



Earth Writing

- Speaker:** Assoc Prof Simon Springer
Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, Canada
- Chair:** Dr Jamie Gillen, Department of Geography, NUS
- Date/Time:** Friday, 10 April 2015, 3.30pm – 5.00pm
- Place:** Earth Lab (AS2 02-03), Department of Geography, NUS

Abstract

Geography means earth writing, and so it is perhaps fitting that writing itself has become a primary intellectual battleground in contemporary geographical thought. This paper advocates for metaphorical earth writing, arguing that it unchains our geographical imaginations from the shackles of our disciplinary past by boldly embracing geopoetics. I hope to spark debate by promoting the un-disciplining of geography as a means to open up a theoretical space for voice, where a material space of emancipation might follow. The notion that our epistemological, ontological, and methodological choices are not apolitical decisions without consequence guides my inquiry. Accordingly I critique the accusation of esotericism as a narrative that reifies the false dichotomy between academia and society. Aversion to metaphor fails to recognize the epistemological challenge it raises and underestimates how jargon combats commonsense notions that reinforce hierarchical power relations. How we write the earth constitutes a political choice, where disciplining others into a singular way of knowing, being, and doing geography is an affront to the possibilities of space. When we make space for earth writing as a beautiful flourishing of geopoetics, we place the earth at the center of experience, releasing the light and energy of a more powerful geography.

About the Speaker

Simon Springer is an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria, Canada. Prior to this he worked at the University of Otago and the National University of Singapore. Simon's research agenda explores the political, social, and geographical exclusions that neoliberalization has engendered in post-transitional Cambodia, emphasizing the spatialities of violence and power. He cultivates a cutting edge approach to human geography through a theoretical edifice that foregrounds both poststructuralist critique and a radical revival of anarchist philosophy. Simon has published extensively in a number of top-ranking geography journals including *Progress in Human Geography*, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *Political Geography*, *Area*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Geoforum*, and *Antipode*. He is the author of *To Make the Colossus Tremble: Anarchist Geography and Spatial Emancipation* (University of Minnesota Press, 2015), *Violent Neoliberalism: Development, Discourse and Dispossession in Cambodia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), and *Cambodia's Neoliberal Order: Violence, Authoritarianism, and the Contestation of Public Space* (Routledge, 2010), and the co-editor of *The Handbook of Neoliberalism* (Routledge 2015) and *The Handbook of Contemporary Cambodia* (Routledge, 2015).

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