

THE BIOGEOGRAPHER

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of the American Association of Geographers

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Notes from the Chair

Tony Stallins, BSG Chair, 2017–19

Day versus night science

1. *There is no such thing as the Scientific Method.*
2. *New knowledge is not science until it is made social.*
3. *Scientists do not find order in nature, they put it there.*
4. *Science does not deserve the reputation it has so widely gained of being wholly objective.*
5. *What pass as acceptable scientific explanations have both social determinants and social functions.*

Despite your initial reactions, these are quotes from scientists. The authors are listed below. They are presented in the book *Never Pure*, by the philosopher of science Steven Shapin. The broad thread through this book is that there is no one kind of science. Feyerabend (2015) similarly criticizes the perception of a productive science as one that is singular in its form of practice.

Scholars in the field of science studies have articulated analogous descriptions of how science works. They have done so in ways that also negate extreme social constructivist accounts of science in which the disunity of scientific method becomes an argument to support the acceptance of creationism and the denial of anthropogenic climate change. This may be no surprise, as many of us now recognize that science is not value free. Biogeographer Tom Vale (1988) acknowledged this critical perspective in his call for wisdom in light of how scalar extent and grain can be used to justify or refute our interpretations of forest change. Still, do geographical biogeographers recognize and encourage the diversity of modes of scientific inquiry? Geographical biogeography doesn't idolize controlled experimental science like biology and ecology, for the most part. We test and falsify hypotheses, but we also are descriptive and rely on context to orient the universalizing qualities of our research findings. But do we have good philosophical health? Two recent essays, one from biology and the other from ecology, highlight ways of thinking that we might reflect upon as biogeographers. Biologists Desai and Jun (2018) refer to day science, the science that is mechanical, logical, and seeks to appeal to a universal template of best practice. Night science, by contrast, wanders, guesses, and considers hunches and patterns. Instinct and intuition are part of problem solving. Similarly, Schroeter et al (2018) discuss the difference between divergent and convergent thinking in ecology. Divergent thinking is the 'ability to generate multiple unique solutions to a problem and to connect disparate concepts in unique ways'. It is considered the foundation of creative ability and complex problem solving. Convergent thinking differs from divergent thinking in that it results in a correct or best answer, idea, or solution from a selective number of concepts. When we do research, we likely use day and night science. Our research will inevitably involve convergent as well as divergent thinking. But do we tend to value day over night science? Is convergent thinking worth more than divergent thinking? What are the implications of our preferences? If we are to encourage and train creative thinkers and preserve some of the excitement that brought us into science and geography, we may need to put more value on night science and divergent thinking. This will ask us to appreciate scholarly work less for the way in which it adheres to our norms and offers up the slow, safe, conservative accumulation of knowledge, and more for how it departs from this model and takes risks.

References

Collins, H. (2009). We cannot live by scepticism alone. *Nature* 458(7234), 30.

Desai, A., and S. Jun. 2018. Promoting an "auteur theory" for young scientists: preserving excitement and creativity. *BioEssays* 1800147. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bies.201800147>

Schroeter, I.M., C.C. Forrester, L.M. Brigham, E.R. Fried, K.C. Grabenstein, C.C. Karban, and M.T. McDermott. 2019. Diverging from the dogma: a call to train creative thinkers in science. *Bul. Ecol. Soc. Am.* 100(1): e01463. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bes2.1463>

Shapin, S. 2010. *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if it Was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Feyerabend, P., and E. Oberheim. 2015. *Tyranny of Science*. Polity Press.

Vale, T.R. 1988. Clearcut logging, vegetation dynamics, and human wisdom. *Geographical Review* 375–386. <https://doi.org/10.2307/215089>

Sources of the quotes. See Chapter 3, pages 32–46 in Shapin’s book *Never Pure* for full details.

1. Peter B. Medawar, Richard Lewontin (biologists)
2. Edward O. Wilson (biogeographer)
3. Jacob Bronowski (mathematician)
4. Warren Weaver (mathematician)
5. Richard Lewontin, Steven Rose (biologists)

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Graduate Student Representative Column

Clay Tucker, BSG Graduate Student Representative 2018–19



Hello BSG!

