

# HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

*Royal Geographical Society  
with the Institute of British Geographers*

**Newsletter July 2003**

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Please send any material for inclusion in the Newsletter,  
and any suggestions for future content, to the editor

*John Wylie*, Department of Geography, University of  
Sheffield,  
Winter St., Sheffield, S10 2TN, UK.

Hard copies are fine, but a version on disc (Word files  
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## HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

### Committee 2003

#### Chair

Dr Alison Blunt Queen Mary, University of London (2004)  
[A.M.Blunt@qmw.ac.uk](mailto:A.M.Blunt@qmw.ac.uk)

#### Secretary

Dr Pyrs Gruffudd University of Wales, Swansea (2004)  
[R.P.Gruffudd@Swansea.ac.uk](mailto:R.P.Gruffudd@Swansea.ac.uk)

#### Treasurer

Dr Noel Castree University of Manchester (2003)  
[Noel.Castree@man.ac.uk](mailto:Noel.Castree@man.ac.uk)

#### Newsletter Editor

Dr John Wylie University of Sheffield (2004)  
[J.W.Wylie@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:J.W.Wylie@sheffield.ac.uk)

#### Postgraduate Liaison

Mark Paterson University of Bristol (2004)  
[m.paterson@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:m.paterson@bristol.ac.uk)

#### Other Committee Members

Dr Laura Cameron University of Cambridge (2004)  
[ljc23@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ljc23@cam.ac.uk)

Dr David Demeritt King's College London (2004)  
[david.demeritt@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:david.demeritt@kcl.ac.uk)

Dr David Matless University of Nottingham (2003)  
[David.Matless@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:David.Matless@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers

### HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP

#### Annual Report for 2002

#### 1. Conferences

HPGRG maintained its high profile at a number of international conferences during 2002, and established a new Postgraduate Award Scheme to encourage postgraduate participation in HPGRG sessions at the annual IBG conference (see below).

- *IBG, Belfast 2002*: HPGRG sponsored three successful and well-attended sessions: 'Putting philosophies of geography into practice' (with BGRG); 'Senses and sensibilities'; and 'Dialectics of utopia and dystopia' (with UGRG).
- *Tropical Views and Visions: Images of the Tropical World*: HPGRG was awarded £700 from RGS-IBG (2001) to support postgraduate participation and a plenary speaker at this international conference, held at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich on 12-13 July 2002. HPGRG also contributed £100 of its own funds towards a reduced postgraduate registration fee. The conference was convened by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins, and was a collaborative venture between members of HPGRG and the Research Centre of the National Maritime Museum. The RGS-IBG grant covered approximately one-third of the costs of the substantial postgraduate subsidy, together with half of the costs of one plenary speaker's airfare. The conference was devoted to the various ways in which the tropics have been imagined and experienced by British travellers, with particular reference to the global circulation of images, commodities and exotic species over the last three centuries. Keynote speakers were Michael Dettelbach (Boston University) and Nicholas Thomas (Goldsmiths). The conference was attended by 76 delegates, including 21 postgraduates. The venue provided a unique opportunity to engage with the collections of a notable public museum and to reach out beyond the conventional academic community, enhancing the public and academic profile of geographical research. The conference also promoted further exchange between geographers and leading researchers in the arts and humanities. A book is planned in association with the conference, to be published by Reaktion Press, with illustrations from the collections of the National Maritime Museum (from report submitted by Felix Driver to RGS-IBG, 5 August 2002).
- *Emotional Geographies*: HPGRG was awarded a grant of £400 from RGS-IBG to subsidise postgraduate registration fees at this conference, held at Lancaster University, 23-25 September 2002. HPGRG contributed a further £80 towards travel costs. Awards were made to Rani Kawale (UEL), Ember Kelly (Bristol) and Deborah Thien (Edinburgh). Their reports on the conference will be published in the next HPGRG Newsletter.

- *IBG, 2003*: During 2002, HPGRG (together with HGRG, SCGRG, UGRG and WGSG) proposed a plenary session on 'Geography and the Humanities' for the IBG to be held at the RGS-IBG in September 2003. Three HPGRG sponsored sessions were also accepted: 'Textual spaces / spatial texts' (with SCGRG); 'Post human / post natural geographies' (with SCGRG); and 'Oral histories of geographical knowledge' (with HGRG).
- *IGU, 2004*: During 2002, HPGRG liaised with the Commission for the History of Geographical Thought and proposed a seven co-sponsored units on 'Histories of Geography in International Perspective' to be held at the IGU in Glasgow in August 2004.

