Cultural-Historical Geographies of the Archive: Fragments, Objects and Ghosts

Sarah Mills, Department of Geography, Loughborough University

Abstract

This article reviews the increasingly diverse ways in which geographers are engaging with archives. Whilst traditionally associated with historical geography, cultural-historical geographers have recently 'animated' the archive and its collections of fragments, objects and ghosts. Through this article, I provide an overview of the central characteristics of work in this field, as well as considering the discipline's wider relationship with archival material. Overall, I reflect on the key challenges for geographers in animating and 'bringing to life' the archive — and by extension — the past.

Introduction

In their final instalment of a 2010 progress report on qualitative methods, Claire Dwyer and Gail Davies discuss work by cultural-historical geographers that has 'animated' the archive, seeking "to bring the material and documentary properties of archives into play" (2010, p. 89). Here, I focus exclusively on these engagements and experimentations as part of a review of the 'cultural-historical geographies of the archive'. In doing so, this paper echoes Hayden Lorimer's commentary in his excellent chapter on archival research — 'Caught in the Nick of Time' — that "geography is enjoying a fine spell of experimentation in form and tone where fragmentary data is being turned towards more imaginative styles of composition and expression" (2009, p. 267). As there is a useful and by now well-rehearsed body of methodological literature on the philosophies underlying archival research and the process of 'doing' historical geography fieldwork (Baker 1997; Baker & Billinge 1982; Black 2003; Hannam 2002; Ogborn 2003a, 2003b), this article does not specifically include practical fieldwork advice (although it does reflect on 'practising the archive' and 'archival encounters', see Gagen et al. 2007). Rather, the focus here is to map out the 'imaginative styles' of archival research that Lorimer identifies, as part of a wider argument about the increasingly diverse ways that cultural and historical geographers are engaging with 'the archive' and its fragments, materials and ghosts.

Archives have always offered researchers an opportunity to collect and analyse historical data on a diverse array of topics across a range of time-periods. However, in recent years 'the archive' has been

variously re-defined, its material re-imagined and its inhabitants resurrected. This is due, in part, to broader theoretical and methodological shifts in contemporary human geography. As Gagen et al. (2007) note, "recent attempts to *enliven* historical geographical enquiry have been characterised by a more creative and inclusive engagement with a wide range of sources. In this respect, it is obvious that the 'cultural turn' and poststructuralist criticism more broadly have played a key role in the development of new methodological vocabularies among new generations of historical and cultural geographers" (2007, p. 2; on the 'cultural turn' and 'new cultural geography', see Barnett 1998, Cresswell 2010). It is these more creative, enlivened and imaginative geographies of the archive that I would define as 'animating' the archive. In one sense, the review foregrounds this more performative direction of recent work, but I would also contend that for much of this work there is an important political dimension, which this review also highlights. Overall, this paper makes two central contributions to current academic debates and literature in relation to archives and methodology in human geography.

First, as already hinted, it builds on Dwyer and Davies' 2010 acknowledgment that the archive has recently been 'animated'. I seek to expand their discussion and provide an introduction to these animations for those less familiar with archival methods, positioning this review as part of a broader move in the methodological literature from "archive-as-source to archive-as-subject" that considers "the practices of collecting, classifying, ordering, display and reuse" (Ashmore et al. 2012, p. 82) through a discussion of archival *fragments, objects* and *ghosts*. In doing so, I argue that being creative with archives opens up a number of possibilities for geographers, as well as potential collaborations between cultural-historical geographers, other researchers and practitioners. Throughout the paper, I use the term 'animated' to cover a range of creatively engaged and enlivened archival practices that I believe has defined this recent research – its approach to reading the archive, the materials used to 'bring the past to life', and the relationships and responsibilities of 'playing' with the archival record. Not only does this research try to address methodological challenges of historical fieldwork, but I reflect towards the end of the paper on how new types of 'animations' and technologies will inevitably shape archival research in the future.

Second, it appears that there is an appetite and need to critically reflect on method more broadly within cultural geography at this very moment. In their recent *Cultural Geographies* article on teaching and scholarship as part of a series of reflections on Peter Jackson's (1989) *Maps of Meaning*, Dydia DeLyser and Bethany Rogers (2010) discuss methods and the 'new' cultural geography. Here, they argue that methodological concerns have often been secondary to theoretical advancements in the sub-discipline

(see also Lorimer 2009; Simpson 2012) and that as we move forward "it will be essential to be more articulate and openly explicit in print about our methods and methodologies" (DeLyser & Rogers 2010, p. 186). DeLyser and Rogers stated that between 2000-2007, "only 15 percent of the articles in *Cultural Geographies* discussed methods and only 1 percent of the articles over the seven-year span included a separate 'methods' or 'methodology' section" (2010, p. 187). It therefore seems pertinent to position this review as part of a wider critical engagement on method within cultural geography (and in the discipline more broadly) and the various ways in which geographers are utilising historical material. Furthermore, disciplinary identities of cultural-historical/historical-cultural geographers are becoming more widely adopted, illustrating how connections and cross-sub-disciplinary identities have fostered (in part) these recent 'archival animations'. Whilst it goes beyond the remit of the paper to explore these wider disciplinary shifts, it could be suggested that the boundaries between cultural and historical geography are perhaps more fluid than ever (see Wylie 2010 on the 'cultural' and 'cultural-historical' identifiers used by geographers; see also Griffin & Evans 2008). Finally, archival methods have the potential for even wider connections and opportunities across geography as a whole, and beyond. This paper discusses archival collaborations with practitioners and artists, but it is also important to highlight ways the archive can play a role in producing 'hybrid research' within geography. DeLyser, this time in a progress report with Daniel Sui focusing on attempts to go beyond the qualitative-quantitative divide, have recently described the rise of '*archival ethnography'* (discussed later in this paper) as a form of 'geographic synthesis' and 'hybrid form of research' (Sui and DeLyser 2012, p. 116). Furthermore, I would argue that metaphors of 'digging' and 'unearthing' material from the past record (Cameron 2010) chime with various research methods and agendas in physical geography, creating synergies across themes of 'nature' and 'culture' for example (see Harrison et al. 2004).