My preparations for the AAG seem to be more going more swimmingly than in days past. The new website and abstract gallery are much easier to navigate for organizers than before now. I'm excited to see all the sessions that are sponsored/affiliated with the BSG this year, and I hope to see many of you at those sessions!

Traditionally, the BSG Graduate Student Rep. has organized a panel that would be useful for upcoming and early career researchers. Instead, this year I have gathered a group of presenters for a special session titled "[Doing Fieldwork in Biogeography](#)." The intention of this session is to have a comfortable space for students to both present and ask questions about a part of research that I find increasingly important: fieldwork. Research can only be as good as its data, and in a world of technology, students are often reluctant to go to the field, and/or they cannot seem to grasp all of the technological advancements of modern fieldwork. Dr. Chris Underwood will be discussing advances to multi-proxy fire reconstructions; Becky Brice will show us new uses for digital field data collection; Ryley Harris will demonstrate remote-sensing techniques for characterizing forest-grass ecotones; and I will share some key tips on performing tree-ring research in coastal areas.

Lastly, a shameless plug for myself: In the realm of biogeography, I will be giving a TED Talk about tree-ring science in March here at Louisiana State University's [TEDxLSU](#). I'm excited to share our discipline of biogeography with the world. Stay tuned for a video of the event in the future, and take a look at all the past [TED talks about our environment](#)!

Geaux Tigers!
Clay Tucker
ctucke8@lsu.edu

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BSG Board Elections

Nina Hewitt, BSG Board Member 2018–20 and Elections Organizer

Call for Nominations: 2019 BSG Board Elections

The Biogeography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers invites nominations for elected positions to the BSG leadership. During this election cycle, we will elect a new BSG chair to take over from Tony Stallins and two board members to take the place of Daehyun Kim and Grant Harley. Service as chair and board members is for two years. Please send nominations for any of these three positions to nina.hewitt@ubc.ca no later than 22 February 2019. Also, please specify the position of interest for each nomination.

Voting will take place between 26 February and 26 March 2019. Election results will be announced at our annual BSG specialty group board meeting in Washington, DC during the AAG Annual Meeting.

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Awards and Competitions



James J. Parsons Award for Distinguished Career in Biogeography & Henry Cowles Award for Excellence in Publication in Biogeography

Grant Harley, BSG Board Member 2017–19 and Awards Organizer

The James J. Parsons Award, named in honor of long-time University of California-Berkeley professor James J. Parsons, was created in 1998 to recognize outstanding lifetime achievements in the field of biogeography. Criteria used to assess a candidate's merit for this award include a distinguished research career, remarkable dedication to the development of undergraduate and graduate students in biogeography, and outstanding service to the discipline. Application packets for the Parsons Award should include 1) a formal nomination letter and 2) at least two supporting letters. Parsons Award nominations should be submitted as a single packet.

The Henry Cowles Award was established in 1998 to honor Henry Cowles, who published the first paper to appear in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*: “The causes of vegetation cycles” (1911). The award recognizes the best biogeographical paper or book of the year. Applications for the Cowles Award should include the name of the person(s) you are nominating along with the citation for the paper or book that was published in 2018.

Previous award winners are listed on the BSG homepage.

Please submit Cowles nominations and Parsons applications either via postal or electronic mail to:

Grant Harley
gharley@uidaho.edu
University of Idaho
Department of Geography
875 Perimeter Drive, MS 3021
Moscow, Idaho 83843-3021



Student Presentation Awards

Christy Briles, BSG Board Member 2018–20 and Student Presentation Awards Coordinator

Hello BSG members,

We are now taking applications for the 2019 student presentation competition to be held at the AAG annual meeting in Washington, DC. The annual meeting is an opportunity to showcase your research and discuss your findings with other experts in your field. By taking part in the student presentation competition you not only get to add this accomplishment to your CV, but also get valuable input from fellow biogeographers on your work.

The student presentation competition consists of two awards:

- Best undergraduate or master's student presentation, and
- Best Ph.D. student presentation.

This competition is open to all undergraduate and graduate students. Faculty please encourage your students to apply!

You must be the primary author and presenter of the paper or poster. Individuals who received their degree one year prior are also eligible. If you would like to participate in the competition, please email a copy of your abstract and a completed application form (available at www.biogeographer.org) to christy.briles@ucdenver.edu.

