CHAPTER 1

Human Geography: The First Half Century

This is a book about human geography as an academic field: as a discipline taught in schools and represented in the universities as an accepted area of study. As such, it dates from approximately the turn of the last century. The Schools of Geography at Oxford and Cambridge were founded in 1899 and 1889,[1] respectively. In the United States, Departments of Geography were established at the University of Chicago in 1903, Harvard in 1885, and at the University of California at Berkeley in 1898.[2]

What I try to do in this chapter is to provide a survey of what human geography was like over the first approximately 50 years of its existence in the universities of the anglophone world. From the mid-1950s on there is clear evidence of accelerating change, and I argue that the second half of the 20th century was quite different from the first. For the first time, theory entered the geographer's vocabulary, and methods became something to be put in question and to be improved on. Many of the relationships that had been the focus of the human geographer's concern remained the same but were now looked at in a very different light. The same applies to the concepts through which those relations were grasped: change amidst continuity.

This is not to claim that the first half century can be described in a monotone. There is a history. The particular relations that human geographers placed at the center of their concerns and how they viewed those relations tended to shift as the century progressed. In his 1973 Presidential Address to the Association of American Geographers (AAG), Edward

Taaffe tried to capture those shifting foci in terms of what he called three traditions: area studies, man–land, and the spatial. I draw on this characterization here, demonstrating that there was indeed a clear history. I also show that there was some conceptual development even while it was not argued out in terms any better than an appeal to the facts of the case. The human geography of the time was nothing if not positivistic, and this was to last until the beginning of the 1970s. But neither was it static.

PEOPLE AND NATURE DOMINANT

> Any statement is of geographical quality if it contains a reasonable relation between some inorganic element of the earth on which we live, acting as a control, and some element of the existence, or growth, or behavior, or distribution of the earth's organic inhabitants, serving as a response.
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> —DAVIS (1906, p. 71)

> The first half of this century has seen the emergence of the modern study of geography as an academic discipline fit to take its place among the older disciplines of science, the social sciences, and the liberal arts in every university of Britain. This remarkable and rapid growth, paralleled by that of the study of geography at all levels in schools, is undoubtedly due to the realization that there is an intimate relationship between man and his environment and that no other subject seeks to understand or interpret this relationship in its entirety both in space and time.
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> —STAMP (1960, p. 9)

In human geography in the first part of the last century, the man–land tradition as Taaffe referred to it was utterly dominant. This was the human geography that was still being taught in British high schools and universities in the 1950s, as per the second quote just presented from one of the major figures in British geography at that time, Dudley Stamp. There were, nevertheless, important shifts in emphasis. Initially it was the role of the physical environment in structuring human activities that was stressed. Later there would be reactions to this. One emphasized the role of culture in changing the physical environment. A second saw the relation to the natural environment as one that was mediated by culture and technology: environment as a technical and cultural appraisal, therefore. Under all these headings, there are literatures of varying degrees of methodological sophistication and theoretical penetration. All of them, though, relied on a rather stark, and in some ways indefensible, separation of the natural from the human. This had important implications for

theory in human geography, even while "theory" in an explicit, acknowledged sense was still *terra incognita*. In this section I start with a brief history of work in this vein during the first half of the last century and then discuss some of its implications.

A Mini-History

Environmental Determinism

From the late 19th century to the 1930s and with lingering influences well beyond, human geography was dominated by what was known as environmentalism. The main concern was documenting how the natural environment influenced, determined, controlled, or conditioned human geographies, including esoteric geographies such as "civilization." The names of people like Ellsworth Huntington, Ellen Churchill Semple, and James Fairgrieve are notable here, among others. A first example comes from British geographer Halford Mackinder. In *Britain and the British Seas*, published in 1907, Mackinder made the following claims about what he called "the essential qualities of the British environment":

> (1) Insularity, which has tended to preserve the continuity of social organization;
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> (2) Accessibility, which has admitted stimulus from without, and prevented stagnation;
>
> (3) Division into a more accessible east and a less accessible west, which has made for variety of initiative, and resulting interaction;
>
> (4) Productivity of soil and climate, the necessary basis of a virile native growth;
>
> (5) Possession of a vast potential energy stored in deposits of coal, the mainspring of modern industrial life; and
>
> (6) Interpenetration by arms of tidal sea, giving access to the universal ocean-road of modern commerce. (pp. 178–179)

This is typical of this genre of writing: the emphasis on the effects of the natural environment and, not least, the failure to provide any serious corroboration for the claims. More interesting in this regard was the work of another of the determinists: American geographer Ellsworth Huntington.

Huntington's obsession was "the geography of civilization" and the role of climate in producing it.[3] His argument was that climate influenced health and energy, and this in turn influenced the development of what he called "civilization." The latter was something to be measured. On a world scale, it was a matter of asking a group of "experts" to rank countries in terms of their respective levels of civilization. In examining his thesis

within the United States, he drew on a number of different measures, including white homicide rates as an (inverse) measure of "self-control" and various social and economic variables as indicators of "the goodness of life." These measures were correlated using maps with measures of what he called "climatic efficiency," drawing on levels of productivity of (1) factory workers and students around the world (Huntington, *Civilization and Climate*, 1915, pp. 228 and 234) and (2) piece workers in the United States (Huntington, *The Mainsprings of Civilization*, 1945, Chap. 12). The different measures were mapped, and "tests" of his hypotheses were then in the form of copious map comparisons.

In mitigation, Huntington clearly did not regard climate as the only significant variable; rather, its importance was, at least in his intentions if not execution, to be evaluated relative to that of other variables, notably race. Accordingly, he believed that "low races" could become more civilized if transplanted out of their "original, unstimulating environments" (1915, p. 59).[4] There is also occasional reference to social conditions: the role of public opinion in encouraging self-discipline in the face of the challenge of the various pathologies of alcoholism, laziness, and immorality, which he believed were brought on by tropical climatic conditions. Likewise and in anticipation of a direction that human geography would later take in response to the excesses of environmental determinism, there was the occasional nod in the direction of the difference that technology might make to the climate–"civilization" relationship.[5] In all these regards, Huntington was a clear advance on Mackinder. What they shared, though, was a distinctive intellectual environment.

Livingstone has argued that studies of climate and its relation to people in the late 19th and early 20th centuries of the sort exemplified by Huntington's writings were permeated by political and moral evaluation: Peoples were evaluated, found wanting, lacking civilization, and so on, and their moral defects explained in terms of climate. This was often with the political subtext of why such peoples not only were colonized peoples but why they *should* be. It also reflected an interest in the possibilities of white settlement in the tropics and the problem of "acclimatization."

