

Cultural landscapes and ecology III: foraging/farming, food, festivities

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In this, the final of three reports, I focus on several themes, including early agriculture and modern farming, foodways and the often associated festivals or celebrations that commemorate them. I will also cover other ground, mentioning a number of disparate works that have appeared in the past year or two that occupy the intersection of ecology and cultural landscape study. As I discussed in the two previous reports, the themes and topics found at this site shift over time. Of the three mentioned in the title, food gathering and production are long-standing staples in ecology and cultural landscape studies. Food as focus of nature/culture interactions is more recent, but still has a time depth of several decades. Festivities have enjoyed some attention by cultural geographers since at least Kniffen's (1951) work on agricultural fairs. For the most part, however, the topic is a new one, associated with, if not always approached from, post-structuralist perspectives.

I Agriculture and its origins

Among the most venerable and still vital research topics within the cultural landscape and ecology domain is the question of agriculture's origins and development. Figures such as Humboldt, Darwin, de Candolle, Vavilov and Sauer were, at various times and intensities, attracted to the search for agriculture's origins and diffusions. From the point of view of our postprocessual present, it may seem a dated project; a relic of diffusionist thinking or, more recently, a marginal concern within a synchronic-systemic cultural ecology. Therefore, it may come as a mild surprise that work on plant and animal domestication and dispersals proceeds apace with probably more rather than less participants. The participation of cultural geographers, however, has not been as central as it once was. Archaeologists and paleoecologists are the main actors, and the new directions in research generally reflect this. Two recent volumes illustrate this, and

also demonstrate some of the newer approaches available to uncover and reconstruct the paths and processes in this history.

David R. Harris (1996) has overseen and edited a major reassessment and general survey of *The origins and spread of agriculture and pastoralism in Eurasia*. The Asian landmass is still the favored candidate for charting the initial transitions from food procurement (foraging) to more tended forms of food production (from cultivation to agriculture). Yet, of course, Asia and 'Eurasia' (including Austronesia) more broadly, cover an immense expanse and range of habitats. Twenty state-of-the-art chapters are devoted to detailing the particulars of various emergent domesticates, both plant and animal, and to placing them in their geographical contexts. These contributions are grouped into three divisions: southwest Asia, Europe and central Asia (in)to the Pacific. Eight preceding chapters present a set of general 'thematic perspectives' on new and updated views and methods. These include social, ecological, genetic, linguistic, bio-molecular, epidemiological and geographical perspectives on the study of people-plant and animal interactions. Harris, long-term Director of the Institute of Archaeology at University College London and a geographer with Berkeley roots, as always, puts the whole in able and expert perspective with his introductory and concluding essays.

Two of the aims of Harris's volume, and the conference on which it is based, were to revisit and redirect the concepts of centers of origin and diffusion. Some of the contributions of this volume suggest a need to revise, but not necessarily dismiss, the insights and arguments of earlier workers on these topics. Others offer quite innovative approaches. All take the discussions and demonstrations below and beyond general levels. As Harris (1996: 6) points out, questions of single versus multiple origins of domesticates must be answered through detailed investigation, biological and archaeological, of individual taxa, region by region. Collaterally, the question is not so much whether, but whither diffusion, and by what means. L. Luca Cavalli-Sforza (1996), the noted geneticist and co-author of the monumental *The history and geography of human genes* (Cavalli-Sforza *et al.*, 1994), presents the case for demic as opposed to cultural diffusion for the spread of early agriculture. Drawing on evidence derived from mapping human genetic gradients from southwest Asia into and throughout Europe, Cavalli-Sforza argues that agriculture traveled with farmers rather than being transmitted through cultural adoption. He suggests his model can be applied to both farming and pastoralism in other areas, including central Asia and Africa. The archaeologist Colin Renfrew (1996) makes complementary claims for the spread of languages and, concomitantly, agriculture and pastoralism. Although not acknowledged, geographers might legitimately ask to what extent the *Geist* of Ratzel and his work on migrations and diffusion are recapitulated, if not embedded, in these models. While for many, their genetic and linguistic mappings may appear too elegantly simple to explain processes as complex as agriculture's expansions, they may offer methods for tracing the spread of more discrete traits that give definition to cultural landscapes. At even larger scale, Andrew Sherratt (1996) offers a thought-provoking piece on the implications of plate tectonics for human evolution and agricultural emergence. He poses a series of counterfactuals or what he calls 'imaginary prehistories' to show that the conjunctive conditions that resulted in an agriculture coincident with Holocene beginnings were more accidental than processual outcomes.

In the same section cultural biogeographer Mark Blumler (1996) argues that cultural ecologists, particularly those with archaeological interests, need to inform their efforts

in light of current ecological and evolutionary theory. Under the umbrella of a non-equilibrium view of nature, a number of theoretical revisions in ecology and evolutionary biology have been advanced with increasing acceptance. The roles of environmental disturbance, nonclimax dynamics, biotic communities-as-chimera, historical contingency, and change as rapid and disjunctive, are all entering into the mainstream thinking. Blumler provides a brief illustration of how these newer modes of conceptualizing ecology and evolution can be applied to the case of wild cereal ecology in Mediterranean and southwest Asian contexts. Presumably a more global and general application of these perspectives and principles awaits elaboration. Not surprisingly, however, one of the messages of this volume is that now is a time for sifting through the stores of new regionally and chronologically specific evidence, rather than advancing a new round of metanarrations and megamodelings of agriculture's inceptions.