This paper is structured in three inter-related sections. First, in *fragments*, I introduce the partial and incomplete nature of archives and the tactics used by cultural-historical geographers to 'seek out the cracks'. Second, in *objects*, I focus on the diverse material and collections being used as research data, including a discussion of the more-than-representational and more-than-human 'animations' of the archive. Finally, in *ghosts*, I deal with the absent-presence of archival research and the haunting affects of re-animating past lives through biographies, as well as reflecting on contemporary connections between the archive and our everyday lives. Finally, the conclusion highlights issues surrounding the future of archival research and digital re-animations.

Fragments

Archives are made up of fragments and as such are partial and incomplete: firstly, in terms of chronology and coverage; and secondly, in terms of physical structure – often littered with holes and missing pages. This fragmentary character of archives poses the researcher with a number of frustrating challenges, and yet this is often what makes them so enchanting, mysterious, seductive and addictive (on geography and enchantment more broadly, see Woodyer & Geoghegan 2012).

Ultimately, an archive is a collection or ensemble of material that documents *the past*. A 'home' for documents (and as I'll explore later objects and other things as well) – their very materiality is a memory – literally flaking, breaking and discoloured with time; as Miles Ogborn states, "memories fade, and archives are fighting the decay and deterioration that time's chemistry brings" (2004, p. 240). Indeed, some archives weigh-in and weigh-out material as it exchanges hands between the archivist and researcher and inevitably each time this process occurs, there is a natural (if miniscule) loss of material. In bringing together under one roof (or underground storage container, off-site lock-up or digital server) a collection of related material – an archive is often perceived as containing 'the truth'. There is an assumption that a visitor can expect an 'official' account of one person's life, one nation's development, one organisation's activities, and so on. This assumption, however, is problematic. Archives always have a *creator* and these makers of memory need to be considered carefully (Harvey-Brown & Davis-Brown 1998; Moore 2010). I should note that there is therefore, an explicit politics in recovering and restoring fragments, or creating new archives, for many researchers. Geographers have used archival material as part of activist campaigns (DeSilvey 2003), to uncover the hidden geographies of political protest and re-unite activist networks (Brown 2012a), as well as working-with owners of personal archives (Ashmore et al. 2012) and organisations (Mills 2013) to catalogue fragments and (re)make collections.

All archives and their fragments have political dimensions: colonial (Duncan 1999), national (Ogborn 2003b), institutional (Davies 2000), personal (Burton 2003), photographic (Rose 2000), sound (Lorimer 2007) or film (Houston 1994). Even a collection that may be a complete 'set' chronologically is still essentially one version of the past and issues of power and representation are central to archives and their construction (Kurtz 2001; Ogborn 2003b). One response by geographers to these issues has been to utilise more than one collection when piecing together accounts, stories and lives, or to utilise oral histories in conjunction with archival material – collecting as many fragments as possible (Riley and Harvey 2007). There are also a number of concerns about evidence, truth and knowledge in historical research, and in how we define the past (Schein 2001; Till 2001), which often manifest themselves in suspicions of archival disorder or disarray. Instead, Lorimer and Philo's (2009) argument in relation to their own geography department's archive is that one should actually be suspicious of *order*:

"Can it be assumed, however, that an ordered archive necessarily should give rise to an orderly account based upon this order? Possibly the researcher needs to be suspicious of the apparent order, and instead to seek out 'cracks' in the facade: for misunderstandings, for other questions needing to be asked that the sources, in their neatness and completeness, arguably evade." (Lorimer and Philo 2009, p. 229).

Acknowledging – and instead embracing – the fragmentary and disordered nature of archives and 'seeking out' these cracks has been central to much work by cultural-historical geographers that have animated and creatively played with fragments, using them as a way to explain the incomplete nature of our lives, states, institutions and everyday geographies. Indeed, fragments are often all researchers have to go on, the 'clues' (Ginzburg 1990) that are 'dug up' (Till 2001) as part of a 'make-do' method involving "the rehabilitation of historical fragments" (Lorimer 2009, p. 258). Whilst I discuss the use of non-written fragments in the next section, it is useful to highlight Caitlin DeSilvey's research here in her work on a Montana homestead (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c) where she salvages meaning from incomplete sources: fragments of paper, objects, scraps of oral history and other 'remains', describing how "the salvage of memory makes do with materials at hand, and uses this material to craft stories about people and place that might otherwise go untold" (DeSilvey 2007b, p.421-2). Indeed, the histories we seek to uncover as geographers are often just as fragmentary as the material we can access. This synergy therefore gives rise to new 'animations' that attempt to bring these fragments to life. The next section illustrates this argument through discussing DeSilvey and others' work with objects, however it is important to highlight that overall, for many cultural-historical geographers, it is the fragments that contain the beauty, mystery and particular way of reading the archive that so enchants them.