This may be. It does not help shed light on the quotes from Mackinder, though, nor the writings of Huntington. Rather, I think there was a genuine attempt to try to understand the particularities of development in the world or what was known at that time as "civilization" through appeal to geography and so to justify its intellectual importance if only in the eyes of its practitioners. One is struck here by Huntington's appeal to a diversity of geographical determinants, including race, even while he tended to put almost all his emphasis on climatic variation. In this regard, Livingstone's (1992) argument that the environmental focus was part of an effort to reconstitute and professionalize geography in the face of the

academic atomization that was proceeding apace at the turn of the century seems thoroughly apropos.

Possibilism

In its original, more primitive form, the man–land approach had emphasized the effects of the natural environment on geographic differences, particularly of development and "civilization." An alternative approach reversed the causal arrow between "man" and the "land." Instead of natural limits, controls, or conditions, one now talked about the role of culture in changing those limits or in making choices among a diverse set of natural conditions. The emphasis shifted to human action as causative and on choice as conditioning human action, although in some cases the effects of those choices might be thoroughly unintended.

An early expression of this is the work of French geographer Vidal de la Blache, who argued for a "scientific study of places" in which what he called "genres de vie," or modes of living, would be placed at the center of the picture. These were place- or region-specific ways of life, and he sought to explain them in terms of particular articulations of the natural milieu and people's interpretation and mobilization of the possibilities latent within that milieu. This early reversal of the causal arrow was known as "possibilism" to emphasize its rejection of the physically determinist nature of environmentalism.

A more developed form of this argument took shape in the thinking of American geographer Carl Sauer, who was particularly interested in the human impact, intended and unintended, on the natural environment. Sauer figured prominently in W. L. Thomas's critical collection of essays, *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*. Specific research foci for Sauer (1967) included the role of fire in replacing woodland with grassland. Burning was used to increase the yield of desired animals and plants. This also changed the nature of the trees that survived: those that were more fire resistant, those that germinated and grew quickly after a fire and those that could tolerate full exposure to sun. According to Sauer, "The climatic origin of grasslands rests on a poorly founded hypothesis." The same conclusion applied to some deserts. As far as the deserts of the southwestern United States were concerned, there was historical evidence of the land bearing large numbers of cattle in the 18th century. Sauer argued that under those conditions each successive drought left the range depleted, its carrying capacity reduced, and the recovery of the range less likely.

In the United States Sauer's influence was substantial. In Britain it was less evident, and most of the topics Sauer was interested in fell to the systematic field of historical geography. Excellent examples include H. C. Darby's monograph on the draining of the Fenland (1956)[6] and Clifford Smith's work on the origin of the Norfolk Broads, a series of small,

shallow lakes that were eventually traced to medieval peat diggings (Lambert, Jennings, Smith, and Godwin, 1960). Sauer's interest in premodern landscapes is confirmed here.[7]

The Natural Environment as a Technical and Cultural Appraisal

A less explored theme in the history of human geography's early love affair with the relations between people and "their" natural environment was how that relation was mediated by technology and social values. There is certainly an overlap here with Carl Sauer, but it not only predates him; it was also less anxious about demonstrating how human activity modified the environment. One could certainly acknowledge that geology, climate, and so on might play some role in understanding a geographic distribution. It was, however, only in terms of the technologies, the understandings of nature, and people's values that this could make sense.

This line of reasoning was evident as early as the mid-1920s in the work of Daryll Forde (1925, 1934), a British geographer who, appropriately enough given the nature of his arguments, had strong ethnological interests and would later migrate to anthropology. In his 1925 paper with the significant title "Values in Human Geography," Forde was at pains to point out the way in which a variety of practices ranging from clothing habits to agricultural concentrations could not be reduced to climatic variation. He was also keenly alert to the implications of technological development, remarking on among other things, the significance of the development of rapid oceanic navigation and refrigeration for the (then recent) agricultural development of countries like Argentina and New Zealand. On the other hand, and certainly a reflection of the intellectual environment of the time, he saw technology as an expression of a particular stage of development or civilization.

The notion of civilization as an explanatory condition would continue into the postwar period. A book that had a major impact on British geography at least during the 1950s was *The Tropical World*, by French geographer Pierre Gourou (1953). Much of its appeal stemmed from Gourou's careful examination of the nature of tropical soils and what they implied for human adaptation and population densities. The rapid exhaustion of the soil subsequent to the clearing of the forest resulted in shifting forms of cultivation over most of the equatorial zone. Yet there were clearly exceptions where, despite these challenges, relatively high rural population densities were achieved. The answer, he claimed, was differences in civilization. Monsoon Asia was a case in point, since it "taught us that low population densities are not a necessary result of tropical conditions. The tropical environment certainly provides many obstacles, but these can be overcome; the vast areas of dense population in tropical Asia contain peoples with a well-developed civilization, whilst the sparsely populated

areas of the tropical world are occupied by civilizations whose techniques of production and political organization are rudimentary" (p. 140).

Where the focus was difference within the developed world, then technological change would suffice as the explanatory fulcrum. By the 1950s, this had become a common theme in human geography research, particularly among historical geographers. The historical chapters of Wilfred Smith's (1949) *An Economic Geography of Great Britain* provide quite startling exemplars of this as the author traces out the implications of new forms of technology in the production and distribution of energy for the country's changing population geography: from textile mills on running water, to heavy industry on the country's coalfields with the invention of the steam engine, to the later dispersion of light industry courtesy of electricity. Another instance among many is Howard G. Roepke's 1956 study of the changing geography of the British iron and steel industry, in which, for example, the changeover from charcoal smelting to coke smelting led to a shift from the woodlands to the coalfields and the invention of the Gilchrist–Thomas basic hearth steel process in the late 19th century opened up to exploitation the iron ores around Middlesborough.

Intriguingly, a more general and programmatic statement of the people–environment relation along these particular lines would only come very later on—in fact, after the onset of the spatial–quantitative revolution. This was William Kirk's (1963) "Problems in Geography." Although Kirk was primarily concerned with identifying a rationale for the field of geography as a whole, his development of the idea that it should be "the environment as a field of action" had, in his hands, important implications. As such, it was to be understood in terms of human consciousness: "a psycho-physical field in which phenomenal facts are arranged into patterns or structures and acquire values in cultural contexts" (p. 366). This was the behavioral as opposed to phenomenal environment, and he clearly saw the former as incorporating the technological.[8] In this way, he hoped to short-circuit the idea of the environment as a thing apart, though without moving beyond the sort of emphasis on communities as agents that Sauer had espoused—a crucial weakness, as would become clearer when human geography later embraced social theory in a self-conscious way.

