the eyes, on visual things rather than on invisible relations, lay the basis for the very reification they seek to undermine? Does it not, implying a particular, physical idea of being, force thoughts into the very coherence and historical stability it seeks to question? This is what I am really concerned with when writing about boundaries, asking if we should not reconsider this secret reliance on geometrical metaphors, our thinking of thoughts in spatial terms, asking about the necessity of that reliance on a topo-logic ... my reliance on a topo-logic, the very boundary metaphor I stressed in the beginning of the paper. I offered you these two pictures: that of the limits of geography and margins of academic papers, boundaries delimiting a specific content or form; and this other one, the line which hermetically closes off a coming together of form and content, these powerful Swedish bars and the straight scars

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on the cheek, stigma of disobedient women, marking those who went too far walking the line. Two boundary metaphors employed by topo-logical thinking. Were they empty word-play? Or even worse, did I try to bind you with hidden meaning? Maybe. But I do not regret it, quite the opposite. I will go on like this, will try to draw you even further into my boundary pictures, into the landscape of spatial metaphors. I am evil. And - I want to show you the wealth of that which I am questioning, want to tell you why I value so highly this damned tradition of the boundary metaphor. After all, how could I criticize what I do not respect?

The subject is the *limit* of the world, Wittgenstein says in his search for the limits of the sayable, for the boundary between meaningful statement and meaningful movement (1982, sections 5.62 and 5.632). But he was not the first one to use spatial metaphors and to be obedient to the silent demands of a topo-logic. There is no first one, so deeply is this metaphor rooted in a tradition of metaphysics, a tradition of metaphysics-critique, so old that Gaston Bachelard can wonder if a metaphysician could think at all, if he could not draw. With discontent he concludes that, for their concise description, "many metaphysical systems would [merely] need mapping" (1969, p.212). And that was tried indeed, and no wonder. It was a geographer who drew the map of "the solemn geographies of human limits" (as Eluard calls them) and built a world on it: On the limits of human knowledge Kant based our possibility to know. Having lost security in the relation between belief and the transcendental absolute, modernity - still demanding absolute guarantees for security - engaged in a relationship between reason[2] and

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[2] This connection between reason and immanent limits to knowledge was not yet made by Descartes. To him, knowledge of the world was not necessarily broken, no a-priori limits hindered experience, and deception, in the end, was the Demon's accomplishment. In Blumenberg (1983, p.219) I read about Leibniz (1692) criticising Descartes's concept of reason's relation to reality: "The supposed disagreement between our conception of a nature independent of our consciousness and that which exists in itself need not be deception. It

the certainty of a priori limits to knowledge. Unfortunately the universal guarantees for the specific need did not hold. It turned out: Reason defining limits when limits define reason cannot provide a solid foundation. Whatever you may think of it: Foucault's backside was sensitive enough to feel the threat of antinomies (1974, p.389): "We think of ourselves as bound to a limit which is ours and ours alone, and which through knowledge discloses the world. But don't we have to remind ourselves that we are sitting on the back of a tiger?"

Your limit cannot really be a limit for you, Hegel argued against Kant[3], and in perfect logical consequence he turned his limit into a frontier and pushed it forward in dialectical progression. The security lying behind that move was another one: absolute reason, in which the old dualism of limit and reason would fuse. Today we have become suspicious about this promise. "Contemporary contradictions frequently exceed the dialectical scheme's capacity for reconciliation", a friend of mine once told me[4]. (This had nothing to do with me of course.) We all have come to wonder about reason's relation to domination. We question reason's authority to set limits and - employing sophisticated reasoning - try to set limits to reason. This paradox is called postmodernism. Their modern "postmodernism". Refusing obedience to the demands of categorization, my writing - where honest enough - nevertheless  turns

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[3]   need not be deception, because it is just a particular interpretation of that conception to lay claim to such an agreement." (Transl. D.R.)
Hegel (1975, par. 60): "In every dualistic system, and especially in that of Kant, the fundamental defect makes itself visible in the inconsistency of unifying at one moment what a moment before had been explained to be independent and therefore incapable of unification. ... It argues an utter want of consistency to say, on the one hand, that the understanding only knows phenomena, and, on the other, assert the absolute character of this knowledge, by such statements as 'cognition can go no further';"... No one knows, or even feels, that anything is a limit or defect, until he is at the same time above and beyond it."

