

# UC Santa Cruz

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**Authors**

Bailey, Adrian J  
Breines, Markus  
Emmerson, Phil  
et al.

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**EDITORIAL****Care for *Transactions*****Abstract**

In this editorial we ask key questions about what it means to publish ‘a journal’ in a world of publishing which is driven by individual article metrics and online access. Seeing the value of journals as venues for intellectual debate, we therefore set out a renewed vision as to how the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* can provide space for more collective and collaborative approaches to geographical debate. This approach revolves around the idea of ‘transactions’ itself and creating spaces in the journal for more commentary, debate and dialogue, alongside continuing to publish landmark papers.

The role of journals in Geography is in flux. The days when colleagues picked up a new issue and flicked through all the articles inside are largely behind us. Readers tend now to find particular papers through a vast variety of other ways. Most journals still have a reputational stake in the overall quality of the collected work they publish, but, meanwhile, the role of journals in the discipline today is raising new questions. To what extent do they exist beyond being a peer review and publication venue for individual papers? How can they evolve into active scholarly platforms that curate and generate key debates, interventions and advances? And can a major journal with a longstanding disciplinary reputation—such as *Transactions*—more deliberately, and, as we want to suggest with this editorial, care-fully continue to provide a space for enabling collective thought, and engagement?

In exploring these questions as editors of *Transactions* (and by including the members of our new [Editorial Advisory Board](#)), we have come to see that what we are asking, at root, is what it means to care for a journal as an intellectual space. There are many ways in which this might occur. For us, part of the answer lies with ‘transactions’ itself.

*Transactions* as a journal has always served as a window into the state of the discipline, showcasing some of the best scholarship in Geography. The term ‘transactions’, which has historically been attached to all kinds of journals, positioned the journal as a disseminating tool for conference proceedings. A ‘transaction’ is also, of course, in its more familiar contemporary rendering, an adjective used to describe an instrumental activity of service provision, or commoditised market exchange.

But we can think of transactions differently, with much more attention to what feminist and anti-racist geographers have highlighted in terms of care and the diverse economies and environments of care work (Bond et al., 2020; Diprose, 2020; McDowell, 2004; Middleton & Samanani, 2021; Naylor & Thayer, 2022; Okoye, 2021; Power & Williams, 2020; Raghuram et al., 2009; Smith, 2005)? We evoke ‘care’ here, therefore, as more than just the work of caretaking, which is what editing can be. Instead, we have in mind care as ‘care-full’ work that is nurturing, enabling and attuned to our interdependencies. Specifically, we want to revitalise *Transactions* as a venue for interactive and dialogic exploration based on the back-and-forth of commentary and exchange that contributes to the collective identification of evidence, theory and arguments that truly matter as landmarking contributions to Geography. With this editorial, we call for more dialogue and commentary in the journal to support more caring kinds of scholarly transactions.

This includes being care-*full* about care itself. As journal editors we have sought to be mindful about the unevenness of the care burdens faced by authors and reviewers through the peer review process at the same time as we have sought to surface critical geographical work that highlights how such inequalities have been exacerbated across multiple care geographies impacted by austerity and the COVID pandemic (Clarke & Barnett, 2022; Gayle, 2020; Herrick et al., 2022; Mould et al., 2022; Reid, 2022; Schliehe et al., 2022; Sparke & Anguelov, 2020).

Another concern with care is that it can easily become caught up with the controlling aspects of biopolitics. In an academic journal context, it is crucial to be reflective about all the associated power-knowledge relations of editing papers, moderating reviews, appraising citational authority, and deciding on what qualifies as a ‘landmark paper’. Like actual landmarks in the geographical landscape, what qualifies as a landmark paper is ultimately a matter of collective identification, an interactive—indeed, transactional—process that reflects shared experiences of navigation through landscapes. It emerges over time through an interdependent process of community recognition of something ultimately deemed legible as a landmark. And precisely because this interdependent process is pervaded by power relations, we want to suggest that these can be more ethically engaged, thematised and deliberated through *Care for Transactions*.

To this end we believe that the journal would greatly benefit from adding publications to our traditional mix of research articles that feature more direct transactions across three areas of intellectual exchange: (i) topical, (ii) theoretical and (iii) methodological. These new kinds of publication for the journal might take any number of forms. Examples here include: debates composed of short pieces around a core topic, question or method; responses to particular articles; and standalone commentaries that reflect on the state of a particular area of geographical thought and research, or which provoke new questions or ways of seeing a key idea or concept, or which take on a key topical debate, or which argue for new methodological approaches, and so on.

We will invite authors to engage in these debates and responses as and when it seems feasible during the review process of regular submissions, but we also invite enquiry letters to the journal from people interested in contributing in one of these less traditional formats. Please write directly to our managing editor Phil Emmerson with such enquiries using his Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) address ([journals@rgs.org](mailto:journals@rgs.org)). Across these debate and exchange publications as well as our traditional articles, we want to maximise efforts to include traditionally peripheralised voices and viewpoints on Geography, including not least of all from the global South and Indigenous communities of knowledge-making. We want to do so in ways that also provide publication opportunities for members of the *Transactions* community who contribute behind the scenes as reviewers, providing huge service, but rarely with public recognition for their work except in acknowledgements to ‘the anonymous reviewers’ at the end of the articles they have reviewed.

