

# History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group (HPGRG)

**Royal  
Geographical  
Society**  
with IBG

# NEWSLETTER

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## 1. Welcome

Dear HPGRG members,

2020 is a special year for the History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group as we celebrate our 35th birthday this year. And as a first indication of the vibrancy of such an anniversary we have a packed newsletter with things to share with our membership. First of all, there is our 35-year anniversary event to which we invite all HPGRG members as contributors and attendees. Additionally, as is common in the winter newsletter, we simultaneously look forward to the sponsored sessions that are proposed for the 2020 RGS-IBG annual conference, and backward, to last years' session.

**Michiel van Meeteren (HPGRG Communications Officer)**  
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## 2. Invitation to HPGRG members

35 Years of HPGRG – Looking back and looking forward  
A one-day symposium of the History and Philosophy of  
Geography Research Group (HPGRG)

**Tuesday, 1 September 2020**, Royal Geographical Society with IBG

Call for contributions

The History and Philosophy of Geography Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society with IBG was founded in 1985 on the initiative of David N. Livingstone in collaboration with Richard Harrison and Ron Johnston. On the occasion of HPGRG's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020, the HPGRG committee invites all HPGRG members to come along and celebrate the event on Tuesday, 1 September 2020 from 10 am to 5 pm in the Society. Our programme begins with a keynote lecture by Professor Audrey Kobayashi from Queen's University in Kingston, Canada, who served as the chief editor of the *International Encyclopaedia of Geography* (Elsevier, 2020), on her views about the ways in which geographical knowledge production has evolved over the past three and a half decades, since Audrey completed her PhD at the University of California at Los Angeles, entitled *Emigration to Canada from Kaideima, Japan, 1885-1950: An Analysis of Community and Landscape Change* (1983).

Audrey's keynote lecture will be followed by two sessions with twelve 10-minute presentations of human and physical geographers from all career stages on their personal reflections about the history and philosophy of geography, including pros and cons of considering the history and philosophy of geography together. Inbetween these two sessions, we will hold a brainstorming session with group work among all attendees about key ideas that have shaped the discipline, as a preparation for a joined book project. Based on these varied types of activities, we aim to encourage geographers to look back and look forward in order to provide a better understanding of the diverse range and depth of ideas and debates that have contributed to a distinct epistemological pluralism of human geographical research in the twenty-first century.

If you are interested in delivering a 10-minute presentation, please send a title and abstract of 300 words to Heike Jöns, HPGRG chair ([h.jons@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:h.jons@lboro.ac.uk)), and Michiel van Meeteren, HPGRG communications officer ([M.Van-Meeteren@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:M.Van-Meeteren@lboro.ac.uk)), by **28 February 2020**.

If there is more interest than spaces available on the day, we plan to organise RGS-IBG conference sessions at the subsequent RGS-IBG Conference (2-4 September 2020). The attendance fee for the HPGRG anniversary symposium is £30 for waged delegates and £10 for students and unwaged delegates. Online registration on the RGS-IBG website opens March 2020 to 12 June 2020.

We look forward to your attendance, contributions and our discussions!

The HPGRG committee

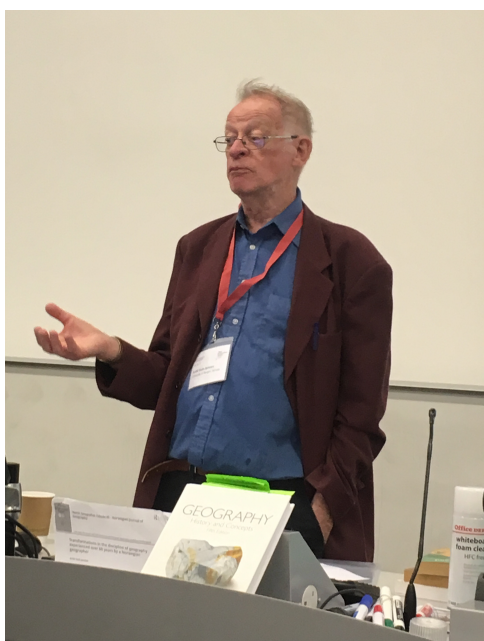
## Programme

- 10:00 Welcome address by the HPGRG Chair
- 10:15 Keynote Lecture on the History and Philosophy of Geography  
Audrey Kobayashi, Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
- 11:00 Coffee break
- 11:15 Looking back and looking forward:  
Reflections on the history and philosophy of geography I  
Six speakers providing 10-minute presentations
- 12:45 Lunch
- 13:30 Geographies of ideas  
Group discussions and presentations on key ideas that have shaped the discipline
- 14:45 Coffee break
- 15:15 Looking back and looking forward:  
Reflections on the history and philosophy of geography II  
Six speakers providing 10-minute presentations
- 16:45 Closing remarks
- 17:00 Close of the HPGRG anniversary symposium

