
Cultural Geography: A Survey of Perceptions Held by Cultural Geography Specialty Group Members*

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As of the year 2000, the Cultural Geography Specialty Group of the Association of American Geographers had 465 members and ranked fourth overall in total membership within the association. Furthermore, cultural geographers had the second fastest growing specialty group between 1993 and 1998, after the Geographic Perspectives on Women specialty group. In spite of this demonstrated overwhelming appeal among geographers, to date, no one has systematically analyzed the subdiscipline of cultural geography to determine such things as its links to other aspects of the discipline, its major scholarly contributions, its most highly regarded publication outlets, its notable practitioners, and its most recognized departments. As the ranks of cultural geographers have swelled, the subdiscipline has become multifaceted. This article contextualizes and interprets the results of a survey sent to members of the 1998–1999 Cultural Geography Specialty Group. Outcomes include Louisiana State University and the University of Texas at Austin listed as offering the strongest cultural geography departments, Wilbur Zelinsky being deemed the subfield's most outstanding living practitioner, and the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* named the journal that best meets cultural geographers' needs. **Key Words:** cultural geography, distinguished scholars, publication outlets, strongest departments.

Since its inception in the late 1980s, the Cultural Geography Specialty Group (CGSG) has experienced a sharp increase in membership, and since 1993 it has consistently ranked among the top six specialty groups in total membership (Golledge 1999; *AAG Newsletter* 2001). As of 2000, the CGSG had 465 members and ranked fourth in total membership. Furthermore, it has been the second fastest growing specialty group within geography since the early 1990s, outpaced only by Geographic Perspectives on Women (Wheeler 1998; Golledge 1999). In spite of this demonstrated appeal among geographers, to date, no one has systematically analyzed the subdiscipline of cultural geography to determine such things as its most recognized North American departments, its major scholarly contributions, its most highly regarded publication outlets, or its most notable practitioners. With the intent of providing a self-examination of the subdiscipline on the threshold of the twenty-first century, this article contextualizes and interprets the results of a survey sent to all members of the 1998–1999 CGSG.

The present study is timely for a number of reasons. As the Association of American Geographers (AAG) readies itself to celebrate its one-hundredth anniversary in 2004, it is appropriate to examine a large and dynamic subfield within the discipline. Second, cultural/historical geographers comprise the largest group of expected retirees by the year 2003 (Gober et al. 1995), so it is worthwhile to take stock of the field. Third, an analysis of the CGSG offers a glimpse of some of the issues that human geographers collectively are facing: namely, increased specialization and growing diversity among its practitioners. Finally, “[J]ust about everyone, including many scholars interested in the field of GIS, have taken a crack at tackling sociocultural processes in their respective research analysis” (Mitchell 1999, 667).

Background

The introduction of specialty groups within the AAG began in 1976, when the AAG Council formed an ad hoc Long Range Planning

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Committee (LRPC) to explore the feasibility of semiautonomous organizations within the association, among other things (see Goodchild and Janelle 1988 for an in-depth discussion of the background of AAG specialty groups). By 1984, thirty-five specialty groups had been established in an attempt to unify association members and counteract the increasing fragmentation along subdisciplinary lines. Originally, specialty groups were formed as a means by which AAG members with shared topical, areal, or research interests could foster greater communication. By and large, the early specialty groups promoted specialization within the discipline and diminished communication between subfields (Goodchild and Janelle 1988).

In 1988, the CGSG was founded as a counter-movement to this overspecialized environment (Myers 2000). Since its inception, the CGSG has encouraged anyone possessing cultural interests to join its ranks. Its declared purpose is “[t]o encourage and facilitate intellectual exchange between scholars of all ages working in every branch of the subfield of cultural geography” (AAG 1999, 514). The CGSG prides itself on its all-inclusive nature as it embraces scholars who approach their research and teaching endeavors with great diversity. However, as in the discipline as a whole, the eclectic interests of cultural geographers have sometimes led to unforeseen fragmentation and splintering (Cosgrove 1993; Duncan 1993; Jackson 1993; Price and Lewis 1993a, 1993b).

Methods

To help examine the status of cultural geography at the threshold of the twenty-first century, a four-page survey was sent to all members of the 1998–1999 CGSG for whom names and contact information were available.¹ This article used the following questions from that survey instrument:

- List the top five North American departments you feel offer the strongest cultural geography programs.
- List the top five most outstanding LIVING practitioners of cultural geography.
- Provide citations for three examples of outstanding cultural geography (this could be considered a list of “must-reads in cultural geography”).

- List the top five journals that you feel best meet the needs of today’s cultural geographers.

