



Historical geography I: Doom, danger, disregard – Towards political historical geographies

Progress in Human Geography

1–17

© The Author(s) 2021



Article reuse guidelines:

sagepub.com/journals-permissions

DOI: 10.1177/03091325211011664

journals.sagepub.com/home/phg**Daniel Clayton** 

University of St Andrews, UK

Abstract

‘Doom’, ‘danger’ and ‘disregard’ are palpable sentiments in recent writing by historical geographers and give the subfield some decidedly political intonations. These three words have diverse, disquieting and expectant connotations and are tracked in this report through clusters of research on colonialism, racism, decolonisation, climate change, Earth history and political reaction and populism. This range of historical work within geography provokes more general questions about how the discipline, generally, sees itself today and at a time of profound uncertainty about the meaning and direction of history. At this time, it is easy to be despondent but vital to hope and work for change.

Keywords

danger, disregard, doom, geographies, historical, political

This report was written during a dark Scottish winter, around a year after Covid-19 was unleashed onto the world. Walter Benjamin’s 1940 entreaty to his mentor Gershom Scholem came to mind as I surveyed 2 years of recent writing by historical geographers. With the Nazis bearing down on France, Benjamin insisted that ‘Every line we succeed in publishing today – no matter how uncertain the future to which we entrust it – is a victory wrenched from the powers of darkness’ (Benjamin, 1989: 262). ‘Doom’, ‘danger’ and ‘disregard’ are palpable sentiments in the eclectic research ambit of historical geography and its connections with the wider discipline and other areas of historical inquiry. These three words have diverse, disquieting and expectant meanings. They connote calamity, cynicism, despair,

disdain, division, exclusion, insecurity, myopia, risk, sickness, tragedy and violence. But when historical geographers visit these disturbing places, it is generally with the aim of finding and fostering what lies on their ‘other’ sides: care, compassion, connection, dialogue, fairness, goodwill, hope and optimism. Doom, danger and disregard, and their doubles, do not form neatly packaged topic areas within the subfield (of which there are currently at least 30, on a conservative count), but they are demonstrable outlooks in its staple interest in ‘geographies of

Corresponding author:

Daniel Clayton, School of Geography and Sustainable Development, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, FIFE, KY16 9AL, UK.

Email: dwc3@st-andrews.ac.uk

the past and . . . the influence of the past in shaping the geographies of the present and future' (to use Mike Heffernan's (2009) broad characterisation).

This report imagines and traverses this terrain with clusters of research on colonialism, racism, decolonisation, climate change, Earth history and political reaction and populism. It also does so cognisant of the blurred lines between work in historical geography and that on the history of geography and geographical thought. The section on doom is the longest and partly because it sets up the ensuing discussions of danger and disregard. I see this triptych as a way of outlining a decidedly *political* historical geography. I mean political in Hannah Arendt's (1951: 296) ecumenical conception of the idea and its 'minimal condition': as a question of how a 'plurality of people' struggle to claim and enact rights and freedoms 'to act together concerning things that are of equal concern to each'. Arendt's politics were attuned to a totalitarian age of anger, destruction and violence. This 'age' has changed, as have its geographies, but many of its rudiments persist. 'History' has become an important and difficult place within which to return to her concerns. These ideas of change and burden encompass the studies sampled below.

The research reported upon here predates the arrival of Covid-19 and I shall leave the pandemic's connections with historical geography to another time. However, as a taster, suffice to make two observations. The first is that Covid-19 is already being routed through the subfield's long-standing concern with matters of disease and death. The second is that the pandemic further stirs two questions that historical geographers have periodically asked themselves, that infuse the ensuing coverage, and that bring a more general sense of the political to the proceedings below: In what 'time' do they think they are operating, and what bearing does

this time have on why, rather than just how, they do the things they do?

I Doom

Cheryl McGeachan (2014) begins her preceding trio of historical geography reports in *PiHG* by observing that interest in the past is flourishing at a time of profound uncertainty about the meaning and direction of history. She reports on an array of studies that point to such uncertainty and are linked by a concern with 'remains' ('legacies', 'spectres', 'ruins' and 'traces' are her main synonyms). Such work reaches into 'the darkest of geographies', she continues, but is also animated by the 'hope' of pulling more propitious and redemptive geographies from the wreckage (McGeachan 2017: 351).

McGeachan's concerns spring, in part, from the subfield's core methodological concern with the biased and patchy nature of archives, and its acute awareness of how, as Briony McDonagh (2018) explains in connection with feminist historical geographies, 'any . . . process of "listening to ghosts" . . . is necessarily gendered, racialized and classed', and also involves partialities of nation, empire and Eurocentrism, and questions of subaltern, Southern and Indigenous knowledge (see Jazeel and Legg, 2019). But they also stem from what David Lowenthal, in his last book (he died in 2018), *Quest for the Unity of Knowledge* (2019: 62–80), describes as a more general 'reversal' in history over the past 50 years (also see Barnes, 2021). Lowenthal avers that the idea that the past is fundamentally different from the present (and with this separation stage-managed by models of progress and revolution) is an 18th-century creation. It is one that has recently been overridden by opposing conceptions of the past as irretrievably connected to, and fractured within, the present. The past can no longer be ignored, he implores, and history is now more publicly accessible than ever before and fuelled by various 'memory',

‘sensory’, ‘digital’ and ‘curatorial’ booms. At the same time, however, the past is now ‘disregarded’ – he also uses the terms ‘tailored’, ‘eviscerated’, ‘coveted’ and ‘disputed’ – more and more.

A great deal of work in historical geography (too much to cite in one) is animated by the tensions between expanding research horizons that are bound up with these more open pasts and new sensing skills, on the one hand, and the deleterious and disregarding sway of abridged and bowdlerised pasts that at once fetter possibilities for propitious change and press the desire for them into ever greater action, on the other.