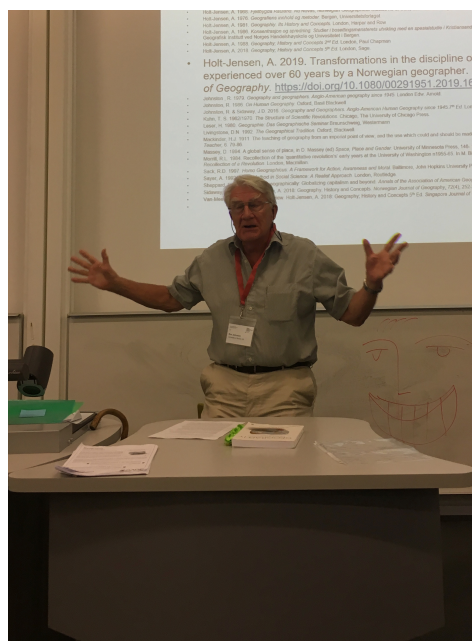
### 3. Session reports 2019 RGS-IBG.

#### 3.1 HPGRG 2019 Keynote: Arild Holt-Jensen

The HPGRG was very happy to be able to sponsor a total of 12 excellent sessions at the 2019 RGS-IBG Annual Conference, including a keynote. The HPGRG keynote was given by Professor Arild Holt-Jensen (University of Bergen), the author of *Geography, History and Concepts* giving his [autobiographical account through Geography's many currents and disciplinary turns](#). Ron Johnston offered his own autobiographical reflections in contrast. Both the [keynote](#) and [Ron Johnston's](#) and [Michiel van Meeteren's](#) papers on autobiography and geography were recently published in the [Norwegian Journal of Geography](#).



Arild-Holt-Jensen delivering the 2019 HPRG Keynote



Ron Johnston reflecting on the 2019 HPGRG keynote

#### 3.2 Author meets readers: David Simon's Holocaust Escapees and Global Development: Hidden Histories

On the last day of the RGS-IBG conference, attendees were given the chance to take part in an intellectually rewarding Author Meets Readers session, discussing David Simon's recently-published ethnographic history, *Holocaust Escapees and Global Development: Hidden Histories* (2019). His fascinating work, a product of research spanning several decades, allowed him to piece together the unique personal life stories of pioneer thinkers and practitioners of the 1945 'development' field, who had fled the Nazi regime in the 1930s and 40s. The lively session, co-organised by Miles Kenney-Lazar, Felix Mallin and James Sidaway, saw David Simon respond to eight sympathetic, yet challenging and critical, commentators – including Majed Akhter, Mona Domosh, James Esson, Ian Klinke, Uma Kothari, Marcus Power, Jonathan Rigg and Boris Michel. These exchanges are expected to be published as a review forum in the [Journal of Historical Geography](#) in 2020.



Author meets readers: David Simon's Holocaust Escapees and Global Development: Hidden Histories

### 3.3 A Non-Representational Historical Geography? Archives, Affects and Atmospheres.

Capturing hopes, troubles, and other affects, atmospheres and encounters presents peculiar challenges to the historical geographer who must already approach their evidence through the gauze of time. These questions have been a recurrent influence upon the Conferencing the International project, previously addressed in a session at the 2018 AAG Annual Meeting on “Geographies of Sensory Politics: Re-thinking Atmospheres”. This double-session on the opening morning (28 August) of the RGS-IBG conference was thus something of a loose sequel, convened by Stephen Legg and Ivan Marković and chaired by Benjamin Thorpe, entitled “A Non-Representational Historical Geography? Archives, Affects and Atmospheres”.

The impressive crowd that made it to the fifth floor of Imperial College's Sherfield Building for the 9am start were treated to Ruth Slatter's fascinating account of the Pre-Raphaelite artist James Smetham's everyday experience of religion, particularly the 'squarings' and 'ventilators' through which he reconciled his religion and his art. The theme of religion was carried over into Eric Olund's talk on missionaries' use of highly charged metaphors to communicate atmospheres and emotions in their anti-prostitution campaigns in Chicago's Levee district in the early twentieth century. Stephen Legg spoke of atmospheres too, in his case the social atmospheres of the 1930-32 Round Table Conferences, in both the spectacular and more everyday conference spaces. Next, Hayden Lorimer discussed the House of Yardley's production and promotion of lavender as a luxury scent, and their association of lavender with a certain version of nationalised loveliness and beauty. Finally, Maarten Loopmans told us of his use of sketching in his and Magaly Rodriguez Garcia's interviews with a sex worker, and the way in which the process of drawing and the subject's reaction to it unsettled the research dynamic.