Prior to data collection, the local compliance officer of the Human Subjects Review Board and the chair of the CGSG were contacted for permission and sponsorship. With the hopes of achieving the highest response rate possible, the survey was administered using two methods. First, members were directed, via e-mail, to a dedicated URL at which a web-based version of the survey instrument could be found. During this first round, members were asked to complete the questions online. All responses were automatically returned via e-mail and were printed and saved. It was speculated that the response rate would be higher if the survey instrument utilized the latest in Internet and computer technology. Three weeks after initial contact, a follow-up e-mail was sent to members who had yet to respond. After an additional four months, a paper copy of the exact same survey questions was sent via regular mail to those who had not responded to the e-mail version. In this second round, a postage-paid return envelope was included. In addition to information garnered from the survey instrument, the *Guide to Programs in Geography in the United States and Canada 1999–2000* (AAG 1998)—the year which corresponded to the 1998–1999 CGSG membership—was consulted. The guide publishes data on all AAG members, including individuals’ specialty group membership, areal proficiencies, current rank/position, and institution(s) at which degree(s) was earned.

Of the 428 surveys sent via e-mail and standard mail, 114 were returned, for a response rate of 26.6%. The profile of respondents closely matched the total CGSG membership (Table 1). Respondents to the survey and total CGSG membership were in relative parity based on rank; the low response rate on the part of associate professors and the high response rate on the part of graduate students clearly reflect the specialty group’s total membership. Females comprised 30% of the respondents, compared to 38% of the total CGSG membership. Finally, as one would expect, a disproportionate number of survey respondents had Ph.D.s, mirroring the CGSG membership.

Table 1 *Profile of CGSG Survey Respondents and CGSG Total Membership*

	% Survey Respondents	% CGSG Total Membership
Current rank or position:		
Full professor	18	13
Associate professor	8	5
Assistant professor	22	13
Instructor	5	5
Graduate student (Ph.D. and Masters)	33	43
Retired	6	2
Other/not reported	8	19
Highest degree earned:		
Postdoctorate	4	1
Ph.D.	53	43
M.A./M.S.	26	36
B.A./B.S.	11	18
No response provided	6	2

Source: Survey of 1998–1999 CGSG members ($n = 114$) and AAG (1998) ($n = 428$).

Results and Discussion

Every discipline has its leading scholars, departments, and journals. Earning a Ph.D. from a prestigious institution can open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Likewise, publishing in a discipline's flagship journal commonly accrues scholarly admiration and respect (Brunn 1997). The discipline of geography is no different.

Periodically, over the past four and one-half decades, geographers have assessed a multitude of qualities within their discipline. Some have rated distinguished geographers (Thornthwaite 1961; Whitehand 1985; Wrigley and Matthews 1986, 1987; Bodman 1991), while others have systematically evaluated the merits of departments and journals (Raup 1961; Morrill 1980; de Souza, Vogeler, and Foust 1981; Koelsch 1981; Gatrell and Smith 1984; Lee and Evans 1984; Whitehand 1984; Turner and Meyer 1985; Dunbar 1986; Morris 1987; Whitehand 1990; Martin 2001). A common theme underlying these studies is that they examined the discipline as a whole. An examination of an individual branch within the discipline, however, can reveal much about the strength of the entire tree.

The results section of this article begins by reporting the links that cultural geographers have made with other fields within the discipline. The analysis of the survey results then

turns to an assessment of cultural geography's most recognized departments, notable scholars, and respondents' "must-read" list. Finally, it highlights publication outlets deemed most suitable by today's cultural geographers. Throughout the results section, I provide contextual introductions for each of the subtopics.

Regional Proficiency and Specialty-Group Links

North American cultural geography had its origins with Carl Sauer and his "Berkeley School" protégés (e.g., Preston James, Yi-Fu Tuan, Wilbur Zelinsky). From the Pacific Coast, cultural geography diffused throughout the country, establishing linchpin departments in places such as Louisiana State, Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin, and Los Angeles. Grafted onto this Berkeley tradition is the work of the midwestern cultural geographers, including Karl Butzer, J. "Fraser" Hart, Terry Jordan, Clarissa Kimber, and Peirce Lewis (Price and Lewis 1993a).

The early works of North American cultural geography were characterized as having a predilection for examining the attributes of rural, folk, preindustrial societies within North America's own backyard and Latin America (Norton 1989; Foote et al. 1994; Wheeler 1998; Peach 2002; Myers et al. forthcoming). The solid foundation and tested set of axioms laid down by these "traditional" scholars permitted cultural geography to expand well beyond its early interests in cultural-artifact diffusion and ecological interpretations informed through historical analysis. Some of today's renowned practitioners—including Daniel Arreola, Denis Cosgrove, Mona Domosh, James Duncan, Larry Ford, and Peter Jackson—have made names for themselves studying ethnically informed and socially contested issues in largely urban settings. Not only has this diversity added strength to the subdiscipline, but it has also helped reinforce cultural geography's role as being a broad-based study area with links to most other subfields.