Among the 20 chapters devoted to regional essays and case studies on specific taxa in particular places, aspects of each should be of general interest to geographers. Here I will only give a sampling. Archaeologist Richard Harrison (1996) emphasizes the importance and apparent antiquity of the Mediterranean *dehesa* landscapes and production systems. As Harrison notes, these agropastoral complexes based on open oak woodlands and swine herding have long interested geographers (e.g., Parsons, 1962) but only recently have engaged the attention of prehistorians. Harris and Gosden (1996) present an overview of their work in western central Asia (southern Turkmenistan), suggesting that the search for agricultural origins on the margins of long-established centers will continue to yield important new evidence. Prehistorian Peter Bellwood (1996) presents a far-reaching (theoretically and geographically) synthesis of the origins and spread of agriculture in the Indo-Pacific realm. Basically, Bellwood contends that the explosive and relatively rapid Austronesian linguistic expansion across a vast zone occurred through colonization and that agriculture was a key part of the baggage. His model for mid-latitude agricultural origins draws on and supports the views of Cavalli-Sforza and Renfrew on a similar occurrence in the Indo-European linguistic realm. One node of nonconformity in the Austronesian agrolinguistic expansion model, as Bellwood points out, is highland New Guinea. As so often is the case, it appears to stand out in its splendid isolation. Geographer Tim Bayliss-Smith (1996) provides a review of past and current work on the New Guinea highlands. As for the question of whether New Guinea can be counted as an isolated and largely independent center of agricultural origins, Bayliss-Smith suggests periodic infusions of crops from the outside, but that cultivation practices, including 'intensive' wetland farming as early as 9000 BP, developed *in situ*. Overall precocity and independence may still be proven, but doubt has recently been cast on the appearance of pigs in the complex at early dates. New techniques applied to available archaeological evidence yielded a date of only 500 BP. This represents a 95% reduction in earlier time depth estimates, though it also probably indicates the need for much more recovery and analysis of evidence.

A parallel volume for the New World tropics has been produced by Dolores Piperno and Deborah Pearsall (1998). As a co-authored book rather than edited collection, *The origins of agriculture in the lowland neotropics* provides more single-minded synthesis, and thus coincides with, as well as questions, various points and perspectives advanced by the contributors to Harris's volume. Both volumes are in general agreement that the

ecologically informed culture historical theorizing of Sauer for both Old and New Worlds, and David Harris and the archaeologist Donald Lathrap for the New, were prescient and remain important. Both volumes emphasize the value of evolutionary ecology applied to cultural questions, but the Eurasian volume voices more confidence in its newer expressions than do Piperno and Pearsall. Accordingly, these two paleoethnobotanists are seemingly comfortable with the now dated (?) systemic saw that agriculture's emergence was 'a process, *not* an event'.

Through a generally conventional processual lens, they offer a summary of how they view the evidence at present. The emergence of food production in the neotropical lowlands was coeval with its appearance in southwest Asia, and presumably linked to climatic and vegetational changes between 11 000 and 10 000 BP, no less profound than those at higher latitudes at the same time. House gardens, as posited by Lathrap, Harris and others, had become the initial staging grounds for systematic cultivation by about 9000 BP. By 7000 BP house-based horticulture had expanded into early shifting field-based agriculture. By 2000 BP most cultivars found at contact had been developed and nucleated, and sedentary village life was the norm for lowland agriculturalists. In order to arrive at these general conclusions, Piperno and Pearsall review portions of the extant literature and pockets of the available data. Theirs is a benign synthesis that goes out on few limbs, but does extend considerable recognition to geographers' work, and the salience of geographical factors and contexts in putting the pieces together. Besides Sauer and Harris, they acknowledge the work of cultural geographers such as Denevan, Gade, Parsons and paleoenvironmental geographers such as P.J. Bartlein and K.B. Liu. It is in the middle chapters, 'The phytogeography of neotropical crops and the putative ancestors' and 'The evolution of foraging and food production', where, drawing on their own specializations, they offer the most original and incisive interpretations. In a short summary chapter, they put the lowland neotropics in global comparative perspective.

II Foraging pasts; farming futures

At their self-reflexive best, archaeologists, geographers and the assorted hyphenated paleo-specialists drawn to speculate on and investigate agriculture's origins, must see some mimicry between their methods and the practices of the precultivators – caches of data collected here, spoor of diffusion paths tracked over there, and so on. But now as we pass into this third millennium CE, foraging as a principal subsistence strategy, let alone the livelihood mode of many peoples, is largely *in extremis*. Therefore, it is heartening still to run across reports or studies of foraging's survivals in remote corners of today's world or, for that matter, its much removed modern variants found in both urban and rural contexts. Richard Hansis (1998) reports on the growth of harvesting nonwood forest products (NTFPs) in the Pacific Northwest. The main collectors are immigrant workers, mostly of Hispanic and southeast Asian origins, many from peasant backgrounds. Collecting floral greens, berries or mushrooms for urban specialty markets allows for flexible alternatives to wage labor, but often puts the pickers in conflict with the 'native' population, both Euro-American and Amerind, over appropriate use of land, both public and private. Increasing harvests also raise questions of environmental impacts and degradation. Hansis frames his findings in

political ecological perspective, but the complementary project of viewing cultural landscape construction as part of the labor process seems equally well suited to this situation (Mitchell, 1996). This is but one among myriad examples of how globalizing pressures on local economies fashion new ecologies and cultural landscapes, some quite archaic in their antecedents.