Objects

In this section, I explore how cultural-historical geographers have engaged with diverse non-written archival material and in particular – objects. In doing so, this has prompted re-evaluations of the fundamental question: 'what is an archive?'. In its simplest form, "for an archive to exist, things (papers, documents, objects) have to be collected" (Cresswell 2012, p. 168; see also Gagen et al. 2007; Withers 2002 on this question). As the previous section stated, there are various types of archive – formal and informal – but all involve an element of collecting. This can include collecting by researchers too – through their own gathering of items (partial or obsessive) via online auction site eBay (DeLyser et al. 2004), second-hand shops, gifts and donations. Furthermore, researchers have their

own 'archival (re)collections' through the digital photographs, photocopies and online files from their fieldwork (see Lorimer 2009). These personal files can often prompt memories of the archive room itself and the process of research. In particular, historians have reflected on the "deep satisfaction of finding things" (Steedman 2001, p. 10) and that this is perhaps strongest during encounters with objects, with some even revealing a strong desire to steal objects as keepsakes, or other disruptive desires (Burton 2005; Rose 2000). These affective and emotional connections to objects are significant as part of the research process, however Lorimer is quick to point out that "crude accumulation is no research method…nevertheless, the private passions that revolve around collecting act as powerful forces in the production of research expertise and know-how" (2009, p. 260). So whilst we tend to think of archives as collections of written sources and texts that hold discursive meaning (correspondence, minutes, diaries, reports) it is often the objects, ephemera, memorabilia and tactile 'stuff' that is most memorable, desirable or illuminating.

For some, objects provide an entry-point to study 'embodied historical geographies', the focus of Carl Griffin and Adrian Evans' special issue of *Historical Geography* that considers past objects, practices and events as part of a wider argument about the possibilities "that remain faithful to the purpose of writing geographies past and yet true to the representational critique" (2008, p. 6). They are referring here to the potential of non-representational theory to move from symbolism and representation towards practices and performance; and yet, how this has tended to focus on the present or recent past (see Lorimer 2008; Thrift 2004). Griffin and Evans therefore present a manifesto "for taking the historical geographies of embodiment seriously" (2008, p. 9) and, as part of this, argue that practices, events and significantly – objects – can bear witness to past performance (see also Ogborn 2009). Several geographers have illustrated how objects do just that. For example, Peter Merriman's (2005) work on the Country Code used postcards, board games and badges as historical 'data' to illustrate how young people in particular were drawn into unique engagements with the messages of the Code through such objects. In the aforementioned special issue, Evans (2008) discusses eighteenth-century household items and inventories, animating the tactile ways in which domestic spaces operated in and through objects. Finally, material 'encounters' were also a focus of Merle Patchett's (2008) work on the historical-cultural geographies of taxidermy. Rather than focusing explicitly on the 'finished article', she instead explored "the practices and relationships that brought specimens to their state of enclosure, inertness and seeming fixity" (2008, p. 18). In her article on the Hopetoun tigers – trophies of the colonial enterprise – she positions this work within a "recent vein of creative historical research" whereby "researchers have highlighted how material encounters and material entities can be rich

resources for historical recovery" (2008, p. 18). Overall then, these geographers show how objects can be crucial in understanding the performance of particular events, behaviours or practices over time.

Jamie Lorimer and Sarah Whatmore (2009) push these ideas of material encounters with objects further by focusing on the 'more-than-representational' (and 'more-than-human') qualities of archives (see also Ogborn 2009). In presenting the bloody embodied historical geographies of elephant hunting in mid-nineteenth-century Ceylon, Lorimer and Whatmore combine human and non-human experiences to try to tackle the methodological challenge of 'animating the archive', which they outline here:

> "The bodies and materials of interest are largely dead and gone; the contexts and language in and through which they encountered each other are spatially and temporally distant and cannot be directly witnessed; and a lot of what passed between them is not and could not be recorded in surviving texts" (2009, p. 675)

This echoes Gagen et al.'s editorial introduction to *Practising the Archive* that talks of how although "we must, by necessity, forgo any claims to the possibility of recovering in fullness the realm of lived gesture, touch, and emotion", there are "many creative ways to engage with existing 'representational' sources as conveyors of historical 'performance' in its immediacy and evanescence" (2007, p. 5). With 'standard' textual archival work therefore deemed inadequate, Lorimer and Whatmore actively sought the embodied and affective dimensions through a 'more-than-representational' reading of the archive. This involved both the 'stretching' of text-based written material, largely from the Royal Geographical Society's archives, "to attune to the sensual, the poetic, the lively and the corporeal dimensions to the practices depicted" (2009, p. 675) and – significantly for this section's discussion – engagements with artefacts and objects. They describe how "lifting, swinging and carrying" hunter Samuel Baker's elephant gun in the here-and-now of the archive room, "you get a sense of the physical challenges involved in elephant hunting" and when combined with other fieldwork in present-day Sri Lanka to create a 're-enactive historical ethnography', "such techniques helped to shrink the spatial and temporal distance established by the metropolitan archive" (2009, p. 676). Finally, Lorimer and Whatmore (2009) describe the moments of translation from their experiences in Sri Lanka (photographing elephants, rereading the texts 'in-situ') as bringing the archival material 'to life'. Overall, as Lorimer and Whatmore suggest, this 'more-than-representational' reading of the archive involves not only the enrolment of historical objects and the 'stretching' of written material, but an engagement with different sites and places in order to 're-enact' the past.