I Doom Times (and Towns)

This split past also runs into an increasingly forlorn future. Geoff Mann (2019: 91) touches many nerves regarding the current critical wherewithal of geography (historical or otherwise) when he contends that the ‘idea of doom is inescapable for those who take up the task of writing, teaching and doing radical geography today, because it presents fundamental challenges to the progressivist faith that animates radical critique’. Andrew Kirk (2017) returns to one important site of such trouble in *Doom Towns*, examining the serial construction and obliteration of replica towns at the Nevada Proving Grounds (nuclear testing site), established in 1951, and using this ‘landscape’ of the Cold War arms race as a metaphor for the wider late modern cultivation within and beyond the academy of ‘doom’ specialisms and scenarios that morphed into latter-day ‘risk’, ‘disaster’ and ‘simulation’ models and vistas (also see Brook et al., 2020; Masco, 2021). The point, of course, is that doom, like everything else, has a history and geography.

Mann’s (2019: 91) more immediate worry, however, is with how an ‘entire field’ of critical endeavour within geography (and obviously not just it) ‘founded on the potential for massive

social transformation in the relations among humans and between humans and the non-human worlds’ has floundered. He argues that while geographers now extol the emancipatory relevance and radical resolve of their work by focusing on human and planetary woe (problems of anger, calamity, inequality, injury, oppression, prejudice and violence), they do so with the future to which their endeavours have hitherto been entrusted, and which redeems them, now ambiguous.

He is not saying that geographers’ manifold struggles and solidarities are futile. In fact, quite the opposite: efforts need to be redoubled and reimagined, he insists, rather than lamented as lost to history. The umbilical connection between human struggle and progress (to improve life and one’s lot by transforming the earth) may be down, but it is not out. However, he stresses that geographers ignore ‘doom’ at their peril.

Mark Lilla (2016: xiii, 7) adds that the hope once staged by revolutionary thought, namely that history heads in specific direction (towards emancipation), is being supplanted by ‘reactionary sentiment’, which apprehends a world of inveterate struggle, and with socialism earmarked as both historical detritus and a live threat to the present. He identifies, with alarming fluency, how the reactionary has come to be ‘in a stronger position than his [sic] adversary [the revolutionary] because he believes he is the guardian of what actually happened, not the prophet of what should be’. Among other things, and *pace* Lowenthal, the reactionary’s profound ‘sense of mission’ and ‘militant nostalgia’ makes history amenable to manipulation and mendacity (blame, scorn, schism and indemnity, yielding ‘history wars’ and a ‘cancel culture’). ‘Where others see the river of time flowing as it always has, the reactionary sees the debris of paradise drifting past’, fuelling potent feelings of grievance, loss, abandonment and the need for redress (Lilla, 2016: xiii–xv, 33–35).

Mann and Lilla may exaggerate the reach and grip of doom and reaction, but perhaps not by much. Historical geography inhabits this space and time both wittingly and reconditely, exploring an array of struggles and possibilities and the different roles that history (as lesson, loop, warning and haunting, and rarely today simply as *divertissement*) plays. Six strands of scholarship and debate stand out. I shall deal with two of them presently, two in the next section, and two in the last.

2 *The Song Remains the Same?*

Doom and the meaning of hope can be found in historicising reflection within the discipline and subfield on its political and moral commitments and struggles. I am not thinking here of the theoretical and programmatic manifestos of yore – which, in any event, are now both more easily launched and more quickly lost in the mix due to the greater cacophony of voices in the discipline and academy. Rather, I am thinking of a geography that checks in on itself and what it regards as its ‘praxis’ (ways, means and interests) in more regular ways. As the newly installed editorial team at *The Journal of Historical Geography* (Tolia-Kelly et al., 2020: 1) see things, there should be a root and branch engagement with ‘questions of race and racism in scholarship, intellectual institutions, education curricula, networks, research and the economies of research posts and publications’.

In recent years, this concern with praxis has brought Mann’s spectre of doom to the fore and is inspiring concern both with *Historical Geographies of Anarchism* (Ferretti et al., 2019) (and as a kind of litmus test for what, if anything, about a completely different future might still be imaginable) and with the forms that a more serial compassion, care and commitment to difference and equality might take. Both sentiments can be found in the 14 essays in *Spatial Histories of Radical Geography* (Barnes and Sheppard, 2019). The volume explores

geographers’ academic and activist engagement with inequality and injustice over the last 50 years and how these struggles are now situated in radically different (neoliberal and corporate) academic, policy and university frameworks. The study of such past struggles does not amount to a *divertissement* (distraction, conceit or lament) with respect to ‘what was’ or ‘has come to pass’ or ‘now is no more’. Rather, it is a crucial means by which geographers ascertain their present and compare situations.

The historicising moves in volumes like this may mark a despondent recognition that geographers are going over the same ground again and again and arguably in more adverse times. The song of power and privilege remains the same. Or does it? As Eric Sheppard and Trevor Barnes (2019: 201) suggest with David Harvey’s Baltimore in mind, one of the refrains of such historical work in times of doom is to think and act directly and relationally about personal and disciplinary ‘truth spots’ – how to identify the places, situations, connections and causes that are of foremost concern, and how far the conditions and contingencies spotted and grounded there might ‘circulate’ (get hooked up to other places and projects). Olivier Orain and Marie-Claire Robic (2020) think in an allied way about Paris in May 1968 and its subsequent influence over French geography. Looking back can help give shape to these questions about ‘what’ and ‘where’ are important, and how they are situated in encompassing ones about the dialectics of class, race, gender and generational struggle, and the wider contradictions of capitalism and the state.

There are strong parallels between such disciplinary ruminations and Audrey Kobayashi’s (2017) plea for a ‘historical geography in the service of social justice’ and Cole Harris’s (2020) return to the historical geography of settler colonialism in North America in his copious *A Bounded Land*. Both note how they still find themselves having to remind readers of the history and geography of a basic set of unjust and

injurious colonial relationships and effects (rights to land and resources; discourses of conquest and dispossession; deeply racialised discrimination; colonial settler state domination; the spatial fragmentation of Native life and duplicitous liberal politics of assimilation). Yet as Harris (2020: 281) also observes: since the 1960s ‘Indigenous people have been speaking back to settler Canada as never before, and in a great variety of ways: in the arts, in creative writing, in academic analyses of settler colonialism, in court challenges of colonial practices, in commissions on residential schools and missing and murdered Indigenous women, in blockades and other protests against resource developments, and perhaps most basically in their numbers [demographic resurgence]’.

