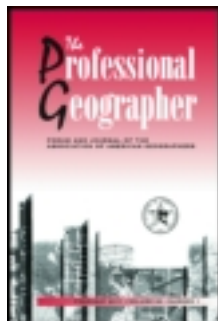


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ON THE HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION OF GEOGRAPHY: AN HISTORICAL MATERIALIST MANIFESTO

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VIEWS AND OPINIONS

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ON THE HISTORY AND PRESENT CONDITION OF GEOGRAPHY: AN HISTORICAL MATERIALIST MANIFESTO

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The history and present condition of Geography have to be understood historically. A review of the roles of geographical knowledge under capitalism illustrates how it has changed in relation to shifting societal needs. Against such a background it is then possible to fashion an historical materialist interpretation of the present dilemmas of Geography as an academic discipline and to formulate concrete proposals for its transformation. Key Words: history of geography, geographical thought, historical materialism, social theory.

The present condition of Geography and proposals for its transformation must be firmly grounded in an understanding of history. The roles and functions of geographical knowledge, together with the structures of that knowledge, have changed over time in relation to and in response to shifting societal configurations and needs. The history of our discipline cannot be understood independently of the history of the society in which the practices of geography are embedded. The rise of merchant, and later industrial and finance forms of capitalism in the West, paralleled as it was by increasing spatial integration of the world economy under Western politico-economic hegemony, demanded and depended upon the crystallization of new forms of geographical knowledge within an increasingly fragmented professional and academic division of labor. The difficulties and alternatives geographers now face are likewise rooted in conflictual processes of societal transformation. Proposals for the transformation or stabilization of our discipline are, whether we like it or not, positions taken in relation to grander processes of social change. Awareness of that basic fact must inform debate over where our discipline is going and how it is to be restructured to meet contemporary challenges and needs.

On the History of Geography and Society

Geographical knowledge records, analyzes and stores information about the spatial distribution and organization of those conditions (both naturally occurring and humanly created) that provide the material basis for the reproduction of social life. At the same time it promotes conscious awareness of how such conditions are subject to continuous transformation through human action.

The form and content of such knowledge depends upon the social context. All societies, classes, and social groups possess a distinctive "geographical lore," a working knowledge of their territory, of the spatial configuration of use values relevant to them, and of how they may intervene to shape the use values to their own purposes. This "lore," acquired through experience, is codified and socially transmitted as part of a conceptual apparatus with which individuals and groups cope with the world. It may take the form of a loosely-defined spatial and environmental imagery or of a formal body of knowledge—GEOGRAPHY—in which all members of society or a privileged elite receive instruction. This knowledge can be used in the struggle to liberate peoples from "natural" disasters and constraints and from external oppression. It can be used in the quest to dominate nature and other peoples and to construct an alternative geography of social life through the shaping of physical and social environments for social ends.

The form and content of geographical knowledge cannot be understood independently of the social basis for the production and use of that knowledge. Pre-capitalist societies, for example, produced highly sophisticated geographical understandings but often of a particular and localized sort, radically different from geography as we know it [15, 25]. The trading empires of Greece, Rome, Islam, and China all produced elaborate geographies of the world as they knew it [19, 21, 31, 42]. These geographies typically mirrored the movement of commodities, the migrations of peoples, the paths of conquest, and the exigencies of administration of empire.

The transformation from feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe entailed a revolution in the structures of geographic thought and practice. Geographical traditions inherited from the Greeks and Romans, or absorbed from China and above all Islam, were appropriated and transformed in the light of a distinctively Western Europe experience. Exchange of commodities, colonial conquest and settlement formed the initial basis, but as capitalism evolved, so the geographical movement of capital and labor power became the pivot upon which the construction of new geographical knowledge turned. Six aspects of geographical practice stand out in the bourgeois era:

(1) Concern for accuracy of navigation and the definition of territorial rights (both private and collective) meant that mapping and cadastral survey became basic tools of the geographer's art [3, 40]. In the imperialist era, for example, the cartographic basis was laid for the imposition of capitalist forms of such rights in areas of the world (Africa, the Americas, Australia and much of Asia) that had previously lacked them. Such activity laid the basis for exclusive class-based privileges and rights to the appropriation of the fruits of both nature and labor within well-defined spaces. On the other hand, it also opened up the possibility for the rational organization of space and nature for the universal welfare of humankind.