[4]   H. Hrachovec (1984, p.59):"Die zeitgenössischen Widersprüche überfordern die Kapazität des dialektischen Schemas an vielen Stellen."

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out to be of this mode: It also is paradox, relying on a topo-logic, the very logic it is directed against. (If, however, meaningless statement would succeed in becoming meaningful movement, writing would show that, in-fact, it exceeds topo-logic.)

> Lasting, in this self-deconst...decomposition is alone the hope that it could be driven by something else. A hope? Can it support the deeper hope that this recognition could lead towards unbroken harmony? Or can it support - at least - the certainty of the wise woman who no longer lives for happy ends, but gropes her way along this fissure which unavoidably - as it seems - distances her self-consciousness from the whole that she is? Or is there no hope, not the ray of a hope, not the thin line, the threa-t of the hope, no need to hope, because it already is, is wide, open, infinite...?

In all this I forgot to say what I mean by topo-logic: I do not mean topology[5], and not topologic logic [6] in a strict sense, but a particular way of conceiving *identity*, a particular idea of what it depends on that something is called something and not somethought else. Grasping identity in topo-logical terms is locating it in some *constant* position in an ordering-framework[7]. It is a *common* framework which is *independent* of the identities it defines. A grid, in which each identity, like a *solid* body with a more or less fuzzy boundary, occupies one

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[5] Topology is a field of mathematics and geometry, in which concern is not about the shape and size of geometrical configurations, but with the structure of their connectivity, i.e. the relations between the points of a configuration. (See: Tucker, A. and Bailey, M. (1950))

[6] Like many-valued logic, temporal logic or deontic logic, topologic logic is an alternative to traditional formal logic. It is a more abstract form of temporal logic (See W. Stegmüller, 1979, 2, p.147ff, and N. Rescher and A. Urquart (1971)).

[7] See B. Werlen (1987) for geographical and other spaces as such ordering frameworks: Based on a Popperian 3-"world" (!) ontology he argues that one cannot locate elements of the social or mental "world" in a geographical ordering frame. I agree, but go further to question his suggestion of using other, specific ordering spaces ("spatial metaphors" in my terms) for these "worlds".

specific, *unequivocal* region.

It is in this form that we usually think about material objects in the so called "absolute" geographical space-time. But it is also by this metaphorical picture that we describe thoughts and ideas. We use spatial metaphors in defining concepts through their extension, intension, or through the hierarchy of regions called "genus proximum et differentia specifica", we use them to provide the setting for mathematical and logical arguments, and we make them explicit when talking about "a field of research", "the frontier of knowledge", "the boundary between world-views", "the distance between cultures", "the limits of reason", "Bewußtseinsräume", "realms of thought". Structuralistic definition of elements, Saussurean definition of signs through signifiers and signifieds is another example: Determining identity by the crossing of two sets of differences presupposes a space that these differences are stretching in. Does the structuralist's conception rely on the "container" of an ordering frame? Could not some thoughts or ideas be defined by others, in which they are included[8]? Are signifiers and signifieds solid entities, homogenous regions a distance-scale may be held on to? Do they not dissolve as we try to get a hold on them, crumble into infinite quarks? - Spatial metaphors: Did we kill the lifely tension of these tropes, freeze their creativity in the cold grip of ideology?