Half a world away, Reginald Cline-Cole (1998) explores the (de)formations of regional forestry landscapes within Nigerian dryland settings, through the juxtapositions of forestry discourses, especially as they variously conceal and reveal the existence of 'fuelscapes'. Cline-Cole points to issues of fuel-wood potential and procurement, as central to knowledge claims concerning processes of deforestation and degradation. Focus on discourse(s) within the domain of environment-development studies has become one of the – dare I say it? – key discursive strategies within a newer and emergent political ecology. Peet and Watt's (1996a) edited collection *Liberation ecologies* highlights some of this thinking as well as providing empirical cases from Africa, Asia, and Latin America wherein new approaches are demonstrated. Peet and Watts (1996b: 13, emphasis in original) resist forecasting where the political ecology of the 1990s is headed, but 'What is striking . . . is the extent to which *these new directions attempt to engage political ecology with certain ideas and concepts derived from poststructuralism and discourse theory*'. Anthropologist Arturo Escobar's (1996) essay in this volume, 'Constructing nature: elements for a poststructuralist political ecology', is particularly useful for indicating some lineaments, past and present, and posing some of the future possibilities. Karl Zimmerer (1996) makes a case for viewing soil erosion in Bolivia's Cochabamba region through discourse-directed analysis. Lucy Jarosz (1996) offers a similar brief for deforestation with illustrations from Madagascar. These and similar departures/new directions within political ecology, environmental history and allied subfields offer examples how reconstitutions of ecologically orientated cultural landscape study might proceed.

Lawrence Grossman's (1998) *The political ecology of bananas: contract farming, peasants, and agrarian change in the eastern Caribbean* is not necessarily a political ecologically reconstructed cultural landscape study, but it does nicely balance the cultural ecology + political economy = political ecology equation. His opening concern is to specify the nature of contract farming in the eastern Caribbean, with St Vincent serving as the example. Generally, third-world farming by contract is considered a post-Fordist phenomenon, part of the panoply of changes associated with economic globalization. Grossman points to antecedent conditions in the eastern Caribbean, suggesting more historical depth to these developments. Working in tandem with British colonial policies, the role of frequent crises caused by environmental disasters, particularly hurricanes and volcanic eruptions along with droughts and pest plagues, cleared the way for the present arrangements. For a fuller historical accounting of the role of environmental disruptions in this process, see Bonham Richardson's (1997) most recent contribution to his multivolume project of reconstructing the economic and environmental historical geography of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century British eastern Caribbean. In terms of labor, Grossman questions the assumption that contract farming necessarily brings about deskilling and proletarianization. As for declining food production and increasing pesticide use under banana contract farming, both occur, but in ways and for reasons not usually cited. Overall, while acknowledging the structuring power of political economic forces, at base he sees the environment's own agencies –

what he terms the 'environmental rootedness of agriculture' – as playing a larger part than is commonly depicted. Drawing on solid knowledge of cultural ecology, past and present, Grossman makes good amendments to both cultural and political ecology as currently proposed and practiced.

Completely removed from the constant revisionist maneuvers and makeovers within the social theoretical arenas, and certainly not claiming to be some momentous (re)vision, John Fraser Hart's (1998) *The rural landscape* is a welcomed extension and partial revision of his 1975 minor classic *The look of the land*. That volume was part of the Prentice-Hall *Foundations of Cultural Geography* series under the editorship of Philip Wagner. The series in turn was part of an inspired effort by Wagner and the publisher to produce a dozen or more slim but authoritative statements on key topics in cultural geography. Only six were actually published; Hart's companions were Sopher on religion (1967), Rapoport (1969) on house form, Issac (1970) on domestication, Wagner (1972) on communication and Zelinsky (1973) on the USA. Designed for the class and seminar room, but also meant to serve a narrower audience, the series offered the prospect of a set of reference works that, had it continued, might have extended the duration, if not the scope, of traditional cultural geography's purview. In this sense, the series marks a point of maturation, whereafter the subfield might have entered a rococo phase, but lacked sufficient cadres of younger adherents to make the necessary elaborations or involutions. By the 1970s a more theorized and robust cultural ecology attracted many of the would-be workers, and by the early 1980s Duncan's (1980) and Cosgrove's (1983) calls for a radically reorientated cultural geography were turning heads and minds in new directions. The contexts and impacts of Duncan's 'The super-organic in American cultural geography' have recently been reassessed (Mathewson, 1998; Shurmer-Smith, 1998).

Where does all this leave Hart's unreconstructed approach to landscape research? Largely where it has always resided – at the core of any commonsensical attempt to understand rural land and life. Hart draws on 50 years of formal geographic practice, in discerning and describing the elements of his favored landscapes, mostly found in western Europe and eastern North America. The book's chapter divisions recognize rocks, plants, land divisions, farm structures, and small town and urban edges as main groupings. Sections on forest use, land dividing and farms structures, especially fences, feed lots and specialized constructions for different crops, provide precise and penetrating views of the basics of human-land relations. Hart's clear thought, prose and reportage should ensure this volume, and the occasional text of its type and quality, enduring niches in the geographic literature.

