The Field of Geography

Geography Yesterday and Tomorrow. E. H. BROWN, Ed. Oxford University Press, New York, 1980. x, 302 pp. $29.95.

Twentieth-century geography has been a field divided against itself or, perhaps more accurately, an uneasy alliance among workers in a number of disciplines dealing with some aspect of landscape change, spatial relations, or environment. All at least pay lip service to the notion that they have something in common (if only a "sense of place"), and the cleavage between physical and human geography is perhaps not as deep as that dividing physical from cultural anthropology. In any case, one of the principal dynamics of this cleavage is illustrated here, perhaps unwittingly since this is a multiauthored volume commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Royal Geographical Society.

Underlying a difficulty in discourse between physical and social geographers over much of the past 50 years has been the retreat of physical geographers from a macro level of explanation to a stance approaching atheoreticity at the same time as social geographers have embraced micro-level explanation in a peculiarly exaggerated fashion. In British physical geography the retreat from theory is noted in two of the most important disciplines, geomorphology (in K. M. Clayton's chapter) and biogeography (discussed by I. G. Simmons). When broader theories of landforms espoused by William Morris Davis were abandoned (in part because of a reaction against Davis's primitive and ingenuous research techniques), geomorphologists ceased attempting to understand the grand outline and retreated to the study of localized processes with little connection made with the forms they produce.

Biogeography, according to Simmons, is the subfield of geography that ranks lowest in "conceptual awareness and methodological definition" (p. 146). Oriented toward applications (land use and environmental impact studies, ecosystem management, and the like) in their research, lacking in theoretical differentiation from biologists, and conservative socially (as evidenced by their lack of participation in the environmental movement of the '60's and '70's), the geographers specializing in biogeography are unlikely to lend definition to the larger field in the near future (in contrast to the crucial role of biogeography, via Humboldt, in the emergence of academic geography in the 19th century).

In Britain, as in the United States, the focus of innovation in academic geography has moved from physical into social geography. Alan Wilson, in a review essay on theory in human geography, is concerned with distinguishing between statistical and mathematical approaches to spatial theory and notes the impact of systems analysis on social geography. But Emrys Jones, in a chapter on the latter, glumly cites a "dearth of theory," the dependence of urban geographers on models developed by the Chicago school, and the dizzying succession of new paradigms emanating from exaggeratedly positivist location theorists in the course of the '70's. The problem with location theory is that its proponents have been eager to assume that mechanistic models (such as the gravity model of migration) explain human behavior with rational precision, when in fact places may be invested with irrational values, the opposite of what location theory predicts. Jones's contribution is a plea for a phenomenological approach to spatial relations, looking toward a "hermeneutic geography," which need not represent a retreat to the "soft" descriptive geography of the past.

The notes of caution struck by Jones are well complemented in Hugh Prince's discussion of recent work in historical geography, a discipline he promotes as offering a technique for questioning the assumptions underlying currently fashionable theories. In his view, much of classical geographic theory has been specific to particular historical circumstances. Thus Adam Smith's notions of industrial location made sense only in the context of the early phases of industrialization and the transportation technology then current. Likewise, central place theory is valid only with reference to a competitive market economy. In this way, the historical approach becomes the conscience of social geography, a check against its own excesses.

Thus the attitudes toward contemporary geographical theory and the quantitative methodology underlying it, as represented by the papers in this book, range from cautious to critical, with scarcely concealed currents of hostility informing the attitudes of physical geographers. (Clayton warns that geography enrollments will fall "unless the quantitative enthusiasm of some young school teachers is curbed.") Yet one wonders whether such a demeanor is characteristic of British geographers as a whole or just of those in the orbit of the Royal Geographic Society, an institution that has been decidedly antitheoretical throughout most of its history, as T. W. Freeman makes clear in his lengthy narrative of its relationship with the field. The keynote of this relationship is struck early on, when Freeman notes that the society has always tried to discourage "esoteric academic cults" (p. 1) and has been overly conservative in embracing new developments—theoretical ones, we can presume. The society's focus has been characterized by what W. R. Mead, in his chapter on regional geography, defines as a defensive "otherwhereitis." The primary interest of the society was in exploration, and members like R. D. Cooley (1795–1883), who said it was unwise for the society to lionize explorers, were regarded as cranks. The *Geographical Journal* sought to maintain as wide a readership as possible by stressing exploration, although it later admitted a modest emphasis on cartography and geomorphology. The most striking symbol of the society's intellectual failure before World War II was the *Journal*'s rejection of a famous paper by H. J. Fleure on human regions, subsequently published in the *Annales de Géographie*, where theoretical approaches were welcomed.

Finally, Freeman's description of geographical education, complemented by N. J. Graves's chapter on the same subject, is of particular interest to American geographers, who may believe that geography has been long institutionalized throughout the English educational system. In fact, there was virtually no instruction in geography in secondary schools until the interwar period, and real growth has taken place only the past 30 years. Unless geography meshes with the university curriculum, particularly through the entrance examination struc-

ture, the subject will not be adopted in the secondary schools at any advanced level, according to the British experience. Primary school instruction is the equivalent of its American counterpart: it has virtually withered away under the onslaught of "progressive" curricula.

