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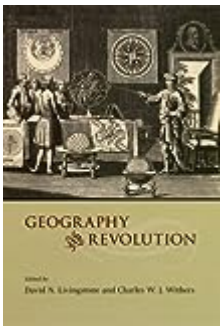

David N. Livingstone, Charles W. J. Withers, eds. *Geography and Revolution.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005. viii + 433 pp. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-226-48733-5.

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"We're going to have a Revolution!"

"Revolution" is a fraught term for historians these days. Handy for labeling courses and textbook chapters, most revolutions have come under fire from historians seeking complexity and multivalence rather than cataclysmic change. So it is both brave and foolhardy of David Livingstone and Charles Withers to create a book specifically about the three great revolutions: the scientific revolution; the industrial revolution; and the political revolutions of the eighteenth century. Of course, it will come as no surprise to readers of this forum that this is no simple reactionary undertaking. Rather, in an interesting and occasionally provocative book, the authors make an argument for the importance of geography to these revolutions, rendering them thereby more complex and contextually rich.

Livingstone and Withers have assembled an important group of collaborators, each looking at the relationship between geography and one of these revolutions. The contributors take one of two approaches to the interaction of geography and revolution. First, some essays examine the geography of revolutions, arguing that all revolutions have a geography; that is, they exist in space, in particular geographical contexts, and this matters to the development of the revolution. Other essays look at revolutions in geography, insisting that the discipline of geography itself goes through transitions that could be called revolutionary, especially in connection with these larger intellectual, technological, and political changes. This leads to some very interesting juxtapositions. By examining geographical knowledge and study in conjunction with these revolutions, the editors have brought together diverse historiographies seldom discussed together. This has exciting possibilities, and the best of the chapters challenge us to examine the topic in a new way. Of course, the downside of such an undertaking is that there is not one large coherent argument. Some of the chapters work better within the theme than others, and in the final analysis there has been no major change in interpretative outlook. Still, as a whole the volume does a good job of reminding us of the important interactions between geography and revolution.

In the first section, dealing with geography and the scientific revolution, three of the authors look at the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century transformation in

natural knowledge. Peter Dear argues that place and space are important both to investigating nature and to the historical investigation of natural philosophy. Historians of science have been taking this up in recent years, as John Henry's wonderful chapter in this section makes clear. Henry demonstrates the differences in national styles of doing science in the seventeenth century, particularly those of England and France. Henry argues (perhaps in a sophisticated return to Robert Merton's "sentiments") that the French believed in rationalization and the investigation of causes, whereas the English were suspicious of underlying causes (or at least, our ability to know them). Isaac Newton, developing a mixture of English and French styles through his autodidactic reading of Rene Descartes, was able to achieve important breakthroughs denied to colleagues steeped in only one geographical (national?) style. Charles Withers then argues that the scientific revolution had a geography and that geography was part of the scientific revolution. As he has shown us in other books and articles, he insists that scientific knowledge was created in local spaces, that such knowledge traveled over space, and that geography itself as a set of knowledge practices was part of the scientific revolution. Given one of Dear's most intriguing suggestions–that while the history of science has done a wonderful job in recent years in insisting on and understanding the development of local knowledge, we have not explained how that local knowledge, grounded in social and real space, becomes generalized–it would have been interesting to see Withers and Dear engage with the question in a more dialogic form.

We turn to a geo-political comparison of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace for the final selection of this section on geography and science. James Moore convincingly argues that Darwin's and Wallace's use of biogeography and the study of geographical distribution varied in significant ways due to their different socioeconomic statuses. Darwin used the idea of invading organisms conquering the weaker native species in a way that corresponded to a geopolitical view based on British imperialism. Wallace, on the other hand, had less privilege in this British imperial world, and constructed a (less successful) model of equilibrium and mapping, rather than conquest. Clearly space and place were important both to the science and to our understanding of its development.