Our plan is to be closely involved ourselves as editors in developing these new transactions in *Transactions*, seizing opportunities wherever we see them for facilitating more commentary, more debate and more reflection in, through and on exchange in the journal. One way in which we will do this is through engaging directly with reviewers, encouraging them to transform what are so often care-full words of engagement, critique, suggestion and disagreement, into written commentaries that might enable these transactions to be further engaged in public. We hope this will further enrich not only the journal, but also the discipline. We similarly encourage others who may have not have been involved in review, but who also feel they have a perspective to add, to do so through written commentary in the pages of the journal.

Our editorial team now includes an active advisory board of scholars at earlier stages in their academic careers. They bring a great diversity of perspectives on important thematic topics, debates and controversies across the breadth of the discipline. Working with them here, we want to point now to three examples of the sorts of opportunities for exploration and dialogical exchange that we hope to incorporate more fully into the journal going forward. These are just illustrations and are offered with a view to inspiring many other topics for exchange in the journal rather than as some sort of revisionist canon.

Political ecology, for instance, presents multiple opportunities for exchange between disciplines, between the global North and South, and between academia and activism. Taken broadly, it approaches natures as produced by political, economic, historical and cultural processes, and has proved remarkable in its depth and growing breadth (e.g., Bickerstaff, 2022; Bond et al., 2020; Bryant & Goodman, 2004; Connolly, 2020; Cseke, 2022; Davies, 2021; Faria et al., 2021; Gandy, 2022; Hope, 2021; Staddon, 2009). As these cited articles illustrate, *Transactions* already provides space to develop political-ecological scholarship in ways that simultaneously extend and shift thinking and research in Geography. But there remains scope in recent turns to materiality and infrastructure that open up new arenas for political ecology, including by identifying non-human political actors and intergenerational ethical quandaries, whilst seeding fertile geographical grounds for debates on hot topics ranging from the Anthropocene and climate crisis to the socio-natures of conservation, geoengineering, pollution, resilience, sustainability, techno-solutionism, toxic landscapes and zoonotic disease. Nurturing such debate within the discipline, we also seek to assist geographers in reaching audiences beyond Geography as well. We hope in this way to support work on what can be done in terms of reparations and other responses to the vulnerabilities created by climate crisis through praxis, partnership and co-production. And, along the way, and in the spirit of care-full transactions, we think new political ecology studies can also contribute more self-reflection on the traditional whiteness, masculinism and coloniality of geography.

A second example of an area where we see many opportunities relates to the theme of ‘Geography in the World’. It is especially promising, we think, to connect this theme with the decolonial and global South provocations of world-

ing geography in ways that challenge the elevation of English and whiteness within (and beyond) the ‘Institute of British Geographers’ (Esson et al., 2017; Jazeel, 2017; Jazeel et al., 2022; McFarlane, 2022; Müller, 2021). We welcome in the same spirit more reflections from geographers working in (and across) different national contexts around the world, including the contexts of First Nations and Indigenous struggles to decolonise (Daigle & Ramirez, 2019; Nishiyama, 2022; Woods, 2020). Another indexical example of this worlding work has been the recent upsurge of interest in Latin American geographies, exemplified by the new Research Group of the RGS and associated articles we have recently published from and about the region (e.g., Davies, 2021; De Lira, 2022; Ferretti & Viotto Pedrosa, 2018; Halvorsen, 2020; Hope, 2021; Krafft et al., 2019; Novaes & Lamego, 2022). This opens up opportunities for two-way dialogue across linguistic and epistemological boundaries. A wealth of geographical ideas, knowledges, methods and experiences emanating from Latin America and the Caribbean have started to make a real impact on ‘core’ debates and concepts (e.g., Gahman & Thongs, 2020; Haesbaert & Mason-Deese, 2020; Uzor, 2020; Zavala Guillen, 2022; Zaragocin & Caretta, 2021). We do not think that interest in Latin American and Caribbean geographies should be constrained to scholars with an interest in the regions. Our recent turn towards geographies in the world is a start, but much more work is needed to engage with Latin American and other non-Anglophone geographies (see Esson et al., 2021; Jones, 2022; Joronen, 2021; Nayak, 2017). As we explore possible strategies for opening greater dialogue, we therefore invite the TIBG community to care for the work involved in translating and working across different languages and canonical literatures.