The second session kicked off with Giulia Carabelli's paper on "Empire as affect", in which she spoke about apprehending the imperial atmosphere in Trieste, particularly the contested invocation of empire in the 25 April Liberation Day commemorations. In the following paper, Merle Patchett took from a box three avian accessories, which she used as a means of thinking (and teaching) the archive as animal, and demonstrating the mutual constitution of dualisms like natural/human history and animal/artefact. Next, Felicity Callard turned to the challenge of catching daydreams, and the attempts that have been made across a range of disciplines to do such a thing. Finally, Ivan Marković spoke about tobacco smoke in the 1980s workplace, and the way in which its traces are both absent and abundant in the archive. Ben Anderson acted as discussant, brilliantly pulling from across the morning's papers to identify two broader senses of the non-representational at work: taken as a mode of enquiry, he argued, one could see its plenitude and proliferation within historical geography; however, taken as a set of phenomena, there were more tensions evident between the papers.

As well as attesting to the vibrancy and variety of non-representational work currently being pursued within historical geography, the sessions also made good use of props to puncture the wordiness of the typical conference paper presentation. Merle's 'botched birds' proved not only illustrative of the thorny issues at hand, but of the dangers of a thorny materiality to hands. And Hayden infused the atmosphere of the room with the scent of lavender in aromatic illustration of his subject, a tactic that the audience might have been relieved to find out that Ivan did not follow.



### 3.4. *Human Geography Today: Then and Now* organised by Catherine Oliver and Phil Emmerson

This panel was convened to celebrate and reflect on *Human Geography Today*, twenty years after its publication, and to think forward to the next twenty years. We were delighted that four of the original authors of the collection joined the panel to share their reflections: Prof. John Allen; Prof. Sarah Radcliffe, Prof. Susan J. Smith; and Prof. Gill Valentine. Their knowledge and experience of the discipline proved fertile for an insightful and honest discussion.



L-R: Phil Emmerson, Gill Valentine, Susan J. Smith, Sarah Radcliffe, John Allen and Catherine Oliver

**John Allen** opened the panel by contending that HGT should always be regarded as ‘of its time’ in advocating a difference in how Human Geography was both understood and undertaken *then*. He explained that the editors and authors were highly aware of the particular moment of political, social and intellectual transformation from which they were writing. In particular, he noted that insistence on relationality was not about doing away with ‘structure’ but rather about drawing out the ‘betweenness’ of structures - ‘we were poststructuralists who believe in structures’ he joked.

**Sarah Radcliffe** reflected on her chapter in relation to the ‘one world’ world, asking: “what kind of world serves as the frame of reference?”. Pointing out the collective nature of its writing and the situatedness of HGT in Western thought, she reiterated the importance of “collectives” as political-intellectual endeavours. Specifically, she highlighted the role of geography collectives in Latin America, suggesting this as a source of connection between the ideas of 1999 and geographies/geographers in 2019. The ‘implicit horizons of relationality’ were centred, for Radcliffe, as vital to the kind of world she worked and works with.

**Susan Smith’s** intervention focussed on the always timely nature and scale of inequality that was the subject of her chapter. Connecting this to the importance of *nature* within HGT, she reaffirmed that approaching and understanding the world through space-place-nature is still vital to geographical thinking and work 20 years on. Yet within this, she also noted the extremes of inequality as widening, and posed the idea that a ‘less-than-human’ might be seen as a crucial concept both now and in the future.

**Gill Valentine’s** reflection drew together a number of themes from the panel by insisting on the need to embrace the possibility of openness, Understanding 2019 as a very different political space than 1999, both within and outwith the discipline, Valentine suggested that the present is

possibly a space of ‘diminished hope’. Central to this, she posed the idea of borders (physical and metaphorical) and made a firm case for ideas of difference and intersectionality as key means through which we might consider and mobilise to negotiate, break and, in some necessary cases, protect these boundaries.

Audience questions prompted the panel members to think critically and creatively about a variety of themes including the importance of relational thinking, as well as whether a ‘new’ version of HGT would be a valid project, what that would look like, and where its impetus might lie. The whole panel struck a cautionary line on this, warning against the risk of creating a “Human Geography Yesterday”.

Overall, we felt the session was a success and hope that it proved interesting and productive for all involved. We would like to extend our thanks to the panel and audience members involved, and to thank HPGRG for generously sponsoring and supporting the session.