As cultural geographers have built upon their traditional roots and incorporated many "new" research approaches, knowing the extent to which cultural geographers have expanded their research scope beyond the western hemisphere would be worthwhile. Likewise, there is a desire to understand the relative influence of

the traditional cultural-geography approach compared with the research contributions of the new cultural geographers. An effective way to assess the extent of interaction between geography's subfields is to examine cross-membership among its specialty groups (Bodman 1991). Revealing links between specialty-group membership can be an indication of cognate research interests (Goodchild and Janelle 1988) based on topical similarities.

As expected, the United States continues to hold great interest for cultural geographers (Table 2). Outside North America, the next two most frequently declared regional proficiencies are in Europe and Asia. Latin America still appeals to cultural geographers, yet the region appears to be less of a focus than it was in the past. These data suggest that cultural geographers have become much more regionally diversified. Table 2 also highlights underrepresented regions of study and specialization. Compared to its importance in the world economy, the Pacific Rim has attracted the attention of relatively few cultural geographers. This could be valuable information as cultural geographers conceptualize new research ideas or look to new study areas to test existing models.

A look at the other specialty groups to which CGSG members also belong reveals that some stereotypes are upheld, while others are shattered (Table 3). There continues to be a close association between cultural and historical geography, as well as cultural geography and the Latin American region. Cultural geographers comprise 31.9% of the Historical Geography Specialty Group, while 20% of Latin Americanists profess a cultural bent.

Survey results also reveal that today's cultural geographers continue to maintain ties to a wide variety of the discipline's subfields. For example, cultural geographers comprise 47.3%, 36.0%, and 35.2% of the membership in American Ethnic, American Indians, and Geography of Religions and Belief Systems specialty groups, respectively. Other groups at least 20% of the membership of which is comprised of cultural geographers include Human Rights, European, and Values, Ethics, and Justice.

Likewise, survey results indicate that the complexion of cultural geography is changing as a result of the "cultural turn" that is influencing much of human geography. Com-

Table 2 Areal Proficiencies of 1998-1999 CGSG Members

Region	Number of Members
United States	88
New England	7
Middle States	11
Middle Atlantic	9
Southeastern	23
Southwestern	28
Pacific Coast	31
Great Plains/Rocky Mountains	25
West Lakes	18
East Lakes	4
Europe	79
North America	71
Asia	63
Latin America	62
Mexico	28
Central America	32
Caribbean Islands	18
South America	28
World	51
Canada	42
Africa	40
Australia/New Zealand/Pacific Islands	20
Former Soviet Lands	17
Pacific Rim	12
Polar Regions	7

Source: AAG (1998).

Note: AAG members are able to declare multiple areal proficiencies.

prising 12.7% of the Urban Geography Specialty Group, cultural geographers have clearly expanded their scholarly horizons well beyond rural, preindustrial societies. The relatively high proportion of cultural geographers in the Geographic Perspectives on Women (18.4%), Sexuality and Space (18.4%), and Political Geography (18.4%) specialty groups is further testament to the strong social theory current that is running through the subdiscipline.

Finally, a few cultural geographers have even developed connections with specialty groups focusing on geospatial techniques (e.g., GIS, Remote Sensing, Microcomputer) and physical geography (e.g., Geomorphology, Climate, Water Resources). While they comprise only 3.3% of GIS's total membership, it is promising to see forty-five cultural geographers establishing that important link.

The Hearths of Cultural Geography

Each year, popular periodicals, including *U.S. News and World Report*, list the nation's top colleges and universities based on selected criteria. Likewise, the Gourman Report (1997),

Table 3 *Number and Percentage of 1998–1999 CGSG Members Belonging to Selected Other Specialty Groups (SG)*

Name of Specialty Group^a	Number of Cultural Geographers as Members of SGs	% Cultural Geographers of SG Membership
American Ethnic Geography ^b	53	47.3
American Indians ^b	36	36.0
Geography of Religions and Belief Systems	44	35.2
Historical Geography	135	31.9
Human Rights	22	22.7
European	37	20.3
Latin American	66	20.0
Values, Ethics, and Justice	28	20.0
History of Geography	26	19.8
Geographic Perspectives on Women	71	18.4
Sexuality and Space	23	18.4
Political Geography	62	18.4
Canadian Studies	14	17.3
Recreation, Tourism, and Sport	42	16.2
Cultural Ecology	55	15.7
Environmental Perception and Behavioral Geography	36	14.9
Bible	8	14.5
Socialist Geography	33	13.6
Geography Education	46	13.2
Urban Geography	101	12.7
Contemporary Agriculture and Rural Land Use	22	10.4
Asian Geography	18	10.3
Russia, Central Eurasian, and Eastern European	20	10.3

Source: AAG (1998).

Note: This table shows only those SGs of which cultural geographers comprise at least 10% of the membership. AAG members are permitted to join up to three specialty groups.

^a In 1998–1999 there were forty-nine specialty groups, including CGSG; others have been established since.