The deadline for submissions is Friday, 15 February 2019.

Also, if you are available to judge the presentations, please let me know days and times you can participate via email by March 1, 2019. Thank you!

Best,

Christy Briles



Student Research Grant Competition

Daehyun Kim, BSG Board Member 2017–19 and Student Research Grant Coordinator

2019 Student Research Grant Competition

The goal of the Biogeography Specialty Group (BSG) Graduate Student Research Grant competition is to provide partial support for graduate students to conduct quality biogeographic research projects for their master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. The awards are competitive, and proposals are judged individually on the basis of: (1) scientific merit of the project, including biogeographic significance of the research question, adequacy and quality of the methods, and originality of the research; (2) organization and clarity of the proposal; and, (3) qualifications of the student to conduct the proposed work.

Each applicant must be a student member of both the AAG and BSG, and the proposed project should be part of her/his thesis or dissertation research. Students may join the AAG and BSG now and become eligible for the grants competition if not already a student member.

Normally, awards are made to one master's student for \$500 and one doctoral student for \$1000 each year, but an additional award may be made if the proposals are exceptional and funds are available. A committee of four to six biogeographers from different institutions will evaluate the proposals. Applications must be emailed by March 1, 2019 to Dr. Daehyun Kim at biogeokim@snu.ac.kr

Proposal Instructions

Name all application files with your last name first. Each applicant should submit a proposal according to the following format:

1. **Cover sheet.** Please complete and submit the application form on the next page. The form must include the name of student's advisor and email address in order to certify that the information is correct. You should type the information directly into the cover sheet, and then simply append the following items to the end of this document.
2. **Project description.** This section should contain a clear description of the research objectives, the expected significance, and the research methodology. The text should not exceed two single-spaced pages. Cite only the most relevant publications.
3. **List of cited references.**
4. **Itemized budget.** No salaries or indirect costs are allowed, only direct costs such as travel expenses and essential field supplies. The awards are usually \$1000 for doctoral work and \$500 for master's work.
5. **Budget justification.**

6. One-page abbreviated curriculum vitae. In the CV, please briefly list past and current funding (both the agency and the dollar amount) that has supported this proposed research. Awards given by the BSG are partially based on demonstration of need for BSG funding. Failure to disclose your past and current funding (including funding that may have arrived during this competition) for this research could result in disqualification from this competition.

Cover Sheet

Date:

Name of Applicant:

Department:

University:

Mailing Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

The proposed study is for: Master's Degree Doctoral Degree

Anticipated date of graduation:

Title of project:

Amount requested:

I am a student member of both the AAG and BSG: Yes No

Signature of Applicant:
(please type)

Proof of student eligibility:

I certify that the applicant is currently a graduate student under my supervision and that the proposed project is part of her/his thesis research.

Signature of Advisor (please type):

E-mail address so that we may confirm your signature on this proposal:

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Recent Publications

Articles:

1. Barefoot, C. R., K. G. Willson, J. L. Hart, C. J. Schweitzer, and D. C. Dey. 2019. Effects of thinning and prescribed fire frequency on ground flora in mixed *Pinus*-hardwood stands. *Forest Ecology and Management* 432:729–740.
2. Bekker, M.F., D.P. Metcalf, and G.L. Harley. 2018. Hillslope and hydrologic processes explain spatial variation in tree-ring responses to the 1983 Borah Peak, Idaho earthquake. *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms* 43: 3074–3085. <https://doi.org/10.1002/esp.4470>
3. Ford, S. A., J. S. Kleinman, and J. L. Hart. 2018. Effects of wind disturbance and salvage harvesting on macrofungal communities in a *Pinus* woodland. *Forest Ecology and Management* 407: 31–46.
4. Goode, J. D., C. R. Barefoot, J. L. Hart, and D. C. Dey. 2018. Disturbance history, species diversity, and structural complexity of a temperate deciduous forest. *Journal of Forestry Research* DOI: [10.1007/s11676-018-0746-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11676-018-0746-y).
5. Hart, J. L. and J. S. Kleinman. 2018. What are intermediate-severity forest disturbances and why are they important? *Forests* 9: 579
6. Hewitt, N., G.R. Larocque, D. Greene, and M. Kellman. 2018. A model of hardwood tree colonization among forest fragments: predicting migration across human-dominated landscapes. *Écoscience* DOI: [10.1080/11956860.2018.1515596](https://doi.org/10.1080/11956860.2018.1515596).
7. Kim, D. 2018. Characterizing the pathway and rate of salt marsh vegetation dynamics: a multivariate approach. *Estuaries and Coasts* 41:1370–1380.
8. Kleinman, J. S. and J. L. Hart. 2018. Vascular flora of longleaf pine woodlands after wind disturbance and salvage harvesting in the Alabama Fall Line Hills. *Castanea* 83: 183–195.
9. Klimaszewski-Patterson, A., P.J. Weisberg, S. Mensing, R.M. Scheller, A.D. Syphard. 2018. Using paleolandscape modeling to investigate the influence of Native American-set fires on pre-Columbian forests in the southern Sierra Nevada, California, U.S.A. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*. DOI: [10.1080/24694452.2018.1470922](https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2018.1470922).
10. Walsh, M.K., H.J. Duke, and K.C. Haydon. 2018. Toward a better understanding of climate and human impacts on late Holocene fire regimes in the Pacific Northwest, USA. *Progress in Physical Geography* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309133318783144>
11. Willson, K. G., C. R. Barefoot, J. L. Hart, C. J. Schweitzer, and D. C. Dey. 2018. Temporal patterns of ground flora response to fire in thinned *Pinus-Quercus* stands. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research* 48: 1171–1183.

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News

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2019 Annual Meeting of the AAG, Washington, D.C.

The Annual Meeting of the American Association of Geographers is one of the largest geographic conferences in the world. Our next meeting, 3–7 April 2019, will be held in Washington, D.C., at the Marriott Wardman Park and the Omni Shoreham in the Woodley Park neighborhood of Washington, D.C. We hope to see you there! Please see the AAG Annual Meeting Webpage for more information: <http://www.aag.org/cs/annualmeeting>

Notes

Miscellaneous:

1. Back issues of *The Biogeographer* are posted on the BSG website (www.biogeographer.org).
2. Please consider adding the **BSG domain** to your favorite links and promote it on your homepage, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. (www.biogeographer.org).
3. The BSG Facebook page is managed by Arvind Bhuta and is available here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/141655989204924/>
4. Tony Stallins is presently managing the original BSG website (www.biogeographer.org). A motion was passed during the 2018 BSG Business Meeting to nominate Arvind Bhuta as the new BSG Webmaster. During the transition, the BSG has a second Website (<https://sites.google.com/view/biogeographer/home>). If you have links (or other materials), send up to 2–3 pages to Arvind, including syllabi for biogeography courses. You can contact him at (biogeographer.aag@gmail.com).
5. Communications among BSG members is usually by email through the AAG's discussion forum. For instructions to access and post messages on the BSG forum, login to the AAG website (www.aag.org), then:

Select "Memberships"
Select "Specialty Groups"
Scroll down to Biogeography and select "learn more"

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Submission Guidelines

Chris Underwood, Editor, *The Biogeographer*

Submissions to *The Biogeographer* should be sent directly to the editor (underwoodc@uwplatt.edu) as email attachments in Word format. Please spell-check and proofread your submissions carefully. Submissions should be concise and written in a style consistent with the rest of the newsletter.

Notes and News Items

Notes are intended to convey topical information of interest to the BSG community. *Notes* topics may include: (1) **Research Notes** – new projects and progress reports or general research-related ideas and issues; (2) **Field Notes** – recent field work or field trips or retellings of classic tales from the field; (3) **Course Notes** – news, announcements, or articles related to teaching biogeography or pedagogical issues affecting the discipline; (4) **Book Notes** – book reviews or announcements; and/or (5) **Miscellaneous Notes** – anything that doesn't fit in any of the other categories.

News items can be personal, departmental, institutional, or any other biogeography-related happenings that have occurred since the last edition of *The Biogeographer*. These can be self-authored items or press releases.

Recent Publications

Only publications that have actually appeared in print or online will be listed; please do not submit in-press items until you have page numbers or a permanent URL.

Kind regards,

Chris

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