## 4. 2019 HPGRG Undergraduate Dissertation Prizes

In 2019, the HPGRG decided to award two undergraduate dissertation prizes. Both can be downloaded from the links in this Newsletter:

Olivia Russell (University of Edinburgh) [“Geography, Cartography and Military Intelligence: Gertrude Campbell’s Cartographic Work for the Royal Geographical Society in 1913 to 1918.”](#)

Mitchell Wilson (University of Bristol): [“Expanding the Empirical Repertoire of Non-Representational Theory Through a Methodological Reflection on Creating a Documentary Film.”](#)

In 2020 the HPGRG will again award the undergraduate dissertation prize of £50 for outstanding original work in the history and/or philosophy of human geography, physical geography or associated fields. In addition, SAGE will provide the prize-winner with a year’s free personal journal subscription – either [Progress in Human Geography](#) or [Progress in Physical Geography](#).

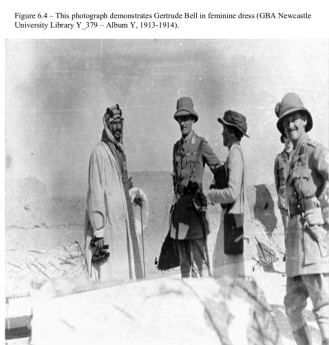
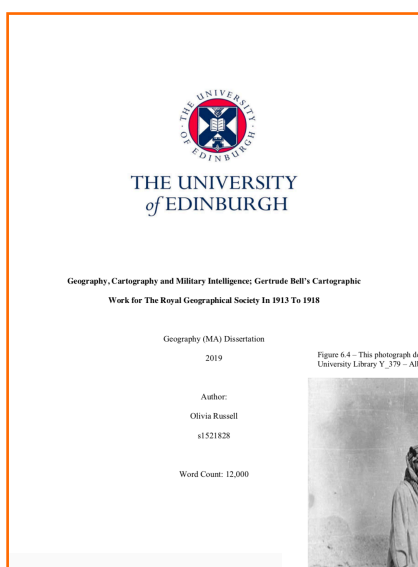


Figure 6.4 – This photograph demonstrates Gertrude Bell in feminine dress (GBA Newcastle University Library Y\_379 – Album Y, 1913-1914).

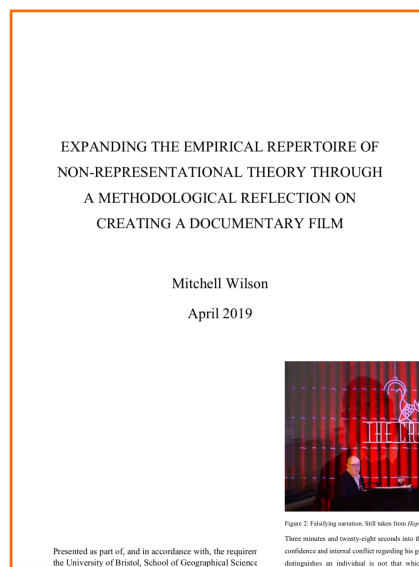


Figure 2: Filthy hipster. Still taken from *Hope is a Disease* (2019). Three minutes and twenty-eight seconds into the film, Ty begins to open up about his lack of confidence and internal conflict regarding his gender identity. For DeLouse (2004 [1988]), what distinguishes an individual is not that which is determined on the basis of opposable differences, but rather that which happens to the individual. Thus, when speaking about his identity, rather than reaching any conclusion, Ty experiences a becoming that “begins as a desire to escape bodily limitation” (Massumi 1992: 94). While this narrative is occurring, the film shows Hope performing a song titled “Pigalle”, which continues to play as we switch back to the interview where Ty refers to Hope as the channel through which he is able to be empowered by “female energy”  
 “... the straight line as force of time, as a labyrinth of time, is also the line which forks and keeps on forking, passing through *impossible presents*, returning to non-necessarily *over-pasts*.”  
 DeLouse (2005[1989]: 127)



We welcome nominations that examine geographical knowledge, discourses and practices in academia, but also within schools and the public sphere. Nominations are requested from Dissertation Supervisors or Heads of Department. The dissertation should have been completed within the past two years and be written in English. We welcome nominations not only from the UK but also from other countries. Depending on the number and quality of submissions, the prize may not be awarded every year.

Please direct all questions and submit an (unmarked) electronic copy of the dissertation with your letter of recommendation to [Dr Emily Hayes](mailto:Dr.Emily.Hayes@hpgrg.org.uk).

## 5. Sponsored sessions RGS-IBG 2020

At the coming [2020 RGS-IBG conference in London](#), the HPGRG sponsors the following session proposals.