^b Changed its name after 1998–1999.

now in its eighth edition, ranks graduate programs within American and international universities. The results of these reports seemingly change little from one year to the next, yet administrators, scholars, prospective students, deep-pocketed donors, and high-school guidance counselors are keenly interested in knowing who the institutional “leaders” are. Setting aside the obvious prestige factor, the content of these reports is valuable and, whether justifiable or not, wields much influence. The information is weighed when considering department funding or cutbacks, which departments will receive coveted external funding, and where students will apply to complete their studies (Koelsch 1981; Morris 1987).

In 1924, University of Miami of Ohio President Raymond Hughes conducted the first U.S. study comparing departments by discipline (including geography) (Koelsch 1981). A decade later, with sponsorship from the American Council on Education, Hughes repeated and expanded upon the first study. Between 1924 and 1980, at least seven more studies assessed the quality of geography

programs in the U.S. (Koelsch). The most recent report to rank geography departments was published by the National Research Council (NRC) (Goldberger, Maher, and Flattau 1995). Either reputational surveys or peer evaluations provided the method of data collection for each of the studies above. These “external evaluations” (Morris 1987, 162) rely heavily upon the informed opinion of people most acquainted with a department (e.g., department chairs and faculty) or people served by them (e.g., students). The other most common approach used to evaluate departments employs objective “internal evaluations” (Morris 1987, 162), which assign weight to a given set of variables and establish a hierarchy based on the tabulated results. It is strongly asserted, however, that “objective measures should complement, not replace, peer-based rankings” (Turner and Meyer 1985, 278).

In 1939, C. Warren Thornthwaite led the search for an objective measure of department rankings. He categorized American geographers based on the number of times citations to their work appeared in Richard Hartshorne’s

discipline-defining book, *The Nature of Geography* (Thornthwaite 1961). Thornthwaite compiled a rating of geography departments derived from his ranking of individual scholars, based on the number of quality scholars assembled in each department. In 1980, Richard Morrill undertook a less questionable approach, employing a purely objective formula based on the enrollment productivity (including number of students per faculty member), graduate productivity (including number of graduate students granted degrees and number of former graduate students serving in Ph.D.-granting institutions), and research productivity (including number of professors in a department who published in selected journals) of graduate departments. Morrill reported that the results of his “mean-of-rankings” index more closely approximate the perceived status of departments than does a weighted index.

Since Morrill’s trail-blazing work many other objective-based studies have issued rankings of geography departments (de Souza, Vogeler, and Foust 1981; Koelsch 1981; Turner and Meyer 1985; Dunbar 1986; Cosgrove 1987; Morris 1987). However, they have all focused on departments at the discipline level. Much could be learned from examining department rankings within a single subfield. As one of the largest nontechnical fields within the discipline, cultural geography makes for an ideal study.

I seek to answer the question: Which departments continue to have a forte in cultural geography? Have the Berkeley School and its spin-offs (LSU, Oregon, UCLA, Texas, and Wisconsin) maintained their prominence within cultural geography, or has there been a transition, as newer social theory research threads its way into the cultural fabric? Which departments currently have the most to offer graduate students seeking advanced training? It is hypothesized that top-ranking departments also turn out the most number of Ph.D.s who specialize in cultural geography. This assertion is tested by comparing results of the survey of CGSG members (Table 4) against the institution from which practicing cultural geographers earned their Ph.D.s (Table 5).

According to survey respondents, the top two North American departments offering the strongest cultural geography programs are Louisiana State and Texas (Table 4). An

Table 4 Responses to “List the Top Five North American Departments You Feel Offer the Strongest Cultural Geography Programs”

Name of Institution	Number of Votes Received
Louisiana State University	29
University of Texas–Austin	29
Syracuse University	27
Pennsylvania State University	23
University of Kentucky	20
University of California–Berkeley	19
University of Wisconsin–Madison	19
University of California–Los Angeles	18
University of British Columbia	15

Source: Survey of 1998–1999 CGSG members.

Note: This table shows only those departments receiving at least fifteen votes. Total number of votes exceeds survey size ($n = 114$) because respondents were asked to list five departments.

examination of the 1998 *Guide to Programs* reveals that both LSU and Texas have at least eight faculty members on their staff who specialize in cultural geography/landscape studies. Additionally, these two departments are among those that trace their lineage back to the Berkeley School (Price and Lewis 1993a).

Three other “traditional” cultural geography departments are also found among the top nine (California–Berkeley, Wisconsin, and California–Los Angeles). It is interesting to note, however, that Syracuse, Kentucky, and University of British Columbia are also among the top nine schools, although they have trended away from the Berkeley tradition to embrace social theory research in recent years.

