

## **Cultural Geography Study Group Report for 2005-2006**

### **Office bearers:**

#### *Convenor:*

Chris Gibson, University of Wollongong cgibson@uow.edu.au

#### *Deputy Convenor (incoming):*

Rachel Hughes, University of Melbourne hughesr@unimelb.edu.au

#### *Deputy Convenor (out-going):*

Kathy Mee, University of Newcastle Kathy.Mee@newcastle.edu.au

Please note: In line with rotating executive policy developed at the 2001 CGSG meeting in Newcastle (a policy designed to retain corporate memory and provide support to incoming office bearers), in 2003 the previous Deputy Convenor, Chris Gibson (UOW) was elected Convenor. Former Convenor, Kathy Mee (Newcastle) was elected Deputy Convenor (out-going), along with Rachel Hughes, as Deputy Convenor (in-coming). At the Brisbane 2006 the in-coming Convenor and Deputy Convenor will be elected for the next term and Dr Gibson will become Deputy Convenor (out-going).

### **1. Study Group Events**

#### **IAG/IGU/NZGS Conference, Brisbane 2006**

Cultural geographers are a strong presence at this year's joint IGU/IAG/NZGS conference in Brisbane, with an unprecedented line-up of specialist sessions and speakers. The following is a summary of the specialist sessions being sponsored by the study group (including those co-sponsored with other study groups), and their convenors:

- Keynote Session: does Antipodean geography matter? (convenor Fraser MacDonald)
- Cultures of Nature (4 sessions; convenor Lesley Head)
- Geographies of Belonging (4 sessions; convenors Kathy Mee and Sarah Wright)
- Of Material Consequence? Object Geographies (2 sessions; convenor: Rachel Hughes)
- Visual Art and Cultural Geography (convenors: Ruth Fazakerley and Gavin Malone)
- Cultural Geography, Urban Worlds (convenors: Tim Bunnell and Lily Kong)
- Doing Participation 'Downunder' (2 sessions; convenors: Sara Kinson and Ruth Panelli)
- Critical geographies of the Asia-Pacific: power, identity and globalization (2 sessions; co-sponsorship with IAG-SEAGA Asia-Pacific Geographies Forum; convenors: Kathy Gibson, Linda Malam and Katharine McKinnon)
- Transnationalism: comparative perspectives (3 sessions; co-sponsorship with IGU Commission on Population and Vulnerability; convenor: Kevin Dunn)

- The Spaces of Culture (co-sponsorship with The Australia Research Council's Cultural Research Network; convenor Michelle Duffy)
- Geographies of Rural youth (co-sponsorship with the IAG Rural Study Group; convenors Neil Argent and Chris Gibson)
- Geographies of rural creativity (co-sponsorship with the IAG Rural Study Group; convenors Neil Argent and Louise Johnson)

## 2. Publications

In 2004 a special review symposium was published in *Geographical Research* (v42, n3) of Don Watson's *Death Sentence*. The review symposium, edited by Phil O'Neill, stemmed from the special session 'The State of Language in the Academy' at the 2004 IAG in Adelaide (co-sponsored with the IAG Economic Geography Study Group). It features contributions from Phil O'Neill, Elissa Sutherland, Bob Fagan, Kevin Dunn and Chris Gibson.

Another forum publication is due out in *Geographical Research* (v44, n4) based on the special session held at the 2005 IAG in Armidale on the links between cultural geography and cultural studies. The session was organised by Chris Gibson in response to his participation in the recently funded ARC Cultural Research Network (RN0459928), which seeks to build bridges between cognate disciplines (see below). The session brought prominent cultural geographers, including past convenors of the IAG study group and journal editors, to reflect on their own experiences, while others raised a series of questions to engage wider discussion. The papers collected in the GR forum distil the essence of those presented in Armidale, and are followed by two responses: one by Rae Dufty, a postgraduate student at the University of New South Wales, and another by Jon Stratton, a prominent cultural studies academic from Curtin University of Technology in Perth.

Kathy Mee reports that the editing process is nearing completion on a special issue of *Housing, Theory and Society*, stemming from Cultural Geography Study Group sessions at the 2005 IAG in Armidale on Geographies of Home.

Several publishing outcomes are also likely from the IAG in Brisbane. Lesley Head is planning a special issue of *Geoforum* stemming from the Cultures of Nature sessions; Kathy Mee and Sarah Wright have secured agreement for a special issue of *Environment and Planning A* from their Geographies of Belonging sessions, Kevin Dunn, Michelle Duffy and Katharine McKinnon are all discussing options for edited collections based on their sessions.

## 3. The ARC Cultural Research Network

The ARC Cultural Research Network (RN0459928), led by Graeme Turner at the University of Queensland now includes the following IAG members: Kay Anderson, Christy Collis, Gordon Waitt and Chris Gibson. The aims of the Cultural Research Network are:

1. To enhance interdisciplinary exchange between researchers from cultural studies, media, and communications studies, and researchers contributing to

- emerging trends in cultural geography, cultural history, cultural anthropology, new media, and creative industries.
2. To apply the benefits of such exchanges to developing multidisciplinary approaches to research projects on cultural literacies, cultural technologies, cultural histories, geographies, and identities.
  3. To establish networks of communication and exchange to maximise the influence, capacity and collaborative potential of innovative cultural research in Australia, and to assist the professional development of early career and postgraduate researchers.
  4. Over the five years of the funding period, to develop focused programs of collaborative cultural research projects for which external funding can be sought.
  5. To build on existing transnational links in order to internationalise the CRN.

Cultural geography has thus far played a major role in the network; it is one of its six keywords, and it has a dedicated place in the formal structure of the network, as a funded 'node'. Chris Gibson the convenor for that node, with an annual budget that is intended to support events and initiatives that bring people together to discuss projects, with an emphasis on the interplay between geographical and other disciplinary perspectives. The other topical nodes in the network are: cultural literacies; communities and identities; cultural histories; and cultural technologies. There is also a dedicated node and budget for early career researchers and postgraduates. Opportunities exist to maximise opportunities for the Study Group in conjunction with CRN activities.

#### **4. Future events**

Discussions are planned at the Brisbane IGU/IAG conference for future events of the study group. These will include specialist sessions for the 2007 Melbourne IAG, and other study group events. Following the tendency in recent years, office bearers will encourage study group members to propose events that are synchronised with full national IAG conferences so as to minimise fragmentation and maximise attendance.

Chris Gibson