The purpose and poignancy of these historical geographies lies in their twofold insistence that the gravity of history should not be underestimated but that new political spaces and solidarities might also emerge from such dark pasts (also Heynen et al., 2018). Such historical geographies can mitigate doom. They are not simply in its thrall. The line between the two is often drawn (as it is in the Barnes and Sheppard volume) through the recognition that this way back to the future needs to avert nostalgia and be keenly aware of amnesia (the racisms, sexism, structural exclusions and privileges of geography’s past). And as Susan Millar and Don Mitchell (2017: 75) note with reference to one of Neil Smith’s ‘truth spots’, there is always ‘a “tight dialectic” between the history of geography (the production of environmental [and progressive or oppressive] knowledge) and historical geography (the production of nature and space)’.

3 Populist Geographies

James McCarthy (2019: 301) points to geographers’ growing historical and comparative engagement with the ‘authoritarian and populist turn’ in the world – a combination of

‘neoliberal, fascist and progressive populisms’ (also Hart, 2020; Loren-Méndez and Pinzón-Ayala, 2020). In a wider register, Pankaj Mishra (2018: 3–9, 268–273) argues that an ‘age of extremes’ (which was Eric Hobsbawm’s adage for the 20th century) has been supplanted by an ‘age of anger’ characterised by a heightened propensity for ‘demagoguery’ arising from the failure of states, leaders, social movements and international organisations to ‘deliver’ on promises of prosperity, freedom and security.

Work in this vein points in two directions. First, towards spectres and precursors of fascist and anti-fascist geographies: interest, not least, in *Hitler’s Geographies* (Giaccaria and Minca, 2016), which were based on twin spatial practices of *lebensraum* (the expansion in national/racial ‘living space’) and *entfernung* (the expulsion and elimination of ‘undesirables’), and how they are being reworked in contemporary far-right conceptions of homeland and exile and haunt settler colonial logics of elimination (e.g. Ince, 2019; Merrill and Pries, 2019). Rachel Busbridge (2020), for example, tracks ideas of ‘territorial exclusivity’ to Israeli incursions in and around historic sites with dual Israeli and Palestinian heritage and with the Israeli authorities using these sites to mobilise ‘mythical pasts and redemptive futures’.

Second, a couple of recent best-selling books consider the historical geographies of populist sentiment in Britain and France over roughly the same 50-year period (1970–2020) (also see Claval, 2019; Featherstone and Karaliotas, 2019). In *Rule Britannia*, Danny Dorling and Sally Tomlinson (2019) explore the mutually enabling, if contradictory, ‘populist’ connections between disaffected and deprived (‘left behind’) communities and an elite-Tory insular-island nationalist ideology (fantasy) that, since 1973, has been threaded through the UK’s tortuous relationship with the European Union and culminated in Brexit. Christophe Guilluy (2019: 58) attempts something similar, if with a different inflection, in *Twilight of the*

Elites. He examines the challenges to French identity and governance posed by *'la France périphérique'*: the *gilets jaunes* (yellow vests) and the revolt of a disaffected 'forgotten/provincial France' against what he terms the 'bobos' ('Bohemian-bourgeois business and political elites') of a metropolitan/global Paris and their attempt to deflect and co-opt 'provincial' grievances by focusing their 'politically correct' energies on the post-imperial and racial problems of the city's multi-ethnic banlieues (suburbs). Both books explore the potency and delusions of imperial nostalgia, expose neoliberal 'myths of the open society' and dig into the way deprivation and neglect fuel populist causes and opportunism (Guilluy, 2019: 85). They track how different experiences and sentiments of grievance and despair – abandonment, heroic defiance and victimhood – have played out within and across national borders and how these historical geographies of populism and protest stem from the economic and political perturbations of the late 1960s and early 1970s. David Harvey's (2020: 14) latest book, *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*, also dwells on the long-term significance of the drive, from the early 1970s, 'to try to capture as much accumulation as possible, and as much wealth and power as possible, within the corporate class'.

II Danger

Mann (2019) also describes doom as a time of 'rational dread' on account of precipitous climate change and the considerable challenges surrounding the imagination and attainment of what he and Joel Wainwright call 'climate X' – a radically alien, yet needed and attainable, climate future that will sustain life on earth (Wainwright and Mann, 2018: 173–188). This 'rational dread' – or splicing of the affective and the deliberative – leads to a second set of reflections, on danger, and with historical geographies of climate and the problems involved in thinking about the connections between the time

of human history and the deep time of earth systems (as signified by the term Anthropocene) in the van. I shall comment in this vein first on the idea of 'dangerous' climate change (and as distinct from climate 'crisis') and then on the idea of Earth thinking, and how work on such matters historicises geography over a range of spatial and temporal scales and lends the sub-field an environmental and existential politics.

I Dangerous Climate Change

The terms 'crisis', 'disaster' and 'emergency' (and related ones of 'resilience' and 'vulnerability') now have a pervasive, but in many ways overworked and increasingly redundant, grip on the media and political and public imagination. They are arguably losing their militant-affective edge as spurs to tough action, decisive change, and compassion in the face of existential peril. As Joseph Masco (2021: 339) concludes in *The Future of Fallout*, 'crisis' (usually as the *uber* term) has acquired a 'counterrevolutionary' and 'stabilising' logic. It has been honed as a tool of governance, route to profit and mechanism of neoliberal subterfuge, and not least in the way it is both deployed to deny climate change and betrays longer (spurious and noxious – colonial and racialised) historical geographies of climate reductionism (see Livingstone, 2020). 'Crisis' obscures the underlying and systemic conditions and contingencies by which 'dangers' – threats, propensities, scenarios – become 'fall-out' (disasters). The tight dialectic between the production of crisis/disaster/emergency knowledges and the production of calamitous and deleterious natures and spaces to which such eventualities pertain becomes tight to the point of mystification and implosion.

It is for this reason that many geographers working on questions of climate change in the folds between physical, human and historical geography eschew a language of crisis and see 'danger' as a more redolent way of thinking and talking about 'disaster' than disaster itself (see

Benn and Sugden, 2020). As Mike Hulme (2019, 2020), for example, relates, the semantics of ‘danger’ underscore how climate change works as an idea: one with a partly unseen past (that somehow needs to be recovered) and both a harrowing and expectant future. The future comes into view through the spectre of a ‘dangerous climate’ (rather than simply a disastrous and dystopian present). Despite all the doom, this spectre opens up ‘moments [in the past] when alternative political paths were available’, as Masco (2021: 15) surmises, and a radical history that furnishes ways of analysing ‘multi-generational forms of violence that continue to unfold without much serious debate’.

