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## Review of Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire, by Felix Driver

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*Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. Felix Driver. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001, Pp. viii and 258, figures, index. ISBN 0631201114 (hardcover: alk. paper) 0631201122 (paperback: alk. paper).

The discipline of geography does not transcend geographers; it is not an immutable amalgam of phenomena and method, an essential slice of the intellectual pie. But neither do geographers freely create geography; it is not whatever geographers want to do. Instead, geography now and always is a momentary manifestation of a complex historical process. For modern, academic geographers to understand and engage more knowledgably in that process, they need to understand their current moment as part of the process through which modernity emerged. With *Geography Militant*, Felix Driver provides another history of geography that helps geographers to understand a critical aspect of that process: the role of British exploration in the professionalization of geography during the nineteenth-century.

After the introduction, succeeding chapters focus on some aspect of the early professionalization of geography during the transition from what Driver terms Geography Militant to Geography Triumphant. He derives those terms from an essay by Joseph Conrad that itself must surely draw on the Catholic church's categorization of souls as belonging to Church Militant on Earth, Church Triumphant in Heaven, or Church Suffering in Purgatory. But whatever the source of the concept of Geography Militant, prominently displayed in the monograph's title, its analytic utility seems minimal. A Conrad reference that more appropriately captures the shift from religious to scientific authority might have been First Secretary Vladimir's admonition to the agent provocateur in *The Secret Agent*: "The sacrosanct fetish of today is science. Why don't you get some of your friends to go for that wooden-faced panjandrum—eh?"

Conrad aside, Chapter 2 treats the emergence and changing character of the main British institution involved in the early professionalization of geography: the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). Despite Driver referring to contemporary theoretical developments in the history of science and professing a concern with "the wide variety of practices at work in the production and consumption" of geographical knowledge (p. 8), he for the most part provides a history of conflicting ideas about practices appropriate for the RGS, especially regarding the tension between its dual role as arbiter of geographical truth and agent of imperial power. Ideas certainly formed an important aspect of the process through which the RGS emerged and changed. Yet largely ignoring the relationship between those ideas and the dramatic realignments of social, political, and economic power during the nineteenth century does not reflect a concern with a "wide variety of practices" and obfuscates the processes, of such great concern to contemporary historians of science, through which particular arrangements of power and versions of truth emerge together.

Chapter 3, in contrast, by focusing on the RGS' *Hints for Travellers*, does begin to address one of a "wide variety of practices" involved in the process through which that institution changed. Driver argues that while some might interpret *Hints for Travellers* as an attempt to exert hegemony by, for example, projecting the RGS version of truth and how to produce it into "darkest Africa," geographi-

cal knowledge was by then, in fact, “already too large and diverse to be mastered” (p. 56). That conclusion will hopefully stimulate close readings of *Hints for Travellers* that will result in better understanding of the process through which the relationship between power and knowledge changed during the nineteenth century, particularly how the emergence of disciplinary power made the imposition of particular truths by sovereign power increasingly less relevant.

If the analysis of *Hints for Travellers* hints at “the wide variety of practices at work in the production and consumption” of geographical knowledge, the chapter analyzing an 1890 London exhibition of African artifacts and people addresses practices much more diverse than codification of instructions for exploration. Most of Driver’s analysis focuses on the display of two African boys because they so clearly manifest the discourse that categorized Africa and its people as puerile, as undeveloped, as premodern, and therefore as naturally available for appropriation by modern Britain. Driver, however, demonstrates the contested character of that discourse by analyzing the public representations involved in the exhibition together with the concurrent Scramble for Africa and the less public court record deriving from an action by the Anti-Slavery Society to have new guardians appointed for the two boys. The court record, for one, clearly suggests that the way the exhibition represented Africa and its exploration was a manifestation of a complex process involving conflicting representations and practices, in part aligned with class and gender differences. Yet, as Driver himself points out, all of those conflicting representations and practices nonetheless shared the same axiom: the two boys, and Africans in general, required representation because they were puerile premoderns and therefore unable to represent themselves. The court only arbitrated the way in which the boys should be treated; neither it nor the plaintiffs and defendants questioned that they had the power/knowledge to decide the most appropriate treatment. All of which confirms the theoretical distinction between an ideology versus a discourse such as Orientalism, which contains (in both senses) critical voices, the distinction between sovereign power versus disciplinary power, and the importance of understanding the processes through which academic disciplines and discourses came to play such a central role in legitimating (post)colonial power relationships.

The centerpiece of the monograph consists of three chapters, each of which focuses on an individual who personifies an aspect of African exploration. David Livingstone is the combination of gentlemanly missionary, scientist, and imperialist that became the RGS “brand.” Winwood Reade is the marginalized, self-destructive eccentric. Henry Morton Stanley, the brash reporter for the *New York Herald* who tracked down Livingstone at Lake Tanganyika in 1871, is the opportunist whose exploits the gentlemen of the RGS simultaneously abhorred and used to promote support for their own activities. Driver takes the reader from England to Africa with these explorers and does indeed address a “wide variety of practices at work in the production and consumption” of geographical knowledge. For example, he explicates parts of the complex web of interactions that linked philanthropists, scientists, politicians, and the RGS to Livingstone’s activities in the field. Reade apparently had an entirely different purpose—“cultivating his own marginality,” (p. 22) in Driver’s view—and his story thus epitomizes the diverse, changing, and complex motivations of the African explorers.

The conflicted reactions to Stanley's escapades also support Driver's point that "the cultural history of exploration appears much more heterogeneous than it might otherwise seem; a field of conflict and controversy, rather than a narrative of progress" (p. 124).

Surprisingly to anyone educated as a cultural-historical geographer, though, while Driver takes the reader to Africa with those explorers, African landscapes—yes, the very landscapes those explorers were engaged in appropriating—remain absent. Yet, far from being static objects available for appropriation by the explorers, those landscapes were going through substantial material/conceptual transformations during the nineteenth century. Landscape transformations from vegetation to settlement patterns were crucial aspects of the process of colonialism in which the activities of Africans and explorers in the field linked to those of philanthropists, scientists, politicians, and the RGS in Britain. Understanding the role of exploration in the early professionalization of geography therefore requires integrating those landscapes into any analysis. Landscape does finally appear in Chapter 8, which addresses the co-option of exploration tropes by social progressives in England, but the brevity of that appearance (pp. 192) merely emphasizes how marginal landscape is to Driver's "culture history of exploration" (p. 124).

On balance, *Geography Militant* is another commendable contribution to the history-of-geography literature. It should be of particular value to those interested in additional information on the involvement of the RGS in African exploration. The interplay of archival and published sources reveals some of the complexities of the process through which geography changed over the nineteenth century. The gestures toward the abstractions of theorists such as Bruno Latour and Edward Said enliven the wealth of concrete detail.

*Geography Militant* will hopefully stimulate even greater efforts to understand geography's current moment as a manifestation of the complex historical process of modernity's emergence. That effort will require *historical geographies* of geography, as opposed to *histories* of geography, that include landscapes in their analyses. And that effort will require serious engagement with theoretical abstractions that facilitate general understanding of the concrete details of particular places, people, and events.

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*Science in the American Southwest: A Topical History*. GEORGE E. WEBB. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2002, Pp 272. \$48.00 cloth. ISBN 0816521883.

From the opening pages of *Science in the American Southwest*, George Webb makes clear that he has little in common with "New Western" scholars who seek to present complex, critical, environmental histories of science and scientists. Instead, Webb chooses a more traditional "progressive" view of science, depicting