Some Summary Comments

What needs to be emphasized above all is the utter pervasiveness of the man–land tradition in Anglo-American geography during the first half of the 20th century and extending even into the 1950s. The vapidities of environmental determinism were by then long gone, but the idea of an orderly relationship between people and their environment as the dominant one to be considered in evaluating human geographies persisted.

The reasons for this are buried deep in academic geography's beginnings, in part the way it was often first nourished within geological departments but, and perhaps more important, as a result of the massive influence that Darwinian thinking exercised over thought, including social thought in the second half of the 19th century. Darwin's emphasis was clearly biological: Traits were selected in as a result of the way they facilitated survival in a particular environment. Human beings, on the other hand, could, by virtue of their cultural capacities, adapt in ways that were technical and cultural. The important point is that Darwin lived on in human geography through a concern for the adaptation of organisms to their natural or physical environments. The initial move in this direction was from the environment to the organism: Nature imposed a particular way of life on people by virtue of the incentives or disincentives that it provided. Later attention moved to the distinctive characteristics of people as biological organisms.

Accordingly, the people–environment, or "man–land" relationship as it was called, would continue to be *the* criterion of significance in geographical description and understanding. Geography was the natural environment, as reflected in books with titles like *The Geography Behind History.* When carried to its logical conclusion, the results could be quite bizarre, though at the time they seemed perfectly reasonable. Kenneth Sealy's 1957 *The Geography of Air Transport* provides a case in point. One rapidly gets the idea. After an Introduction, his Chapter 2 has the ominous title "The Physical Geography of Aviation." We learn, among other things, that "high mountains are hazards" (p. 34) while "forested zones, especially those within the tropics or the northern taiga present little real obstruction. Forced descent may be a hazardous business, but the presence of lakes and rivers mitigates these perils" (p. 35).[9,10]

The emphasis on the relation between people and nature meant a highly eviscerated sense of the social, if indeed it existed at all. One might recognize that the natural environment was a technological and cultural appraisal without it resulting in any reflection on the social conditions within which particular technologies or cultural values might develop. People, in other words, were assumed to be people: not much more than biological organisms with certain needs for food and water. So it is not surprising that one of the subthemes in human geography both before and after World War II was the relation between population and resources. This was of interest to Sauer himself:

> The steeply increasing production of late years is due only in part to better recovery, more efficient use of energy, and substitution of abundant for scarce materials. Mainly we have been learning how to deplete more rapidly the resources known to be accessible to us. Must we not admit that very much of what we call production is extraction?

> Even the so-called "renewable resources" are not being renewed. Despite better utilization and substitution, timber growth is falling farther behind use and loss . . . Much of the world is in a state of wood famine, without known means of remedy or substitution. (1967, pp. 24–25)

This was also something picked up on in the political geography of the time. In *The New Europe*, Fitzgerald (1945) talked about the need for a redistribution of population between the countries of the world.[11] Italy's major problem was the land hunger of its peasantry (p. 202). On the other hand, in light of heightened imperial tensions, too few people could be a problem. For Fitzgerald, therefore, one of France's major problems was that it was "deficient in population." There is a similar emphasis in a later compilation entitled *The Changing World: Studies in Political Geography*, edited by W. Gordon East and A. E. Moodie (1956).

There were exceptions to this disinterest in the social. The British geographer Mackinder and the American Bowman, who were writing prior to 1930, were unusually sensitive to issues of class relations, as we see later in a discussion of their work in Chapter 9. Both also had a heightened sense of human agency. They were well aware of the role that governments played in creating human geographies, but this was never something that, like Sauer's culture, was a sort of reified force over which people had no control. In fact, both of them wrote because they believed that they could make a difference. Significantly, both were men of action themselves as well as people with a public agenda.

Mackinder also had on occasion a quite developed sense of the significance of social relations in the abstract. It wasn't something that simply informed his policy agenda. In this regard, he is in vivid contrast to the dominant man–land view of the time: a view in which social relations, as we have seen, had little place. In the early part of *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (1919) there are some striking statements along these lines:

> The modern reality of human control over nature, apart from which democratic ideals would be futile, is not wholly due to the advance of scientific knowledge and invention. The greater control which man now wields is conditional, and not absolute like the control of nature over man by famine and pestilence. Human riches and comparative security are based today on the division and co-ordination of labor, and on the constant repair of the complicated plant which has replaced the simply tools of primitive society. In other words, the output of modern wealth is conditional on the maintenance of our social organization and capital. (1919, pp. 10–11)

And:

> For every advance in the application of science there has been a corresponding change in social organization. It was by no mere coincidence that Adam

> Smith was discussing the division of labor when James Watt was inventing the steam engine. Nor, in our own time, is it by blind coincidence that beside the invention of the internal combustion engine—the key to the motor car, submarine and aeroplane—must be placed an unparalleled extension of the credit system. (1919, p. 12)

These are quite remarkable statements. The relation to nature is affirmed, but now it is socially mediated. Likewise, and as per the notion that nature is a technological appraisal, we are put on clear notice that this needs to be understood in the context of social relations, in this particular instance the division of labor and the credit system. It would be a long time before human geographers thought along those lines again.[12] In the meantime, the recipes of the man–land tradition persisted. Among other things, they found application in the study of particular places or regions. It is to that topic that we now turn.

The Area Studies Tradition

The idea of difference between places, ordered or otherwise, has always been central to the practice of geography as an intellectual pursuit. One of the earliest of those commonly recognized as geographers, Strabo, the ancient Greek scholar, divided the world into three zones: the torrid, the temperate, and the frigid. Generations of British schoolchildren were inducted into a division of the country into upland and lowland Britain, typically separated from one another by a line drawn from the Exe to the Tees or, alternatively, from the Bristol Channel to the Wash. This parallels more lay understandings of geography as in the common attribution of regional labels: the South, the Midwest, and so on.

There has been considerable variation in the way this interest has been expressed. On top of that, the tradition has fluctuated in its degree of centrality to the academic geography enterprise. Early in the 20th century, the idea of the region did indeed command attention. Typically seen as qualitatively distinct and singular, it came to displace environmentalism as the core of American geography. The conditions for this were at least threefold. One was simple disillusion with the pseudoscience of environmentalism represented by its more extravagant claims and the seeming elusiveness of coming to conclusions about, for example, influences, determinants, and controls (i.e., just *how* controlling/influencing?). A second was the search for an object that human geography could call its own, in the manner of the other sciences, while the third were the well-worn tracks of German and French geographers, including Vidal de la Blache. All these influences came together in the work of the great American geographer and founder of the so-called Berkeley School, Carl Sauer. Sauer's magisterial statement is "The Morphology of Landscape" (1925).