(2) The creation of the world market meant "the exploration of the earth in all directions" in order to discover "new, useful qualities of things" and the promotion of "universal exchange of the products of all alien climates and lands" [30, p. 409]. Working in the tradition of natural philosophy, geographers such as Alexander von Humboldt [20] and Carl Ritter [37] set out to construct a systematic description of the earth's surface as the repository of use values, as the dynamic field within which the natural processes that could be harnessed for human action had their being. The accurate description of physical and biotic environments has remained central to geography ever since.

(3) Close observation of geographical variations in ways of life, forms of economy and social reproduction has also been integral to the geographer's practice. This tradition degenerated (particularly in the commercial geography of the late nine-

teenth century) into the mere compilation of "human resources" open to profitable exploitation through unequal or forced exchange, the imposition of wage labor through primitive accumulation, the redistribution of labor supplies through forced migration, and the sophisticated manipulation of indigenous economies and political power structures to extract surpluses. Geographical practices were deeply affected by participation in the management of Empire, colonial administration, and the exploration of commercial opportunities [8]. The exploitation of nature under capitalism evidently often went hand in hand with the exploitation of peoples. On the other hand, the construction of such knowledge in the spirit of liberty and respect for others, as for example in the remarkable work of Elisée Reclus [36], opened up the possibility for the creation of alternative forms of geographical practice, tied to principles of mutual respect and advantage rather than to the politics of exploitation.

(4) The division of the world into spheres of influence by the main capitalist powers at the end of the nineteenth century raised serious geopolitical issues. The struggle for control over access to raw materials, labor supplies, and markets was struggle for command over territory. Geographers like Friedrich Ratzel [35] and Sir Halford Mackinder [28] confronted the question of the political ordering of space and its consequences head on, but did so from the standpoint of survival, control, and domination. They sought to define useful geographical strategies in the context of political, economic and military struggles between the major capitalist powers, or against peoples resisting the incursions of empire or neo-colonial domination. This line of work reached its nadir with Karl Haushoffer, the German geopolitician who actively supported and helped shape Nazi expansionist strategies [72]. But geopolitical thinking continues to be fundamental within the contemporary era, particularly in the pentagons of military power and amongst those concerned with foreign policy. By force of historical circumstance, all national liberation movements must define themselves geopolitically if they are to succeed.

(5) Concern with the use of "natural and human resources" and spatial distributions (of population, industry, transport facilities, ecological complexes, etc.) led geographers to consider the question of "rational" configurations of both. This aspect of geographical practice, which emerged strongly with the early geological, soil, and land use surveys, has increased markedly in recent years as the capitalist state has been forced to intervene more actively in human affairs [77]. Positive knowledge of actual distributions (the collection, coding and presentation of information) and normative theories of location and optimization have proved useful in environmental management and urban and regional planning. To a large degree these techniques entailed acceptance of a distinctively capitalist definition of rationality, connected to the accumulation of capital and the social control of labor power. But such a mode of thought also opened up the possibility for planning the efficient utilization of environments and space according to alternative or multiple definitions of rationality.

(6) Geographical thought in the bourgeois era has always preserved a strong ideological content. As science, it treats natural and social phenomena as things, subject to manipulation, management, and exploitation. As art, it often projects and articulates individual and collective hopes and fears as much as it depicts material conditions and social relations with the historical veracity they deserve. For example, geographical literature often dwells upon the bizarre and quaint at the expense of dealing openly with the legitimate aspirations of peoples. Although it aspires to universal understanding of the diversity of life on earth, it often cultivates parochialist, ethnocentric perspectives on that diversity. It can be an active vehicle for the transmission of doctrines of racial, cultural, sexual, or national superiority. Ideas of

