



REVIEWS

The review essay is a new feature in *Historical Geography*. The purpose of a review essay is to allow practitioners to craft a longer piece (2,000 words) that either engages a recently published text, or pair of texts, of broad significance to Geography, or interprets a contemporary title in historical geography with reference to other contemporary literature in the field. The book review editor welcomes your ideas for future essays; most recent scholarly titles can be procured for your review.

Review Essay

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The Dictionary of Human Geography, Fifth Edition. DEREK GREGORY, RON JOHNSTON, GERALDINE PRATT, MICHAEL J. WATTS, AND SARAH WHATMORE, editors. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009. Pp. xvi+1,052, maps, diagrams, bibliography, index. \$52.95 paper. ISBN: 1-405-13288-4

The publication of the fifth edition of *The Dictionary of Human Geography* in the summer of 2009 also marked the the ninth year that a copy of the fourth edition has sat on my desk – corners battered, spine long broken, and pages filled with impromptu bookmarks. I wondered how my well-worn companion to academic geography would compare to its new sibling. The unequivocal answer is that the fifth edition is a vastly different and improved resource.

While the purpose of providing “students and others with a series of theoretical frameworks for situating, understanding, and interrogating the modern lexicon” has not changed, the entries, discussions, and contributors often have (p. vi). These changes are many, but necessary, as it is neither the same world nor the same discipline as it was in 2000. The book, its entries, and the words its contributors wrote are very much situated in 2009.

Structurally, the two editions are similar. Side by side, the fifth edition is one-third of an inch thicker and 94 pages longer. The fifth edition uses a different font, which increases the number of characters by as many

as 348 per page of entries. Even though the fifth edition devotes ninety fewer pages to dictionary entries, the preface to the new edition claims more than one thousand total entries and more than three hundred first-time entries, compared to the more than nine hundred entries in the fourth edition. Also new to the fifth edition is a 138-page bibliography containing more than four thousand references, serving to consolidate what were small, hard-to-read reference sections after each entry in the previous edition. Another ancillary change is that the font size in the 95-page index is larger than previously. The combined effect of these changes is that the new edition packs more material into a book of relatively the same size, while changes and additions to ancillaries make the volume easier to use.

The editors for the fifth edition are the same as the previous edition, with the addition of Sarah Whatmore to the team and Derek Gregory replacing Ron Johnston as lead editor. More fundamental to the project is the formation and use of an international editorial board composed of twenty-one contributors, former contributors, and non-contributors. The most noticeable change is the increase in contributors, from 57 in the fourth edition to 111 in the fifth edition. That only 32 of the fourth edition contributors are part of the 111 in the fifth edition is strong indication of the changes in most of the returning entries. Historical geographers among the new contributors include Felix Driver, Gerry Kearns, Graeme Wynn, Michael Heffernan, Nuala Johnson, and Richard Smith.

Contributors between the fourth and fifth editions also express a changing geography. Most of the contributors are still from the United Kingdom, although the percentage shrinks from 66 percent of the contributors in the fourth edition to 52 percent in the fifth edition. The percentage of contributors from the United States and Canada increased from 21 to 26 percent and 9 to 14 percent respectively. Contributors from areas outside of the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada increased from 4 percent in the fourth edition to 7 percent in the fifth edition. The fifth edition has new contributors from India, Singapore, Israel, and Denmark.

Focusing on historical geography and related entries as a sample provides a point of entry into changes in the entries and content. One indication of content differences for historical geography is in the index. The fourth edition index lists 11 topics for "historical geography." What is shocking in the fifth edition index for "historical geography" is not the 27 topics, but that only one—counterfactuals—is the same.

Many of the returning entries are reworked and rewritten. Michael Heffernan takes over the "historical geography" entry in the fifth edition from Dan Clayton. While the entry remains about three pages in length, the definition, organization, and scope are subtly but clearly different. Clayton's fourth edition explanation frames historical geography as "a sub-field of human geography that is concerned with geographies of the past and their relations with the present" classifiable into periods of the 1930s-1960s, the 1970s and 1980s, and the trends of the late 1980s and 1990s (pp. 337-340). Heffernan's position is that historical geography is "a sub-discipline of human geography concerned with the geographies of the past and

with the influence of the past in shaping the geographies of the present and the future" (p. 332). The change in words is slight, switching the "their" to the "with the" and adding the agency of "shaping," but the different meaning opens up what historical geography can be and recognizes the power that it has. Similarly, Heffernan's discussion contains the same general periods as the previous entry, but clarifies differences in the British and North American articulations of historical geography and brings his observations to the present. Heffernan's reworking in this entry is similar to other entries in that it is subtle but lucid. In these regards, the fifth edition as a whole succeeds by taking already good explanations and discussions and making them better.