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Views of Wundt

Wilhelm Wundt and the Making of a Scientific Psychology. R. W. RIEBER, Ed. Plenum, New York, 1980. xii, 250 pp., illus. $24.50. Path in Psychology.

Wundt Studies. A Centennial Collection. WOLFGANG G. BRINGMANN and RYAN D. TWENEY, Eds. Hogrefe, Toronto, 1980. x, 446 pp., illus. Paper, $28.

During 1979 and 1980 the world psychological community celebrated the centennial of psychology as a discipline. The event that occasioned the celebration, the founding of Wilhelm Wundt's psychological laboratory in Leipzig, has been a subject of debate, some regarding the laboratory as having been founded in 1879 and others choosing 1879 to date the first doctoral dissertation based on research done under Wundt's direction. It should not be surprising that a discipline that is unable to agree on its own centennial is also unable to agree on the life and work of its founder.

The period of celebration has stimulated a plethora of papers at professional meetings, from which these two books have drawn the majority of their chapters. The spirit of historical revisionism is alive in both volumes, with authors disdaining the views of Wundt found in the standard histories and replacing them with their own views of the "real" Wundt. Though the volumes make significant contributions to the field, particularly in expounding new factual material about Wundt and his psychology, the divergence among the authors demonstrates how far we are from knowing Wundt and his contributions.

There are a number of similarities between the two volumes. Both deal with the development of Wundt's psychology in the years before Leipzig and with the establishment of Wundt's system and his influence on world psychological development; and both mix specially prepared material with reprints of professional talks with articles and translations from the past. The books even share authors, both containing contributions by Arthur Blumenthal and Kurt Danziger.

The reprinted pieces, such as William James's review of Wundt's *Grundzüge*, the excerpt from C. H. Judd's translation of Wundt's *Outlines of Psychology*, E. B. Titchener's obituary of Wundt, and the like are nice to have, but at the cost of books today the duplication of readily available material seems unwarranted. The pages would have been better utilized with original material. An exception to this is the material reprinted in one of Solomon Diamond's contributions in Rieber's volume, in which he traces the variants of the introductory section of Wundt's *Principles of Physiological Psychology* through its various editions, communicating clearly how Wundt's psychology changed over the years.

The pre-Leipzig period of Wundt's career is treated in five papers in Bringmann and Tweney's volume and in a long paper by Diamond, entitled "Wundt before Leipzig," in Rieber's. Diamond's is an interesting piece and reflects a high level of scholarship. It is, however, a remarkably sour treatment of Wundt and his family, far more so than the facts presented seem to warrant. Many of Diamond's interpretations depend on psychohistorical assumptions that I found often unconvincing and overextended. But his monograph is certainly stimulating and will surely be a starting point for many future revisionist articles. It seems unfortunate that Diamond did not extend the work to include the Leipzig years as well and publish it on its own. The papers in Bringmann and Tweney's volume give a more balanced view of the pre-Leipzig Wundt. Bringmann, Bringmann, and Balance give a solid if uncontroversial treatment of Wundt's early life, and Carl F. Graumann gives a very useful treatment of his early psychological position. These joined by Willem van Hoorn and Thom Verhave's "Wundt's changing conceptions of a general and theoretical psychology" provide an exceptionally good view of the early Wundt. Perhaps the most stimulating paper in this section is Robert Richards's "Wundt's early theories of unconscious inference and cognitive evolution in their relation to Darwinian biopsychology." Richards's treatment of Wundt's concept of unconscious inference is particularly valuable, clearly distinguishing between Wundt's view and that of Helmholtz.

The section of Wundt's Leipzig years seems to me the best part of Rieber's volume. Kurt Danziger's two contributions, particularly his "Wundt and the two traditions in psychology," stand out. Danziger's papers have a definite slant, however, and for balance they should be read along with Graumann's paper and Tweney and Yachanin's "Titchener's Wundt" in the Bringmann and Tweney volume.

Tweney and Yachanin's paper is exceptionally important. In recent years, Titchener has become a special target for revisionist historians, being accused of everything from poor translating skills to some sort of silent conspiracy to hide the "real" Wundt from American psychology. Such accusations have become almost a literary device with some writers, as both volumes demonstrate quite clearly. Tweney and Yachanin's paper goes a long way toward clarifying the situation and demonstrating just how unfounded most of these accusations have been. It also points up the problem that revisionist history often merely replaces old myths with new.

Both these books are good examples of the collection genre, with the usual flaws of uneven quality. Because of its larger number of contributions and more balanced representation, I found the Bringmann and Tweney volume the more useful. Rieber's book is considerably smaller in size and somewhat more idiosyncratic in approach.

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Confluence in Research

The Cancer Mission. Social Contexts of Biomedical Research. KENNETH E. STUDER and DARYL E. CHUBIN. Sage, Beverly Hills, Calif., 1980. 320 pp., illus. Cloth, $18; paper, $8.95. Sage Library of Social Research, vol. 103.

The Cancer Mission is a carefully constructed and ambitious book that deserves wide readership among those interested in the qualities and structures of contemporary, large-scale directed biomedical research.

The central concern seems to be how what the authors call "problem domains" in biomedical research are constituted through the confluence of several lines of investigation. Such domains hang together for some while before dissolving into the flux of continuing research. Studer and Chubin seem particularly concerned to present this kind of