III Food and food issues

Cultural geographers in particular, and human geographers more generally, have long found food an object of interest. Whether in its antecedent forms as crop plants and livestock and their precursors, or as the products of subsistence activities and more advanced fishing and farming practices and systems, food has always (since at least Herodotus) been on the table for study and analysis. Until recently, however, the focus has been largely on the production and supply sides. The cultural and related turns with human geography continue to redirect interest and research toward the modes

and the matter of consumption. At the same time, work within the political ecology and more flexible political economy spheres is taking food, and especially the issues that surround it, more seriously. All this is illustrated by an array of current work, ranging from reservings of earlier studies, to new cultural geographic tastings, to political economic micro-to-macro wavings.

Frederick Simoon's (1994) classic culture-historical study, *Eat not this flesh: food avoidances in the Old World* [1961], has been reissued in revised and enlarged format. Few cultural traits can count as fundamental and defining as food prohibitions, especially those involving 'flesh foods'. The same can be said for the debates generated by these practices. They parallel the divisions evident in earlier contentions over agricultural origins – primarily ritual/religious versus ecological-economic causations, but have the added intensity of the here-and-now. Simoons draws on an impressive collection of sources from earliest records to the present, and spices it with personal observations from his wide travels. He considers, in turn, the categories of beef, pork, chickens and eggs, horseflesh, camelflesh, dogflesh and fish. Keeping with culture-historical method, he argues for tracking individual cases and practices through time and place, and concludes that only the interplay of a full range of factors including religious, moral, hygienic, ecological and economic, can explain eating patterns. In his most recent book (1998) *Plants of life, plants of death*, Simoons shifts from food with its multiple meanings and production-consumption modes to selected plants that are either venerated or avoided in Old World ritual and religious contexts. These include some plants and their parts that are also eaten or used medicinally. Among these plants are garlic and onions, urd and fava beans, sesame, mushrooms, mandrake and ginseng. All are freighted with ritual significance in various cultural traditions which Simoons tracks, documents, and interprets with his customary thoroughness. The end notes run to more than 2000, spanning some 150 pages.

The taste of American place (Shortridge and Shortridge, 1998a) brings together 19 previously published articles on regional and ethnic foods. All appeared since 1980, and feature the work of anthropologists, folklorists, geographers, historians and sociologists. Despite the slight datedness and diversity of disciplines represented, the collection has striking immediacy and unity of outlook. The themes of regional identity as expressed through foodways, and food as an element of ethnic identity formation and retention, are well illustrated and play off one another nicely. The third section, 'Eating out', does not mesh as well as the first two sections, but does cover aspects of commercial dining and fast-food marketing that represent rapidly expanding dimensions of the geography of food. Stephen Frenkel's (1998) piece on the specialty coffee business in the Pacific Northwest bridges the formation of identity-through-consumption theme and marketing dynamics. With a quick nod to Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital' and a few other conceptual markers, he briskly demonstrates how specialty coffees are effective vehicles for 'selling class [status]', 'selling place', and 'selling development'. The third vignette is a perceptive look at how vendors can exploit naive naturalism [eco-chic approach] and exoticism [Banana Republican pitch]. Various, coffee is said to come from 'pristine' environments such as New Guinea, or from places like Guatemala where coffee is grown 'on traditional estates by dedicated horticulturalists'. In both cases the relations of labor are either elided or romanticized. Frenkel (1998: 62) points to a third trend in which consumers take an active role in 'destablizing the separation of production and consumption' and link their coffee

buying with development issues in producer regions. Along similar lines but in other times, Lewis (1998) traces lobster consumption in Maine from a colonial famine food to upper-class rusticator summer fare, and on to its iconic status as middle-class *haute cuisine*. In the process it has become a symbol for the state, but one in which many native residents resent.

Rice consumption provides a window on yet another set of shifts in diet and attitudes. J.R. Shortridge and B.G. Shortridge (1998b) show through careful analysis of producer and shipper data (most rice consumed in the USA is grown and shipped there) that before the 1960s little rice was eaten outside the producer regions in the Deep South, or in ethnic enclaves where rice was a customary item in the diet. Consumption by state in 1980 varied from less than one pound *per capita* to almost one hundred pounds in Louisiana. Since then, many areas of the country have increased their rice consumption, particularly California, New York, New Mexico and Texas. The main producer states – Louisiana and South Carolina – have greatly increased their consumption. The authors present no firm evidence for why the changes have occurred, but suggest that a combination of factors are involved. These include increased immigration from rice culture regions, new food fads – *nouvelle cuisine*, southwestern, Cajun and oriental cooking – and, most importantly, the diffusion of a new American lifestyle that stresses casualness, health, ecology and ‘empathy for elements of nonstandard American cultures’. Other contributions in the volume that place foodways and items in the cultural landscape in evocative ways include: Lockwood and Lockwood (1998) on pasties in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Gutierrez (1998) on Cajuns and crawfish, and Zelinsky (1998) on the overall geography of ethnic restaurants in the USA.