If CGSG members consider that the departments listed in Table 4 offer the strongest programs in cultural geography, are they also

Table 5 Institutions at Which at Least Five 1998–1999 CGSG Members Earned Their Ph.D.s

Name of Institution	Number of CGSG Members with Ph.D.
University of California–Los Angeles	13
Louisiana State University	12
University of Wisconsin–Madison	10
Syracuse University	8
University of Minnesota	8
University of California–Berkeley	7
University of Kansas	6
University of Oregon	6
Arizona State University	5
Michigan State University	5
University of Chicago	5

Source: AAG (1998).

producing the most number of cultural geographers? According to data collected from the *Guide to Programs in Geography* (AAG 1998), the three most productive departments are California–Los Angeles, Louisiana State, and Wisconsin–Madison (Table 5). Moreover, when cross-referencing the schools listed in Tables 4 and 5, Louisiana State, Syracuse, California–Berkeley, Wisconsin, and California–Los Angeles have leading reputations and are also top producers of practicing cultural geography scholars.

As Turner and Meyer (1985) conclude, the relative clustering of departments is often more meaningful than their specific rank. Many “lower”-ranked departments produce outstanding cultural geographers. Mentors need to bear in mind that a student’s success may rest more in their conceptual “fit” with one or two members of a department than in how prestigious the department may be. For graduate students, a department’s ranking may not be the best indicator of the quality of instruction and guidance offered. Sometimes a single scholar can be more meaningful in a person’s career than a basketful of distinguished specialists.

Cultural Geography Scholars

Led by the likes of Brian Berry and David Harvey, and referred to by any number of names—including “centurions” (Whitehand 1985), “new centurions” (Wrigley and Matthews 1987), and “master weavers” (Bodman 1991)—the leading scholars in cultural geography are the prodigious publishers who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of published scholarship; their work effectively fashions and shapes the discipline’s research agenda (Whitehand 1985; Wrigley and Matthews 1986; Bodman 1991). Interestingly, the areas of expertise of these influential authors are becoming more diverse; no longer do they originate in geography’s subfields of urban, economic, and quantitative methods. Andrew Bodman (1991) found that a growing number of “master weavers” come from the ranks of cultural geography. For example, a March 2001 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* features an article titled “Lost in Place: Yi-Fu Tuan May Be the Most Influential Scholar You’ve Never Heard Of” (Monaghan 2001). It came as little surprise to many geographers that the piece highlighted the distinguished career

of one of cultural geography’s foremost practitioners.

The compiling of most lists of geography’s distinguished scholars relies heavily upon citation counts from the Science Citation Index (SCI), Social Science Citation Index (SSCI), and Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). Citation counts provide a means of assessing both the influence of a work (and subsequently the author) and its visibility within academia (Turner and Meyer 1985). Whitehand (1987), however, identifies at least three flaws with citation counts: (1) they do not consider if the information is cited accurately or is misleading; (2) the citation may be overly critical and may not support popular visibility of the author behind the work; and (3) the citation may indicate a fundamental dependence on the cited work, or it may be merely perfunctory. In other words, citation counts speak to quantity, but not to quality.

In response to concerns over citation counts, Bill Mead (1987) suggests that a more viable method to determine notable practitioners and classic works would be to survey members of the association asking them to make a list. The criteria for compiling the authors and their “classic statements” would then be the frequency with which particular works appeared on the assembled list. Mead admits that this would be an incredibly onerous chore to undertake at the discipline level. Such a list however, could prove fruitful at the subdiscipline level. A list of recognized scholars and seminal works within a subfield would go far towards explaining major research interests among its membership, the core themes within the subfield, and any structural changes that might be taking place.

Along these lines, I asked each member of the CGSG to name the scholars they felt were the “most outstanding living practitioners of cultural geography” (Table 6). Wilbur Zelinsky leads the list. Next are Peirce Lewis, Donald Meinig, Yi-Fu Tuan, Denis Cosgrove, Terry Jordan, and James Duncan. Of these seven geographers who received sixteen votes or more, all but Cosgrove, Jordan, and Duncan earned their Ph.D.s before 1960. Thus, the success of these highly productive scholars may rest not only in the fact that they have turned out superior quality work, but that they have remained highly productive throughout their lifetime.

Of that same top-tier group of cultural geographers, all but two—Cosgrove and Duncan—are considered “traditional” cultural geographers. This is an indication that the work of traditional cultural geographers is still highly regarded within the subdiscipline. However, a closer look at the remaining scholars who received at least seven votes reveals a mixture of “traditional” practitioners and those using social theory approaches in their research.

When looking at the universities from which the notable cultural geographers earned their Ph.D.s, California–Berkeley stands out. Of the fourteen most highly regarded scholars, four (29%) earned their doctorate from the department known for Carl Sauer. This supports Whitehand’s (1985) assertion that the most productive scholars tend to come from a select few Ph.D.-granting departments.

Considering the growing popularity of the Geographic Perspectives on Women Specialty Group among cultural geographers (Table 3), it is curious that only two females (Mona Domosh and Anne Buttimer) appear among the list of cultural geographers receiving at least three votes. Little appears to have changed

since Bodman (1991) found that women are very poorly represented among the ranks of notable scholars. Perhaps the outstanding contributions of female geographers will be better recognized in future surveys. How long can the discipline, or the CGSG, ignore these persistent patterns?