Analogous messages can be found in recent plenary essays by Craig Colten (2018), Georgina Endfield (2019), Glen MacDonald (2020) and Graeme Wynn (2020), which imagine and argue for more expansive historical geographies and environmental histories of climate, ones that ask about how catastrophe has loomed, and has been experienced and dealt with, through time and across space. In these and other initiatives, ‘danger’ – as menace, wake up call, and (as for Benjamin) flash of radical recognition – is used to link scientific uncertainty in climate data and models to different types and scales of human and planetary difficulty posed by climate change and leads to the political question (*à la* Arendt) of what a climate future might look like (also see Chakrabarty, 2018). The future is imagined through the way climate change, and, especially, how dramatic weather events and hazardous periods of climate change, can be traced through different eras and to different parts of the world. In short, the word ‘danger’ is crafted as a scientific and political repository from which to fashion historical geographies of climate knowledge and action (and of course ignorance and inaction) and with the life and death matter of the (perhaps terrifyingly short) distance between ‘a very dangerous climate and an unliveable climate’, as Andreas Malm (2018:

211) puts it in *The Progress of This Storm*, of key concern.

As MacDonald (2020) propounds, the tackling back-and-forth between past, present and future climate change markers (scientific milestones; piecemeal achievements and failures of political will; accepted and spurned findings; and the use and abuse of climate projections by different actors and entities) has become a scientific-cum-moral project in its own right, and one, he insists, that must revivify a unified (physical and human) geography. He is particularly concerned with what became of those ‘seminal’ moments from 1957, the International Geophysical Year (IGY), when the dangers of climate change started to be glimpsed, and with increasing regularity, alacrity, lethargy and peril from that point on. The IGY was also the year of the ‘Asian flu’ pandemic that killed over one million people worldwide and of Operation Plumb-bob, the largest and longest nuclear testing operation in history (undertaken at the Nevada test site). In other words, the IGY deserves its own historical geography – a ‘cross-section’ with an infinite ‘vertical theme’, if you will (see Collis and Dodds 2008; Hefferan 2009).

Hulme (2019) dwells on the question of whether it is ‘too late (to stop dangerous climate change)’ and avert the prospect of a runaway ‘hothouse Earth’, and how this question literally came to the boil in 2018 (with record global temperatures and heated public and political debate). Considerably more thought now needs to be given to ‘the possible futures of the idea of climate change’, he adds (Hulme, 2020), and to how ‘hard [it is] to explain the future of an idea when the very notion of “the future” itself has a past and a future’. While ‘there has been no shortage of ideas for which their future has been written – for example, the ideas of progress, democracy, science, socialism, capitalism, intelligence, being human’, the problem today, he says, is that many (most) of these ideas seem

like ‘has beens’ (also see Mahoney and Hulme, 2018). We are back with Mann.

Climate change also has an ominous and troubled spatiality. Its dangers will be felt most acutely – that is, unevenly and unequally in terms of who the net contributors to the things driving climate change are and who will be on the sharpest end of its effects – MacDonald (2020) avers in a ‘fateful ellipse’ on the world map (roughly, the tropical and formerly colonised world). He uses this expression with some trepidation, mindful of its potential association with an ugly history of environmental determinism. However, critical reflection on climate dangers, he and Wynn (2020) insist, necessarily brings forth spectres of slavery and colonisation, and thus questions of power and moral responsibility, that need to be confronted.

Kathryn Yusoff (2018) adds that talk of such a geographically condensed ellipse not only resurrects colonial stereotyping and talk of ‘the white man’s burden’; it also detracts attention from the more generally racialised hue of climate change (from drivers and effects that are as fateful, albeit in different ways, in Louisiana as they are in Lagos or Lahore). She writes of ‘Black Anthropocenes’ on account of ‘the geographical and subjective dispossession’ performed by ‘White Geology’. Black Anthropocenes involve an ‘inhuman proximity organised by historical geographies of extraction, grammars of geology, imperial global geography, and contemporary environmental racism’ – geographies, geologies and genealogies ‘predicated on the presumed absorbent qualities of black and brown bodies to take up the body burdens of exposure to toxicities and to buffer the violence of the earth’ (Yusoff, 2018: 5).

Lastly in this subsection, *Weather, Climate, and the Geographical Imagination* (Mahoney and Randalls, 2020) deals with how these questions of spatiality need to be kept in conversation with ones of temporality. The meaning of ‘dangerous climate change’ is hewn from what the contributors to this volume describe as many

shades of temporality: faster/blaring and slower/silent threats; path-dependent and future-conditional trajectories; gradual and exponential change; backloaded problems and frontloading scenarios associated with CO₂ emissions into the air and oceans; earth system thresholds and tipping points; and so forth. Broadly here, climate change is as much a ghosting, as it is a reality, of portents and effects that points to what Dipesh Chakrabarty (2018: 5) terms an ‘Anthropocene time’: a new and stupefying phase of human history within which we ‘connect events that happen on vast, geological scales – such as changes to the whole climate system of the planet – with what we might do in the everyday lives of individuals, collectivities, institutions, and nations (such as burning fossil fuels)’.

Endfield (2019: 25) adds that framing climate change in global terms runs roughshod over equally important ‘stories about local events and geography, local places, and the history of weather in those places’, stories ‘which make complex challenges and manifestations of climate change more salient and tangible, [and] could result in greater emotional and cognitive engagement with climate change’ (also Endfield and Veale, 2018).

2 A Fragile Earth and Fractured Knowledge

A further take on danger (still as both peril and possibility), this time as fragility and fracture, can be tracked through three similarly themed, if differently focused, books: Michael Bravo’s *North Pole* (2019); Veronica della Dora’s *The Mantle of the Earth* (2020); and Lowenthal’s *Quest*. Each of these works probes humanity’s deep and resolute, yet perennially precarious and paradoxical, quest to know the planet and the globe as its home. Each is concerned with the idea of earth thinking and the political implications of humanity’s recognition that, as Arendt (1998 [1958]: 250) writing in that same IGY observed, ‘we now live in an earth-wide

continuous whole'. Bravo, della Dora and Lowenthal deem this gleeful yet forlorn human quest as a metaphor for geography's tricky identity as an Earth subject and argue that thinking about the history of this subject at a time of its 'peak' fragility (if you will) really matters.