Locking eyes on Richard Pillsbury’s (1998) bold-faced title *NO foreign food* in short-order summons up whiffs of culinary chauvinism or perhaps dietary nativism? Or maybe just a nasty know-nothingism. But then glancing down the cover, the smaller subtitle ‘American diet in time and space’ suggests other possibilities. As it turns out, Pillsbury knows quite a bit about American foodways, from colonial times to the present, and across a wide portion of America’s regions and places. By way of introduction, Pillsbury juxtaposes two chapters presenting impressions of American foodways (‘concept’) with the actual victuals (‘content’) over time. These are followed by chapters on the food supply, the prepared food phenomenon, retailing food, cookbooks, impact of immigration on the American diet, restaurants, today’s standard fare and, most imaginatively, another set of concept-content comparisons that offer a regional model and map the contemporary diet regions. The main regions are as one might imagine: Northeast, South, Midwest, Interior West, Southwest and Pacific West. The model identifies additional categories, viz. zones of ‘historic interaction’, ‘traditional fabric’, ‘national transaction’, ‘transition’, ‘frontier’, and centers of innovation. The zones and centers allow for a more dynamic depiction of national dietary patterns than comes from the regionalizations. Both flux and fixity configure the mappings of American foodways. Not surprisingly, ‘foreign’ food intrusion and adoption account for more than small change.

Simoons’ and Pillsbury’s books, and most of the articles in the Shortridges’ collected volume, treat food conventions in a conventional manner. Bell and Valentine’s (1997) *Consuming geographies: we are where we eat* offers a contemporary tour of some of the same topics, and introduces other less obvious aspects of food and its consumption in

novel ways. They draw from an eclectic menu of cultural/social theoretical positions and works to inform their observations of, and insights into, current foodways. Within this mode of presentation, said to provide new ways of thinking about and through food, spaces for still newer perspectives (on food and other cultural constructs) are opened up. Part of their methodology comes from the domain of 'traveling' and 'nomadic' theorizing, one of the more recent productions of postmodern and postcolonialist theorists (see Creswell, 1997). The book's structure, however, comes from Neil Smith's (1993) thoughts on spatial scales in the local-to-global continuum. Accordingly, Bell and Valentine explore food consumption at a series of scales: body-home-community-city-region-nation-global. In their words they 'aim to produce a textured account of what Cook and Crang (1996) call "circuits of culinary culture" as they map across space' (Bell and Valentine, 1997: 12). The body, of course, is the locus, the final destination of foods' normal transits from nature to nurture. Corporeality is an increasingly expansive concern within critical cultural studies, and includes the work of geographers on several sides of various divides (Duncan, 1996; Bale and Philo, 1998; Callard, 1998; Harvey, 1998a). Similarly, home is the usual site of foods' literal incorporation, but also shelters an array of symbolic and actual practice that surround food consumption. In that ecology's etymology specifies household management, both body and home offer likely candidates for future extensions of ecology/cultural landscape investigations. The larger scales and spaces of food consumption, from community-based to global that Bell and Valentine project through insightful culturalist lenses, each present departures and directions worth pursuing. For example, foodways are often crucial elements in the construction of regional and national identities and, along with attendant global articulations, both cultural and commercial, they are obvious subjects for eco-cultural landscape study.

Goodman and Watts' (1997) *Globalising food: agrarian questions and global restructuring* is one such volume that takes up the challenge of confronting issues raised by food and its globalizations. Although not concerned with either ecology or cultural landscapes *per se*, many of the collected chapters deal with forces and conditions that are transforming ecologies and landscapes as well as the nature of farming itself. Moreover, as the tenor of the contributions makes clear, new approaches to 'agro-food' studies are well under way. Disciplinary matrices grounded in land-grant university sponsored rural sociology and geography have been superseded by engagement with debates and developments in critical social science. Watts and Goodman's (1997) opening essay 'Agrarian questions: global appetite, local metabolism: nature, culture, and industry in *fin de siècle* agro-food systems' looks at past, present and future food issues. They not only argue for the continued relevance of Karl Kautsky's classical Marxist analysis of the agrarian question, but suggest that at this century's end, the salience of agrarian transitions may be as central to capitalism's growth and globalization as a century ago. Of course, aspects of today's agroindustrial dynamics were not discernible or predictable a century ago. In broad outlines, however, contributions in the collection point to Kautsky's prescience across a range of issues. Boyd and Watts' (1997) chapter on the chicken industry in America demonstrates the applicability of Kautskian analysis to one of the more striking examples of post World War Two agroindustrial flexibility and adaptation. In the span of a few decades chicken production went from a diffuse and incidental rural household activity to a geographically concentrated (largely in the southeastern states) vertically integrated industry with impressive 'just-

in-time' scheduling qualities. By the 1990s broilers had bolted ahead of beef as the meat Americans consumed in greatest quantity – from less than a pound *per capita* per year in the 1920s to a projected 80 lb by 2000. Industrial poultry seems positioned to become the global fleshfood of choice/necessity within the next century. Or will it? This projection, albeit in caricatured form, is not out of line with assumptions about production and globalization informed by political economy perspectives advanced in this volume and in both Marxist and neoclassical thought more generally. Whatmore and Thorne (1997) offer a critique of this kind of thinking which they see as rooted in a particularly modernist form of geographical imagination. They advocate alternative geographies of food (and new geometries of interaction) that subvert notions of colossal landscapes of capital and spatially totalizing globalizations. They point to work of Bruno Latour (1993) and John Law (1994) as providing theoretical direction in conceptualizing global networks as performative orderings rather than systemic entities. Their poststructuralist intervention within this volume does not so much call into question the agrarian questions raised, but the way they have been asked and pursued.