“geographical” or “manifest” destiny, of “natural” geographical rights (e.g., United States control over the Panama Canal), of the “white man’s burden” and the civilizing mission of the bourgeoisie or of American democracy, are liberally scattered in geographical texts and deeply embedded in popular geographical lore [5, 10, 43]. Cold War rhetoric, fears of “orientalism,” and the like, are likewise pervasive [38]. Furthermore, the “facts” of geography, presented often as facts of nature, can be used to justify imperialism, neo-colonial domination, and expansionism. Geographical information also can be presented in such a way as to prey upon fears and feed hostility (the abuse of cartography is of particular note in this regard). But there is a brighter side to all of this. The geographical literature can express hopes and aspirations as well as fears, can seek universal understandings based on mutual respect and concern, and can articulate the basis for human cooperation in a world marked by human diversity. It can become the vehicle to express utopian visions and practical plans for the creation of alternative geographies [22, 36].

The Rise of Geography as an Academic Discipline Within a Professional Division of Labor

Academic geographers sought to combine experience gained from these diverse practices into a coherent discipline within an academic division of labor that crystallized towards the end of the nineteenth century. They have not been altogether successful in this project. To begin with, they often remained eclectic generalists (posing grand questions on such topics as environmental determinism, the social relation to nature, the role of geography in history, etc.) in an academia increasingly dominated by professional analytic expertise. Also, rejecting historical materialism as a basic frame of reference, they lacked methods to achieve synthesis and overcome the innumerable dualisms within their subject, between, for example, physical and human geography, regional specialization and systematic studies of global variation, unique and generic perspectives, quantitative and qualitative understandings. The dominant institutions within the discipline (such as the Royal Geographical Society) were more concerned with the practices of discovery and subordination of nature and the techniques of management of empire than they were with the creation of a coherent academic discipline [8]. Academic geography, as a consequence, posed grand questions but all too frequently trivialized the answers.

In the face of external pressures and internal disarray, geography has tended to fragment in recent years and seek salvation in a far narrower professionalization of its parts. But the more successful it has been in this direction, the more its method has coalesced into a monolithic and dogmatic positivism and the more easily the parts could be absorbed into some cognate analytic discipline (physical geographers into geology, location theorists into economics, spatial choice theorists into psychology, etc.). Geographers thereby lost their *raison d’être* as synthesizers of knowledge in its spatial aspect. The more specialized they became, also, the more they distanced themselves from the processes of construction of popular geographical knowledge. What was once an important preserve for the geographer fell into the hands of popular magazines and the producers of commercial travelogues and brochures, television films, news, and documentaries. The failure to help build appropriate popular understandings to deal with a world undergoing rapid geographical integration was a startling abrogation of responsibility.

Caught between lack of academic identity and profundity on the one hand and a weak popular base on the other, academic geography failed to build a position of power, prestige, and respectability within the academic division of labor. Its survival increasingly depended upon cultivation of very specialized techniques (such as remote sensing) or the production of specialized knowledges for powerful special interests. Big government, the corporation, and the military provided a series of

niches into which geographers might conveniently crawl. The academic evolution of the discipline is now threatened by total submission to the dictates of powerful special interests.

Yet to be conscious of the facts of geography has always meant to exercise responsibility with respect to them [7, 18, 33, 39, 41]. How that responsibility is expressed depends upon the social context and the individual and collective consciousness of geographers. Some, in the name of academic freedom and objectivity, have sought to raise the study of geography up onto some universal plane of knowledge, to create a positivist science above the influence of any mundane special interest. Others sought to confront the relation between power and knowledge directly, to create antidotes to what they see as one-sided geographical understandings and so become advocates for the legitimate aspirations of indigenous peoples or oppressed groups. Still others have struggled to help build an historical materialist science of human history in its geographical aspect, to create a knowledge that would help subject peoples, classes, and groups gain closer control over and the power to shape their own history.