Bravo (2019: 5, 34, 178) traverses the complex and delicate relations between the 'nature' and the 'culture' around the North Pole and how they have been routed through tropes of mystery, survival, Native occupancy and imperial fantasy. Among other things, 'the very idea of seeking the North Pole so beguiled... [Western] explorers that they felt compelled to search for a deeper history of the poles in which their own polar endeavours would make sense'; and this, for many, yielded a simultaneously exhilarating and numbing feeling that they had reached 'the origin of time', most immediately in the sense that the North Pole has 'no allocated longitude or time zone'.

Della Dora probes how the fragility of this idea of Earthly timelessness and search for deep understanding has been wrapped up with the metaphor of the mantle of the earth. On the other side of the 'Gaia' of Ancient lore – of a visibility life-sustaining and balancing Mother Earth – there was an earth and sky that was more deceptively and alluringly represented in the form of cloaks and garments (della Dora, 2020: 67). She continues:

The mantle metaphor conveys a sense of fragile and transient beauty. Its polychrome texture drifts between the hidden profundity of the earth and the infinity of the universe. It naturally directs the gaze to the surface, but it also implies the existence of a hidden depth. The mantle conceals and reveals. It gives visual shape to the tension between the visible and the invisible, between the hidden and the manifest... [and] has also challenged generations of scientists and explorers to tear it apart. (della Dora, 2020: 2)

This tearing apart was driven as much (if not more) by avarice as it was by curiosity, of course,

and to the point that the mantle of the earth became what Sydney Mangham, in 1939, described as a 'wounded green mantle' – the progenitor of the fragile 'blue marble' image of Earth that later came from space (della Dora, 2020: 228).

Lowenthal's *Quest* is a lifelong reflection on what he sees as the tearing apart of humanity's ability to know the planet as a 'whole' (a word used frequently in the book) due to the fractious inroads and consequences of disciplinary fiefdoms and research silos (also see Barnes, 2021). He goes over well-trodden ground (largely, although not exclusively, in Western thought) about the loss of 'synthetic' understanding and dangers of 'disunified' knowledge, and, in a 'reap what ye shall sow' tone, with 'the precious fragile sanctuary [called Earth, also called Eden] now at risk of diabolical destruction', and with 'climate change and environmental racism... [now] imperil[ling] both cultural and environmental heritage' (Lowenthal, 2019: 62, 151). The late 1950s, and in this instance the bruising debate between CP Snow and FR Leavis about the 'lumping' and 'splitting' of knowledge, loom large once more. Lowenthal's reading of 20th-century history as a 'fragile' time through which 'apocalyptic doom soured the scrutiny of the pessimist; [and] faith in progress sweetened the plaudits of the optimists' has broad resonance today, although his disquisition on 'the widening gulf between scientists and public opinion on major issues – climate change, vaccination' seems more dubious (Lowenthal, 2019: 26–29, 58–62).

Lowenthal (2019: 171) also reflects on the last of this report's three themes: the matter of 'disregard', and by which he means the way 'split' knowledge pivots on 'immediacy', discounts 'hindsight', and works to both 'presume' and 'expunge' the past.

III Disregard

One of the ways in which ideas of innovation and dissent, and even progress, in academia are

framed is through the delineation of questions and topics that have been ‘disregarded’ (ignored, unseen, unsung or discounted) hitherto. The recent promotion of Black, Indigenous and subaltern geographies is seminal in this regard (see Jazeel and Legg, 2019). Of ‘Black geographies’, Camilla Hawthorne (2019: 1) notes that while

Black thought has long been concerned with questions of space, place and power . . . , these interventions, which span centuries and continents, have not always been recognized as “properly” geographical and have thus been systematically excluded from the formal canon of disciplinary geography.

The question of how such disregarded geographies might become ‘mainstream’ does not just revolve around commending what they are, or might achieve, to a disregarding audience – she outlines ‘thematics’ of ‘space-making and the Black geographic imagination; racial capitalism, cities, policing and carceral geographies; and racism and plantation futures’ (Hawthorne, 2019: 1–4). It also summons structures and histories of disregard – exclusion, denigration, ignorance – and the question of why they have not been adequately addressed before (also see Goldberg, 2018; Inwood and Alderman, 2020).

As Lowenthal (2019: 98–104, 149–162) remarks, this latter double condition of ‘purity and mixture’ – the experience and memory of being on the outside, or in virtuous separation, and of wanting the choice to decide on whether or not to be or become mainstream – is part and parcel of today’s times of ‘doom’ and ‘danger’ and makes disregard (where it comes from and the different forms it takes) an object of historical study and interpretative sensibility in its own right. Disregard has reached this position because questions of voice, agency, difference and human regard for other humans and the planet are now at once powerfully in the air and everywhere seemingly jeopardised and fractured.

In this last section, then, I shall alight briefly on ‘disregard’ as a means of flagging a further range of work in the subfield. I shall start with historical geographers’ interest in the idea of disregard itself and then consider how it is hooked up with growing interest on their part in the buzzword ‘decolonisation’, which has become a *cause célèbre* within geography and critical inquiry much more generally.

I ‘The Politics of Disregard’

I take this expression from Ann Laura Stoler (2008: 255), whose work has left a deep impression on how historical geographers deal with questions of colonialism and have become interested in ones of affect. She deploys it in her *Along the Archival Grain* to flag two issues.

Sarah de Leeuw (2012: 274–275) neatly captures the first issue: how ‘archives and the materials housed therein can be fruitfully theorized as deeply affective entities which require researchers to pay close attention to the emotional, political, and subjective nature of working with them’. A politics of disregard is concerned with how tangible (material and embodied) conditions and forces (of abjection, advantage, exploitation, privilege, repression, resistance, violence and so on) are connected to emotions, sensations and sentiments (of rejection and recognition, pain and gratification, fervour and indifference, trust and deception, and optimism and cynicism, for example) and how these material-affective forces and filaments structure relationships between researchers and their objects and subjects.