## 2. Postgraduate Award Scheme

In addition to supporting postgraduate attendance at the 'Emotional Geographies' conference in September 2002, HPGRG also developed a new award scheme to fund attendance at the annual IBG conference. Three awards of £50 were made to the following postgraduate students, who presented papers in the session on 'Putting philosophies of geography into practice': Sarah Dyer (KCL), Richard Powell (Cambridge) and Dragos Simandan (Bristol). Their reports of the session were published in the HPGRG Newsletter, and all three of the students have had papers published in a themed issue of *Area* that emerged from the IBG session (see **Publications**).

## 3. Publications

- A special issue of *Area*, edited by Hayden Lorimer and Nick Spedding, was published in 2002 (34.3) on 'Putting philosophies of geography into practice.' This themed issue (with eight papers) emerged from the IBG 2002 conference session of the same name. As the editors write in the *Area* editorial, 'The purpose of the session was to explore new ways of thinking about the history and philosophy of geography - specifically those that address the relationships between the everyday activities of geographers and the theoretical-methodological tools that we choose to employ in our research and our teaching' (227).
- *Postcolonial Geographies*, edited by Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan, was published by Continuum in 2002. This book includes a number of chapters first presented at the HPGRG conference on 'Postcolonial Geographies' held at the University of Southampton in 1998.
- A themed issue on 'Geographies of Home' is in preparation for *Cultural Geographies*. This developed from the conference held at UCL in 2002, supported by HPGRG, DARG, SCGRG and WGSG.
- The HPGRG Newsletter (edited by John Wylie) is sent to all members twice a year. It includes conference reports, information about forthcoming conferences, AGM minutes, the Annual Report and Financial Statement, and contact details of Committee members.

## 4. Finance

HPGRG ended the year with a balance of £1639.83 (see attached Financial Statement). The Postgraduate Award Scheme worked well in 2002 and will be continued in 2003. HPGRG continues to award grants that supplement successful applications to RGS-IBG.

## 5. Committee members

The Committee will remain the same until the AGM in September 2003, when two members (Noel Castree - Treasurer; and David Matless - Committee Member) will complete their terms of office. Mark Paterson (Postgraduate Liaison Officer) is no longer a postgraduate student, and the AGM will consider increasing postgraduate representation on the Committee.

## 6. RGS-IBG Liaison

The Group's Committee was consulted by the Research Division of the RGS-IBG on a range of issues relating to research and teaching. HPGRG played an active role particularly in relation to planning the Annual Conference in 2003.

**Dr Alison Blunt**  
**Chair, HPGRG**

**January 2003**



**RESEARCH GROUP REPORTING FORM  
HPGSG**

Name: Dr. Noel Castree (Treasurer)  
Period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002  
Receipt and Payments Account

**INCOME**

RGS-IBG subvention	£285
RGS-IBG grant(s)	£400
Other grants	
Subscriptions	
Conference income	
Meetings income	
Advertising income	
Royalties	
Interest	£0.40
Other income	£200.00 (transfer from savings account)
	Total receipts
	£885.40

**EXPENDITURE**

Committee expenses	
Conference costs	£700
Meetings costs	
Newsletter costs	
Prizes	£300
Other costs	
Total payments	<u>£1000</u>
Net surplus/deficit	<u>-£114.60</u>
Opening balance(s) – 1 <sup>st</sup> January	<u>£1037.10</u>
Closing balances – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	<u>£922.50</u>
HSBC Bank –current a/c	<u>£1037.10</u>
HSBC Bank –deposit a/c	<u>£915.31</u>
	<u>£1952.41</u>

**RESEARCH GROUP REPORTING FORM  
HPGSG**

Name: Dr. Noel Castree (Treasurer)  
Period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002  
Receipt and Payments Account

**INCOME**

RGS-IBG subvention	
RGS-IBG grant(s)	
Other grants	
Subscriptions	
Conference income	
Meetings income	
Advertising income	
Royalties	
Interest	£1.82
Other income	
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>£1.82</b>

**EXPENDITURE**

Committee expenses	
Conference costs	
Newsletter costs	
Grants and Awards	
Prizes	
Other costs	£200 transfer to chequing account
Total payments	<u>£100.00</u>
Net surplus/deficit	<u>-£98.18</u>
Opening balance(s) – 1 <sup>st</sup> January	<u>£915.31</u>
Closing balances – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	<u>£717.13</u>
HSBC Bank –current a/c	<u>£922.50</u>
HSBC Bank –deposit a/c	<u>£717.13</u>
	<u>£1639.83</u>

## Conference Reports

### *Emotional Geographies*, University of Lancaster, 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September 2002

*Note: The HPGRG made two awards to postgraduate students attending and presenting at this conference. Their reports are below.*

#### 1. Ember Kelly, School of Geographical Sciences, University of Bristol

Despite being a geographer, having little sense of the difference between left and right, I am unable to read maps. Coupled with the complexity of the campus at Lancaster University I spent a lot of time lost. I can therefore confidently report that the students and staff at Lancaster are very friendly and helpful, ever willing, literally, to take a bewildered traveller by the hand and show them where their accommodation block is. Indeed this friendliness was an enduring feature of the whole conference.