The failing credibility of positivism in the late 1960s opened the way to attempts to create a more directly radical or Marxist tradition. Geographers were faced with a peculiar mix of advantages and disadvantages. Old-style geography - global, synthetic, and dealing with ways of life and social reproduction in different natural and social milieus—lent itself easily to historical materialist approaches, but was dominated by establishment thinkers attached to the ideology of empire or actively engaged in the service of national interests. A radical element lurked within this rather stuffy tradition. Reclus [36] and Kropotkin [22] brought anarchism and geography together to express their common social concerns in the late nineteenth century. More recently, writers like Owen Lattimore [23] and Keith Buchanan [4] tried to portray the world not from the standpoint of the superpowers, but from that of indigenous peoples (*From China Looking Outwards* is a typical Lattimore title). The active repression of such thinkers, particularly during the Cold War and McCarthyism [32], led many progressive geographers thereafter to express their social concerns behind the supposed neutrality of "the positivist shield." The main line of battle in the late 1960s, therefore, was over whether social concerns could be adequately expressed from behind the positivist shield or whether that shield was indeed as neutral as at first sight it appeared.

The radical and Marxist thrust in geography in the late 1960s concentrated on a critique of ideology and practice within the positivism that then reigned supreme [34]. It sought to penetrate the positivist shield and uncover the hidden assumptions and class biases that lurked therein. It increasingly viewed positivism as a manifestation of bourgeois managerial consciousness given over at worst to manipulation and control of people as objects and at best capable of expressing a paternalistic benevolence. It attacked the role of geographers in imperialist endeavors, in urban and regional planning procedures designed to facilitate social control and capital accumulation. It called into question the racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, and plain political prejudice communicated in many geographical texts.

But the critics also had to create geographical thought and practice in a new image. Marxism [33, 34], anarchism [1, 2, 34], advocacy [9], "geographical expeditions" [6], and humanism [26] became some of the rallying points for those seeking alternatives. Each had then to identify and preserve those facets of geography relevant to their project. The more mundane techniques, such as mapping, information coding, and resource inventory analysis, appeared recuperable if not unavoidable to any reconstitution of geographic practice. The problem was to shake them free from their purely positivist presentation and integrate them into some other frame-

work. Bourgeois geographers had also long sought to understand how different peoples fashion their physical and social landscapes as a reflection of their own needs and aspirations. They had also shown that different social groups (children, the aged, social classes, whole cultures) possess distinctive and often incomparable forms of geographical knowledge, depending upon their experience, position, and traditions. These ideas also seem recuperable as the basis for fresh geographical practice. Historical and cultural geographers, insofar as they had paid attention to the processes of spatial integration, regional transformation, and changing geographical configurations through time, provided relevant raw materials.

From the initial fumbblings and searchings, a new agenda for geography emerged, rooted deep in tradition yet original and breathtaking in scope, exhilarating if often frustrating in its practice [17]. The study of the active construction and transformation of material environments (both physical and social) together with critical reflection on the production and use of geographical knowledge within the context of that activity, could become the center of concern. The focus is on the process of *becoming* through which people (and geographers) transform themselves through transforming both their natural and social milieus. For the humanists, this process of becoming could be viewed religiously or secularly through the philosophical lenses of Heidegger and Husserl [7]. The Marxists had to look no further than Marx's characterization of human labor as a process through which human beings, in acting on the external world and changing it, at the same time changed their own natures [29, p. 177]. Anarchists could appeal to Reclus who argued that "humankind is nature becoming conscious of and taking responsibility for itself" [36, Vol. 1, p. 106]. Those actively engaged in advocacy could feel they were integral to processes of social transformation.

