

President's Awards

Ivor Heijnen President's Award for Best Master's Thesis 2019

Nominated and cited by Emma Stewart and Roslyn Kerr, Lincoln University.

Citation

Thesis title: *From Place-Responsive to Place Constructive Outdoor Education: A Case Study of the Port Hills, Christchurch, New Zealand*

Ivor completed his Master of Social Science degree at Lincoln University in 2018, having studied on a part-time basis while working as Senior Lecturer in the Sustainability and Outdoor Education Programmes at Ara Institute of Canterbury University. While Ivor's degree is a masterate in 'Social Science', his thesis and research is located in the geographic literature, and specifically, in theories related to place. Reflecting both this area of professional practice and scholarly inquiry, it is his contribution to (a) advancing the application of place concepts in outdoor education; and (b) the development and implementation of novel research tools.

The aim of Ivor's research was to explore Christchurch's Port Hills as place for outdoor education and to understand the relationships between outdoor educator's sense of place for the Port Hills and their teaching practices. To this end, he developed a conceptual model to help situate the possible types of engagement with place within outdoor education, and to allow outdoor educators to critically assess their practice in relation to place. This level of conceptual framing is rarely seen at the Master's level, and is a genuine strength of Ivor's work. As one of his thesis examiners emphasised: *"the candidate was able to move from rich descriptions to something more reflective and theoretical. I think the candidate did a very good job presenting a strong final discussion that was appropriate for the research questions and (re)connect to the data and theory. I was pleased to see the development of a conceptual model, combined with honest reflections"*.

Ivor adopted the use of mobile 'walking interviews' in his study and we believe this to be one of the few studies in outdoor education to do so. Encouraged by the comments of one of his examiners, Ivor has submitted a conference paper based on his novel field work approach. As outlined by one of the examiners: *"one of the key strengths was the manner in which the voices of the participants emerged clearly. I think it was clear that the researcher had empathy not only with his topic, but also his participants. I look forward to reading more from this researcher. I am sure this work will be publishable in a high quality international journal"*.

Dr Andrew Neverman
President's Award for Best Doctoral Thesis 2019

Nominated and cited by Professor Ian Fuller and Professor Peter Kemp, Massey University.

Citation

Thesis title: *Quantifying bed stability: the missing tool for establishing mechanistic hydrological limits.*

Andrew Neverman's doctoral research has made a significant contribution to geographic knowledge nationally and internationally within the field of fluvial geomorphology, by tackling the vexing issue of understanding bedload movement in gravelly rivers. Andrew's research involved an original and innovative experimental design in a real gravel-bed river (as distinct from a flume). His truly original and novel approach genuinely developed our understanding of New Zealand's river environment, and indeed the way gravel bed rivers as a whole behave. Andrew's research has been the first to demonstrate in a field-context that the complex process of gravel movement on a river bed relates not only to stream energy, but also to the vertical movement of water within the gravel bed, which serves to buffer or expose the gravel bed to the main flow. Why this is important is because flushing flows, used to predict gravel movement and the turnover of the bed, essential for stream health in the removal of periphyton (algae), have been set at 3x the median flow, on the assumption that the energy of this flow is sufficient to move channel bed material and break up and disperse periphyton. Andrew's research demonstrates this formula is insufficient and that additional variables should be taken into account when setting hydrological limits as part of river management. As such, Andrew's research, although grounded in pure science and physical process, has a very applied focus for New Zealand river management. Andrew's research explored a number of tools and research approaches to deploy in better refining understanding of the gravel-bed river environment and management to prevent or limit periphyton accrual in our rivers.

Andrew's examiners, who included a world-leading authority on the discipline of applied river science, commented that Andrew's work was,

"at the forefront of research on the subject especially as it was undertaken on a large wandering gravel bed river with a coarse gravel substrate. The simultaneous measurement of head differences across the bed-water interface was novel and proved to be an important measure...critical to determining the onset of bedload transport and created scatter in velocity thresholds for movement – an index normally used to explain bedload movement. These measurements have enhanced our process understanding of bed particle entrainment in rivers. Overall the thesis has advanced river science.." (Overseas examiner)

"As a whole, the thesis makes an original contribution to the discipline; the extensive field campaign has yielded an interesting and valuable dataset, and...provides some new insights into bedload transport behaviour." (NZ examiner)

Andrew's thesis therefore provides a significant contribution to geographic knowledge both in New Zealand and internationally, which is being communicated at the highest level through a series of international journal articles. These include several papers in leading Journals in Physical Geography.