Indeed, objects are not simply just another item with a reference number to access via a request slip in a formal indoor reading room. This has been illustrated most powerfully through Caitlin DeSilvey's work on 'salvage memory' in the context of an abandoned and semi-derelict homestead in Western Montana (2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). Here, she uses the site itself – and crucially the objects found there as part of its 'residual material culture' (2007a, p. 38) – to re-think and re-animate the 'archive'. As well as considering the collections' decaying organic matter 'where life ferments' such as maggots, odours, moulds and insects (2006), DeSilvey importantly states that, "every object left to rot in a dank shed or an airless attic once occupied a place in an active web of social and material relations" (2007b: 403). Her work, and this emphasis on offering "an imaginative recuperation of those webs of connection and affinity" (2007b, p. 403) has inspired others to consider the spatially distributed places, objects and collections that 'make-up' an archive. In his discussion of the once vibrant and largest open-air market in North America – Maxwell Street Market in Chicago – Tim Cresswell considers a distributed archive "across multiple sites that bleed into each other" (2012, p. 174) including the formal archives, a collection of objects stored in various homes and gardens, a private residence of an activist, and importantly, *the place itself*. Indeed, we can conceive of 'expanded archives', or as Cresswell terms it "a kind of living archive" (2012, p. 166; see also Lorimer 2009 on 'hybrid archival-field spaces') that involve distributed collections and objects. In particular, Cresswell highlights the role of 'gleaning' – a certain type of collecting that produces "a kind of inverse archive" (2012, p. 169) – bringing together the excluded, forgotten, discarded and otherwise destroyed. Almost always, this involved *objects* such as hubcaps or shoes and their connections to the market's activities – photographed or stored as part of a 'kitcsh archive', prompting us to ask "What are the histories of these banal objects?" (2012, p. 171). Cresswell concludes that archives are "leaky places produced through a contested set of valuations concerning which objects count as worthy and significant" (2012, p. 164). Indeed, there are much broader questions when thinking about what 'counts' as an archive or collection in terms of preservation, responsibility, 'secondhandedness' and value (see also Hetherington 2004).

Finally, objects have been used in contemporary contexts as ways to reach out of the archive and invite people into dialogues with material, museums and memories (on museum geographies, see Geoghegan 2010, and on the geographies of curating, see Miles 2011). Through her research and website (archivingthecity.com), artist and researcher Adeola Enigbokan brings together digital video, archival documents, cartography, walking-tours and objects to explore urban experience and how the city is "built in layers of time" (Enigbokan 2012; see also Enigbokan & Patchett 2012). Her work suggests an even further expanded notion of 'what is the archive'? where this section first began, with Enigbokan interested in the multiple practices of 'archiving' rather than the 'archive' per se, and in particular, the

role of electronic media and digital data. In one particular blog entry – to highlight the role of objects and their 'place' in the archive/lived experience – Enigbokan discusses an art installation called *Chamber of Delights* conducted in collaboration with Juan Betancurth at El Museo del Barrio, New York in July 2011. Here, Juan recreated his Columbian aunt's living room (the 'chamber of delights') filled with personal objects, furniture and photographs where visitors are encouraged to sit and engage with the space. Enigbokan then invited participants to conduct 'foolish journeys' where – after a tarot reading – visitors selected a destination in Harlem to walk to. As she explains, "each visitor was asked to return from the trip with an 'offering' – an object found along the walk – to leave in the installation, as part of the ongoing exhibit. He or she then marked a master map with the location of encounter with the offering. This location, at which the participant is struck by the significance of a discarded object, marks a moment of becoming strange in the city" (Enigbokan 2011). This example therefore demonstrates the potential moments of connection between the past and present – as well as between art, performance, exhibition space, urban landscape and objects – with the traditional archival process of collecting actively taking place inside an art/museum space through the wider public.

So far, the discussion in this paper has largely been on material fragments and objects, however there are other important and political aspects to consider here concerning the individuals that are resurrected when animating the archive. I now turn to these encounters with ghosts who can reside in archives and some of the ethical and methodological considerations this necessarily involves.

Ghosts

Going to the archives almost certainly means an encounter with ghosts – individuals no longer alive and frozen in time at a particular moment. I should state here that I use the term 'ghosts' metaphorically rather than literally in this paper, whilst still recognising that some researchers (anecdotally at least) have shared their lived experiences of seeing or hearing ghosts whilst in an archive (for wider debates on the 'spectral' in geography, see Maddern and Adey 2008). As Alan Baker (1997) famously stated, "the dead don't answer questionnaires" and therefore the archive offers us an opportunity (however partial or fragmented) to 'meet' our research participants. Instead of arranging to meet in a café, or conducting a focus group in a community centre, these individuals are housed on shelves and microfiche: sometimes anonymous, sometimes photographed, but almost always an absent-presence. One of our tasks as researchers then, is to locate these ghosts and try to re-create their lives from the archival record (see Gagen 2001 on young people and agency, for example). Indeed, archives can contain hidden voices of both the powerful and powerless – but often one or the other is absent. This is

usually determined by the practices of collecting mentioned earlier in this paper and the wider politics of the archive: What will it save or destroy? Whose stories will it keep? Who decides? Furthermore, there are a series of ethical issues surrounding past lives and the co-opting of individuals into projects who cannot be asked to sign consent forms or agree to be cited (Cameron 2001; Moore 2010). I have reflected on these issues in more depth elsewhere (Mills 2012), but issues of power and positionality are vitally important to a responsible and engaged process of archival fieldwork. I also want to stress the related political implications of some recent interventions in historical work. As well as activist campaigns and research that has drawn on the archival record (discussed in *fragments*), there is also an important political dimension to a diverse range of postcolonial archival research and feminist historiography (see, for example, Boyer 2004; Maddrell 2009; McEwan 2003). Furthermore, there is a growing effort in children's historical work to address some of these political and ethical issues. Elizabeth Gagen's writing (2001) has inspired me to search for, or be attentive to, 'young ghosts' and I have a particular feminist commitment here to what I have termed 'doubly marginalised' research participants: "first, as 'out-of-sight' research subjects housed in filing cabinets and on microfiche and, second, as young people [often] hidden amongst adult accounts" (Mills 2012, p. 359). Whilst the politics of individual archives clearly varies in terms of the 'prominence' and 'visibility' of young people (or women, or other marginalised groups), these are important considerations for researchers.