In that lengthy article, he expresses disillusion with environmentalism; embraces the idea that every science has to have a phenomenon that it can call its own; and then, under the clear influence of German and French geographers from the first two decades of the century, identifies what that object should be: the cultural landscape or culture area.

In all these attempts, the human–environment distinction was retained as a key one, but whereas some, like Hettner, emphasized "the physical basis," others, including Schlüter, stressed the transformative role of human agency. It was the latter to which, notably, Sauer was attracted. The manner in which he talked about it, though, underlines his adherence to a nature–culture dichotomy: "The cultural landscape is fashioned out of a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result" (1925, p. 25.)

Several features of Sauer's concept of the cultural landscape are notable. The first was the focus on material change in the landscape and the material expressions of human culture: "The cultural landscape is the geographic area in the final meaning. Its forms are all the works of man that characterize the landscape. Under this definition we are not concerned in geography with the energy, customs or beliefs of man but with man's record upon the landscape" (1925, p. 25). The second is the focus on human transformation of so-called natural landscapes, so preserving the natural–cultural or nature–human dichotomy. According to Sauer, "The cultural landscape is fashioned out of a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result" (1925, p. 25) Finally, cultural landscapes were organic wholes. They consisted of elements—farmhouses, property lines, particular land use complexes, field boundaries, patterns of land use—that were necessarily related with respect both to each other and to the natural conditions (e.g., the underlying geology and building materials). Sauer quotes approvingly the statement that one has not fully understood the nature of an area until one "has learned to see it as an organic unit, to comprehend land and life in terms of each other," which, of course, resonated closely with Vidal de la Blache's view.

This was a very particular view of the region and one worth dwelling on at some length. A clue is provided by Tony Wrigley (1965) in his critique of the Vidalian method, and it applies equally to Sauer. Wrigley pointed out that Vidal de la Blache's method was fine for traditional societies but broke down when one tried to apply it to societies that fulfilled their material needs not necessarily locally but through quite elongated links of an exchange nature. The importation of building materials like brick could result in the displacement of the locally available but more expensive limestone or sandstone for house building. But neither Vidal de la Blache nor Sauer were interested in contemporary, urban, societies and perhaps this is the reason.

Their view of the region was significantly antimodernist. It led to a focus on what would later be called "formal regions" or regions of homogeneity[13] and for which, in their cases, relations with other regions, perhaps through some geographic division of labor, were immaterial to their character. Areas characterized by some self-sufficiency as well as some unity of cultural landscape and form—in other words the sorts of regions that, as Wrigley implied, were rapidly disappearing—were of particular interest.[14] These were by no means idiosyncratic views. Other luminaries of the regional geography of the period, like Herbert Fleure and E. Estyn Evans, had similar biases.[15] This approach might work when applied to Ireland's Celtic Fringe, the Welsh Uplands, or more isolated parts of France like the Basses Alpes, but areas like that were becoming fewer and farther between. In the United States this was particularly the case. Applying the method to the rich corn lands of East Central Illinois just did not work. Perhaps significantly the only regional study that Sauer carried out in the United States was of the Ozarks.

It might seem, therefore, that the way in which regional geography was practiced was not at all in tune with the times. This is both right and wrong. It is right in the sense that people's lives were increasingly commodified and urbanized. The sort of self-sufficient peasantry selling only its surplus had long disappeared in England and the United States and was fast disappearing in the rest of Western Europe. Even if people lived in the countryside, they might well work and shop in a neighboring town, and farmers would certainly market their grain and livestock there. Towns and cities were increasingly the points from which social life was organized. In these regards, the sort of region favored by the likes of Sauer, Fleure, and Evans had rapidly diminishing significance. But there were countervailing forces. In the 1930s in particular, the countryside and the land were valorized, and this intersected with a longer standing antiurbanism, part of which is evident in Mackinder's anxieties about centralization in London and the importance of what he called "balanced communities" (Mackinder, 1919, Chap. 7). This valorization reached its climax in Nazi Germany. It was, however, much more widespread than that.[16] It also intersected with demographic anxieties of urban degeneration and the moral virtues of working the land, which had a longer history[17] and with which the emphasis on the relation to nature of contemporary geographers found a nice convergence.

I should note two other factors regarding the regional geography of the time. The first is how few exemplars there are compared with, for example, French geography and its tradition of regional monographs: the work of not just Vidal de la Blache, therefore, but, and among others, Albert Demangeon, Max Sorre, and Roger Dion. Rather, the region seems to have been a descriptive tool for engaging with the geography of

a larger area, typically a country. A geography of the United States would include at some point a division into regions, typically along the formal lines indicated previously. This would then be followed by a discussion of each region in turn in terms of its particular characteristics. This was still the pattern in the postwar period, as in John Garland's (1955) *The North American Midwest.* Its last hurrah may have been Jean Mitchell's (1962) edited collection of regional studies of Great Britain.

A hallmark of this regional geography, therefore, was its highly descriptive character. This also applied to what few studies of particular regions there were. In J. W. Houston's (1959) study of the plain of Valencia in Spain, there is from the very start an attempt to provide some sense of the unity and distinctiveness of the region—to justify it as an object worth separating out from the mass of areal differentiation that is the world:

> The keynote of this region . . . has been the high degree of harmony between physical conditions and land use, together with a ready opportunism to change crop productivity according to the demand of external trade. This high degree of commercialism, however, has not removed the close intimacy which exists still between the peasant and his land. (1959, p. 166)

There is a strong man–land emphasis as in the reference to "the close intimacy which exists still between the peasant and his land." Sauerian influences are clearly in evidence, not least a strong sense of the visual as a means of apprehending the unity of the area:

> Scattered densely among the fields, like a city-in-the-country, are the white-washed cottages called "barracas" and the large, yellowed farm houses of "alquerias." Here and there the outline of the level plain is softened by the vertical clumps of palm, eucalyptus, or cypress trees. . . . Framing all this docile landscape are the mountains to the north and south, frail and brittle in the heat haze, and the more gently sloping hills to the east, stained red and yellow with the drought. (1959, p. 167)

The descriptive character of traditional regional geography, its concern with the unique or idiographic, which was supposedly (see Chapter 2) celebrated by Hartshorne and castigated by Schaefer,[18] along with its seemingly unscientific methods may have contributed to the crisis of geography as it developed in the 1950s: the view that owing to these emphases geography did not deserve a place in the university.[19] Against that backdrop one can begin to understand some of the enthusiasm with which many younger geographers, anxious about the future of the discipline, greeted the spatial–quantitative revolution and the promise it held for a more scientific geography concerned with explanation as well as description, something that is taken up in the chapter to follow.[20]