Asking about the inescapability of giving boundaries to ideas, of fixing immaterial thoughts in mental maps: This is not taking position in the either/or of the contempory debate about the priority of ontological-

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[8]   This is the typical structure of paradoxes, an inexcusable logical mistake, inexcusable because it blows up the metaphorical ordering space of logic. Hence in logic, such definitions are called meaningless and are excluded by conventions like type-theoretical distinctions. In everyday language, however, definitions or assertions of that structure are frequent and not meaningless at all. They are crucial for the versatility of this language, responsible for an "universalism", which guarantees that "everyday-language (contrary to various scientific languages) ... can express anything one can meaningfully talk about at all" (A. Tarski (!), 1935, p.275 (translated)).

or of epistemological concerns in today's thinking[9].

This is not asking about other *ontologies*. It is not questioning what one ontology qualifies as "existing" and hence as an object to be "known" or talked about. The issue is not judging alternative propositions about "being" or "existing worlds", but rather "Being" itself. The issue is Being, but not in the sense of determining it in a yet more fundamental ontology, but in the sense of letting it loose.

And this is not asking about other *epistemologies*. It is not proposing other ways to knowledge, not proposing that we could communicate, and hence - in the traditional sense - "know" some thought without it being materialized, sensualized in symbols: a word, a book, a boundary-stone[10].

The issue rather is questioning the conception of "knowledge" which underlies the *idea* of "an ontology" and "an epistemology" and guarantees their mutual support. Inquiring into the necessity of spatial metaphors is challenging the dominating conception of "knowledge" and

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[9]  G. Olsson writes: "While epistemology studies statements which claim that something is something else, ontology determines the principles of Being itself; the theory of knowledge focuses on the problem of identity, the theory of being on issues of existence. ... The braiding of epistemology and ontology is inevitable, even though the former activity tends to dominate during some periods, the latter during others. ... (W)hereas modernism deals primarily with epistemological questions of a relational nature, postmodernism experiments with ontological issues of fundamental importance" (1989, p.1). My suggestion is: Perhaps postmodernism is not concerned with alternative ontologies (nor epistemologies), but engaged in a radical questioning of the *idea* of an ontology and an epistemology.

[10]  We can only "communicate" an idea in and through its material manifestation, as we can only describe material things if lead by ideas. In other words: As in the case of signifier and signified, we only "know" material things and ideas as idealized/materialized into the symbolic. The idea of pure materiality infinitely retreats before the progression of the materiality of the idea, as well as the materiality of pure idea infinitely withdraws itself from the grasp of an idea of the material.

its necessary association with communication[11].

It is a very specific form of communication and a very particular type of "knowledge" that supports the idea of an ontology and an epistemology: *literal knowledge* and *universal communication*. Literal knowledge is that part of knowledge which is sufficiently independent of person and context to be communicated in language and stated in a "work". Declaring the "end of mythology", or later, the "end of metaphysics", it began to colonize the world of human competences. Arising out of a strange demand for autonomy *and* security this "knowledge" is one capable of envisaging a threefold universality:

- the universality of access: a knowledge that seeks independence of the person of the scientist/author...,

- the universality of the interpretation, seeking independence of the meaning of assertions from the person who interprets/reads,

- the universality of the applicability, aiming at context-independent validity of its assertions.

Three conditions for "ideal" communication, "ideal" language, "ideal" society, all based on well defined boundaries.

But is universal communication, is a shared language, the basic condition for an ideal society, or is it also - and not only for the purpose of founding the meaning of words - word-less co-presence, shared experience of the unspeakable?[12] Is not a society that understands itself as being based on universal communication a very impoverished society already, one that objects every subject to unification and identification, one that disciplines fantasy? No, I do not forget the value and satisfaction arising out of such communication. It certainly is important to insist on seeking discoursive agreement if arbitrary decision and

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[11] What must the Being be like for being to be recognizable as the same (A=A)? What must Being be like for knowledge about being to be possible (A≠B)? Does it not have to be Being in an unequivocal place in a constant, common, independent (metaphorical or literal) space?

[12] In (perhaps more) familiar terms: Is it the law of the father which makes society possible, or is it also - and at least as fundamental - the bodily rhythm of the mother?