IV Festivities

It seems like about a decade ago there was a moment in geographers' explorations and appropriations of social theory when Bakhtin's concept of the carnivalesque was said to offer many possibilities for inspired work in and on cultural landscapes (Philo, 1988; Jackson, 1989; Shields, 1991). Perhaps I haven't been tracking it accurately, but the interest was apparently fleeting with no major studies to mark it. This is regrettable, as festivals, fairs, feasts and similar events and diversions evoking associations with food, celebration, social inversions and cultural transgressions, are all prime terrain and occasion for culture and landscape study in the newer as well as more traditional modes. Simply by focusing on the roles of plants and animals in contexts of festivity opens up an immense subject area. Whether the ecological dimensions are obvious or, once or twice removed, they are becoming increasingly complex. For example, hunting in its multiple expressions, but especially as sport and particularly as class and/or gender-based ritual performance, has largely evaded the notice of geographers (but see Emel, 1998; Raitz, 1998). Festivals celebrating food is a more familiar topic as noted above (viz. Shortridge and Shortridge, 1998a), but still lacks sustained attention. In premodern times and contexts food celebration mostly marked passages in the production cycle, e.g., planting and harvest festivals. Increasingly, these events are staged promotions of local, regional or ethnic identity.

Work on festivities, apart from a focus on their explicit ecological aspects, can claim more recent additions. Pilgrimages, both secular and religious, can be viewed as traveling or mobile festivals (Wagner, 1997). Creswell's (1996: 78) work on New Age pilgrimage to Stonehenge blurs the categories of sacred and profane, while evoking images of the carnivalesque. Waterman (1998) has opened up a crucial topic with his 'Carnivals for élites? The cultural politics of arts festivals'. While inversion may characterize the carnivalesque, the question of who stays on top is rarely in doubt (I'm doubly reminded of this for, as I write, Louisiana's Mardi Gras carnival is nearing climax – and, the more inversion, the more the immutability).

Perhaps the most current and complete festival study by a geographer is Steven

Hoelscher's (1998a) *Heritage on stage: the invention of ethnic place in America's Little Switzerland*. At one level Hoelscher presents the history of New Glarus, Wisconsin, a Swiss immigrant colony established in the 1840s. A half century later the historian Frederick Jackson Turner considered this community a curiosity in that it remained a self-conscious ethnic enclave showing few signs of assimilation or erosion. Almost from the outset, the colonists initiated an annual *Kilbi* (church) festival that conflated American and Swiss independence celebrations with commemoration of the colony's founding. At decennial intervals, larger-scaled events were organized, and by the 1890s the festivities were shifted to September. This was more in keeping with the original Swiss *Kilbi* that marked the return of transhumant herders and cattle from summer pastures. They also began to attract growing numbers of participants, including many non-Swiss Americans. In the 1930s a William Tell pageant was added to the proceedings, expanding the 'folkloric' display and possibilities for heritage commodification. Since the 1960s these have been multiple: the town has been heavily 'Swisscaped', the citizens ethnically reinvented and the locale embedded in regional, national and international tourist circuits. At another level, Hoelscher provides an able reading and telling of recent social and cultural theory on questions of place promotion, ethnic identity and commemoration, and tourism's global reaching for top-spot in the world economy (see also Hoelscher, 1998b).

Festivity, and its cognates, come from the Latin *festivitas*, pertaining to holidays with the sense of both suspending the quotidian and exercising excess. *Escapism*, the title of Yi-Fu Tuan's (1998) most recent book (and perhaps his last according to his own testimony), certainly correlates with festivity. Tuan covers many forms of escapism, which he holds to be a central axis in culture and the human condition, but passes on festivals as exemplars of collective escapism. In this wide-ranging meditation on culture as escapism, Tuan offers five contexts – earth, animality, people, hell and heaven – for exploring escapism's manifestations. Of food and carnality (in the chapter on animality) he has plenty to say. They connect us most directly with our 'animal' selves. As Tuan (1998: xiii) avers, '[c]ulture is the totality of means by which I escape from my animal state of being'. As always, Tuan's thoughts are pitched to the higher registers of humanism, however unfashionable some of those no(ta)tions may currently be. As an early convert to cultural geography, and clearly one of the most distinctive and erudite voices in modern geography, I only hope that he will emulate his fellow Wisconsinite, Harry Houdini and, wiggling free of his own words, give us much more of his escapist artistry!

V Animals as other

Although hunting may not have entered many geographers' sights, animals as representatives and representations of nature has. Wolch and Emel (1998) have assembled a state-of-subject collection with their *Animal geographies: place, politics, and identity in the nature-culture borderlands*. The contributors address four broad zones of convergence and contention: animal subjects/human identities; negotiating the human-animal borderlands; the political economy of animal bodies; and animals in the moral landscape. In their opening essay, 'Witnessing the animal moment', Wolch and Emel ask and partially answer the questions: why animals in social theory? And why now?