The Spatial Tradition

On the other hand, the way in which the spatial–quantitative work was to celebrate the spatial and explore with intensity its implications has led to a common belief that prior to it, it was little in evidence.[21] It did indeed usher in a self-conscious concern with the way in which human activities—industry, agriculture, cities—were organized over space and the spatial regularities that could be observed in that organization: clustering, regularities of spacing, areal specialization. Movements over space—migration, residential mobility, the diffusion of innovations—were subjected to the same framework of understanding; their spatial properties were what was to be explained, and space relations—the relative distances between adopters of an innovation, for example—were important in that explanation. However, quite aside from the fact that both the man–land and regional work were firmly within the spatial tradition, if drawing on a different concept of space,[22] the concept of the spatial at the center of the spatial–quantitative work had a long history. If anything, it enjoyed a prominence in the first 20 or so years of the 20th century that would only then be obscured by the dedication to the regional.

In an essay on what he has called "the invention of economic geography," Trevor Barnes (2000) indicated the way in which two foundational texts shared this same interest. The first was George Chisholm's *Handbook of Commercial Geography* (1889). Elsewhere Chisholm expounded, significantly, that

> It is the function of geography with respect to any class of phenomena that have a local distribution to explain that distribution in so far as it can be explained by variations connected with place in the operation of causes whose operation varies according to locality *or according to the relation of one locality to another.* (1908, pp. 568–569; my emphasis)

The other text, J. Russell Smith's *Industrial and Commercial Geography* (1913), which Barnes described as an American version of Chisholm's *Handbook*, is also notable. Underlining Chisholm's emphasis on "the relation of one locality to another," Smith outlined what he called a world economic geography of control and production. Control was located in northwestern Europe and the northeastern seaboard of the United States, since these were the areas that had capital to spare. The rest of the world was defined by its role as a producer. One can detect the same sort of sensibility in Bowman's *The New World*—a world in which some sort of spatial dialectic seems to be operating: As the opportunities for resolving the social problem within the United States through an expanding frontier evaporated, so attention would have to shift to an expansion of trade with the rest of the world (Bowman, 1928, Chap. 35).

Mackinder's work again is also exemplary. He is most famous for his explorations of spatial relations on a global scale with his Heartland theory and the contrasting spatialities of sea power and land power. But it is also clear in other of his writings, like his regional study *Britain and the British Seas*, published in 1907. Among other things, he talks there about:

- *Nodality*. Quite aside from the environmentalist emphasis on the role of natural waterways and the channeling of land routes by topography to create nodal points (p. 331), Mackinder recognized new nodalities that resulted from the convergence of railroads on new industrial centers: "It is obvious that modern industrial towns, based on local supplies of mechanical power or of metals, may grow large although lacking much nodality. . . . But if such communities endure they tend to create a kind of artificial nodality, as has notably happened with the great railway center of Birmingham. Even London-Westminster, twice made capital because naturally nodal in a high degree, has accumulated from its subsequent momentum a vast added nodality, as the focus of a radial system of paved roads and railways" (p. 330).
- *Spatial inertia*. "Should the significance of a town's nodality decrease, because, for instance, of mechanical inventions, or of new customs barriers, it does not necessarily follow that the town will forthwith degenerate. Much capital expenditure has been irrevocably fixed in it, or in connection with its trade, and great efforts may be put forth to improve its artificial nodality. Thus it may persist by *geographical inertia*, analogous to the mechanical inertia or momentum of a moving object. It is a 'going concern' with a goodwill based on the custom of trade, and is worth saving" (p. 330). This sounds awfully like the problem of local dependence, which was to be defined more generally some 70 or so years later.
- *The creation of new spatial divisions of labor*. Mackinder draws a contrast between an earlier urban geography in which towns served rural hinterlands and a later one that is being superimposed and in which the towns relate to each other through roles in a countrywide spatial division of labor: "At first a number of small market-towns . . . were scattered evenly over the more fertile parts of the country. They were local distributive centers at nodal points. . . . Now a certain number . . . are being selected for city-growth, while the rest dwindle with the general loss of rural population and the improvement of communication. . . . But it is characteristic of the rising places that . . . they obtain their renewed importance no longer as general distributors of the second or third grade, but by specialization of some definite type. . . . It follows that they are not self-sufficing after the manner of the old market-towns, but must supplement one another, or depend on some vast neighboring city" (pp. 337–338). Again, this was a long time before Doreen Massey talked about spatial divisions of labor.

This sort of emphasis was sharply attenuated with the shift of human geography's interest toward unique regions, but it did not disappear entirely. As early as 1933, Colby focused explicitly on the spatial character of urban form, arguing for it as the product of a balance between what he called centripetal and centrifugal forces and showing a sensitivity to the dynamics of urban land markets that would not resurface until the 1960s. Even earlier, Hartshorne (1927) recognized the crucial role of relative location in the explanation of industrial geography.[23]

Likewise, alongside the dominant interest in formal homogeneous regions, there persisted a minor countercurrent in which it is the nodal region, the region centered on towns and cities, that is emphasized. Mackinder had already advanced this idea in *Britain and the British Seas*, in his discussion of London and its wider hinterland. These arguments were then carried forward by British geographer Charles Fawcett and his student Robert Dickinson. Fawcett's work from the 1920s on was always informed by a strong spatial sensibility. In his 1917 article "The Natural Divisions of England," and despite the curious use of the word "nature" in the title, Fawcett anticipated by some years the more formal definition of the nodal or functional region.[24]

Dickinson, on the other hand, is a somewhat ambiguous figure. On the one hand, he seemed an exemplar of the geographers of the time. In the 1933 book *The Making of Geography*, coauthored with Osbert Howarth, Dickinson came out clearly on the side of the region and people–nature relations. The "essence of geography," he declared, "is the explanatory description of human occupance within composite natural regions" (p. 245). Yet, on the other hand, in some ways his work on urban spacing echoed Christaller's 1933 work on central places (Johnston, 2001). The conclusion of Dickinson's article on markets and market centers in England's East Anglia (1934) is significant:

> It will be evident from the foregoing study of the distribution and size of markets, that with the development of transport and modern organization, marketing activities show a tendency to concentrate in fewer centers. The distribution of mediaeval markets was such that all places were within two to four miles of one or more markets. In the early nineteenth century the larger market towns, at points of greater nodality, were located at ten to fifteen mile intervals. In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency to the further concentration of marketing activities in even fewer centers, now rendered easily accessible by both rail and road. (p. 182)

It is unlikely that Dickinson was aware of Christaller's work.