Returning more specifically to ghosts and archival animations, it is often a common anecdote that researchers who are engaged in archival research day-dream about the lives of those found in the archive and try to imagine what their life was like, to fill in the 'gaps' (or 'cracks', see *fragments*) and in doing so, experience moments of connection and familiarity (Steedman 2001). As Lorimer states:

> "Oftentimes, and without any great act of will, researchers call on their geographical imagination to picture, to populate and to personalize the pasts to which they are dedicating such time, effort and thought. In the minds eye, unknown aspects of subjects' identities are coloured in, the outlines of unseen faces are etched, landscapes settled and key scenes set and staged so that events might dramatically unfold." (Lorimer 2009, p. 257).

For some, there are further spectral connections and experiences in archival-sites themselves. Returning to DeSilvey's work as a volunteer-curator, she describes how "as I reached for my bucket of water to sluice the dirt down the open drain, I felt an odd sensation – another body, kneeling on this floor, scouring away…I had been, in a sense, 'possessed' by the ghost of Emma Randolph [one of the Randolph family who originally owned the homestead], who must have kneeled to the same chore year after year" (2007a, p. 40-41; see also Hetherington 2001).

Perhaps the most common way that the past lives of individuals have been incorporated into geographical research is through the use of biographies (Daniels and Nash 2004). In her recent paper in *Progress in Human Geography*, Emilie Cameron (2012) discusses 'new geographies of story and storytelling' as part of non-representational possibilities. As she notes, one of the most popular attempts to do this in collaboration with the archival record has been Hayden Lorimer's (2003) cultural-historical approach of 'telling small stories'. Here, Lorimer enlivens the personal experiences of geography fieldwork education in 1950s Scotland through the 'small stories' of a then 14 year old – Margaret Jack – and her instructor – Robin Murray. Through bringing together oral history interview material and the personal accounts of these individuals (or in the case of Murray, his wife) with a collection of written material including field diaries and letters, Lorimer narrates "one of geography's 'small stories'" (2003, p. 197). He explains that:

> "My ethnography of the 1951 field-course has been generated through imperfect processes of remembrance, transmission and interpretation. It serves two important functions: centring Margaret and Robin as active subjects of the narrative, and emphasizing the longer social lives of this small story." (2003, p. 199)

Not only is Lorimer 'granting' these fragments the "more formalized status of 'archive'" (2003, p. 199), he is engaging in moments of translation with the living and the dead. As Robin Murray died in 1991, Lorimer's approach of telling both Robin and Margaret's (aged 66 at the time of the research) story simultaneously, effectively weaves the present and past narratives together to produce both a biographical but also *geographical* account of fieldwork practices and these particular events from 1951.

As well as a means of re-animating past lives and engaging with individuals and their own geographies, I also want to stress in this section the 'haunting' affects of ghosts in relation to our own identities as researchers. These encounters and emotions are surprising, perhaps, but often lead us to question when it is time to 'let go' of archival encounters, or if indeed we should (Bressey 2011; Mills 2012). Whilst positionality and reflexivity are now familiar concepts in geographical research, they are less often considered in relation to historical methods and archival research. This may, in part, be not so much a characteristic of the sub-discipline and its research practices, but rather due to a wider more general relationship to the past in everyday life that is outward (or backward) looking rather than inward (or forward) looking and where emotions (apart from perhaps in personal genealogical research) are largely kept at a distance. A noteable exception is Adrian Bailey, Catherine Brace and David C Harvey's paper on the "contested product of negotiation between the practices (including methodologies), beliefs and identities of the researchers involved" (2009, p. 254) in an archival project on nineteenth-century

Methodism in Cornwall. Here, the authors reflect on the nature and challenge of collaborative archival work and issues surrounding positionality – namely religious belief – during their experiences as 'three geographers in an archive'. As archival work is often a solitary process, this collaborative insight is unique. Through examples of each researchers' reflections on the project in relation to their own relationship to organised religion (secular, Methodist, ambivalent), this paper highlights the need "for geographers to maintain a reflexive approach to their historically grounded identities" (2009, p. 255). In many respects, the 'archival ethnography' Sui and DeLyser (2012) identify, mentioned earlier in this paper, relates to these types of connections and the influence of our identities on the reading and interpretation of the archival record, and also of the impact the archive can have on our identities (see also Laurie 2010; Rose 2000; 2002). In this respect, geographers are beginning to share and 'animate' their personal experiences of the archive: whether through reflecting on the "agreements, disagreements, acquiescences and compromises" (Bailey et al. 2009, p. 267) about finding, analysing and writing about past lives, or as the next example details – through sharing experiences of building, displaying and 'making' archives with (living) others.

