

Cultural geography study group & Asia Pacific transformations group sponsored session

Re-imagining the tropics: sites and networks of knowledge

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The terms ‘tropics’ and ‘tropicality’ are re-emerging in scholarly debate across a range of academic disciplines (geography, history, anthropology). In Euro-American research in particular, there has been a return to the archives of ‘tropical geography’ as conceptualised throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and formalised in the immediate post-WWII period. Some have focused attention on the formation of tropical knowledges in the colonial and post-WWII archives (e.g. Arnold 1998, 2000, 2006; Driver 2004; Bowd and Clayton 2005), while others chart the circulation of tropical knowledges through cinema (Law et al 2007) and academic books and journals (Power and Sidaway 2004; Grundy-Warr et al 2003). Some scholars examine how tropical knowledges shape historical and contemporary practices of fieldwork (Driver and Martins 2005; Corbridge and Mawdsley 2003), and Australian researchers re beginning to interrogate planning policies for the contemporary tropical city (Luckman et al forthcoming). Drawing on these ideas, but in a postcolonial context of multiculturalism and global connectedness, this session aims to:

- Re-cast the tropics not as ‘geography’ but as ‘discourse’ of knowledge and power
- Examine the texts, institutions, technologies and practices that help define and produce tropical regions as knowable geographies
- Consider the tropics as a network rather than bounded geography

We welcome papers with these general themes, as well as those that more broadly articulate with debates about ‘tropicality’.