

Critical works in Theory and Practices

Par . Le 24 September 2008



Since June of this year, geographers worldwide have free access to the online textbook *Critical Geographies : A Collection of Readings*, published with the Canadian-based Praxis (e)Press. The book introduces students and scholars to wide-ranging approaches, topics and theories of critical geographical scholarship. Thirty-six chapters of previously published work cover 150 years of critical geographic scholarship and offer insights into the multi-directional and meandering paths of critical thought and practice in the geographic discipline.

Critical Geographies, however, is more than a simple textbook. It is an intervention into academic knowledge distribution, translating important principles of critical scholarship into practice:

First, *Critical Geographies* is free ! The only prerequisite for obtaining the book is internet access. By providing educational material for free, the book helps make higher education democratic and accessible independent of personal or institutional wealth.

Second, the book does not pursue a corporate or for-profit agenda. Many university educators have been uneasy with the idea that the education they deliver in the classroom is used by corporate publishers to accumulate capital by selling expensive textbooks to their students. *Critical Geographies* enables these instructors to deliver education in an independent manner.

Third, *Critical Geographies* challenges instructors and researchers to modify their practices of teaching and knowledge production. Researchers, in particular, must develop a greater awareness of the consequences of where they publish. Many excellent papers could not be included in this book because the owners of the journals in which these papers originally appeared required prohibitively high republication fees. While we are grateful to the publishers and copyright owner who permitted us to use their texts without charging a fee, we also urge researchers to inform themselves of copyright issues and republication guidelines before they submit their work to

journals. Through informed practices on the side of researchers and authors, geographic knowledge will more likely reach their intended audiences.

Fourth, the book contributes to a critical teaching infrastructure. It includes texts by early thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus, influential radical geographers such as James Blaut, David Harvey and Richard Peet, critical feminists such as Suzanne MacKenzie, Cindi Katz and Janice Monk, contemporary critics of the geographic discipline such as Nicholas Blomley and Laura Pulido and many others. By not limiting the focus to one particular approach to critical geography, the book encourages critical interpretation among its readers about critical geography as well.

Critical Geographies targets graduate and upper-level undergraduate students at colleges and universities as well as readers outside of institutions of higher education. To accommodate this diverse readership, the original texts were edited to make them more accessible and “reader-friendly”. The online format further facilitates the flexible and creative use of the book in classroom teaching, education and activism.

Critical Geographies : A Collection of Readings is available at: <http://www.praxis-epress.org/> and ACME (*An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*) here: <http://www.acme-journal.org/index.html>

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