They see specific challenges to modernist epistemologies, especially coming from feminism and postmodernism, as not only destabilizing animal–human boundaries, but opening up the ‘animal question’ in its multiple dimensions. Several of the chapters situate animals and their ecologies – either deranged through human agency and domination, or in their more ‘natural’ state – as elements within cultural landscapes, though the main concern of each is critique of a particular aspect of human–animal relations. Anderson (1998) visits zoos as concept and construct, taking the Adelaide Zoo as the case for her observations. She shows how zoos have aided in colonial projects of naturalizing oppression of indigenous peoples, and inscribing human–animal boundaries with gendered and racialized readings. Gullo *et al.* (1998) and Wolch (1998) consider human–animal relations in urban contexts. Seemingly less scripted and confined than in zoos, animals’ roles in urban spaces and landscapes are still bound by powerful conventions and subordinations. Wolch (1998) calls for envisioning zoöpolis, wherein the just place of animals in cities is thoroughly theorized, socially but non-anthropocentrically negotiated, and acted upon. The implications of her piece put conjunctions of ecology and cultural landscape at the center. Perhaps too ‘zootopian’ for some, it will strike others as fresh and feasible urban thinking. Gullo *et al.* (1998) offer a concrete case involving the question of ‘wild’ animals in urban landscapes. They examine the issue of cougars in southern Californian urban spaces as reflected in the changing ideas and behavior by both humans and cougars over the past two decades (the authors accept the notion of animal consciousness and ideation). Emel (1998) takes a longer look at the relations between men and wolves, with special attention to the USA. In the campaign to eradicate the wolf, she sees a particularly potent demonstration of ‘the interrelatedness of sexism, racism, animal abuse, and economic practices’ (1998: 92). Outside the volume, Whatmore and Thorne (1998) propose a radically different way of configuring the geographies of wildlife. Comparing the sociospatial ordering (topological-taxonomies) of ‘wild’ animals in Roman gladiatorial games and in endangered species listings, they seek (1998: 435) ‘to disrupt the linear historical narratives of “civilization” and “evolution”, which consign wildlife to marginal spaces with a teleological destiny of erasure’.

Of this literature, Philo’s (1998) ‘Animals, geography, and the city: notes on inclusions and exclusions’ may be the most salutary in my estimation. Philo sets out to do two things, and he does them very well, if all too briefly. First, he considers how animals have been largely excluded from geographers’ thinking and writing. Secondly, he looks at the inclusion of stockyard animals in nineteenth-century cities such as London and Chicago, and their eventual exclusion from urban life. In the first part of his essay, Philo surveys work by geographers dealing with animals and zoographical themes. It is not meant to be a comprehensive survey, but he does considerable service in setting a portion of the record straight on the nature of Sauer’s and the Berkeley school’s complex body of work. To appropriate concepts fashionable in critical human geography, this body’s ‘positionality’ and ‘situatedness’ were often, and remain, seen as marginal to geography’s dominant discourse. That Sauer and his associates viewed the world variously from its prehistoric, peasant and nonprogressivist/productionist/positivist margins, continues to be overlooked, or discounted when (sub)disciplinary differentiations are recounted. In my second report (Mathewson, 1999) I commented on this propensity for uninformed assertion and facile generalization. If more new cultural geographers would take closer looks at the corpus, they

might find that the caricatured whole (usually depicted as retrograde, if not reactionary, and wholly irrelevant to contemporary concerns) is simply that. Philo (1998: 53–58) makes important and telling revisions of this now dominant view, by showing how, against the grain, Sauerians have always taken animals and human–animal relations seriously. Contra the volume editors’ claim (Emel and Wolch, 1998: xiii) that the Sauerians failed to grant agency or identity to animals in their studies, Philo (1998: 56–57) argues otherwise. Beyond the question of animals’ exclusions in geography, Emel and Wolch (1998: xv) accurately note that in concert with the ‘wholesale rejection of Sauerian cultural geography, [the] entire idea of a nature separate from human culture was . . . abandoned as hopelessly naive and outdated’. As result of ‘denaturalizing nature’ and seeing everything as cultural construction, the agency of nature and animals was denied. As Emel and Wolch (1998: xv) point out, it was left to environmental historians, ‘influenced, ironically, by Sauer and the Berkeley school’, to call the new cultural geographers on nature’s elision. This leads to my final observations (also made in my two previous reports) that regional environmental history is, at the moment, perhaps the most vital site and ripe situation for advancing ecology and cultural landscape study.