Notable Scholarship

In addition to being asked who they felt were the subfield’s most notable practitioners, CGSG members were asked to provide citations for three examples of outstanding cultural geography. Given the great latitude allowed respondents and the numerous choices with which they could have answered, it is revealing to find the prevalence of monographs and anthologies on the compiled list of “must-reads” (Table 7). Of the top nineteen seminal works, all but three (84%) are books. The only articles to be listed among the outstanding examples of cultural geography are Carl Sauer’s “Morphology of Landscape” and Peirce Lewis’s “Axioms for Reading the Landscape,” and “Small Town in Pennsylvania.” This tends to support the commonly held assertion that books are the more valued medium of exchange within cultural geography and have a more lasting effect upon the readership than do articles.

Considering his prominent position atop the list of notable cultural geographers, it comes as no surprise that Wilbur Zelinsky’s *Cultural Geography of the United States* (1972/1992) is voted the most outstanding work in cultural geography (Table 7). Zelinsky’s piece is followed on the list by Meinig’s anthology, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes* (1979). The fact that Sauer’s 1925 article is still so highly regarded speaks of the profound impact he has had on the subfield and of his influence in guiding the profession.

A closer look at the list of “must-reads” reveals that Meinig, J. B. Jackson, Lewis, and Duncan all appear twice on the list. Meinig, Lewis, and Duncan are each voted to be among cultural geography’s most outstanding practitioners (Table 6). J. B. Jackson did not appear on that list because CGSG members were specifically asked to consider “living” cultural geographers only. The results of Table 7 suggest that, in all probability, J. B. Jackson would have appeared among the list of notable

Table 6 Responses to “List the Top Five Most Outstanding LIVING Practitioners of Cultural Geography”

Name of Scholar	Number of Votes Received	Institution at which Ph.D. Was Earned
Wilbur Zelinsky	33	Berkeley
Peirce Lewis	25	Michigan
Donald Meinig	24	Washington
Yi-Fu Tuan	24	Berkeley
Denis Cosgrove	23	Oxford
Terry Jordan	20	Wisconsin
James Duncan	16	Syracuse
Peter Jackson	10	Oxford
Derek Gregory	8	Cambridge
John Jakle	8	Indiana
Donald Mitchell	8	Rutgers
“Pete” Shortridge	7	Kansas
Philip Wagner	7	Berkeley
Bret Wallach	7	Berkeley

Scholars who received at least three votes: George Carney (6); John “Fraser” Hart (6); “Kit” Salter (6); Daniel Arreola (5); Paul Starrs (5); Mona Domosh (4); J. Nicholas Entrikin (4); David Harvey (4); David Ley (4); David Lowenthal (4); Anne Buttimer (3); Karl Butzer (3); Michael Conzen (3); Marvin Mikesell (3); Karl Raitz (3).

Source: Survey of 1998–1999 CGSG members.
 Note: This table shows only those scholars receiving at least three votes. Total number of votes exceeds survey size (n = 114) because respondents were asked to list five practitioners.

cultural geographers had he still been alive at the time of the survey.

As discussed above, while "traditional" cultural geography remains a core part of the subdiscipline, there is more than ample evidence that social theory-based approaches and the influence of the "cultural turn" are making substantial contributions to cultural geography. Six (32%) of the nineteen "must-reads" are examples of the "new" cultural geography. Cultural geography can only benefit from continued diversity among its practitioners and is that much stronger when it embraces relevant new approaches in its research milieu.

Table 7 Responses to "Provide Citations for Three Examples of Outstanding Cultural Geography (This Could Be Considered a List of 'Must-Reads in Cultural Geography')"

Title (Author)	Number of Votes Received
<i>Cultural Geography of the United States</i> (Zelinsky)	15
<i>Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes</i> (Meinig)	12
"Morphology of Landscape" (Sauer)	9
<i>Re-Reading Cultural Geography</i> (Foote et al.)	9
<i>A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time</i> (Jackson, J. B.)	7
<i>Land and Life: Selection of Writings by C. Sauer</i> (Leighly, ed.)	7
<i>Maps of Meaning</i> (Jackson, P.)	7
<i>Topophilia</i> (Tuan)	7
"Axioms for Reading the Landscape" (Lewis)	6
<i>Writing Worlds</i> (Barnes and Duncan)	6
<i>Lie of the Land</i> (Mitchell)	5
<i>Readings in Cultural Geography</i> (Wagner and Mikesell)	5
<i>Fast Food, Stock Cars, and Rock 'n' Roll</i> (Carney)	4
<i>Shaping of America series</i> (Meinig)	4
<i>Discovering the Vernacular Landscape</i> (Jackson, J. B.)	3
<i>Geographical Imaginations</i> (Gregory)	3
<i>Place/Culture/Representation</i> (Duncan and Ley)	3
"Small Town in Pennsylvania" (Lewis)	3
<i>Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape</i> (Cosgrove)	3