There is clear evidence, therefore, that the sorts of concepts of space that would become *au fait* in the course of the spatial–quantitative revolution were already circulating in the first half of the century, if as a

minority presence. Even then, this is not to do entire justice to it. The concept of space that would be foregrounded by the spatial–quantitative revolution was of space as relative: One understood the locations of activities in terms of their locations relative to activities elsewhere—questions of accessibility and direction, in particular. And what was to be located could be reduced to a limited set of geometrical forms: points, as in the case of towns, or individual people, who might well be in motion as migrants, or indeed commodities to which the same qualification applied; or lines, like railway lines, the routes traveled by commercial airplanes, highway networks, and the like. Haggett set this out in his seminal text of 1965. What is curiously missing from his list are areas: an expression, that is, of the space-consuming properties of activities like factories, cities, housing developments, and, again, lines of communication for which land must typically be assembled and often through a process that is politically fraught. Hägerstrand drew attention to this in a 1973 paper. Relative space, he argued, was constituted not just by acts of spatial arrangement, distancing, clustering, and the like but also by the fact that it provided room, and activities needed room just as much as they needed to be in interaction with others at locations elsewhere.

The significance of this is the way in which space as room loomed so large in the early geopolitical writings of Mackinder and Bowman.[25] I shall have cause to take this up again later in the book; here I want to confine myself to a few remarks of justification. Both were taken up with what Hägerstrand would later describe as the matter of "providing room" but on a much grander scale than how he would express it through his time geography. Bowman was impressed by the closure of the American frontier and its implications for the need for American industry to, in effect, "find room" for its expanding flow of products in the rest of the world if the social contract between business and labor was to be preserved.[26] The idea of closure was also something that concerned Mackinder but less from the standpoint of a country for whom global hegemony lay in the future (the United States) than from that of a country (Britain) whose own hegemony was clearly being threatened: For him, the question was one of how to retain the room that had been acquired in the form of the British Empire.

THEORY AND METHOD

> Field work provides us with the data, and, on occasions, takes us some way towards the elucidation of those data. It is an article of faith among us that field work is the essential basis of geographical study. When R. H. Tawney said that what economic historians needed was stouter boots, many of us paused to

> consider the condition of our own shoe leather, and the cry among us has quite properly been "field work and more field work." To many, the field has been a welcome relief from the methodological babble to which I am adding today.
>
> Yet I suggest that the new cry might well be "Field work is not enough." The map, to use F. W. Maitland's familiar phrase, is a "marvelous palimpsest." Not all the ancient writing is legible through what has been written since, but much of it is, and still more of it is for those who have eyes to see. When, as geographers, we gaze around, one question forces itself upon our attention; it takes a variety of forms: "Why does this countryside look as it does? What has given this landscape its present character?" The moment we ask this question, that moment are we committed to historical geography in one form or another.
>
> —DARBY (1953, p. 9)

Prior to the spatial–quantitative revolution, and as Darby claims, it was indeed "an article of faith" that field work was "the essential basis of geographical study."[27] In this particular paragraph, he wants to use that "article of faith" as a foil for his own view, based on his work as a historical geographer, that is, that if we are interested in explanation we should also draw on archival sources. But such a view had no effect on the field. With some exceptions during the 1950s, like Roepke (1956), Farmer (1957), and Smith (1955), whatever the methods deployed, the ends were largely of a descriptive sort. And Darby's own work is no exception. His Domesday geography of England was a massive undertaking, eventually running to five volumes, but it was essentially about interpreting the source provided by the Domesday Book and mapping the data. The study was devoid of analysis and perhaps necessarily so given the severe limits of the archives at that time. The Domesday Book of 1086 was indeed a remarkable compilation, but it is pure data and offers little in the way of clues as to how they might be interpreted. But even for later periods when the archives were altogether richer, they were put largely to descriptive ends.[28]

Parenthetically, and although he wants to make a point, we should also note Darby's complacency about method: "To many, the field has been a welcome relief from the methodological babble to which I am adding today." However, it is a somewhat ambivalent complacency, since he admits to adding to the "methodological babble" and given the time at which he was writing he was clearly hedging his bets. The "methodological babble" was indeed a feature of the times and would eventually be given more precise expression in the form of the spatial–quantitative revolution. His admission is interesting for a further reason. When one reads the article in question, it is clear that "methodology" for Darby was, at least by that date, also about interpretation and the sort of interpretive

framework appropriate to historical geography. It is about how we should understand the relation between history and geography, time and space. In this regard, it stands as one of the few contributions to geographic theory that we have from human geography during the first half of the 20th century, along with those of a few others, like Mackinder and Sauer, even though Darby would have shrunk from such a word.

For to repeat: The emphasis in human geography was very largely descriptive. To read work from that period, whether in the form of professional papers or textbooks, is to be overwhelmed by maps, but maps that were rarely put to explanatory use. Rather, they provided a necessary complement to the narrative, which was almost entirely descriptive in character and typically focused on the relation to nature: the expansion of land under irrigation in some part of the world, the growth of hydroelectric power in another, the expansion of the settlement frontier elsewhere, the world distribution of coffee production, and so on.

Theory in a more implicit form, of course, as some framework of ideas could not be avoided. But it served less for purposes of interpretation and more for defining what was significant and what was not in a geographic study. Features of the world that related to the use of the land or the sea, the relation between geology and settlement patterns, or changes in land use patterns and plant disease, were selected. But as far as explanatory purposes were concerned, some sort of ecological "common sense" tended to step into the breach. Of course, villages were spaced along spring lines because people needed water; or, of course, they avoided the flood plain precisely because they did not like to be flooded out. We should not expect dairy cattle in tropical latitudes owing to the difficulty of keeping the milk fresh. In subarid climates, it made perfect sense to irrigate, and so on.

The central interpretive assumption was that if there were covariations across space they were between elements of the natural environment on the one hand and human activities on the other. The way in which regional accounts were structured is a nice expression of this. Almost certainly they would start with a discussion of what was called "the physical framework." This would then be followed, in turn, by sections on, successively, agriculture, mining, if there was any, then industry, and finally transport and towns. The material was arranged, in other words, to reflect an assumption about their decreasing dependence on relations to the "physical framework": It would start with agriculture and mining and conclude with those features less easily reducible to the facts of climate, geology, and topography and more a matter of what, in retrospect, we might attribute to spatial rather than to ecological logics.