While the commonality of the new agenda was frequently masked by bitter backbiting amongst the participants, there could be no question as to the common core of concern. But there were deeper problems that inhibited its execution and threatened it with early extinction, crushed under the overwhelming critical silence of a positivist reaction. The problems are in part external to the profession, the product of a societal condition that does not favor experimentation, innovation, and intellectual debate but which seeks to discipline unruly academics to more narrowly based immediate and practical concerns as defined by powerful special interests. But the problems are also internal. Advocates for community cannot justify a stance of "community right or wrong" if one community's gain is another's loss any more than environmentalists can reasonably proceed oblivious of employment consequences. Humanists, if they are to avoid the trap of narcissistic radical subjectivism, need a more powerful theory than agency and structure to grapple with macro-problems of money power, inflation, and unemployment. Anarchists, while sensitized to ecological and communitarian concerns, lack the social theory to understand the dynamics of capitalism in relation to state power. Marxists come armed with a powerful theory but find it hard to cope with ecological issues or with a subject matter in which highly differentiated activities of individuals and social groups within the particularities of space and place are of paramount concern.

What is lacking is a clear context, a theoretical frame of reference, a language which can simultaneously capture global processes restructuring social, economic and political life in the contemporary era and the specifics of what is happening to individuals, groups, classes, and communities at particular places at certain times. Those who broke out from behind the safety of the positivist shield ruptured the political silence within geography and allowed conscience and consciousness freer play. But they spoke with many voices, generated a veritable cacophony of competing messages, and failed to define a common language to voice common concerns.

Between the safety of a positivist silence and the risk of nihilistic disintegration lies the passage to a revitalized geography, an intellectual discipline that can play a vital, creative, and progressive role in shaping the social transformations that beset us. How to negotiate that passage is *our* dilemma of *this* time.

The Present Condition of Geography

Geography is too important to be left to geographers. But it is far too important to be left to generals, politicians, and corporate chiefs. Notions of "applied" and "relevant" geography pose questions of objectives and interests served. The selling of ourselves and the geography we make to the corporation is to participate directly in making *their* kind of geography, a human landscape riven with social inequality and seething geopolitical tensions. The selling of ourselves to government is a more ambiguous enterprise, lost in the swamp of some mythic "public interest" in a world of chronic power imbalances and competing claims. The disenfranchised (and that includes most of us when it comes to interest rates, nuclear strategy, covert operations, and geopolitical strategizing) must be heard through the kind of geography we make, no matter how unpopular that voice within the corridors of power or with those who control our purse strings. There is more to geography than the production of knowledge and personnel to be sold as commodities to the highest bidder.

The geography we make must be a peoples' geography, not based on pious universalisms, ideals, and good intents, but a more mundane enterprise that reflects earthly interests, and claims, that confronts ideologies and prejudice as they really are, that faithfully mirrors the complex weave of competition, struggle, and cooperation within the shifting social and physical landscapes of the twentieth century. The world must be depicted, analyzed, and understood not as we would like it to be but as it really is, the material manifestation of human hopes and fears mediated by powerful and conflicting processes of social reproduction.

Such a peoples' geography must have a popular base, be threaded into the fabric of daily life with deep taproots into the well-springs of popular consciousness. But it must also open channels of communication, undermine parochialist world views, and confront or subvert the power of dominant classes or the state. It must penetrate the barriers to common understandings by identifying the material base to common interests. Where such a material base does not exist, it must frankly recognize and articulate conflict of equal and competing rights that flows therefrom. To the degree that conflicting rights are resolved through tests of strength between contending parties, so the intellectual force within our discipline is a powerful weapon and must be consciously deployed as such, even at the expense of internalizing conflicting notions of right within the discipline itself. The geographical studies we make are necessarily a part of that complex of conflictual social processes which give birth to new geographical landscapes.

Geographers cannot remain neutral. But they can strive towards scientific rigor, integrity and honesty. The difference between the two commitments must be understood. There are many windows from which to view the same world, but scientific integrity demands that we faithfully record and analyze what we see from any one of them. The view from China looking outwards or from the lower classes looking up is very different from that from the Pentagon or Wall Street. But each view can be represented in a common frame of discourse, subject to evaluation as to internal integrity and credibility. Only in this way the myriad masks of false conflict be stripped away and the real structure of competing rights and claims be exposed. Only in this way too, can we insure that the geography we make is used and not abused in the struggles of our time.