Dr Amba J. Sepie
President's Award for Best Doctoral Thesis 2019

Nominated and cited by Associate Professor Peyman Zawar-Reza and Dr Garth Cant, University of Canterbury.

Thesis title: *Tracing the Motherline: Earth Elders, Decolonising Worldview, and Planetary Futurity*.

Citation

Amba Sepie's thesis *Tracing the Motherline: Earth Elders, Decolonising Worldview, and Planetary Futurity* is a thesis like no other. Beginning with the words of Indigenous elders who have already called for global change in worldview for all humans, Sepie weaves together a thesis arguing that the future of our planet requires all of us – and Western humans in particular – to pay attention to Indigenous leadership. Learning from the wisdom that has already been collated, structured, and embodied through Indigenous ways of being is essential to moving beyond our current cultural obsession with technical knowledge and its implication that securing our planetary future requires only better technical management. It is here that Sepie's work speaks to the heart of the discipline of geography, when understood as a critical examination of the relationships between people and place. Her work critiques and then transcends the dichotomy inherent in people-place formulations by extending the domain of analysis to encompass more-than-human mythical beings and Earth herself, all interwoven in deep relationship with humans and ecologies. Geographers would do well to heed this reframing of what has often been called 'resource management'.

Examined by the US-based indigenous scholar Four Arrows Don Jacobs and Professor Robin Kearns (University of Auckland), Sepie's thesis is interdisciplinary and boundary-pushing yet was deeply appreciated by both examiners. Jacobs writes:

I have read this dissertation twice, both times with a degree of amazement I cannot recall in the readings of more than 100 that I have evaluated during my academic career. I am known for my critical assessment of research, carefully seeking sufficiently scholarly, logical flow, crisp writing and a thesis that addresses a gap in the literature. Looking at this work as in the domain of human geography and related worldview reflection, it was difficult for perhaps the first time in my career to find problems for which I could offer constructive criticism.

While Kearns writes:

This is a deeply scholarly thesis. I congratulate the author on the breadth of literature read, cited and synthesised as well as the boldness of scope and argument. When many PhD theses are only notionally philosophical, this thesis is consistently reflective and satisfying

to read. It is a work that engages with disparate and culturally diverse bodies of work in an assured and eloquent manner.

Sepie's work is perhaps best summed up in the five words that most impressed her New Zealand examiner, Robin Kearns, when she wrote: "I call for decolonising everything." This includes decolonising what we might expect a geography thesis to include as empirical data. Sepie argues that given that Indigenous 'Earth elders' are *already* writing, speaking and leading in the area of planetary futurity, the most respectful engagement for her thesis is to pay attention to what has already been said. Her careful scholarship does just that, finishing with an outline for different forms of pedagogical practice that might pass on the wisdom of the elders to the next generation via what Sepie has identified as 'motherlines'.

The thesis also extends the remit of work on geographies of care to encompass non-human others, thereby drawing a key aspect of indigenous scholarship into a field (the geographies of care) which has hitherto mostly attended to the social, albeit with some inclusion of the technical. It also offers a way of transcending the nature-culture dualism that the differs from the route initially and arguably still most commonly followed in Anglophone geography (in the work of people such as Sarah Whatmore, J.K. Gibson-Graham, Bruce Braun, and others since), which is via Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour and Science and Technology Studies (STS) more generally. This is an important response to criticisms from Indigenous geographers that recent trends in posthuman geography are not as new as they appear to be (see for example, Larsen and Johnston 2017), and decolonising geography should include recognising the intellectual contributions of Indigenous thinkers from both within and outside the discipline of geography.

This thesis takes the best insights from academic geography and it makes an outstanding contribution to what could be described as 'more than geography', and 'more than academic' audience. Sepie's thesis has already begun to influence her peers and scholars around the world. It has already been downloaded more than 250 times on two platforms, with over 1000 online reads (see Research Gate and Academia.edu for more). With four major peer-reviewed publications having emerged from Sepie's thesis work during the course of her enrolment, we look forward to seeing where she goes next with her scholarly endeavours.

Dr Gail Yvonne Adams-Hutcheson
President's Award for Emerging Researcher in Geography 2019

Nominated and cited by Professor Robyn Longhurst, and Dr Colin McLeay, University of Waikato.