VI Final words and footnotes

Two books have appeared in the past year that suggest that geographers are beginning to reinhabit the environmental-historical spaces seemingly vacated to historians. Both deal with wetlands along the Gulf of Mexico. Alfred Siemen’s (1998) *A favored place* gives us a detailed historical geography of the San Juan River wetlands of central Veracruz, Mexico, from AD 500 to the present. Grounded in his initial discovery and investigation of ancient raised field agricultural systems in this region, Siemens charts 15 centuries of landscape change using sources including archaeological, archival, travelers’ accounts and aerial photography. What stands out is how perceptions and use of the wetland environment have changed over time – from philia-to-phobia, from nurture to negation. Gay Gomez (1998) has written a splendid account of ‘seasons on Louisiana’s Chenier Plain’. Modestly entitled *A wetland biography*, Gomez manages to orchestrate something closer to autobiography – not only do the people tell their stories, but the biota and the marsh/swamp/and ridge landscapes are given voice too. Separate chapters consider alligators, waterfowl, furbearers and fish in the regional ecology, along with cycles and seasons, and land and water formations. The human history is treated equally, but not separately – it infuses the whole. Now this is authentic polysemic and polyvocalic environmental historical geography at its inception! For a conventional companion history of America’s wetlands see Vileisis’ (1997) *Discovering the unknown landscape*.

Convergences of conservation biology and cultural/political ecology are another way ecology and cultural landscape studies can come together in new configurations. Two recent volumes are notable here. Stan Stevens (1997a) has convened a half-dozen frontline researchers to describe and prescribe how environmental conservation can be carried out through cultural survival action. Case studies by geographers in Central America (Herlihy, 1997; Nietschmann, 1997), Nepal (Stevens, 1997b) and other specialists on Alaska, Australia and Papua New Guinea put the case for indigenous

co- and self-management of protected areas in welcomed relief. Zimmerer and Young's (1998) *Nature's geography: new lessons for conservation in developing countries* promises to be an equally important text bringing together ecologists, cultural and political ecologists, and biogeographers. This is a carefully crafted effort suggestive of a number of new directives and directions: new regional geography with biotic bite; a critical cultural biogeography and conservation biology; and both political and cultural ecology informed/reformed through the 'new' ecology of disturbance and disequilibrium dynamics. Cases and places presented by geographers include: M. Blumler (the Near East), B. Brower and J. Metz (Nepal), F. Echavarría and F. Pérez (the Venezuelan Andes), S. Horn (Costa Rica), K. Medley (Kenya), A. Taylor (China), M. Turner (the Sahel), R. Voeks (Borneo) and K. Young and K. Zimmerer (the central Andes). While it is hard to predict the impact of a book, especially an edited one, this volume could seed considerable debate. Cronon's (1995) *Uncommon ground – toward reinventing nature* (less provocatively subtitled 'rethinking the human place in nature' in its 1996 paper edition) ignited widespread debate across disciplinary divisions, implanting constructivist questions at the center of the nature–society problematic. Presumably on lesser scale, but with lasting effect, *Nature's geography* should help to bring a restructured biophysical geography back toward the center of the same construct.

With this report, a series of three has been completed. The domain covered – cultural landscapes and ecology – represents an active and important site of geographers' labors for much of this century, if not longer. I have been concerned to acknowledge some of this depth in my reportage. Current work clearly shows that the study of human–environment relations within their cultural contexts and expressions is being reenvisioned and revised in multiple modes and directions. At the same time, familiar approaches maintain adherents. Looking on to the nearside of next century, it is likely that florescences of the new, along with involutions of the old, will proceed apace. What is less clear, is whether dialogues will be sustained, or whether critical differences will beget fixed distances and static disengagements. It is my hope that this version of 'progress' does not come to pass, but rather earlier work will continue to provoke and inform dialectical departures.

In these reports, I have tried to identify, or at least include, examples of work that fit this description. Among these, a few stand out. Of these, Kay Anderson's (1997) critique of the geography of domestication is exemplary. Giving a fair airing of nineteenth century-to-Berkeley school geographers' conceptualizations of plant and animal domestication issues and processes, she moves well beyond their bounds to open up a number of new and critical sites for revisiting and revising one of cultural geography's key themes. As she (1997: 465) suggests, here she '... begin[s] the task of critically deconstructing the process of domestication conceived in both its technical and metaphorical senses. In such way ... to connect practices of domestication to recent geographies of power, discourse, nature and identity'. Anderson's essay shows that the domestication theme is far from marginal or moribund; rather it should be at the center of an enlivened and critical cultural geography.

One final comment that might have been registered in a footnote, but also seems fitting either as a coda or summary observation, is on David Harvey's (1998b) 'The Humboldt connection'. In response to commentary about his book *Justice, nature and the geography of difference* (1996) Harvey relates how he had recently taken a long look back at Humboldt's work, especially *Cosmos*.¹ He wasn't sure what had prompted him,

perhaps 'some sort of unfinished business or untapped vein of knowledge' (Harvey, 1996: 723), but he came away with a reappreciated sense of Humboldt's powers and capacity to speak to current concerns. As with Marx, Humboldt's gifts were (and are) myriad, but especially their abilities to lay bare the interactions of humans and nature. Harvey ends on the note that, if not Marx, then perhaps Humboldt can and will inspire and instruct geography's reach for higher grounds than it has been wont to occupy generally. To this, I would only add that geographers with people-environment interests are well positioned to lead the way.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Steve Hoelscher for advice on things festive, Karl Zimmerer for sending an advance copy of *Nature's geography* and to the editors of *Progress in Human Geography* for proposing this report category and their decision to continue it. As always, various academic presses were helpful and generous in sending me books and promotional materials.

Note

1. *Cosmos* has recently been reprinted by the Johns Hopkins University Press in their *Foundations of Natural History* series (Humboldt, 1997).

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