Stoler’s (2008: 247, 255, 274–278) second, and related, concern is with how these material-affective relations expose a twin fissure in post-colonial theory: ‘the premise [found there] that we who study the colonial know both what imperial rule looks like and the dispositions of those it empowers’; and ‘the smug sense that colonial sensibilities are a given and we can now quickly move on to the complexities and

more subtle, troubled dispositions of the post-colonial present’.

From its 15th-century inception, Stoler (2008: 255) continues, colonialism has rightly been criticised for being an ‘ignorant’ and ‘distorting’ system of knowledge. However, the redemptive pledge to recall and nurture a more accurate or equitable knowledge has yet to deliver on its promise. ‘Decolonisation’ is still required, both in the mind and on the ground. Meanwhile, postcolonial theory and scholarship struggle to exculpate themselves from the problems of imperial amnesia (forms of bias and acts of disregard) and colonial nostalgia (hazy and distorting suppositions about the colonial past and present) they arraign. The colonial past is disregarded in latter-day postcolonial projects in the sense that it is prone to being shrouded in overfamiliarity, thus short-circuiting what is made of what Derek Gregory (2004), with lasting probity, termed ‘the colonial present’.

In these ways and more, Stoler (2008: 238) suggests, the politics of disregard ‘saturate efforts to understand the lived inequities of colonial relations in more profound and prosaic ways’. Geographers have readily ventured into what she describes as this ‘unsettling space’, which variously ‘spans knowing and not knowing, good and bad faith, refusal and acceptance’; is traversed by different (‘bare’, ‘contrived’, ‘feigned’ and ‘educated’) acts of ignoring and forms of ignorance; and is a space of ‘active and violent forces’, rather than just legacies or scars, a space where ‘sentiment damages and defies, discriminates and demands’ (Stoler, 2008: 238–255; 2016, 5–17).

Hidefumi Nishiyama (2019) coins the expression ‘geopolitics of disregard’ to tease out ‘acts of disregarding certain forms of violence and injustice’ in ‘everyday’ (rank and file) military life in Okinawa from the late 19th century. Stephen Legg (2020: 774) uses a related term, ‘political atmospherics’, in connection with early 20th-century international conferences, examining

how material settings, objects and atmospheres (conference travel, meeting rooms and actualities and metaphors of weather) combined with political moods, bodily gestures and forms of speech, or ‘atmospherics’, to connect (and in this context racialise) ‘place, bodies and politics’. The issue of whether it is possible to fully challenge colonialism’s ‘disregarding’ ways is especially problematic in situations of settler colonialism where entrenched forms of sequestration, and divergent Native and settler views on the past, prevail. Writing about Canada, Graeme Wynn (2019: 161), for example, shows how deeply damaging ‘histories of colonialism’ have been as ‘exercises in justification and rationalization that distort, disfigure, and destroy the pasts of the colonized’.

As Aparajita Mukhopadhyay (2018) shows in *Imperial Technology and ‘Native’ Agency* (on railways), and Nilanjana Mukherjee (2020) discloses in *Spatial Imaginings in the Age of Colonial Cartographic Reason* – two major new books on British colonial power in India – triumphant imperial ruses of reason and technological mastery became both disdainful ploys of rule and illusions of control that were betrayed by displays of colonial ‘refinement’, and, by implication, native ‘incivility’. Both the ruse and the illusion were spatialised through distinctions of class, race, gender, tribe and religion and played themselves out in railway carriages, on surveying frontiers, and in the pages of travel guidebooks. Another major work, James Duncan’s (2020) *Resisting the Rule of Law in Nineteenth-Century Ceylon*, takes such concerns into the colonial police, courts and prisons. Duncan probes various ‘arts’ of colonial power – ‘arts’ in the sense that these spaces, and the distinctions between metropole and colony, and coloniser and colonised, they sought to draw were shot through with affective relations of ‘subterfuge’, ‘disassembling’ and ‘dark biopower’ (also see Haines, 2019).

2 Decolonisations

A further expression of this concern with disregard comes in connection with scholarship and debate about the nature and meaning of the colonial present and backstory questions about decolonisation.

Postcolonialism's concern with 'colonialism's complex afterlives' (Gandhi, 2019 [1998]: 4) is now interleaved with, and in some ways being surmounted by, recognition of ongoing – intricate and intense – actualities of colonial abuse, distortion, exploitation and trauma, and doom about the eternal return and ping back of colonial power. At one level, what Nasser Abourahme (2018: 107), for example, says about this 'boomerang' present (with reference to Palestine) is palpably true and proper: it provokes a reckoning with

our enduring colonial histories not as a set of legacies, hauntings or traces (the faint scents of a past), but as the durability of colonial entailments that cling to the present. That is, colonial history as neither smooth and seamless continuity (an eternal colonial present) nor abrupt epochal break (a stagist overcoming), but the protracted temporality and uneven sedimentation of colonial practice.

Yet as he also implies, defining the present in terms of colonial entailments, encumbrances and endurances raises important questions about what 'the colonial' means and does today. Does it invoke a history (a protracted or sedimented temporality) that then needs to be carefully re-examined (as Stoler would have it)? Or can one stick largely to the present on the presumption that the general contours of this history are known and agreed upon?

There are three (related) questions at stake here. The first pivots on how the idea of the colonial present points to past struggles to rid the world of its colonial founts and forms of power – to decolonising energies that somehow waned or remain incomplete. Second, if the

colonial is not dead, and struggles for decolonisation form part of a lapsed or protracted history that is folded into this recognition, then it behoves us to understand more about this history – a history that, as Bill Schwarz (2017) potently relates, is profoundly marked by 'tragedy'. What clues about the hopes and potential pitfalls of current decolonising projects – and not least, perhaps, regarding how and why geography today needs to be 'decolonised' – might be gleaned from the study of historical geographies of '*décolonisations*', plural. (Singaravelou et al., 2020; also see Clayton and Kumar, 2019; Ferretti, 2020; Klein et al., 2019)? And third, and as Tariq Jazeel (2019) asks: How might such historical work distinguish between different 'anti-', 'de-' and 'post-' colonial elements and trajectories of 'the colonial' and ask about any of these things in singular, plural or common forms?