Not all individuals in and connected to archives are ghosts. Working with more recent material from the late twentieth century for example means many individuals (and certainly their families) are still alive and therefore anonymity and other ethical considerations needs to be taken seriously (Schwarz 1992). Similarly, there are many ways in which engaging with archives involves a relationship between researchers and ongoing lives in the present: with archivists, enthusiasts and owners of personal archives. Ashmore et al. (2012) reflect on these relationships as researchers /archivists/enthusiasts through discussing their experiences of archiving a personal collection in collaboration (or working-with) its owner – commonwealth journalist Derek Ingram. They describe the affective pushes of "the archive in flux" and how during the processes of 'archivalization' (see also Ketelaar 2001) when an archive is coming-into-being, there were clear connections to (their and his) ongoing lives in the present-day: through conversations with the owner, files that travelled outside the home to share with his friends, and discussions with colleagues. Importantly, they note that "instead of approaching the archive as a consumer – as a researcher who will extract meaning from the contents – it is also possible to shape the emphasis and order of an archive itself" (2012, p. 88; see also Mills, 2013).

Overall then, re-animating individual biographies offers geographers an insight into past lived experiences – but we should also be open to considering how contemporary relationships can be shaped through reading the archival record, the archives role in the co-construction of biographies, and the multiple-meanings of 'finding yourself' in the archive (Ashmore et al. 2012). Indeed, geographers have literally found themselves named on documents or in photographs during archival research (Brown

2012b), as well as reflecting more broadly on their identities and conflicted or complementary subject positions whilst in the archive (Laurie 2010).

Conclusion

As part of a wider appreciation and critical reflection on methods in cultural geography, this paper has sought to map out recent 'animations' of the archive – to showcase creative approaches and exciting collaborations through research projects that draw upon the archival record. We should perhaps be cautious of over-celebrating or romanticising the 'cultural-historical geographies of the archive'; indeed, there is a need to remain critically engaged with issues of power and representation and the politics of the archive, which historical geographers have importantly highlighted. However, the growing literature on "archive as site as well as source" (Ashmore et al. 2012, p. 82; see also Stoler 2009, p. 44) and work by cultural-historical geographers that creatively plays with the fragments, objects and ghosts of archives is certainly energizing methodological innovation and debate. In this conclusion, I want to briefly reflect on the future of archives themselves and what this may mean for geographers.

In many ways, the form, content and spaces of archives are changing. Lorimer (2009) highlights the recent move towards digital collections, with hundreds of national and local archives in the UK currently engaged in processes of digitization for preservation and wider public access. What this will do to the 'nature' of archival research remains to be seen, but as Lorimer notes, there may well be less emphasis on 'the archival visit'. I also believe there will be new possibilities to remotely connect with material and 'animate' the archive. The use of digital images, the opportunity to zoom into fragments, turn pages on a tablet, and piece together screen-shots may create new digital 'animations' as researchers 'play' with archives. However, the politics of digital archives, data protection and privacy, especially in relation to the media, is a controversial topic (see Enigbokan 2010 on 'databases as dumpsters') and one that is likely to define the future of contemporary archives. In terms of our role as researchers in these debates, I would advocate participating in current surveys and consultations by libraries, record offices and organisations on the importance of archiving digital material and on the ways digital technologies can be used to support archival research. The advent of social media and presence of archivists (and archives) on twitter is also blurring boundaries between academics, enthusiasts, volunteers and archive employees. Through online discussion boards, blogs and twitter hashtags, archivists are discussing elements of archival practice with all kinds of researchers and enthusiasts: advertising new material, releasing film and sound clips, and advertising invitations to collaborate with local and national projects. This provides yet more opportunities, perhaps, for

cultural-historical geographers to be involved in 'quieter' user engagement activities 'beyond the academy' through 'public' historical geographies (Merriman 2010; Mills 2013).

Overall, as "historical scholarship has shifted in methodological inclination: from the pre-dominantly arithmetical to the knowingly artful" (Lorimer 2009, p. 266), one of the defining features has been attempts by cultural-historical geographers to 'animate' the archive. This article has outlined some of the ways in which geographers have creatively played, imagined, pieced-together and resurrected 'the archive' – variously defined – and in doing so, has contributed to debates on archives and method within geography through examples from the discipline and beyond. As a final concluding reflection, I would like to stress that although the paper's discussion has focused on performative and creative archival engagements, there remains a critical and political commitment across much of this research, often in disrupting and negotiating the existing politics of an archive, that is important to recognise. I would argue that this 'animated' work continues some of the long-standing critical work by geographers across diverse topical foci and historical epochs, and is much more than simply 'playing' with fragments, objects and ghosts.

References

Ashmore, P., Craggs, R. and Neate, H. (2012). Working-with: talking and sorting in personal archives. *Journal of Historical Geography* 38, pp. 81-89.

Bailey, A., Brace, C. and Harvey, D.C. (2009). Three geographers in an archive: positions, predilections and passing comment on transient lives. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, pp. 254-269.

Baker, A.H.R. (1997). The dead don't answer questionnaires: researching and writing historical geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 21, pp. 231-243.

Baker, A.H.R and Billinge, M. (1982) (eds). *Period and Place: Research Methods in Historical Geography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Barnett, C. (1998) The cultural turn: fashion or progress in human geography? *Antipode* 30, pp. 379-394

Black, I.S. (2003). Analysing Historical and Archive Sources. In: Clifford, H. J. and Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography*. London: SAGE, pp. 477-500.

Boyer, K. (2004) Feminist geography in the archive: practice and method *WGSG, Geography and Gender Reconsidered*, pp. 169-174, available at http://wgsg.org.uk/newsite1/pdfs/boyer.pdf (last accessed October 2012)

Bressey, C. (2011). Loving Ghosts: Emotional encounters in the archive. Presented at *The Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)*, September 2011.