Citations receiving two votes: *American Backwoods Frontier* (Jordan and Kaups); *American Log Buildings* (Jordan); *Continuity and Decline in the Anthracite Towns of Pennsylvania* (Marsh); *Education of a Geographer* (Sauer); *Folk Housing* (Kniffen); *Geographical Tradition* (Livingstone); *Geographies of Exclusion* (Sibley); *Human Mosaic* (Jordan-Bychkov and Domosh); *Iconography of Landscape* (Cosgrove and Daniels); *Inventing Places* (Anderson and Gale); *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (Thomas); *Middle West* (Shortridge); *Monument and Myth* (Harvey); *Place and Placelessness* (Relph); *Space and Place* (Tuan); *Vancouver's Chinatown* (Anderson)

Source: Survey of 1998–1999 CGSG members.

Note: This table shows only those citations receiving at least two votes. Total number of votes exceeds survey size ($n = 114$) because respondents were asked to list three citations.

Publication Outlets for Cultural Geographers

A key measure of success for a scholar's career is not only the quantity and quality of their publications, but also where they publish their work. As a result, an author's decision regarding to which journal to submit a manuscript has far-reaching implications, including having an impact on earning tenure, receiving promotions, salary adjustments, research assistance, and professional status (Lee and Evans 1984; Brunn 1997; Martin 1998). As Stanley Brunn (1997) reports, getting published in a discipline's flagship journal can instantly bolster one's professional reputation.

Because of the vast career implications, many disciplines have established rankings for the field's journals, and everyone knows which outlets are more revered (Lee and Evans 1984). No official ranking exists for geography journals, and most geographers would agree that the discipline is much too diverse to impose a single hierarchy of journals upon the entire field. This has not discouraged some scholars from attempting to do so, however. Interest in the ranking of geography journals began with David Lee and Arthur Evans (1984) when they randomly surveyed 500 geographers, asking them to rank the discipline's American journals based on quality and familiarity. The landmark study reported that the *Annals of the AAG* was the foremost journal, followed by the *Geographical Review*, *The Professional Geographer*, *Economic Geography*, and the *Journal of Geography*.

Subsequent studies have tended to employ more objective assessments to the rankings of geography journals. A straightforward approach has been to compare average rejection rates among journals. Four of the more sophisticated methods employing data obtained from SCI, SSCI, and A&HCI include: (1) journal impact factor; (2) citation impact factor; (3) mean annual immediacy index; and (4) sending/receiving ratios. A journal's impact factor is a measure of the frequency with which an article has been cited in a particular year, controlling for journal size and publication frequency (Turner 1988). Despite concerns, the journal impact factor is deemed the best single indicator of a journal's influence within a discipline (Whitehand 1984, 1988). Citation impact factor is another method frequently

used to rank journals. It gauges a journal's importance by measuring the number of citations in a given year of the articles published in the preceding two years (Martin 1998). The immediacy index measures the extent to which articles are cited in the same year they reach print; journals with high visibility will also have high immediacy index ratings (Whitehand 1990). The sending/receiving ratio assesses a journal based on how linked it is to others within the discipline according to cross-citations; the more linked and therefore more visible a journal is, the higher its ranking (Gatrell and Smith 1984).

The objective measures highlighted above have creatively quantified the value judgments made every time a scholar submits a manuscript for publication consideration or makes a recommendation to a colleague. These algorithms, however, tell only part of the story. What is needed is to hear the common wisdom of geographers to determine which journals best meet their needs. The information gleaned can help (1) scholars identify which publication outlets are most appropriate for their subject matter, (2) administrators evaluate the perceived quality of a geographer's work, (3) indicate which journals may assist in advancing one's career, and (4) list which journals one should keep a watchful eye on so as to stay abreast of the latest developments within the subfield.

Members of the CGSG were asked to list the top three journals that best met their needs. Topping members' list is the discipline's flagship journal, the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* (Table 8). This is somewhat surprising, considering that this high opinion of the *Annals* comes at a time when many members feel quite disconnected from the publication (Monaghan 1999). It appears that the *Annals'* visibility and prominent position within the discipline weighs heavily in cultural geographers' minds.

Second among members' ranking is the *Journal of Cultural Geography*. The journal is considered by some to be the flagship journal of the subdiscipline. Its popularity and success stem from the efforts of its founding editor, Alvar Carlson, and the quality of article submissions. However, if it is to maintain its high ranking, the journal must catch up on its publication schedule. The third of the leading cultural geography journals is the *Geographical*

Review, which has long been recognized for publishing quality and thoughtful pieces; it currently has an acceptance rate of between 16% and 18% (Starrs 2001).