### 5.1 EURODAC, hotspots, repatriation routes: (trans)formations of socio-technical assemblages of the European border regime

**Organizers:** Jacopo Anderlini (University of Genoa, [jacopo.anderlini@edu.unige.it](mailto:jacopo.anderlini@edu.unige.it)) and Silvan Pollozek (Technical University of Munich, [silvan.pollozek@tum.de](mailto:silvan.pollozek@tum.de))

The goal of this session is to examine the material and socio-technical dimensions of the European border regime and its transformations. Far from the idea of uninterrupted lines that divide sovereign political entities typical of the Westphalian model (Zaiotti 2011, 46), we understand borders as complex and dispersed socio-technical assemblages enacted and (de)stabilized by the interplay of multiple actors, technologies and infrastructures. The session explores mundane modes of European migration and border control and seeks to shed light on both the material manifestations of border assemblages *and* on their contingent, preliminary and sometimes even 'experimental' character with all their frictions, contestations and work-arounds. How are mundane socio-technical border assemblages, such as the EURODAC system, the so-called Hotspots or Frontex readmission operations brought into being and stabilized (Callon 1984)? In which ways and forms do they proliferate? And how do contestations, objections or controversies affect their shape?

This session invites contributions that critically analyse past, present and transforming manifestations of European border assemblages. We encourage research papers that focus on genealogies of mundane European border assemblages and their socio-technical set-ups, that address recent developments and are based on qualitative fieldwork on European borderlands, border control measures and initiatives and their administrative ecologies, or that critically discuss how such mundane border assemblages affect and generate (new) issues of sovereignty, citizenship and mobility.

Topics / keywords: European border regime; socio-technical assemblage; materiality; mundane forms of governing; de/stabilization; transformation; contestation of migration and border control

## 5.2 Non-representational geographies: approaches, methods and practices

**Organizers** Amy C. Barron, (The University of Manchester, [amy.barron@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:amy.barron@manchester.ac.uk)) and Andrew S. Maclaren (The University of Aberdeen [a.s.maclaren@gmail.com](mailto:a.s.maclaren@gmail.com))

This session brings together scholars who draw on, advance and empirically use non-representational theories and methodologies, in all their diversity. Non-representational theories serve as a springboard for exploring the affective geographies of a multitude of phenomena from ageing, to nationalism and geopolitics, to name a few. Various approaches, methods and theoretical lineages reflect and infuse this diversity, bringing together a concern for how places, subjectivities and identities are enacted, felt and mediated. The session also presents an opportunity for the 'borders' within the various subdisciplines of geography to be reconsidered with respect to non-representational theories and to reinforce the interrelations within and between subdisciplines in the use, development and engagement with this diversifying approach.

Topics in this session might include, but are not limited to:

- What non-representational geographies are emerging within the subdisciplines of geography, the arts and wider social sciences?
- How does place feature and matter in/to non-representational work?
- How are different bodies part of the nature of affective places/non-representational geographies?
- How are specific 'types' of places affective e.g. urban or rural places?
- How might scholars engage with the non-representational methodologically?

We are interested in engaging with perspectives from academics at all career stages.

## 5.3 Geography and Public Policy: Exploiting past encounters to better navigate through present terrains

**Organizers:** Mark Boyle (University of Liverpool), Tim Hall (University of Winchester), Shaun Lin (corresponding organizer: National University of Singapore, [geolzs@nus.edu.sg](mailto:geolzs@nus.edu.sg)), James Sidaway (National University of Singapore) and Michiel Van Meeteren (Loughborough University)

In this age of impact, civic engagement, useful learning, knowledge exchange, technology readiness levels, co-creation, or public affairs, the societal utility of geography is once again under scrutiny. Another moment of opportunity presents to geographers to demonstrate the value of geographical knowledge and skills to public policy makers. Equally, the risks of scholarship being compromised, politicized, incorporated, captured, or silenced are again especially elevated. Wrong alleyways await scholars insufficiently equipped to navigate effectively in the policy arena.

Of course none of this is entirely new. We have trodden similar paths many times hitherto. But as a consequence, fortunately, we now have a rich history of intellectual resources to help us navigate through the current fraught terrain. But these resources are being insufficiently exploited. How have geographers plotted a route through the opportunities, risks and wrongs which presented in applied research in the past? Are these sufficiently understood and appreciate today and has their potential to instruct be fully grasped. The purpose of this session is to excavate and reappraise these past resources so that they might more readily be mobilised to instruct present concerns. If they are to be more than objects of historical curiosity, episodes in the history of applied geography must be historicized and provincialized so that their significance can be rendered intelligible: their histories and meanings need to be better understood so that they might have futures and continue to do important work for the discipline.