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domination are the alternative. But are they the only alternative? Is it not possible to slowly come together in silence? Is there not before the duality of either discourse or violence a possibility to seek understanding by laying hands on and engaging in the other's case? It would be an earlier practice of sharing experiences before speaking words - or after, when it is too particular to allow the firm grip of de-finition. Does such word-less experience not lead to a knowledge? Is knowledge only what is never new, always remembering, recognizing being only as that which is identical, as that which is the same as what went before? Is "knowledge" only what is never specific, always abstracting and generalizing to concepts?  Is "knowledge" only what is never silent, never unspeakable, never demanding the sharing of looks?[13]

> Speculations. Desert heat. Air vibrating. Getting closer, led by presentiments... Does not this reflection on topo-logic look like a geographer's version of the critique of a metaphysics of presence? Being and space? See these people of the desert, answering questions I cannot yet ask...

Is it not strange that we think of ideas as de-fined entities, as some-body covered with a skin, as some-thing surrounded by a line (be it a sharp thin line or a fuzzy band)? Wondering about that, should I join the partisans who aim at disruptions of a force and form sufficient to "explode the semantic horizon" around us? Or is it that the spatial metaphors, "the concepts of 'field', 'boundary', and 'the other side' [just]

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[13] The point is not about a redefinition of the term "knowledge", but about the privilege given to it (maybe one could talk about "competence" and use it to include traditional "knowledge" as well as an openness for word-less experience and the ability to remain curious about the world). What is the social status of those people, women in particular, able to experience, respond to unique situations, but unable to put them into words, unable to express them in the generalizations of ruling definitions of "knowledge"? (See, eg. the studies of I. Josefson (1988) on the type of competence and the social status of nurses.)

need modifying" (Hrachovec, 1984, p.63)? Is *modification* enough? We have already modified a lot. We have already tried different versions of the spatial metaphor of the line, symbolizing different identity-relations, different *forms* of being. Many disputes in Modernity are precisely about the modifications of that line. Silently, however, all discussants obey topo-logic: Their minds *see* identity. They "see" every thought as surrounded by a line, no matter if that line takes the form of

- a limit (barrier),
- a frontier,
- a boundary,
- a time-series of boundaries,
- a ditch,
- the void,
- the emptyness of *differance*, ...

Let me briefly describe each of these versions, moments of a whole history of thought based on slight antonymity:

"If the spatial metaphor with which we grasp an abstract entity is that of a *limit*, we consider its identity as pregiven, as determined from a place beyond place, be it the sphere of ideas, heaven, or a throne of philosophy. Take the form in which we reason about reason: There are limits to reason, we are told, limitative theorems circumscribe its various realms. Take the form in which a few people in Vienna and Cambridge spoke about language: There are limits to unequivocal scientific language, they said, paradox sentences mark their position. But: "Who is speaking?" the heretic asked, thus breaking the trust: Can reason, can an unequivocal scientific language really be demarcated by a limiting line? Is not the absolute definition of the limit of reason and of the paradox of language relative to definitions of reason and language? Does not the road towards the limit of an identity, defined by a limit, lead straight into Münchhausen's swamp (Albert, 1980, p.13/14), into the trilemma of founding knowledge? (And is there not, by the way, also the trilemma of Habermas's project of universal pragmatics?) Do we have to delimit reason? After all: If this Cretan liar really was uttering a meaningless paradox, why did we understand it was a paradox he meant to tell? (But at least one man - so the story goes - Paul, the apostle, did think logically disciplined, unequivocal enough

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not to understand the words of Epimenides, this liar[14]: "It even is conceded by one of their own men: Cretans are liars, lazybones and beasts", he wrote to Titus, and not: Some Cretans tell paradoxes.)