For a start, there has been a resurgence of interest in the spatial ideas and practices of 20th-century anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-racist, feminist and intersectional thinkers and activists (some of them geographers) – such as James Blaut, WEB Du Bois, Aimé Césaire, Angela Davies, Frantz Fanon, Audre Lorde, George Padmore, Cedric Robinson, Walter Rodney and Milton Santos, to name just some of the most prominent – and how their work got absorbed into, and lost within, the 'postcolonial turn' of the 1980s and 1990s. The terminology of these figures (of 'abolition', 'racial capital', 'boomerang effect', 'reservoirs of hope and optimism', and 'devil's totality', for example) is being redeployed, in part, as a means of defamiliarising postcolonial understandings and complacencies, and geographers are returning to some of these thinkers' and activists' 'truth spots' (see e.g. Heynen, 2018; Inwood and Alderman, 2020; Sharp, 2019; Sheppard and Barnes, 2019). Both the futurism (radical fervour) and the enervation of dissident traditions and liberation struggles are at stake in such initiatives. They provide ways of thinking not

just about where today's future has gone but also about from where (and not least from the past) it might yet come. They are also ways of guarding against bandwagon effects that too easily merge the past into the present – and including the currently energising, but in some ways formulaic, ways in which decolonial agendas are washing across geography.

Another strand of work in this vein focuses on much understudied historical geographies of post-war decolonisation. It starts from the observation that critical concern with the relations between geography and empire has been trained either on pre-1945 or current colonialisms and with very little attention paid to what lies in between.

For this post-war period, and 'reading for difference in the archives of tropical geography', JK Gibson-Graham (2020: 12), for example, suggests that more geographers than might be imagined observed and were sensitive to the uncertainty and precarity of change, including climate change, that shaped this era, and their mix (there was never just one form of knowledge or ignorance) of prejudice and radicalism might now be read 'against the grain' and 'play a role in making other worlds possible'. Gavin Bowd and Daniel Clayton's (2019: 206–291) *Impure and Worldly Geography* works along similar lines. Among other things, American, British and French geographers' wartime experiences of privation, occupation and military service, and their stoicism in the face of adversity, left a deep impression on how they saw and wrote about the decolonising world. Such experiences prompted them to recoil from the violent liberation struggles going on around them, envision their fieldwork as a pacific undertaking, and adopt a paternalistic attitude towards the postcolonial masses (and especially rural communities) and their struggle to find a meaningful difference between their new nationalist leaders and older colonial masters.

Leading Africa- and Asia-focused geographer fieldworkers such as Pierre Gourou, Oskar

Spate and Joseph Spencer fit this mould, and their aspirations and outlooks were sometimes in sync with those of their African and Asian counterparts and sometimes not (see Clayton, 2020). Yes, their work was biased. But Gibson-Graham (2020: 30; and Clayton, 2020) also finds in its interstices a way into 'community economic practices . . . that have been left under-examined or dismissed as unimportant', and the veneration of which by such geographers prompted them to question, and often insightfully, 'the inevitability of a modern (capitalist) development trajectory'. In these and other hands, interest in geographers' involvement in decolonisation works as a proxy for what a broader historical geography of decolonisation might look like, and with the recognition that decolonisation raised a very basic set of geographical questions about land, resources, territory, identity and development.

There is interest, too, in geographies of late colonialism and their post-independence endurance. Mona Domosh (2018: 321), for example, uses the career of Thomas Campbell of the US Department of Agriculture's post-war African-American extension programme to track how 'racialised biopolitics' that were sewn in the Jim Crow US South, and revolved around the castigation and management of 'potentially threatening and unhealthy racialised populations[s]', wound up (and in British as well as American hands) in late colonial and 'developing' Africa (also see Rogerson and Rogerson, 2020).

Meanwhile, in their encyclopaedic *The Ends of Empire*, John Connell and Robert Aldrich (2020: 446–448) question the assumption that independence movements in 'the last colonies' (remnants of colonial empires remaining from c.1970 onwards) simply 'failed and faded', because 'looking [around] at local strife, fragile economies and political systems, irredentism, controversies over borders, and difficult relations with neighbours' some of these colonies chose to stay, at least informally, within the armature of empire. Connell and Aldridge (2020: 447) note that while,

according to the postcolonial critic, ‘non-sovereignty may not be very “heroic,” [and] perhaps even a “dead-end present,” compared with the groundswell of the great independence movements of the 1940s and 1950s’ some saw ‘tangible and practical benefits’ to it. Matters were not so clear cut either on the other – ‘heroic’ – side of this coin. In *Geographies of Anticolonialism*, which focuses on early 20th-century South India, Andrew Davies (2020: 20) alights upon the need to treat anticolonialism not as ‘a “pure” or reactive form of resistance’ that works in strict opposition to colonialism but as ‘a diverse and productive form of political activity’ that tapped into colonialism’s repertoires of power as well as Indian and dissident traditions, thus spawning (and often disguising) longer term postcolonial difficulties.

Lastly, Miles Ogborn’s (2019: 1) compelling *The Freedom of Speech* returns to a much earlier historical geography of speech and talk - of ‘oaths, orations, orders, mutterings, rumors, incantations, debates, whispers, conversations, prayers, and proclamations . . .’ - in the Anglo-Caribbean slave world, and, in the process, raises important questions about the need to attend to what decolonial thinkers call ‘the colonial matrix [or generative origins] of power’ (Mignolo, 2019: 114 and *passim*). ‘As a crucial [and much overlooked] form of everyday practice (understood as contextual, embodied, located, and practiced speech acts that animate broader modes of veridiction) talk is a way into important questions of identity, social relations, representation, violence and materiality’, Ogborn (2019: 233–235) shows; and assiduous archival listening and detective work provides ‘the basis for alternative ways of understanding freedom and slavery . . . and other ways of comprehending the relationships between humans, other animals, and spirit beings that questioned dominant assumptions about who might speak, and to what purpose’.

IV Conclusion: Powers of Darkness, Glimmers of Victory

These sentiments of doom, danger and disregard do not exhaust – by any stretch of the imagination – how recent work in historical geography might be framed. However, they point to some of its most expressive and suggestive inflections and directions, and to the political tenor of the subfield at the minute, and at a time when historical inquiry seems vital to the present but has a precarious place within it. Historical work within geography provokes more general questions about how the discipline, generally, sees itself, and at a time when ideas of radical transformation, redemption and the future are not what they used to be.