From an explanatory standpoint, therefore, this was a human geography that was, for the most part and with some significant exceptions, impoverished. Given the rare acknowledgment of any sense of how social

relations might structure the relation to nature, as in contemporary work on political ecology, we should not be surprised at that. To repeat: Theory, although it was never expressed as such, served as a criterion of what was significant. It was certainly not a matter of developing and evaluating alternative hypotheses with a view to the revision of theory. It was not a means of interrogating the relation between more abstract claims and the concrete and so adjusting those more abstract statements. Accordingly, people didn't *talk* about theory. There were no courses in university departments that could be called "theoretical" in their emphasis.

Perhaps if there had been a reliable means of testing alternative explanatory claims, things might have been different. Geographers did not have that. Map comparison could only take one so far. Relating the poleward boundary of cotton cultivation to a line defining 200 frost-free days or showing how building materials were a function of the underlying geology—at least premodern building materials—could provide some reassurance that map comparison worked. Most human geographies, however, were much more complex, and in those situations the possibilities of map comparison were rapidly exhausted.

Before moving on to how what limited map comparison there was came to be superseded, though, and in talking about theory and method, one last point needs to be made—one that is entirely in keeping with the lack of interest in theory: the remarkable lack of specialization of geographers that characterized the field in the first 50 or 60 years of the last century. This is especially apparent in the way in which many geographers practiced both human and physical geography. This was particularly the case with human geographers. Dudley Stamp is noted largely for his work in human geography, but he was also active in the interpretation of physical landscapes. A regional geography of Great Britain edited by J. B. Mitchell in 1962 is notable for the way in which the various contributors move between human and physical geography, particularly geomorphology and its relations to the underlying geology. American geographer Glen Trewartha made his mark largely in population geography, but he was also responsible for one of the best climatology texts for undergraduates in the late 1950s. Alfred Grove was a noted British human geographer, but he also did highly regarded work on desert landforms, as indeed did Yi-Fu Tuan early in his academic career and before he turned to more humanistic concerns. John Borchert was noted largely for his contributions to urban geography, but earlier in his career he had made respectable contributions to regional climatology.[29] In part this reflects the view that geography was about the relations between people and the so-called physical environment. It is also testimony to the enduring significance of field work as *the* method *par excellence.* This is the idea of geography as an intensely visual field of study (Driver, 2003). It was the way in which at one time generations of students were initiated into the "field": excursions

into the countryside to examine the relation between geology and the form of the physical landscape, the relation between slope and land use perhaps, or variations in settlement pattern. Like so much else, with the spatial–quantitative revolution this was to become part of human geography's prehistory.[30] Geography was about to become much more fragmented, much more specialized than it had ever been before.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In retrospect, human geography in the first half of this century as practiced in the academy was an extremely conservative subdiscipline. There was an odd disinterest in modern, urban society, apart from a few visionaries like Fawcett and Dickinson. The notion of methodological or theoretical debate was utterly alien. There was no sense of forward movement. And lacking a strong sense of the social, human geography found itself closeted off from the other human sciences.[31] For the most part, complacency ruled. In Great Britain, this was absolutely the case. In the United States, though, there had been some rude shocks challenging that self-satisfaction and reflecting a view in some universities that geography was marginal to their intellectual purpose. The most notable of these was the closure of the department at Harvard, the most prestigious of American universities, in 1948.[32] For some this was a shock and resulted in a crisis of self-belief. But where could or would salvation lie? One answer would be the spatial–quantitative revolution, and indeed afterward human geography would never be the same. It is to that revolution that we turn in the next chapter.

NOTES

1. This is actually the date of the first appointment of a Lecturer in Geography at Cambridge. I have been unable to date the foundation of the School itself. See Stoddart (1989).
2. For an excellent discussion of Geography in the Ivy League universities, see Richard Wright and Natalie Koch's, "Geography in the Ivy League" (*www.dartmouth.edu/~geog/docs/ivy_geog.pdf*).
3. As in the titles of two of his more well-known books, *Civilization and Climate* (1915) and *Mainsprings of Civilization* (1945).
4. Likewise, "We must determine how much of our European and American energy, initiative, persistence and other qualities upon which we so pride ourselves is due to racial inheritance, and how much to residence under highly stimulating conditions of climate" (1915, p. 68).
5. "People who are subject to them (tropical diseases) cannot be highly competent. Their mental processes, as well as their physical activity, are dulled.

So long as a community is constantly afflicted with such disorders, it can scarcely rise high in the scale of civilization. Nothing is more hopeful for the tropics than the rapid progress in the control of these diseases. If they could be eliminated, not only might the white man live permanently where he can be only a sojourner, but the native races would probably be greatly benefited" (1915, pp. 60–61).

6. See also Darby (1951).
7. On the other hand, the work of historical geographer Andrew Clark, a former student of Sauer, is more akin to British historical geography of this genre. His book *The Invasion of New Zealand by People, Plants and Animals* (1949) is a good example of this.
8. "The Coal Measures of the concealed coalfields of Britain have existed for millions of years in the Phenomenal Environment but did not become geographically significant until geological discovery, improvements of mining techniques and demand for power brought them into the Behavioral Environment of British entrepreneurs" (p. 367).
9. This is not the sum total of the book. The writer was clearly aware of some of the fundamentals of the economics of air transport, but that makes the desperate and pervasive search for environmental relations all the more bizarre. At least in hindsight, this is the dominant impression left by the book. But at the time, and crucially, it did not appear so.
10. A second example is provided by O'Dell's (1956) *Railways and Geography*. This is very much more of the same. Of the seven maps included, one is entitled "The Influence of Geology on a Railway Profile" and a second "Crossing Mountains." Of the nine chapters, two are devoted to the relation to the physical environment: "The Land and the Rail" and the delightfully titled "Fog and Flood." A third chapter entitled "Motive Power" includes lengthy discussions of "gradients" and "curves" as well as a disquisitioning on the effects of the distribution of natural resources on the motive power used. So, "to countries lacking resources of suitable coal, electricity can obviate the need to import provided there are sites to generate hydro-electricity" (p. 78), while "adoption of diesel operation has been encouraged by their independence of water supply," so diesel traction is especially attractive where the availability of water supplies is in question (p. 81).
11. "The need of the world is not a new partition of territories between the Powers, according to this or that formula, but an ordered redistribution of population within the habitable regions of the world. The present congestion of certain lands and the emptiness of others does not correspond to the distribution of the world's potential resources. There are vast areas within the temperate and tropical zones whose climate, soil, and vegetation are favorable to human life, but which still life fallow. Their frontiers are closed to settlement for a variety of reasons, amongst them the desire for racial exclusiveness and the intention to protect certain economic standards against the intrusion of peoples of low material level" (p. 8).
12. An interesting exception was the work of C. Daryll Forde (referred to previously), particularly his book *Habitat, Economy, and Society* (1934), with the significant subtitle of *A Geographical Introduction to Ethnology*. I am grateful to one of the reviewers of an early draft of this chapter for reminding me of his significance. This work was published in 1934, underwent numerous editions, and was frequently a component of undergraduate courses in human

geography in British universities. I recall it being on a reading list from my own undergraduate days, my assiduous reading of it, and then my disappointment that there were no examination questions for which I could draw on my knowledge. This is one reason why I do not think it had much effect on the thinking of academic geographers of the time.