Emotions are often elusive and difficult to convey, yet they are a vital part of our experiences. What emotions may mean for different people and in different contexts, and how we articulate and express them was a central theme of this conference. Being inter-disciplinary, these questions were approached from multiple angles. Due to some technical problems with communication equipment designed to help with my Deafness, I was unable to 'hear' all of the plenary sessions. As such, I am sorry I missed John Urry's opening plenary session as the visuals looked good. From the plenary sessions that I did manage to access, Erica Burman and Khatidja Chantler's reflection on collaborative research and the emotions experienced in connection to both the participants and co-workers was an interesting exploration of the importance of subjective and structural positioning. And Gill Valentine's resonant presentation of how young gay or lesbians manage the emotions of coming out was particularly insightful and expressive. From the paper sessions I attended, the ones I enjoyed here, were Paul Harrison's look at whether emotions can ever be articulated; Fiona O'Neill's consideration of body integrity and the differences that transplants make to feelings about self-identity; Donna Reeves's application of both structural and emotional geographies of disability experienced by disabled people in a counselling room situation; Deidre Mathee's paper on the embodiment of social practices present in the preparation of food and eating rituals of South African women of colour; and Rachel Colls's lively focus on clothes shopping and the meanings attached to being different sizes.

As this choice shows, overall the most striking aspect of the three days was the range and diversity of the papers presented. When considering emotions, connections can clearly be made across a number of disciplines. A conference setting seems to be the best place to broadcast emotional geographies, as people are physically present and able to see, hear, and feel both verbal and nonverbal expressions. I am not sure whether this will translate as well to text. The people who seemed best able to convey emotions were the ones most willing to jettison objective language. Not in an over indulgence of the self, more as an appreciation of the connective and sensual relations between humans, nonhumans and the environments we inhabit.

Passion. Love. Desire. Hate. Fear. Perhaps not the usual emotions associated with academic conferences, but neither are they out of place: old and new relationships between colleagues, the intimate nature of one's writing, the mingled pleasure/fear of challenge in a public arena, all of these experiences contribute to the energetic, passionate, and emotional exchange of ideas that is a conference at its best. The Emotional Geographies Conference held at Lancaster University in September 2002 encompassed all of these, with the unusual difference that at this conference emotions were explicitly on the agenda.

Due to their devaluing and feminization, little scholarly attention has been devoted to emotions, except in small, and often feminist, pockets of social science. Moving away from this history of emotional neglect, the Emotional Geographies conference demonstrated not only an increasing interest in exploring emotions, but also highlighted the interdisciplinarity of these explorations. Though 'geographies' had top billing in the conference title, conference participants represented an impressive range of disciplines aside from geography, including cultural studies, psychology, psychotherapy, sociology, and women's studies. The measure of success in this cross-disciplinary gathering was in the numerous excited exchanges that took place during and outside of sessions, as we worked to communicate across (un)shared languages.

In my own research, I am inspired by feminist geographic and psychoanalytic understandings to explore the place of emotions for women living in the Shetland Isles. As such, the multiple engagements with psychoanalytic discourse and/or psychotherapeutic practice (for example, see Ahmed, Bingley, Bondi, Burman & Chantler, Heenan, and Papoulias & Callard) were of particular interest to me. To draw attention to just one of these thought-provoking papers, Sara Ahmed delivered a gripping and powerful analysis of hate and fear in her paper, *Affective Economies*. In her consideration of the processes of subjection with/in the psychic life of power, Ahmed offered some ways to understand the newly relevant circulation of bodies and relations in discourses of asylum and terrorism. The interconnections of emotions and embodiment formed another overlapping theme of the conference, evident in papers that variously examined inhabitation, sensuality, bioethics, and touch. A third theme of interest was the explicit and ongoing commitment to examining methodological practice and to acknowledging the emotions bound up in this practice.

As I enter into the second year of my phd, this project and my accompanying emotions often feel unwieldy, if not chaotic. To bring my work into the light (and in Lancaster in September, the warmth) with an engaged and supportive group of scholars was both helpful and pleasurable. Closing the conference, John Urry nicely exemplified this atmosphere when he made a point of thanking the graduate students for their papers and participation. This gesture was not lost on those students present who are sometimes forgotten in the crowd of the published and employed. Perhaps because of our collectively heightened awareness of emotions, this conference succeeded in dissolving such divisions, sustaining a strongly collegial environment throughout.



**ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY  
WITH THE  
INSTITUTE OF BRITISH GEOGRAPHERS**

Annual Conference  
RGS-IBG London  
September 2-5 2003

HPGRG-Sponsored sessions

1. Oral Histories of Geographical Knowledge (with HGRG)

**Convenors: David Matless (Nottingham), Hayden Lorimer (Aberdeen)**

This module will highlight the increasing employment of oral historical methods within histories of geographical knowledge. As such histories begin to focus on material within living memory, and to address cultures of geography beyond as well as within the academy, oral history offers a way of engaging with formations of geography not always apparent from the published record. Speakers in the session will actively reflect on the utility of oral history, and papers may address academic geography, popular geographies, geographical education, applied geography, and the links between geography and related fields of knowledge.

2. Textual Spaces / Spatial texts (with SCGRG)

**Convenors: Richard Phillips (Salford) Scott McCracken**

The language of space has assumed an important place in literary and cultural studies. Meanwhile, the language of text has become important to human - no longer just cultural - geographers. The spatialisation of literary and cultural criticism and the textualisation of human geography has been productive, but often ambiguous, and not always usefully so. This session will bring together textual critics from across the humanities, to ask what is meant by the spatiality of text and the textuality of space, and to consider the advantages and disadvantages of this terminological and conceptual cross-fertilisation.

3. Post-human / Post Natural Geographies (with SCGRG)

**Convenors: Noel Castree (Manchester) Catherine Nash (Royal Holloway)**

Technoscience is muddying the ontological waters and challenging conventional categories, norms and codes. Artificial intelligence, xenotransplantation, nanotechnology, recombinant engineering are just some of the many current

examples of transgressive technologies. The boundary-crossings they enact – both now and in the future – have wide-ranging material, explanatory, and moral implications. For example, does a genetically engineered mouse have the same rights as one of its ‘natural’ cousins? What form do explanations take when one can’t readily talk of ‘social’ and ‘natural’ processes/causes? Though it may be tempting to discuss our emergent ‘post-human’/‘post-natural’ world in apocalyptic terms, this does little to further understanding of its complexities, ambivalences and potentials. This session aims to bring together geographers working on such things as the culture of science, animals and other non-humans, virtual technologies, genomics and more. Theoretical and empirical papers are invited that eschew plenary assessments of material hybridity and ontological impurity in favour of more textured appraisals. More parochially, because technoscience disturbs take -for-granted notions of what geographers study, there’s a disciplinary question of what geography beyond the human-nature divide might look like. For critical geography specifically, there’s the vexed issue of the grounds for critique once foundational categories like ‘human’ and ‘non-human’ can no longer anchor ethical judgements.

Other RGS-IBG Sessions of interest:

**Contested Geographies of Race and Religion (SCGRG, PopGRG)**

**Convenors: Peter Howard (Edinburgh) David Hopkins (Edinburgh)**

The session consists of three modules which will examine the geographies of race and religion at local, national and international levels. By encompassing issues of gender, generation, education, individuals and communities, the aim is to bring together both established researchers and postgraduates to provide a focus for the study of religious and racialised identities and their influence across a wide range of societies. The first module will concentrate on Muslim identities within specific social contexts, while the second and third modules open up the debate to broader geopolitical, religious and cultural issues. The first two modules have discussants, while the final module will conclude with an overall discussion of issues raised during the session.

**Music, Sound, Noise (SCGRG)**

**Convenors: Ben Anderson (Sheffield) Frances Morton (Bristol)**

This session is interested in the multiple spatialities of music, sound and noise. Sonic geography has until relatively recently been neglected within the discipline. In this half day session we are keen to develop and build on recent renewed interest in sonic geography. We aim to encourage papers that think through how music can actively reshape theories of space and society as opposed to being used simply to exemplify or recycle existing theory into localised contexts. We are therefore interested in papers that think through music/sound/noise, not purely in terms of aesthetics, but also as critical spatial tools. Moreover, we aim to engage with the oft repeated assertion that a sound centred analysis can open up new spaces for different methodologies, philosophies and politics. The session therefore encourages geographical work on music and sound from a range of theoretical, methodological and empirical standpoints. Themes: distinctions between music/sound/noise, social differences and

music, thinking the music/society/spatiality link, embodiment and music, geographies of performance and listening, and sonic epistemologies / ontologies.