## 5.4 Unknowing Geographies: Situating ignorance, inattention and erasure

**Organizer:** Jeremy Brice, (London School of Economics and Political Science, [j.brice@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.brice@lse.ac.uk))

Emerging interdisciplinary scholarship in ignorance studies and agnotology has excavated complex entanglements between knowledge production and the generation of illegibilities, lacunae and ignorance (Gross 2010; McGoey 2019). However, geographers remain marginal to these discussions and extant studies of unknowing rarely focus explicitly on spatiality, temporality, scale or location (Frickel & Kinchy 2015). As a result, the geographies of unknowing – the places and moments which produce and shape ignorance, the mobilities of non-knowledge, and their role in ordering spaces, networks and circulations – have yet to receive sustained examination. Fundamental questions also remain about why certain places remain unmapped, some histories are forgotten and particular futures go unanticipated, and about how the making of these unknown geographies might be entwined with the selective erasure of risk, violence and inequality or the effacement of indigenous and vernacular knowledges.

This session aims to situate critical engagement with the politics, ethics and economies of ignorance through bringing together papers examining both spaces, mobilities and practices of unknowing and times, places and experiences which are rendered unknowable by dominant knowledges. Building on geographies of scientific, indigenous and (post)colonial knowledges, it will explore how geographies – as both spatio-temporal orderings and disciplinary knowledge practices – are implicated within and productive of processes of unknowing. In so doing it seeks especially to acknowledge and scrutinise the historical and contemporary role of geography's own disciplinary institutions, theories and methodologies in engendering ignorance, imperceptibility and disavowal of marginalised knowledges. This session thus aims to enrich scholarship on the history and philosophy of geographical knowledge through stimulating enquiry into the genealogies, politics and implications of specifically geographical modes of unknowing.

## 5.5 Worlds of wisdom Ontology, immanence and transcendence in geography, philosophy and geosophy

**Organizer:** Emily Hayes, (Oxford Brookes University, [ehayes@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:ehayes@brookes.ac.uk))

Over the last decades critical scholarship has laboured to shift Geography's theories and praxes. In spite of these efforts the discipline continues to be associated with the oft-told associations of topographical exploration and imperialism and its crimes. Yet such a view of geographical practice is partial, lazy and chronically damaging. Imaginative measures to lift this veil are an ethical imperative in order to confront the denial of the conceptual might and philosophical essence of geographical practices.

As well as the temporal and spatial connections, material mechanisms of exchange and circulation between what were until the nineteenth century geographical, philosophical and geosophical ways of knowing, rather than separate disciplinary fields, are becoming more clearly apprehended. Recent scholarship on the Enlightenment has been particularly insightful concerning emergent natural philosophical communities and practices. This scholarship has brought both historical-geographical precision as well as added dimensions to global histories of science and understandings of universal knowledge. In addition, the examination of the relations across the shifting, but common, borders of the two ancient fields of knowledge, Geography and Philosophy, has begun. Inquiries into ethics and morality have been growth areas within the discipline. However, the incorporation of Philosophy and histories of Philosophy, from those of Ancient Greece and Rome to Philosophies of Anthropology, into routine geographical and historical geographical teaching, practice and parlance remains shallow.

Surveying Geography's bridging, ie. its inductive and transformative, role between the sciences and humanities, this session will explore the ways in which geographical knowledge, materials and cognitive, physical, visual practices constitute an untapped reservoir of wisdom. The session seeks papers which theorise that the discipline's histories constitute resources for exploring, learning and teaching historical and contemporary routes towards virtuous living. The latter helped to develop diverse viewpoints from which to observe and debate what might constitute good, or better, ways to live. In seeking to foster interdisciplinary exchange and to deepen understandings of the geographies of philosophy and the philosophical value of geography, this session aims to encourage dialogue between practitioners in these respective fields by asking the following:

- Where have Geography and Philosophy been located within diverse schemes of faith, knowledge and science? Where, when and how have knowledge-makers contributed to both Geography and Philosophical communities?
- What common and distinct cognitive concepts, visual and aesthetic tropes and linguistic terms have been developed by practitioners of the aforementioned disciplines? Where were the limits of this common ground?
- How have shifting languages and concepts of space and geographical perceptions been used by philosophers? How have diverse geographical practitioners harnessed philosophical

knowledge and practices? What social constituencies, practices and technologies were harnessed?

- What future directions should this joint venture between Geography and Philosophy take?

## 5.6 Drawing the line. Theories and Practices of Boundary Delimitation in European and Colonial Territories (Eighteenth-Twentieth Century)”

**Organizers:** Federico Ferretti (University College Dublin, [federico.ferretti@ucd.ie](mailto:federico.ferretti@ucd.ie)), Jacobo García-Álvarez and Paloma Puente-Lozano (Universidad Carlos III, Madrid).