The intellectual task in geography, therefore, is the construction of a common language, of common frames of reference and theoretical understandings, within

which conflicting rights and claims can be properly represented. Positivism undermines its own virtues of objective materialism by spurious claims to neutrality. Historical materialism, though appropriate, is too frequently held captive within the rigidities of some political orthodoxy that renders windows on the world opaque and substitutes subjectively conceived political fantasy for hard-nosed objective materialism. Under such conditions the construction of a common discourse for describing and theorizing becomes a tough task.

But the very nature of the intellectual baggage accumulated these past years makes the geographers' contributions potentially crucial. For example, the insertion of concepts of space, place, locale, and milieu into any social theory has a numbing effect upon that theory's central propositions. Microeconomists working with perfect competition find only spatial monopoly, macroeconomists find as many economies as there are central banks and a peculiar flux of exchange relations between them, and Marxists looking to class relations find neighborhoods, communities, and nations. Marx, Marshall, Weber, and Durkheim all have this in common: they prioritize time over space and, where they treat the latter at all, tend to view it unproblematically as the site or context for historical action. Whenever social theorists of whatever stripe actively interrogate the meaning of geographical categories and relations, they are forced either to make so many *ad hoc* adjustments to their theory that it splinters into incoherency, or else to abandon their theory in favor of some language derived from pure geometry. The insertion of spatial concepts into social theory has not yet been successfully accomplished. Yet social theory that ignores the materialities of actual geographical configurations, relations, and processes lacks validity [13, 14].

The temptation then exists to abandon theory, retreat into the supposed particularities of place and moment, resort to naive empiricism, and produce as many *ad hoc* theories as there are instances. All prospects for communication then break down save those preserved by the conventions of common language. The ambiguities of the latter masquerade as theory and theory itself is lost in a swamp of ambiguous meanings. Ambiguity may be preferable to rigid and uncompromising orthodoxy, but it is no basis for science. Retreat from explicit theory is retreat from the challenge to make conscious and creative interventions in the construction of future geographies. The junction between geography and social theory, therefore, is one of the crucial flash-points for the crystallization of new conceptions of the world and new possibilities for active intervention.

The political implications of a resolution of such real and highly charged intellectual dilemmas between geography and social theory are legion. Consider, for example, the clash between anarchist and Marxist perspectives both politically and within the history of geography. Reclus and Kropotkin, geographers both, were impressed by the remarkable diversity of life, culture, community, and environment revealed by their geographical studies. They respected that diversity and sought to preserve it through a political project that linked the peoples of the earth into some vast federation of autonomous self-governing communities. This entailed a highly decentralized and profoundly geographical vision of how an alternative society should look. It has helped fuel a political tradition concerned with worker self-management, community control, ecological sensitivity, and respect for the individual. Is it accidental that the radical urge in nineteenth century geography was expressed through anarchism rather than through Marxism? The sensitivity to issues of place, ecology, milieu, and geographical particularities still makes the anarchist vision appealing. Yet it is seriously flawed by the absence of any powerful theory of the dynamics of capitalism. Reclus [36] in his last work recognized that the intriguing geographical variety for which he had such respect was even then being

swept away, crushed under the homogenizing heel of the circulation and accumulation of capital. The universality of that experience demands a global political response born out of more powerful universal understandings of the dynamics of capitalism than Reclus constructed. His political vision and his intellectual contribution are undermined by this crucial absence.