Brown, G. (2012a). *Non-Stop Against Apartheid: Spaces of Transnational Solidarity* [blog] http://nonstopagainstapartheid.wordpress.com/about/ (last accessed October 2012)

Brown, G. (2012b). *Tricky pronouns: reflections on finding my teenage self in the archive* [blog entry] http://nonstopagainstapartheid.wordpress.com/2012/08/17/tricky-pronouns-reflections-on-finding-my-teenage-self-in-the-archive/ (last accessed October 2012)

Burton, A. (2003). *Dwelling in Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Burton, A. (2005) (Ed.). *Archive stories: facts, fictions and the writing of history*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.

Cameron, E. (2012). New geographies of story and storytelling. *Progress in Human Geography* 36, pp. 573-592.

Cameron, L. (2001). Oral history in the Freud archives: incidents, ethics and relations. *Historical Geography* 29, pp. 38-44.

Cameron, L. (2010). Distinguished Historical Geography Lecture 2010: Digging in the Dirt: Unnatural Histories and the 'Art of Not Dividing'. *Historical Geography* 38, pp. 5-22.

Cresswell, T. (2010). New cultural geography – an unfinished project? *Cultural Geographies* 17, pp. 169-174

Cresswell, T. (2012). Value, gleaning and the archive at Maxwell Street, Chicago. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, pp. 164-176.

Daniels, S. and Nash, C. (2004). Lifepaths: geography and biography. *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, pp. 449-458.

Davies, G. (2000). Narrating the Natural History Unit: institutional orderings and spatial strategies. *Geoforum* 31, pp. 539-551.

DeLyser, D. and Rogers, B. (2010). Meaning and methods in cultural geography: practising the scholarship of teaching, *Cultural Geographies* 17, pp.185-190.

DeLyser, D., Sheehan, R., and Curtis, A. (2004). eBay and research in historical geography. *Journal of Historical Geography* 30, pp. 878-900.

DeSilvey, C. (2003)."When plotters meet": Cultivated histories in a Scottish allotment garden. *Cultural Geographies* 10, pp. 442-68.

DeSilvey, C. (2006). Observed decay: telling stories with mutable things. *Journal of Material Culture* 11, pp. 318-338

DeSilvey, C. (2007a) Practical Remembrance: Material and Method in a Recycled Archive. In: Gagen, E.A., Lorimer, H. and Vasudevan, A. (2007). (eds) *Practising the Archive: Reflections on Method and Practice in Historical Geography* Historical Geography Research Series 40, London: Royal Geographical Society pp. 37-45.

DeSilvey, C. (2007b) Salvage memory: constellating material histories on a hardscrablle homestead. *Cultural Geographies* 14, pp. 401-424.

DeSilvey, C. (2007c). Art and archive: memory-work on a Montana homestead. *Journal of Historical Geography* 33, pp. 878-900.

Duncan, J.S. (1999). Complicity and resistance in the colonial archive: some issues of method and theory in historical geography. *Historical Geography* 27, pp. 119-128.

Dwyer, C., and Davies, G. (2010). Qualitative methods III: animating archives, artful interventions and online environments. *Progress in Human Geography* 34, pp. 88-97.

Enigbokan, A. (2010). *Archiving the City: Dangerous archives?* [blog entry] http://archivingthecity.com/2010/12/08/dangerous-archives/ (last accessed October 2012)

Enigbokan, A. (2011). *Archiving the City: Foolish Journeys @ el museo* [blog entry] http://archivingthecity.com/2011/08/28/foolish-journeys-el-museo/(last accessed October 2012)
Enigbokan, A. (2012). *Archiving the City: Bio* [blog] http://archivingthecity.com/bio/ (last accessed October 2012)

Enigbokan, A. and Patchett, M. (2012). Speaking with specters: experimental geographies in practice. *Cultural Geographies* 19, pp. 535-546.

Evans, A.B. (2008). Enlivening the archive: glimpsing embodied consumption practices in probate inventories of household possessions. *Historical Geography* 36, pp. 40-72.

Gagen, E.A. (2001). Too good to be true? Representing children's agency in the archives of playground reform. *Historical Geography* 29, pp. 53-64.

Gagen, E.A., Lorimer, H. and Vasudevan, A. (2007). (eds) *Practising the Archive: Reflections on Methods and Practice in Historical Geography*. Historical Geography Research Series 40 London: Royal Geographical Society.

Geoghegan, H. (2010). Museum geography: exploring museums, collections and museum practice in the UK. *Geography Compass* 4, pp. 1462-1476.

Ginzburg, C. (1990). *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*. Baltimore; MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Griffin, C.J and Evans, A.B (2008). Historical Geographies of Embodied Practice and Performance. *Historical Geography* 36, pp. 5-16.

Hannam, K. (2002). Using archives. In: Shurmer-Smith, P (Ed.) (2002) *Doing Cultural Geography* London: SAGE, pp. 112-120

Harrison, S., Pile, S. and Thrift, N. (2004). (eds) *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture.* London: Reaktion Books.

Harvey Brown, R. and Davis-Brown, H. (1998). The making of memory: the politics of archives, libraries and museums in the construction of national consciousness. *History of the Human Sciences* 11, pp. 17-32.

Hetherington, K. (2001). Phantasmagoria/phantasm agore: materialities, spatialities and ghosts. *Space and Culture* 1, pp. 24-41.

Hetherington, K. (2004). Secondhandedness: consumption, disposal, and absent presence. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22, pp.157-73.

Houston, P. (1994). *Keepers of the frame: the film archives* London: British Film Institute

Jackson, P. (1989). *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography* London: Routledge

Ketelaar, E. (2001). Tacit narratives: the meaning of archives. *Archival Science* 1, pp. 131-144.