Different from the reasonable modesty of the spatial metaphor of the limit is that of the optimistic and heroic move-out-west imposed on ideas and symbolic relations through the picture of the *frontier*-metaphor: expansion out of "natural necessity". Brauchen Sie noch ein Beispiel? But also the state of science: This metaphor used to convey such a powerful image of the idea of scientific progress that even scientists themselves took their advertising concept for science's identity.

With the *boundary*-metaphor began the move from the absolute identity as essence to the contextual identity as existence, an identity that is determined by its difference to the respective other side. I recognize myself in what comes back from the mirror of your eyes, I develop my critique in "room" determined by the form of that which I criticize. A line that keeps oppositions apart and unites them, this is the boundary. It is the mark of the duality of dualisms. In this duality it then is, in the metaphor of the boundary, that the dialectical movement originates[15].

With the dialectical perspective the spatial metaphor becomes spatiotemporal, topo-logical regulations become topo-chronological rules, and each boundary is transcended in progressing through *a time-series of boundaries*. But dialectical movement follows a dialectical logic which is (among other things) strictly logical. Hence, a dialectican's attempt to liberate thinking from the stable bounds of identity is based on the stability of bound identity. It is based on the moments of identity that logical contradiction can hold on to, and on that other identity at the end/beginning of the teleological tunnel of history. "There is a light at the end of every..., there is a light...", Brad and Janet, dream couple of American mothers-in-law, sing merrily, while moving towards the place of the "Rocky Horror Picture Show". Dialectical movement is finite, is disciplined creativity, doubly bound to restless progression and to a dream of harmonious totality. But did

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[14] This reference to St. Paul's letter to Titus was made by W. Quine, 1966, p.8.. For St. Paul's description see I,10-16 of his letter.

[15] Contrary to common useage in contemporary human geography the term "duality" is not synonymous with "dialectical relation". While the former refers to a mutual dependency of two positions, the latter designates mutual relations between three positions (or two relations) and implies propositions as to their further development.

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not he say before that "it is infinity, which is the original fact, (and) explain we must, where the finite comes from". Seductive words. What if I listen to him, what if I do not join the optimism of progressing from boundary to boundary and on towards a still retreating unity, what if I am more optimistic, so much even, that I feel restricted by the horizon of a tradition [16] that I find myself reacting against, and am simply fed up with respecting old rules in dialectical reasonableness? [17] Am I bound to criticise respectfully or can I free my thinking from the metaphor of the line, one that is strong enough to rule even the powerful dialectical thought?

The leap, der "Satz vom Grund" is an attempt of a preliminary answer: There Heidegger draws the picture of *a ditch*, the morphology requiring a leap. Through his pun of the "Satz vom Grund", he aims at escaping dialectical dependence through the interface between the Leibnizian principle of sufficient reason and the Greek tradition of the long-jump. By a leap the athlete enters the promised land, a new beginning inaccessible for a thought that is dialectically bound to a tradition. This leap goes further than rational critique can follow. Don't think, don't look, just run and jump. But can Heidegger's advice help those who cannot forget it? Can they be liberating, these words that themselves remain bound by the topo-logical metaphor? And bound they are, for it is through the line of a ditch that Heidegger describes the land at the end of geometries. It is through the line of a ditch that he circumscribes an identity that is indebted to its other, but detached enough not to have to compl(i)ment it. Maybe we only can try, dive, trust in the power of forgetting, leave behind the springboard like a ladder.

Olsson's hyper-spatial, a-spatial picture of the *void* is similar to Heidegger's ditch. It is the void between categories, a line which is neither crossed, nor dialectically resolved, but taken as a place to stay, to balance. Touched by the domains of its surrounding traditions without being taken in, it is the neither between either and or as well as all at once. It is in the inevadable distance of this void, that creativity is

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[16]   "Tradition", this is not the rich sediments of various prior actions and events, but the momentary  result of a reconstruction, a construction held in suspension by continuous re-writing.