Recent geographical scholarship on territory, sovereignty and borders have pointed out the need for questioning and exposing in historical perspective a number of “myths” and “political fictions” embedded within modern state-making and its discursive and material makings. Within this theoretical framework, processes of boundary delimitation and demarcation have proved to be a particularly relevant *locus* for examining the complex entanglements of modern conceptions and theories of territory, sovereignty and borders within practices of statehood. This session aims at analyzing the complexities and variety of theories and practices of boundary-making across Europe and colonial territories from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, and how they related to wider assumptions about sovereignty and statehood. We are especially interested in hearing about comparative methodologies and transnational approaches that allow for overcoming typical shortcomings of nation-centered historiographies, as well as in exploring the multiscale nature of these processes of border-making and the heterogeneity of the actors involved in them.

We welcome presentations that align with these themes in diverse ways. This might include, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Cultures and traditions of delimitation and boundary-making across European or colonized/ decolonized countries: variety of delimitation criteria, different organization and composition of boundary commissions, work dynamics and procedures in boundary-delimitation, etc.
- The role of geographic descriptions, maps, land surveys and other types of geographical knowledge in boundary-making practices and theories.
- Dynamics among actors involved in boundary-making (such as local communities, states representatives, technical experts) and the interplay of their conflicting territorial visions.
- Historical transformations of state territoriality and sovereignty.
- Conceptions of border, territory and sovereignty as displayed in demarcation processes.
- Methodological and epistemic issues involved in doing research on the history of territory.

## 5.7 Friedrich Engels and Geography

**Organizer:** Camilla Royle (King's College London, [camilla.royle@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:camilla.royle@kcl.ac.uk))

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) was Karl Marx's closest collaborator. Although mentioned less often than Marx in geographical discussions, he was an important theorist in his own right. With his pathbreaking work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), he analysed the social drivers of poverty, ill health and environmental pollution in urban areas (Clark and Foster, 2006), concerns he returned to in his later work on housing (Larsen et al, 2016, Smith, 2008, p179). Influenced by the Chartist movement, the revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune he was a political organiser and journalist. His wide ranging work addressed science, anthropology, philosophy, military history and more (Hunt, 2010).

Engels worked closely with Marx, his economic thinking influenced *Capital* and he edited the second and third volumes after Marx's death. However, some have questioned whether Engels' interpretation of Marxism gave it a deterministic, economic or dualist slant alien to Marx's own thought (Carver, 2003; Smith, 2008, pp34-5, 87). They have suggested that this was partly responsible for reformist and authoritarian versions of socialist practice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This paper session takes the bicentenary of Engels' birth as an opportunity to examine his contribution to geographical thinking today. Possible themes might include (but are not limited to):

- Engels as a philosopher and as a Marxist
- Geographies of workers' and peasant struggles and revolutions
- The housing question today
- Engels on social epidemiology, health and urban life
- Engels on women, gender and the family
- Engels on science, nature and the environment
- The relevance (or otherwise) of Engels to geography in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## 5.8 Speculative Thinking

**Organizers:** Nina Williams (UNSW Canberra, [nina.williams@adfa.edu.au](mailto:nina.williams@adfa.edu.au)) and Thomas Keating (UNSW Canberra, [thomas.patrick.keating@gmail.com](mailto:thomas.patrick.keating@gmail.com))

Writing about the environmental, political, and financial catastrophes that define the first part of the C21st, philosophers Didier Debaise and Isabelle Stengers (2017) call for a new 'speculative' mode of thought capable of responding to a crisis of "lazy thinking", "false problems" and a rising "inability to think that what we care about might have a future". Today, destruction at different registers of the mental, social and environmental ecology demonstrate all too clearly that these crises of thought continue apace.

Against this backdrop, speculative thinking would be a call to develop a sense of openness - in the most expanded terms possible - to "what, in *this* situation, might be of importance" (Debaise & Stengers, 2017). Against convention, speculative thinking here would not be a call to think more 'abstractly' but would be an open question of how to take care of the alternative as the sense of possibility within a given situation.

This focus on speculation (see Woodward, 2016) comes at a time when Geography is developing exciting work into alternative and imperceptible registers of experience and ontology through notions of the elemental (McCormack, 2018), the pluriverse (Collard et al., 2015), encounter (Wilson, 2017), technological sense (Gabrys, 2019), post-humanism (Williams et al., 2019), post-phenomenology (Ash & Simpson, 2019), minor theory (Katz, 2017), and the micro-political (Sharpe, 2019). Parallel to this, a range of speculative interventions in philosophy and the social sciences offer different understandings of spacetimes and temporality beyond traditionally linear and successive modalities (Connolly, 2019; Savransky et al 2017).