A sizeable gap exists between the top three journals and the remaining thirteen (Table 8). Within this second tier of highly regarded cultural geography journals, three stand out. Considering that its first issue did not appear until 1994, the success of *Ecumene* among cultural geographers is outstanding. Clearly, a void existed within the subfield, and *Ecumene* has aptly filled it. Equally outstanding is that *Ecumene* has quickly become more highly regarded than the older and more established outlet for critical-theory research, *Antipode*. The other two relatively young journals that made notable showings among cultural geographers are *Gender, Place, and Culture* and *North American Geographer*. These two journals were founded in 1994 and 1999 respectively, yet they have achieved substantial recognition in their short tenure.

Implications

This article presents the results of a survey completed by 114 members of the Cultural Geography Specialty Group of the AAG. Categories identified include the subfield's leading departments, living scholars, and journals. Based on the fact that cultural geographers have maintained links to every other subfield within the discipline, much can be learned from surveying those geographers affiliated with one of the discipline's largest subfields.

First, the survey results make evident that the most highly regarded departments within an individual subfield are those that have multiple practitioners. When a department has multiple active researchers working in physical and intellectual proximity (what Jeremy Whitehand [1985, 227] calls the "snowball effect"), learning and scholarly progress can be advanced more effectively. While the advent of the Internet has increased the distance permitted between scholars, the strongest departments within a subfield seem to be those which have a critical mass of faculty who profess a strength in one particular area.

Second, it is clear that the development of new approaches and innovative designs are normally in the hands of a small and select band

Table 8 Responses to "List the Top Five Journals that You Feel Best Meet the Needs of Today's Cultural Geographers"

Name of Journal	Number of Votes Received	Year Journal was Founded
<i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i>	53	1911
<i>Journal of Cultural Geography</i>	47	1980
<i>Geographical Review</i>	45	1916
<i>Ecumene</i> ^a	25	1994
<i>Environment and Planning D</i>	23	1983
<i>The Professional Geographer</i>	18	1949
<i>Journal of Historical Geography</i>	15	1975
<i>Progress in Human Geography</i>	13	1977
<i>Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers</i>	11	1936
<i>Antipode</i>	10	1969
<i>Material Culture (formerly Pioneer America)</i>	10	1969
<i>Gender, Place, and Culture</i>	7	1994
<i>North American Geographer</i>	7	1999
<i>Landscape Journal</i>	5	1982
<i>Environment and Planning A</i>	4	1969
<i>Journal of Popular Culture</i>	3	1967

Other journals receiving two votes: *Places* (2); *Area* (2); *Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, Yearbook* (2); *Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers, Yearbook* (2); *Geographical Bulletin* (2); *Journal of Geography* (2); *Journal of Political Geography* (2).

Source: Survey of 1998–1999 CGSG members.

Note: This table shows only those journals receiving at least two votes. Total number of votes exceeds survey size ($n = 114$) because respondents were asked to list five journals.

^aThe title of this journal was changed to *Cultural Geographies* in 2002.

of scholars (Bodman 1991). The survey results suggest that to be considered an outstanding practitioner within the discipline takes the better part of one's career. Wisdom achieved through experience in the profession is something to be revered as a source of strength, not dismissed as outdated.

Lastly, the data presented in Table 7 makes clear that in some of geography's subdisciplines, books, rather than articles, tend to be the "must-reads." They seem to have a longer-lasting appeal and go farther to bolster one's name recognition. With this in mind, perhaps books should carry considerable weight in the tenure and promotion discussion for geographers in such subfields. The evidence also suggests that anthologies, while onerous to compile, are highly regarded by social scientists.

It is hoped that this article will assist prospective graduate students as they decide what to read and perhaps where to complete their studies. Moreover, the ranking of publication outlets can be used to influence library acquisitions so that practitioners can remain abreast of the latest research developments in the field.

To borrow the words of Garth Myers (Myers et al. forthcoming, 2), "There are many signs of strength for cultural inquiry in geography."

The number of recently established journals in cultural geography (e.g., *Ecumene*, *Gender, Place, and Culture*, *North American Geographer*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*) is only one such sign. Another was found at the 2001 annual AAG meeting in New York City, at which the CGSG sponsored a special session entitled "Meet the Editors: Trends in the Practice of Cultural Geography." The well-attended panel discussion featured editors from *Ecumene*, the *Geographical Review*, *Gender, Place, and Culture*, the *Journal of Cultural Geography*, *North American Geographer*, and *Social and Cultural Geography*. The editors all affirmed that the lines between new and traditional cultural geography have eroded and that cultural geographers are reveling in the diverse ways in which they conduct their research. Building on a strong foundation, the future looks bright for cultural geography in the twenty-first century. ■

Note

¹ Despite the fact that the CGSG had 458 official members in the period between 1998 and 1999, the list of names and contact information (addresses and e-mail addresses) provided to me by the AAG central offices in Washington, DC, contained only 428 members.

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