[17]   This concern with seeking a different solution to the question of identity and difference is also shared by feminism. In search for something that goes beyond the recognition of the dialectical interdependency of gender categories, authors like Drucilla Cornell, Adam Thurschwell or Sheila Benhabib (1987) criticise the identitary logic of bipolar opposites.

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located. Yet, here too I ask: Is not the position of not taking position, the location of nowhere that Olsson is mapping, bound by the rules of topo-logic as well? Does not the space of the void only open up if one recognizes and respects the form and limits of the body of its surrounding traditions? Does not the space of the void only open up for someone whose position is solid enough to reach out, hold together what stubbornly insists on its difference and keep apart what then wants to reconcile in reason's alleged harmony?

It is this question which the inventor of "*differance*" would have to answer as well: Who guarantees the togetherness of resemblance and the separatedness of etymological origins? And who is the creator of oscillating words, who is the author of the "text" (concerned with the role of the reader), who is it, he, who claims to be "playing on the fortuitous resemblance, the purely simulated common parentage of seme and semen (or differ and defer, antre and entre,...)," emphasizing that "there is no communication of meaning between them", and wondering that still, "by means of this floating, purely exterior collusion, accident produces a kind of semantic mirage" (Derrida, 1981, pages 45-46). Is that really accidental? Are there not Positions even for Derrida?

The limit, the frontier, the boundary, time-series of boundaries, or ditches, the void, or differance, they all are modifications of the line, the form of topo-logical thinking. Can we escape this thinking in terms of spatial metaphors? Must thinking be visual thinking?

I am asking you. I don't know myself. So strongly am I bound to the picture of spatial metaphors. I am a geographer, and geographers have some tradition in dealing with topo-logic[18], in thinking in its bounds but also in criticising such thinking. There is a discussion in geography about reification through description in spatial terms. There is research in geography about the ideological function of maps, solidifying social conventions by making them appear like elements of topography (for example, see Harley,1988). Such  questions are just particular forms of my more general questions about topo-logical thinking: What is it that we are doing, locating immaterial thoughts in given coordinate-systems? Is it not reifying them? Is it not preparing them for ideological

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[18]    See e.g.: F. Farinelli (1989).

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solidification[19]?

    Could a "critical human geography" ignore these questions? Even deeply engaged in fieldwork, in the concrete here and now of Cairo's traffic-flows or Clevelands zoning maps, in the mud of an entrophied river, or in conversation with the bank's investment director: Can we afford naivety about the meaning of "knowledge" and the assumption of communicability it traditionally implies? Can we evade the decision if our research aims at proposing solutions or if it aims at initiating a public debate (and this has radical consequences for what "writing" is in human geography)? Can we afford to ignore questions about the position of the scientist as a critic of ideology (and pretend innocence as to the intricate connection of power and knowledge)? Can we afford to neglect debates about a conception of identity in which the specificity of one entity is defined by its other (while emphasizing geography's concern with local "specificity")? ... Wouldn't we have something to contribute to discussions that are so central to contemporary culture? This too is a matter of questioning boundary lines, for the conceptions put on trial there, ruling conceptions of identity, knowledge, ontology, epistemology, or the reach of logic, are criticized for relying on drawing a sharp boundary-line, an unsustainable distinction between the realm of philosophy and the realm of other human sciences. They are criticized for being dependent on a philosophy that considered itself as the keeper of pure reason and on a human science that kept denying itself for its comfort's sake. But no longer is there the authority of a philosophy we can appeal to[20]. No longer can we dream this Oedipal dream of shelter in the arms of Philosophia, the big mother. It is time to enter the debate, turn "pure reason" not only historical and social, but also situate it within

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[19]    I use "ideology" in the way Th. Adorno described it: "Ideology lies in the substruction of something primary, the content of which hardly matters; it lies in the implicit identity of concept and thing..." (Transl. from Adorno, 1984, p.50).