In this session we are drawn to speculation as a response to the crisis of possibilities in an era of increasingly destructive governance and ecological degradation. Specifically, we are concerned with the speculative techniques and methods current environmental problems give rise to, the histories that shape and constitute a speculative perspective, and the technologies required to do speculatively thinking at a time when new questions are being asked about earthly collapse (Danowski & De Castro, 2017) and the "shifts in metaphysical assumptions" (Connolly, 2019, p.10) implied therein. We invite contributions that seek to engage in speculative modes of thinking, sensing and writing about the ecological world. These contributions may be interested in, but would not be limited to, the following:

- Methods and (anti-)techniques for sensing and attuning to speculative forms of experience and ecological process;
- Engagement with technologies and media for creating an expanded sensing, listening, perceiving, and attuning to the earth;
- The role of speculative thought in the creation, contestation, and transgression of borders and borderlands;
- The politics of speculation as a response to specific kinds of ecological problems e.g. the climate emergency, austerity politics, or the rise right-wing populisms;
- Critical engagements with speculative philosophies, geographies and the question of abstraction;
- Anti-, De- and Post-Colonial engagements with speculation and the question of who gets to speculate;
- Conceptual work to speculate with creative processes at non-representational and micropolitical registers of thought;
- Speculative geographical accounts of landscape, the future, digital space, and temporality.

## 5.9 Transgressing disciplinary borders in the production of knowledge: Exploring the power of pragmatism

**Organizers:** Jane Willis (University of Exeter [j.wills2@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:j.wills2@exeter.ac.uk)) and Robert W Lake (Rutgers University, [rlake@rutgers.edu](mailto:rlake@rutgers.edu))

This panel will discuss a new publication: *The Power of Pragmatism: Knowledge production and social inquiry* (Edited by Jane Wills and Robert W. Lake; Published by Manchester University Press, 2020).

The book includes an international set of authors – many of them geographers - who explore the pragmatist tradition and pragmatic approaches to social research. The contributors challenge researchers to think about why, how, and to what ends we engage in social research.

The panel will discuss the philosophical tradition of pragmatism and its application to social research, including Geography. The panel will include some of the authors from the book, as well as other voices, and we welcome critics of this tradition. The focus will be on the way in which pragmatism orientates researchers to both context and practice, helping to transgress disciplinary boundaries in thinking about how to make sense of the world. We hope to have a frank exchange about the strengths and weaknesses of this tradition and welcome contributors from across the community.

Some of the boundary-crossing aspects of pragmatism we hope to explore in the panel include: rethinking foundational assumptions; moving from 'research' to 'inquiry'; relinquishing the goal of representation; erasing the boundary between means and ends; expanding the boundaries of expertise; embracing the open-endedness of provisionality and fallibility; creating publics to explore problems beyond disciplinary interests; and breaking down barriers between the public and the academy.



## 6. Committee membership

At the 2020 General Meeting, Pauline Couper and Thomas Jellies completed their terms as respective undergraduate prize coordinator and website editor. The committee welcomes Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes University) as the new undergraduate prize coordinator while Michiel van Meeteren (Loughborough University) took over the Website and Twitter editor role by folding into the Communications Officer responsibility. The HPGRG also welcomes Mette Buinsma (University of Glasgow) as the new Postgraduate Liason officer.

The full HPGRG Committee is now:

Chair: Dr Heike Jöns (Loughborough University), 2018-2021

Secretary: Dr Federico Ferretti (University College Dublin), 2018-2021

Treasurer: Dr Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University), 2017-2020

Membership Secretary: Dr Franklin Ginn (University of Bristol), 2017-2020

Communications Officer: Dr Michiel Van Meeteren (Loughborough University), 2018-2021

Undergraduate Dissertation Prize: Dr Emily Hayes (Oxford Brookes University)

Postgraduate Liaison Officer: Mette Bruinsma (University of Glasgow), 2019-2022

Ordinary Member: Dr Dean Bond (Loughborough University), 2017-2020

There is no way in which the organizing committee of the HPGRG can be aware of all the exciting events, publications, prizes and grants that are relevant to our members, let alone that we can write down all the news in the newsletter by ourselves. So if you have something to share with the wider HPGRG community, have an event you would like to draw attention to, or want to write a short report on an attended event, there is publication space in the HPGRG newsletter! Just contact the communications officer, Michiel van Meeteren ([m.van-meeteren@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:m.van-meeteren@lboro.ac.uk)) with your text or idea. If we get flooded with good stuff, we'll just issue more newsletters!