Kurtz, M. (2001). Situating practices: the archive and the filing cabinet. *Historical Geography* 29, pp. 26-37.

Laurie, N. (2010). Finding yourself in the archives and doing geographies of religion. *Geoforum* 41, pp.165-167.

Lorimer, H. (2003). Telling small stories: spaces of knowledge and the practice of geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, pp. 197-217.

Lorimer, H. (2007). Songs from before – shaping the conditions for appreciative listening. In: Gagen, E.A., Lorimer, H. and Vasudevan, A. (2007). (eds) *Practising the Archive: Reflections on Method and Practice in Historical Geography*. Historical Geography Research Series 40, London: Royal Geographical Society pp. 57-74

Lorimer, H. (2008). Cultural geography: non-representational conditions and concerns *Progress in Human Geography* 32, pp. 551-559

Lorimer, H. (2009). Caught in the nick of time: archives and fieldwork. In: DeLyser, D., Aitken, S., Crang, M.A., Herbert , S. and McDowell, L. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research in Human Geography*. SAGE: London, pp. 248-273.

Lorimer, H. and Philo, C. (2009). Disorderly archives and orderly accounts: reflections on the occasion of Glasgow's geographical centenary. *Scottish Geographical Journal* 125, pp. 227–255.

Lorimer, J. and Whatmore, S. (2009). After the 'king of beasts': Samuel Baker and the embodied historical geographies of elephant hunting in mid-nineteenth century Ceylon. *Journal of Historical Geography* 35, pp. 668-689.

Maddern, J. F. and Adey, P. (2008). Editorial: spectro-geographies, *Cultural Geographies*, 15, pp. 291-295.

Maddrell, A. (2009). *Complex locations: women's geographical work in the UK 1850-1970* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

McEwan, C. (2003). Building a postcolonial archive? Gender, collective memory and citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa, *Journal of South African Studies.* 29, pp. 739-757.

Merriman, P. (2005). 'Respect the life of the countryside': the Country Code, government and the conduct of visitors to the countryside in post-war England and Wales. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers.* 30, pp. 336-350.

Merriman, P. (2010). Creating an archive of geographical engagement. *Area* 42, pp. 387-390

Miles, E. (2011). Looking through the glass: exploring the strange shadows and museum mysteries of object installation. Presented at *The Annual Conference of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)*, September 2011.

Mills, S. (2012). Young ghosts: ethical and methodological issues of archival research in children's geographies. *Children's Geographies* 10, pp. 357-363.

Mills, S. (2013). Surprise! Public historical geographies, user engagement and voluntarism. *Area* 45, pp. 16-22.

Moore, F.P.L. (2010). Tales from the archive: methodological and ethical issues in historical geography research. *Area* 42, pp. 262-270.

Ogborn, M. (2003a). Finding Historical Data. In: Clifford, H J and Valentine, G. (eds) *Key Methods in Geography.* London: SAGE, pp. 101-115.

Ogborn, M. (2003b). Knowledge is power: using archival research to interpret state formation. In: Blunt, A., Gruffudd, P., May, J., Ogborn, M. and Pinder, D. (eds) *Cultural Geography in Practice.* London: Arnold, pp. 9-20.

Ogborn, M. (2004). Archives. In: Harrison, S., Pile, S. and Thrift, N. (eds) *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture.* London: Reaktion Books, pp. 240-242.

Ogborn, M. (2009). Francis Williams's bad language: Historical geography in a world of practice. *Historical Geography* 37, pp. 5–21.

Patchett, M. (2008). Tracking tigers: recovering the embodied practices of taxidermy. *Historical Geography* 36, pp. 17-39.

Riley, M. and Harvey, D. (2007). Talking geography: on oral history and the practice of geography. *Social and Cultural Geography* 8, pp. 345-351.

Rose, G. (2000). Practising photography: an archive, a study, some photographs and a researcher. *Journal of Historical Geography* 26, pp. 555-571.

Rose, G. (2002). Working on women in white, again. *Cultural Geographies* 9, pp. 103-9.

Schien, R. (2001). Re-placing the past?. *Historical Geography* 29, pp. 7-13.

Schwarz, J. (1992). The archivist's balancing act: helping researchers while protecting individual privacy. *Journal of American History* 79, pp. 179-189.

Simpson, P. (2012). Apprehending everyday rhythms: rhythmanalysis, time-lapse photography, and the space-times of street performance. *Cultural Geographies* 19, pp. 423-445.

Steedman, C. (2001). *Dust.* Manchester: Manchester University Press

Stoler, A. (2009). *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Sui, D. and DeLyser, D. (2012). Crossing the qualitative-quantitative chasm I: Hybrid geographies, the spatial turn, and volunteered geographic information (VGI). *Progress in Human Geography* 36, pp. 111-124.

Thrift, N. (2004). Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect. *Geografiska Annaler Series B: Human Geography* 86, pp. 57-78.

Till, K.E. (2001). Fragments, Ruins, Artifacts, Torsos. *Historical Geography* 29, pp. 70-73.

Withers, C. (2002). Constructing 'the geographical archive'. *Area* 34, pp. 303-311.

Woodyer, T. and Geoghegan, H. (2012, earlyview) (Re)enchanting geography? The nature of being critical and the character of critique in human geography. *Progress in Human Geography* doi: 10.117/0309132412460905

Wylie, J. (2010). Cultural geographies of the future, or looking rosy and feeling blue. *Cultural Geographies* 17, pp. 211–217.