Citation

Since completing a PhD at the University of Waikato in 2014, Gail Adams-Hutcheson has quickly established herself as one of the leading new voices in geographies of emotion, affect and mobilities. Gail's research is breaking new ground in geographical approaches to emotion and

affect by connecting people's lived and deeply felt experiences to the development of geographical theories.

Gail is employed as a Teaching Fellow (University of Waikato) and a Postdoctoral Researcher on the Resilience to Nature's Challenge Project. This research, and Gail's collaborations with national and international leaders in her fields of study, are gaining significant traction through publication in leading geography journals. Gail is also a generous contributor to scholarly networks (Mobilities Study Group, Women, Gender and Geography Research Network and Study Group) and has taken leadership roles the NZGS Early Career Network, the NZGS Waikato Branch, and the New Zealand Federation of University Women, as well as in initiatives within the University of Waikato. These roles involve opportunities to mentor other scholars and Gail is supporting graduate students to excel through successful supervision and co-publication.

Gail is a very worthy recipient for the Emerging Researcher Award and is strongly positioned to be a future leader of geographical research in Aotearoa.

Dr Marc Tadaki
President's Award for Emerging Researcher in Geography 2019

Nominated and cited by Associate Professor Nick Lewis and Dr Karen Fisher, University of Auckland.

Citation

Marc Tadaki is an exemplary early career geographer - a top-tier international researcher, a scholar with considerable local impact, and a tireless institutional actor. His work is published in top journals and is widely cited in local debates and the international literature. His approach to geographical research as well as his research findings have been referenced as exemplars in extended discussions in Keynote addresses at conferences of the NZGS, IAG and the AAG. As a graduate student he co-edited special issues of the NZG and the Canadian Geographer, and became a prominent figure in establishing and securing a significant new trajectory in Physical Geography (one that offers the promise of a platform for a post-modern Geography across the human-physical and theoretical-applied divides). As a Masters graduate of an NZ department he earned a prestigious Canadian Vanier Scholarship, completing his PHD at UBC under the guidance of two of Geography's most senior figures.

As a graduate student at UoA, Marc led two national, discipline-building projects centred on his own research: the building of a national postgraduate student network and the revitalisation of cross-discipline research and scholarship. He led the postgraduate network within NZGS. Significantly, he use this network as a platform not just to advance student interests and concerns, but to add energy and intellect to crucial debates about the discipline's future in NZ (consistently prodding more established disciplinary leaders out of their complacency). He has organised multiple sessions at disciplinary conferences the IAG, CAG, AAG, NZGS. At the same time, he

worked with others at other universities, CRIs and government agencies to reconnect academic Geography to more applied streams of research. Here he has shown the discipline what needs to be done as a collective project. All this has been achieved with a deep commitment to discipline and collective action, a determination to point out and lead new ways forward, and the healthy impatience that marks the best of early career researchers. Marc is fundamentally committed to research in and on NZ, and to use this research to build better national futures and new international knowledge trajectories. Now back in New Zealand as a postdoc at a non-university research organisation, Marc continues to trail blaze as a socio-ecological geographer tackling some of the nation's most pressing problems, while continuing to theorise about the nature and value of socio-ecological knowledge. Marc's record is unparalleled for an early career researcher anywhere, and he has done this as a graduate of our programmes.

Dr Amanda Thomas
President's Award for Emerging Researcher in Geography 2019

Nominated and cited by Associate Professor Warwick Murray, Victoria University of Wellington.

Citation

Dr Amanda Thomas has made outstanding advances in her research and scholarship in a brief time. She is becoming an authority in her research area and has demonstrated this with a growing number of top-level publications in the very highest ranked scholarly journals, contributions to conferences and engagement with the wider community. This includes her work as convenor of the Geography, Environment and Development seminar series and her work organising the ground-breaking activist/academia conferences. Her role in *Counterfutures* journal illustrates her commitment to scholarly advance and the social application of her work. Indeed in this latter regard she is exemplary.

Amanda has made important contributions in terms of undergraduate teaching in Geography. She is a well-prepared and effective lecturer, and I have witnessed the clarity and creativity with which she delivers. Her students give her outstanding feedback as a consequence. The content of her classes is highly innovative and she is pushing back boundaries in our subject. She likes to bring students along with her and one of her great strengths is that she seeks to learn herself. She is kind and considerate to her students, and yet offers full and frank feedback, and she has taken on many supervisions at an early stage in her career. Overall, she puts the students first and is an educator with a high level of ability and integrity.