A third area for further engagement relates to digital geographies. These include concern for how the digital is remapping human and non-human relations as well as digital maps themselves, with a growing interest in digital natures, digital ecologies, digital cities, digital geopolitics and even digital territory (Datta, 2018; Morris, 2022; Prebble et al., 2021; Searle et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2020; Woods, 2021; Zook & Graham, 2018). While smart urbanism and associated forms of platform capitalism continue to highlight the interdependencies of code/space, scholarship on digital geographies is also documenting spatial inequities within these interdependencies at multiple scales and in particular places, ranging from the platforms of online education and debt relations to the embodied experience of tech-enabled home care (House-Peters et al., 2019; Reid, 2022; Roos-Breines et al., 2019; Sparke, 2017; Tan, 2022). Feminist arguments in these debates point to the contradictory possibilities of thriving otherwise and staying with the trouble of such digital spaces (McLean, 2020), and we think that a care-full *Transactions* can continue to stay with the trouble in a similar way as it adapts to the wider changes forced on journals and their editors by the online ecosystems for publishing in which we are now embedded.

As we outlined at the outset, it is the changes to journal publishing brought by the digital age that set the stage for this editorial in the first place. We hope in turn that our invitations here to seize the associated opportunities for more dialogical and care-full exchange in *Transactions* will resonate with geographers across various sub-fields, locations and traditions. And we further hope that the three examples of interest areas we have highlighted inspire more engagements and diversifications of debate both in the journal and in the discipline going forward. There are many additional themes we have recently foregrounded and on which we would like to publish more in order to expand such geographical debate. These include: Black Geographies (e.g., Hirsch & Jones, 2021); Humanitarian Geographies (e.g., Herrick et al., 2022; Mitchell, 2017; Pallister-Wilkins, 2022); Intellectual Geographies (Boyle et al., 2019); Migration Geographies (Ho & Ting, 2021); Muslim Neighbourhood Geographies (e.g., Boussalem, 2020; Gökariksel & Secor, 2022 & Zaman, 2020); Post-Humanist Geographies (e.g., Williams et al., 2019); Prison Geographies (e.g., Schliehe et al., 2022); and Queer Geographies (Andersson, 2022; Boussalem, 2020). All these topics could also be engaged with a view to illustrating how geographers are contributing simultaneously to important debates beyond the discipline. And there are obviously many other areas for engagement like this: ranging from materialist accounts of the mutations of actually existing neoliberalism (Peck & Theodore, 2019; Sparke & Williams, 2022; Sparke & Levy, 2022) to similarly ‘conjunctural’ contributions to interdisciplinary scholarship on topics as wide-ranging as anti-Blackness (Roy et al., 2020); bio-economies (Birch, 2019); care-navigation (Saharan et al., 2021); drones (Cheikhali, 2022; Lockhart et al., 2021); geopolitics (Paasche & Sidaway, 2021); global cities (Leitner & Sheppard, 2020); health education (Mitchell-Sparke et al., 2022); rentier capitalism (Christophers, 2022); vaccine apartheid (Sparke & Levy, 2022) and the Virocene (Fernando, 2020). We could go on listing other diverse opportunities for engagement here at length. But our point, surely, is clear. We are issuing an open appeal for help in nurturing more inclusive, interdependent and far-reaching debate in the journal. Please join us in this care for *Transactions*!

## KEYWORDS













care, geography, biopolitics, digital geographies, political ecology, worlding

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## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

No new data were created for this editorial.

Adrian J. Bailey<sup>1</sup>  
 Markus Breines<sup>2</sup>   
 Phil Emmerson<sup>3</sup>   
 James Esson<sup>4</sup>   
 Sam Halvorsen<sup>5</sup>   
 Jessica Chloe Hope<sup>6</sup>   
 Mikko Joronen<sup>7</sup>   
 Sin Yee Koh<sup>8</sup>   
 Sneha Krishnan<sup>9</sup>   
 Karen Lai<sup>10</sup>  
 Colin McFarlane<sup>10</sup>   
 Jessica McLean<sup>11</sup>   
 Louise Reid<sup>6</sup>   
 Matthew Sparke<sup>12</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Geography, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, Hong Kong*

<sup>2</sup>*Fafo, Oslo, Norway*

<sup>3</sup>*Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), London, UK*

<sup>4</sup>*Geography, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK*

<sup>5</sup>*Geography, Queen Mary University School of Geography, London, UK*

<sup>6</sup>*School of Geography & Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, UK*

<sup>7</sup>*Space and Political Agency Research Group, Faculty of Management, Tampereen Yliopisto, Tampere, Finland*

<sup>8</sup>*Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam*

<sup>9</sup>*School of Geography and the Environment and St John's College, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK*

<sup>10</sup>*Department of Geography, Durham University, Durham, UK*

<sup>11</sup>*School of Social Sciences, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia*

<sup>12</sup>*Department of Politics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California, USA*

## Correspondence

Matthew Sparke, Department of Politics, University of California Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California, USA.

Email: [msparke@ucsc.edu](mailto:msparke@ucsc.edu)

## ORCID

Markus Breines  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7570-9354>

Phil Emmerson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8103-2471>

James Esson  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7076-5119>

Sam Halvorsen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8215-6946>

Jessica Chloe Hope  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8726-8880>

Mikko Joronen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4051-2348>

Sin Yee Koh  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9350-1119>

Sneha Krishnan  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3351-0715>

Colin McFarlane  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9209-4494>

Jessica McLean  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0975-3925>

Louise Reid  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0577-1210>

Matthew Sparke  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7253-7681>



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