Other entries related to historical geographies show similar subtle changes. The fourth edition entry "memory, popular" by David Matless becomes the fifth edition entry "memory" by Nuala Johnson. While this change is likely due to the increased attention to memory at different scales and for different groups over the previous nine years, Johnson's first sentence sets an additional tone: "an inherently geographical activity: places store and evoke personal and collective memories, memories emerge as bodily experiences of being in and moving through space, and memories shape imaginative geographies and material geographies of home, neighborhood, city, nation, and empire" (p. 453). More than the previous edition, the first sentence of entries in the fifth edition are generally more carefully constructed and evocative, providing more substance rather than mere introduction.

Johnson also reworks Charles Withers's entry on "monuments" and contributes the new entry on "heritage." Putting closely related entries under the umbrella of one contributor works extremely well, as it allows for greater attention to particular differences and minimizes overlap. Other sets of entries also use this model. Keith Woodard and John Paul Jones III wrote the fifth edition entries for the often confused and conflated terms "postmodernism," "postmodernity," and "post-structuralism." The successful result is three distinct entries that make clear the similarities and differences between them.

Historical geographers will take note of several new entries and themes of entries. Entries on Chinatown, environmental history, historical demography, and time cover emerging and traditional interests of historical geographers. New entries on "Africa (idea of)," "America(s) (idea of)," "South, the," and "Austral(as)ia (idea of)" point to increasing emphasis on and specificity concerning how we think about our world and the language we use to represent its many dimensions through time. "Cold War," "fascism," "holocaust," and "exception, spaces of" are new entries reflective of emerging historical topics of concern. A new entry on "homeland" by Derek Gregory traces three distinct geographical uses of the concept. Gregory identifies historical uses for nationalist purposes in the history of the German concept of *heimat* and Israeli statehood, and finds similar language in the post-9/11 world's concern with "homeland security." Caught between the two is the thread of contemporary North American cultural ge-

ography interested in the cultural landscapes, place attachments, and identities of ethnic areas. For all of the new entries, the only entry I found dropped from the fifth edition is "post-Soviet states."

More so than the fourth edition, the fifth edition of the *Dictionary* works to tie trends in human geography to those in physical geography, and speak of geography as a whole. The fifth edition adds for the first time an entry on physical geography and the related human-environment concepts of bioregionalism, climate, wetlands, and zoo.

In the preface, the editors reference Raymond Williams's 1976 book *Keywords* as a model and state their intention that the fifth edition "not only provided lucid presentations of key issues but also made powerful contributions to subsequent debates" (p. vi). I found that many of the entries I examined approached or exceeded these two goals, but none more so than Gregory's attempt to make sense of the discipline of geography. Absent from the fourth edition, two parts of Gregory's eight-page entry stand out. First is the articulation of the constitutive nature of geography: "'earth-writing'...the practice of making geographies ('geographing') involves both writing about (conveying, expressing or representing) the world and also writing (marking, shaping, or transforming) the world" (p. 287). Like the first sentence in so many other fifth edition entries, Gregory expresses simply and quickly the complex ways in which we interact with our world as we "do" geography. The second part follows Gregory's suggestion of a definition of contemporary academic geography as "the study of the ways in which space is involved in the operation and outcome of social and biophysical processes" (p. 288). What follows is an expansive and honest essay concerning the six component parts packed into his twenty-word definition. While not a short or easy definition, hopefully graduate students in geographic thought seminars will engage and work through Gregory's definition.

Overall, the concept and method of the *Dictionary* is tried and true. While the bibliography is a useful addition, there is room for improvement. Citation references in the text use the Harvard form of author last name and year of publication (e.g., Brown 1980). When working with a 4,000-item bibliography, it takes a while to sort through the names of eight different Browns, seven different Williams, and six different Martins, often with multiple publications for each. A related issue rising from the thousand different entries is that the bibliography is compiled, but not consolidated. Different printings of works by Sauer and Foucault cited in different ways create bibliographic redundancy, as do listings for D. Harvey 1984 and D. W. Harvey 1984. There is room for improvement, but these flaws are manageable and expected with a project of this size. Another useful addition would be an index to which entries each contributor wrote.

One of the perils of purchasing a "new" edition of a book is taking the chance and then finding out that not so much of it is actually "new." The fifth edition is a successful update and rearticulation of *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, providing plenty of new entries and offering changed and improved discussions of existing entries. Everyone who has and is

happy with an older edition of the *Dictionary* should consider the new edition. For professional academics, the fifth edition remains the useful resource of previous editions and advances the timeline of development and discussion to 2009. For graduate and advanced undergraduate students, the fifth edition is a useful introduction and explicator of many topics and concepts. Some students may see the bibliography as a treasure map to up-to-date literature reviews for term papers and theses. The new edition may also find good use in introductory graduate level coursework, not just as an encouraged reference tool, but as a source of readings and perspectives for debate.