The relationship between geography and technological change is the subject of the second section. Here we see the relationship between geography and the print revolution, timekeeping, and photography. Both Jerry Brotton and James Ryan look at the role of images in geographical research and knowledge, and using different technologies and chronological periods, both see the way such images affect the study of geography "on the ground." In Brotton's excellent chapter, he traces the depiction, both in words and pictures on the map, of the Khoisan people of southern Africa and argues that their depiction created an anthropology of subject peoples. Described and depicted as filthy eaters of offal, they were thus reified and marginalized, until without compunction they could be wiped from the map. Ryan looks at the use of photography by Victorian geographers, arguing that while by the 1880s photography was a necessary part of any expedition, there were major concerns about its epistemological status. Geographers wished to augment photos with narrative, description, explanation, and sketches. Indeed, field sketches were often seen as more accurate. Where photography became revolutionary was in the popularization of geographical expeditions and knowledge, bringing the distant lands to popular audiences. Professional geographers worried about this (after all, amateurs and women could take pictures), but at the same time embraced it.

Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift's discussion of revolutions in time-keeping, the final contribution to this section, is an interesting examination of the adoption of a clock-time framework. This is a sociological model of revolution as grounded in the practice of everyday life, which has some geographical dimension, but is less clearly related to the focus of either the section or the book than the other articles.

When we talk of revolutions, we think of the great political upheavals of the early modern period–the English, French, and American revolutions. There is, of course, a geography of political revolutions, just as geography contributes to such revolutions, both contentions demonstrated by the final chapters of this volume. Robert Mayhew, in an excellent chapter on geography and the English revolution, argues that there was a revolution in the generic form of the writing of geography from 1600-25, influenced by humanistic practice; that this new genre allowed politico-theological debates, especially between Calvinism and Arminianism; and that the pamphlet debates of the English Civil War drew on the geographical information developed in this new genre. The Restoration confirmed the generic revolution, but effaced its religious roots. In other words, a geographical revolution contributed to a political one, which in turn confirmed the geographical transformation. Michael Heffernan turns to the French Revolution, and by examining the life and times of a successful yet unimpressive ge-

ographer, Edme Mentelle, is able to show how geography was affected by the political strife. Mentelle managed to survive as a writer of geography texts through the ancien regime, revolution, Napoleonic period and at the return of empire, by producing geography that was about facts and descriptions, rather than theories or explanation. The effect of the French Revolution on geography thus was to make it less interesting and more descriptive, a conclusion with which Anne Godlewska would probably concur. We turn next to the creation of the American Empire following independence, a creation aided by the production of native geographies. David Livingstone argues that the various geographies written in the years after the revolution were essentially establishing the moral validity of the American people, and their uniqueness. Contradicting the Comte de Buffon, who had spoken about the degeneracy of America, American geographers showed its fecundity and superiority. In all three contributions, the authors show the important interconnections between the changing discipline of geography and the political upheavals taking place around its practitioners. This section thus demonstrates the real power of juxtaposing these studies of different periods and countries through the commonality of geography.

The section ends with a short but interesting chapter by Nicolaas Rupke on the reception of Alexander von Humboldt after his death and the publication of selected correspondence between Humboldt and Varnhagen von Ense. These letters show Humboldt espousing liberal and republican ideas and criticizing various heads of state. Liberal commentators, during the politically tempestuous nineteenth century, welcomed these letters, showing the great Humboldt to have been progressive, while conservative commentators heavily criticized them, seeing him as petty, mean-spirited, arrogant (and yes, republican). This is interesting stuff, but would have benefited from a clearer articulation of its place in the volume and the overall argument about geography and revolution.

This is my main criticism of the volume itself. Full of fascinating material, well-written and well-argued chapters, this is a wonderful collection of essays. However, it suffers from the problem of many collected volumes. The overarching argument or theme is clearer in some chapters than in others. The connecting introductions sometimes strain to pull them all together. On occasion, the overall argument seems almost banal: revolutions happen in space, and geography has revolutions. In its most innovative sections, however, *Geography and Revolution* advances important arguments about the complexities of these interconnections. Geography as a discipline was changed in fundamental and far-reaching ways by its interactions with politics, technology, and science. And these revolutionary movements were in turn affected by their locale–and the study of that locale.