Marx, for his part, occupies the pinnacle of social theoretic power at the expense of excluding geographical variation as an "unnecessary complication" [29, Vol. 2, p. 470; see also 29, Chapter 13]. From that highpoint he can proclaim a politics of universal class struggle founded on universal proletarian consciousness and solidarity. To be sure, Marx frequently admits of the significance of space and place within both his theory and his practice (the opposition between English and Irish working class interests parallels oppositions in his theoretical work between town and country, inner and outer transformations, and the like). But none of this is thoroughly integrated into theoretical formulations that are powerful with respect to time but weak with respect to space. His political vision and theoretical contribution founder on his failure to build a systematic and distinctively geographical dimension into his thought. This was the "error" that Lenin and the theorists of imperialism sought to rectify. They opened up the possibility of an alternative rhetoric within the Marxist tradition in which centers exploit peripheries, the first world subjugates the third, and capitalist powers compete for domination of protected space (markets, labor power, raw materials). People in one place exploit and struggle against those in another place. *Ad hoc* concessions to spatial structure provoke redefinitions of exploitation that coexist uneasily with Marx's view of a capitalist dynamic powered by the exploitation of one class by another. The theoretical foundations of Marxism-Leninism are thereby rendered ambiguous, sparking savage disputes over the right to national self-determination, the national question, the prospects for socialism in one country, the significance of geographical decentralization in political practice [10, 16, 24, 27].

There is more to the split between anarchists and Marxists (or divisions within the latter camp) than their respective approaches to geographical questions. But the Marxists, while proclaiming in principle the significance of geographical uneven development, have had a hard time integrating space or evolving a sensitivity to place and milieu within otherwise powerful social theories. The anarchist literature abounds with such sensitivity but founders on lack of theoretical and political coherence. All of which provokes the intriguing though somewhat idle thought: what would our political and intellectual world be like if Marx had been a better geographer and the anarchists better social theorists? That rhetorical question underlines the contemporary political importance of a theoretical project dedicated to the unification of geographical sensitivities and understandings with the power of general social theories formulated in the tradition of historical materialism. Such a theoretical project is more than just a tough academic exercise. It is fundamental to our thinking on the prospects for the transition to socialism.

An Historical Materialist Manifesto

The tasks before us can now be more clearly defined. We must:

1. Build a popular geography, free from prejudice but reflective of real conflicts and contradictions, capable also of opening new channels for communication and common understanding.
2. Create an applied peoples' geography, un beholden to narrow or powerful special interests, but broadly democratic in its conception.
3. Accept a dual methodological commitment to scientific integrity and non-neutrality.

4. Integrate geographical sensitivities into general social theories emanating from the historical materialist tradition.

5. Define a political project that sees the transition from capitalism to socialism in historico-geographical terms.

We have the power through our collective efforts as geographers to help make our own history and geography. That we cannot do so under historical and geographical circumstances of our own choosing is self-evident. In part our role is to explore the limits imposed by the deadweight of an actually-existing geography and an already-achieved history. But we must define, also, a radical guiding vision: one that explores the realms of freedom beyond material necessity, that opens the way to the creation of new forms of society in which common people have the power to create their own geography and history in the image of liberty and mutual respect of opposed interests. The only other course, if my analysis of the trajectory of contemporary capitalism is correct [76], is to sustain a present geography founded on class oppression, state domination, unnecessary material deprivation, war, and human denial.

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HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MARTIN BUBER'S PHILOSOPHY*

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Humanistic geography represents a duality of reason and feeling, science and ethics. As a scientific approach, it is concerned with uncovering the truth regarding people's experiential relationship with place. It does not regard the phenomena under consideration as merely an object of research, rather it bears an ethical message of concern for those objects, be they human beings, nature or place. This study expands on the ethical dimension conveyed by humanistic geography via Buber's work, trying to show that his dialogical philosophy and humanism is a logical extension of this message. I seek to convey an action-oriented frame of reference for geographers that may lead to a shift from passive reflection about people and place, to an active role in making Buber's "perfect space" possible.

Key Words: science, ethics, dialogue, humanism, commitment, Buber.

In its challenge of rational positivism, humanistic geography questions the very possibility that people's relationships with place and space can be understood without grasping their feelings, emotions, values and intentions [21, 22, 29, pp. 132–135]. Thus, in contrast to rational positivism which is geared towards "explanation in geography," i.e., the derivation of laws concerning the occurrence of given phenomena in space [17, 35], humanistic geography displays an intellectual effort which aims at understanding geography, i.e., grasping the inner meaning of the relationship between people's experience and environment [24, 36, 37]. Furthermore, whereas geography as an "explaining science" rests upon rationalism, empiricism

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