Amanda contributes consistently and with commitment to her university and the broader community. Indeed her work is founded on that connection in many ways. She has given much time to the New Zealand Geographical Society as one of the founding postgraduate network members and latterly as an active member of the Wellington branch, and at times as acting President of that branch. In some ways she is leading, together with others, a rejuvenation of the society which will all benefit from. Dr Amanda Thomas richly deserves the recognition this award will grant her and I have little doubt she will use it to further our subject in progressive ways.

Marcela Palomino-Schalscha
President's Award for Research Collaboration 2019

Nominated and cited by Professor John Overton and Professor Rewi Newnham, Dr Amanda Thomas, Victoria University of Wellington; (supported by Associate Professor Sara Kindon, Professor Julie Cupples, and Katia Guilloff).

Citation

Marcela has drawn highly productive collaborative links between Latin America and Aotearoa New Zealand, and across academia, art communities and the public. Marcela embodies a collaborative ethic throughout every aspect of her mahi. One strand of Marcela's work has focused on facilitating conversations connecting knowledges across space. In 2016, Marcela received an *Antipode* Foundation Scholar-Activist Award that enabled her to bring Mapuche representatives to Aotearoa to foster links with Māori tourism and education initiatives. This forged spaces of solidarity across Indigenous communities, and centred Indigenous knowledge and practice. Marcela also co-edited *The Routledge Handbook of Latin American Development* with Julie Cupples and Manuel Prieto. This work demonstrates the way her collaborative ethic flows into interpersonal relationships – Julie described how Marcela is a “wonderful collaborator”, and the book as “more diverse and quite distinct from existing texts thanks to Marcela's contribution”.

Another strand has focused on art praxis as a mode of co-creation and solidarity, evident in the development of the Newtown mural and her collaborative work with arpilleras (political tapestries). Marcela spent many weekends making arpilleras, and carefully stitching relationships and sharing experiences with migrant and refugee background women. The arpilleras work forms the basis of multiple international presentations and two book chapters in preparation –a Sage Handbook of Participatory Research, and a new collection on Participatory Action Research. One of her collaborators, Katia Guilloff, writes - “The projects she has organised have focused on strengthening a sense of belonging for Latin American immigrants who have chosen Aotearoa as their home.” Because of how she works, and the work she chooses to do, Marcela is an enormously respected colleague, collaborator, organiser and friend. She acts with integrity, thoughtfulness and always with a careful eye to create spaces for justice and care.

Professor Emeritus Harvey Perkins and Dr Mike Mackay (AgResearch)
President's Award for Research Collaboration 2019

Nominated and cited by Dr Karen Johnston and Dr Sarah Edwards, Canterbury Branch.

Professor Emeritus Harvey Perkins and Dr Mike Mackay have had a fruitful research collaboration that began during Mike's time as a Master's student at Lincoln University, and has gone on to span 12 years and involve many other Geographers. Their style of working is an inclusive one which necessarily involves many additional hours over and above research, such as coordination, cajoling and inspiring everyone with whom they work. They have together refined a system that enables successful collaborative research with important geographical contributions over a varied research agenda.

Their working relationship has been hugely prolific as evidenced by their joint publications which total 44 journal articles, conference proceedings and presentations. They are currently co-Principal Investigators in the Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities, National Science Challenge. The Midway Review of the National Science Challenges conducted by MBIE noted that "BBHTC has made a step change by bringing together previously disjointed researchers into a collaborative, multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional research programme that is well-connected to stakeholders, communities and end-users." Harvey and Mike are at the forefront of this collaboration.

Looking to the future, it is clear that Mike will take the lead in continuing the collaborative research agenda he and Harvey have established. In 2019 Mike was appointed as the head of Lincoln University's first Centre of Excellence: Sustainable Tourism for Regions, Communities and Landscapes. This is a multi-disciplinary centre designed to access expertise from across the university with a focus on sustainable tourism. Mike will also extend his leadership role in the Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities National Science Challenge, where he is currently the Facilitation Lead for Phase II: "Thriving Regions". This research will be funded for a further 5 years and builds on both Mike and Harvey's long-standing and highly productive research collaboration.