[20]    "Philosophy isn't a territory which could be separated from the Geography of the disciplines. We all know that.", J.F. Lyotard (1987, p.126) states (using spatial metaphors nevertheless!).

the stabilizing environment of material artefacts and in the dynamic interplay between local and general demands. Then traditional philosophical problems may disappear, just as hard-core paradoxes disappear in the particular constellation of the right  moment and the right place, or just as the circular walls of the existentialist's prison house disappear with a different, an a-spatial idea of what is called "thinking".

What is "thinking"? And what is "superstition"? What is it that leads to "knowledge" and the good society? And what has to end in wild and dangerous speculations?

Asking about the *limits of thinking*. Prominent question. Can you hear it? There, there, from down here even. It comes out of the belly, they say, those, who - in frightening resemblance to the German Zeitgeist in the 1920s - celebrate a new metaphysics of harmonious totality and sustain it - in the midst of cold economic war - by withdrawing into the warmth of inwardness, Californian therapies and the nibbling of macrobiotic food. Asking about the limits of thinking it is the seeking of answers through *thinking* which they call in question, which they easily equate with rationality, and against which they insist on the value of its other, of feeling, perception, and intuition. This is a position that can be sustained by ideological mechanisms, but *not* by argument. Not by argument - and this would be the first and easiest critique - because the use of argumentation would self-contradictory. Not by argument - a second, and more sophisticated form of critique would hold - because they fail to distinguish between different types of rationality, and don't see that "the present impoverished form of rationality merely is ... the result of an enlightenment thinking that is used as an instrument of effective domination" (Adorno, 1976, p.15). If distinguished from "instrumental reason" (Habermas, 1969) or "procedural rationality" (Habermas, 1985), rational arguments against the reification of social relations through these particular kinds of "rationality" can - without paradox - be made. But the critique I have in mind is a third one: Those who celebrate feeling and intuition and ask about the limits of thinking might not be radical enough. Would not their

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concern demand to question *limits* of "thinking" rather than limits of *thinking*? Maybe the issue is not to raise feeling and intuition into the rank of thinking, but to question their distinction. Maybe the issue is not discussing how far we should go rationalizing, but discussing why "rational" has to be clearly defined. Maybe "thinking" does not necessarily have to be thought of as some-thing with some kind of bound identity. Maybe the activity of thinking does not have to have a definite form, just like the idea of an activity called "thinking" does not have to be de-fined.

And still, form and definition are presupposed even by those, who (like Adorno) criticise reification and ideology by means of dialectics and (like Habermas) distinguish between different types of rationality. Questioning *limits* of "thinking" instead, questioning the necessity of limits and boundaries there, would allow us to be just as critical against reification and alienation. One furthermore would be consequent enough to include *all* critics, even oneself, into one's own critique and dissolve the boundary even there. This is a highly political act. Political enough to make even 1968 radicals look conservative (and furious). Caught in the logic of op-position they do not understand that questioning the idea of limits and boundaries is more than "not taking position". It is questioning the idea of a position. It is questioning the space in which positions take place and looking at what is underneath. And it is suggesting that we will not end domination, as long as thinking is bound by spatial metaphors. At this point ...
I stop.

Open questions, questions in openness. No close answers. Does it still make sense to ask, ask not for answers, but for asking ...
Could there be a society without the strict identities thinking defines?
Could we afford to let words flow and change with metaphors and metonymies? Would our trust provide sufficient hold to replace ordinances and scientific papers by poetry? What were this me without

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that objectified, subjectified I to lean on?[21] And who would you be, without the identity of a name? Are we certain enough to love without the right to possession? Need we always divorce when we turned our Ies? Would our trust allow us to be waves, rising and falling, rolling up the sand and seeping back, leaving moments of patterns...

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[21]    M. Foucault (in Deleuze and Foucault, 1977, p.11): "What we have to think are intentions rather than qualities or quantities; depth rather than longitude and latitude; rather moments of individuation than species and kinds; and thousand tiny masked subjects, thousand Ies dissolved, thousand passivities and chaos, where yesterday there used to rule the sovereign subject." (Transl. D.R.)

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