13. This would be in contrast to what would be called functional and nodal regions: regions which enjoyed a coherence through the spatial interactions common to them—a focus of flows on a central point or flows that defined areas as enjoying some common principle of spatial organization.
14. "Vidal de la Blache regretted what he could not help but observe. He considered that much that was best about life in France arose out of the range and balance of original communities to be found there. He considered, like many of his contemporaries, that the moral qualities of rural life were important to the nation and feared their decay" (Wrigley, 1965, p. 11). Lévy, the author of this particular entry (Lévy and Lussault, 2003, p. 985), added to this critique: "Enfin, si elle n'est pas sans parenté logique avec les idéologies du naturalisme progressiste qui oppose au réalisme des puissants l'utopie d'une nouvelle harmonie . . . cette géographie entre en phase avec ceux qui veulent conserver un équilibre menacé par la technique, les marchés et la ville" ["Finally, while it has a logical affiliation with the ideologies of that progressive naturalism which opposes to the realism of the powerful the utopia of a new harmony, this geography (i.e., Vidal's—KRC) is in phase with those who want to retain an equilibrium that is threatened by technology, the market and the town."]
15. On Fleure, see Pyrs Gruffudd (1994); and on E. Estyn Evans, see B. J. Graham (1994).
16. Bernard Marchand (2007) has pointed out its significance in France, where one of its products was a well-received book entitled *Paris et le désert français* [*Paris and the French desert*] (1947), by Jean-François Gravier. Gravier had been active on the extreme right of French politics before World War II. His view was that the increasing concentration of population in Paris was an important source of French demographic stagnation since the birthrate was significantly lower there. France's low rate of national increase had been a concern for successive French governments ever since the defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. Big cities were also a cause of loss of morality. The solution in Gravier's view was a radical decentralization from Paris in order to repopulate the "French desert." Marchand (2007) has written about a similar movement in Switzerland at the same time.
17. On the city and moral degeneration, see Pick (1989).
18. Though the degree to which Hartshorne actually stood for the idiographic is contestable.
19. For an outspoken example, see David (1958).
20. There were some notable exceptions to this rather uninspiring legacy. Spencer and Horvath, in 1963, addressed the question of origins of agricultural regions, anticipating by some decades the later interest in the social construction of space.
21. This is a belief that was sustained by Taaffe's authoritative Presidential Address of 1973.
22. Compare Gregory: "The production of geographical knowledge has always involved claims to know 'space' in particular ways" (2009, p. 707).

23. He also referred to the idea of optimal locations though in seeming innocence of Alfred Weber's work on the topic. Even so, there is evidence in the paper (p. 96) of the sorts of principle at the core of Weber's understanding: "The unit transportation costs are usually higher on finished goods than on raw materials, so that when the manufacturing process involves little or no loss in weight, and the raw material is non-perishable, locus with reference to markets is more important than that with reference to raw materials."
24. In designing his provinces, Fawcett had to come up with regional capitals. He clearly recognized the role of nodality. One of the best examples was Birmingham, which "is distinctly the commercial, financial, shopping, social, and intellectual focus of its region; it has a well-marked regional individuality, and is not, in matters of public opinion, in any way subordinate to any other center, a fact which is well illustrated by its Press and its public life. It is 'Town' for its region" (1917, p. 126). Along with others like Eva Taylor, Fawcett was also instrumental in identifying a notable feature of the changing economic geography of the country: what was variably called the "coffin" or "axial belt" or relatively strong urban growth in an area with London at its Southeast corner and Manchester and Leeds at its northern apices.
25. On Mackinder, see Kearns (1984).
26. Interestingly, this is something that Neil Smith in his otherwise excellent (2003) book on Bowman does not discuss. This is surprising. He underlines the intellectual affiliations between Bowman and Frederick Jackson Turner while ignoring the latter's own arguments in favor of American imperialism subsequent to the closure of the frontier. See Stedman Jones (1972).
27. Compare Carl Sauer (1925): "Underlying what I am trying to say is the conviction that geography is first of all knowledge gained by observation. . . . In other words, the principal training of the geographer should come, whenever possible, by doing field work."
28. Darby's own study (1956) of the draining of the English Fens during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, a large area of land subject to flooding from the sea, is a case in point. See also the book he edited in 1973.
29. It was also evident in classroom teaching. As an undergraduate, I recall a human geographer of very considerable repute, and deservedly so, teaching a course on the regional geomorphology of Wales.
30. In one respect this is to be regretted. This is because of the way in which field work brought physical and human geography together around the idea of landscape, as in the work of Sauer and Darby. There is a sense, though, in which the significance of this was never entirely grasped by geographers. There was certainly work by geographers that emphasized the relation between the visual and geography, as in classic texts of the 1950s like Stamp's (1946) *Britain's Structure and Scenery* or Gordon Manley's (1952) *Climate and the British Scene*, but some of the more influential texts, like Arthur Trueman's (1949) *Geology and Scenery in England and Wales* or W. G. Hoskins's (1955) *The Making of the English Landscape*, came from outside geography; though that in turn may testify to the lay interest in geography as a study of landscape, since their influence was widespread: Both were published as Penguin Books.
31. Compare Taaffe, lamenting the effects of the areal studies tradition, which he termed "the integrative view" that had dominated human geography for much of the first half of the 20th century: "Another weakness of the

integrative view at this time lay in what should have been its greatest strength. The very thing it should have done most effectively, namely to bring geographers into closer contact with the other social scientists, it failed to do. In part this was due to the fact that geographers felt closer ties to geologists and historians; in part, to the fact that neither the methods nor the relatively few generalizations which emerged from geographic work formed an effective basis for communicating with the other social scientists" (1974, p. 6).

32. Yet as Smith (1987) has pointed out, closure of departments was not unreasonable given the inability of geography to present itself clearly. Accordingly, the committee appointed to look into its future at the university "was perplexed by its inability to extract a clear definition of the subject, to grasp the substance of geography, or to determine its boundaries with other disciplines" (p. 169).

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