### **Wear in the Word?: (Re)materialising gendered and sexualised geographies (WGSG)**

**Covenors: Kath Browne (NUI)**

These modules aims to explore the spatialised materialities and the matter of embodied subjects. It seeks to address the critique of recent research activities in wider feminism and queer theory that suggests there is an overemphasis on discourse through explorations of gendered and sexualised geographies. By (re)materialising gendered and sexualised embodiments it is hoped that queer, poststructural and postmodern arguments can be intersected with geographies of power and the materialities of everyday life. Papers will cover both gendered and sexualised geographies, specifically exploring women's, men's, transgendered/transgendered, lesbian, gay, bisexual, pomosexual and heterosexual geographies. Moreover, the discipline and philosophy of geographies themselves will be examined through the lens of genders and sexualities.

There has been a notable lack of attention to the formation of masculine identities and spaces in geography despite frequent calls to analyse (gender) identities relationally and differentially. This is particularly so as recent socio-economic and political changes have placed pressures on (traditional) male identities that confront gender research with new scope for investigation and discussion. This module is designed to provide a forum for innovative and diverse research on geographies of masculinity.

### **Im-passable Geographies**

**Covenors: Stuart Elden (Durham)**

Geographers have always placed the encounter at the heart of their work, be it the encounter with landscape, the other, or the even the tradition itself. However, many different theoretical perspectives converge, at the vanishing point, on the ultimately unspeakable nature of such encounters and thus admit to an impossibility within and resistance to the task of representation. As human geography struggles to go beyond the limitations of positivism and constructivism this aporetic has come to the fore recently in approaches to and accounts of embodiment and performativity. This session seeks papers which engage with such shattering encounters – be they with text, bodies, or landscapes – for the sake of doing justice to our im-possible geographies.

### **Thinking Across The Gap: A debate on the integration of physical and human geography**

**Covenors: Stephan Harrison (Oxford) Doreen Massey (OU)**

This event will comprise a workshop/discussion addressing the links and gaps which exist between human and physical geography. It builds on similar discussions held at the RGS over the last three years and on a workshop held at the 2001 BGRG Annual

Conference. The event will be co-chaired by Doreen Massey and Stephan Harrison and we envisage that the event will take the form of a series of short 'position statements' by invited discussants followed by a debate which will be opened up to the floor. Such an event at the IBG is timely since it links directly with on-going debates in Transactions and Geoforum on the future directions of Geography.

### **Cultures of Consumption**

**Covenors: Peter Jackson (Sheffield), Nina Laurie**

This session draws on, but is not restricted to, the new ESRC-AHRB 'Cultures of Consumption' programme. Papers deal with the conceptualisation of consumption (using commodity chain analysis and other metaphors of networks, circuits and assemblages). They address the ethics and moralities of consumption and the need to re-connect producers and consumers. Other papers take a historical perspective on the development of metropolitan consumption spaces and address the transnational geographies of food and fashion production (including the making of 'fake' designer goods). Consideration is given to the disposal as well as the acquisition of consumer goods and to the development of 'alternative' consumption networks and spaces. Examples are drawn from around the world including India, Bolivia and Turkey as well as the UK. Consumption emerges as a key arena of contemporary political and economic life. Taken together, the papers in this session argue that examining consumption's cultural ramifications is crucial to understanding its commercial significance.

### **Postcolonial Geographies of Development (DARG)**

**Covenors: Claire Mercer (Leicester) Giles Mohan (Portsmouth)**

This session will explore what postcolonial theory has to offer to geographers working on development issues. As such, contributions will engage with postcolonial theories and debates rather than focus on research carried out 'in the postcolonial world'. The implications of postcolonialism for development geography are manifold and are only tentatively beginning to be explored. The module will address issues such as:

1. Does development geography need to be 'decolonised', and if so, what would such decolonised geographies look like?
2. What is the role of fieldwork within a postcolonial geography, and how is it to be operationalised?
3. What is the relationship between postcolonialism and globalisation, and what does this mean for geographical understandings of development issues?



**Historical Geographies of the Sea (HGRG)**

**Convenors: David Lambert (Cambridge) Miles Ogborn (QMW) Luciana Martins (Royal Holloway)**

This session will seek 20-minute papers that address the geographies of the ocean and coastal worlds, particularly those connected to the creation of new global systems from the early modern period. This will include papers on oceanic exploration and colonisation, trade and piracy, as well as on the seaborne movement and circulation of people, ideas and goods. Papers are also invited on the cultures and politics of the seas, ports and coastal regions that arose from contact, commerce and (forced) population movement. Finally, the session encourages papers that use the sea as a means of writing modern historical geographies that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state.