In one of my favourite books, Susan Buck-Morss (1995) writes of the tight dialectic between ‘dreamworld and catastrophe’ in the 20th century ‘passing’ of mass utopias in the East and West, largely as they were played out through Cold War antimonies. This dialectic has been torn asunder in the sense that, in recent times, catastrophe has ballooned and dreamworlds are hard to discern or amass in anything other than intransigent and avaricious ways. Utopias are collapsed in on all but the tiny tiny few, the 1 per cent who own virtually all the world’s wealth and considerable swathes of power. Bereft of dreamworlds, people look in, at their own lived worlds, and it is from there that they look out and connect. There is a counter historical geography to this – an effervescence of internationalism, cooperation and coexistence – to which I shall turn next time. For now, this insular ‘here and there’ is not all doom. As historical geographers are currently determined to disclose, and as the above discussion has sought to intimate, doom, danger and disregard are also stitched together by the courage and audacity of hope.


Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Daniel Clayton  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2557-5495>

References

- Abourahme N (2018) Of monsters and boomerangs: colonial returns in the late liberal city. *City* 22(1): 106–115.
- Arendt H (1951) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Schocken Books.
- Arendt H (1998 [1958]) *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Barnes TJ (2021) David Lowenthal on geography and its past. *Landscape Research*. Epub ahead of print 28 August 2020. DOI: 10.1080/01426397.2020.1808967.
- Barnes TJ and Sheppard E (eds) (2019) *Spatial Histories of Radical Geography: North America and Beyond*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Benjamin W (1989) *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin and Gershom Scholem 1932-1940*, Scholem G (ed.) Smith G and Lefevere A (transl). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benn DI and Sugden DE (2020) West Antarctic ice sheet and CO₂ greenhouse effect: a threat of disaster. *Scottish Geographical Journal* 136 (1-4): 13–22.
- Bowd G and Clayton D (2019) *Impure and Worldly Geography: Pierre Gourou and Tropicality*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bravo M (2019) *North Pole: Nature and Culture*. Chicago and London: Reaktion Books.
- Brook R, Dodge M and Hogg J (eds) (2020) *Cold War Cities: Politics, Culture and Atomic Urbanism, 1945–1965*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Buck-Morss S (1995) *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Busbridge R (2020) Messianic time, settler colonial technology and the elision of Palestinian presence in Jerusalem's historic basin. *Political Geography* 79: 102158.
- Chakrabarty D (2018) Anthropocene time. *History and Theory* 57(1): 5–32.
- Claval P (2019) Europe, public opinion, and Brexit. *Scottish Geographical Journal* 135(1-2): 46–67.
- Clayton D (2020) The passing of 'geography's empire' and question of geography in decolonization, 1945-1980. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(5): 1540–1558.
- Clayton D and Kumar MS (eds) (2019) Geography and decolonisation. Special issue. *Journal of Historical Geography* 66: 1–8.
- Collis C and Dodds K (2008) Assault on the unknown: the historical and political geographies of the International Geophysical Year (1957–58). *Journal of Historical Geography* 34(4): 555–573.
- Colten C (2018) The value of practicing historical geography. *Historical Geography* 46: 1–31.
- Connell J and Aldrich R (2020) *The Ends of Empire: The Last Colonies Revisited*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Davies A (2020) *Geographies of Anticolonialism: Political Networks Across and Beyond South India, c.1900-1930*. London: Wiley-IBG Book Series.
- de Leeuw S (2012) Alice through the looking glass: emotion, personal connection, and reading colonial archives along the grain. *Journal of Historical Geography* 38(3): 273–281.
- della Dora V (2020) *The Mantle of the Earth: Genealogies of a Geographical Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Domosh M (2018) Race, biopolitics and liberal development from the Jim Crow South to postwar Africa. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 43(2): 312–324.
- Dorling D and Tomlinson S (2019) *Rule Britannia: Brexit and the End of Empire*. London: Biteback Publishing.
- Duncan JS (2020) *Resisting the Rule of Law in Nineteenth-Century Ceylon: Colonialism and the Negotiation of Bureaucratic Boundaries*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Endfield G (2019) Weather and elemental places. *Historical Geography* 47: 1–31.
- Endfield G and Veale L (eds) (2018) *Cultural Histories, Memories and Extreme Weather: A Historical Geography Perspective*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Featherstone D and Karaliotas L (2019) Populism. *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture* 72: 31–47.
- Ferretti F (2020) Subaltern connections: Brazilian critical geographers, development and African decolonisation. *Third World Quarterly* 41(5): 822–841.

- Ferretti F, Torre G, Ince A, et al. (eds) (2019) *Historical Geographies of Anarchism: Early Critical Geographers and Present-Day Scientific Challenges*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Gandhi L (2019 [1998]) *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edn. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Giaccaria P and Minca C (eds) (2016) *Hitler's Geographies: The Spatialities of the Third Reich*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gibson-Graham JK (2020) Reading for difference in the archives of tropical geography: imagining an(other) economic geography for beyond the Anthropocene. *Antipode* 52(1): 12–35.
- Goldberg S (2018) For decades, our coverage was racist. To rise above our past, we must acknowledge it. *National Geographic Magazine*, 12 March. Available at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/article/from-the-editor-race-racism-history> (accessed 5 January 2019).
- Gregory D (2004) *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Guilluy C (2019) *Twilight of the Elites: Prosperity, the Periphery and the Future of France*, Debevoise M (Trans.). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Haines E (2019) Visions from behind a desk? Archival performance and the re-enactment of colonial bureaucracy. *Area* 51: 25–34.
- Harris C (2020) *A Bounded Land: Reflections on Settler Colonialism in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Hart G (2020) Resurgent nationalisms and populist politics in the neoliberal age. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 102(3): 233–238.
- Harvey D (2020) *The Anti-Capitalist Chronicles*. London: Pluto Press.
- Hawthorne C (2019) Black matters are spatial matters: Black geographies for the twenty-first century. *Geography Compass* 13(11): e12468.
- Heffeman M (2009) Historical geography. Making history – Institute of Historical Research. Available at: https://archives.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/historical_geography.html (accessed 14 November 2010).
- Heynen N (2018) Toward an abolition ecology. *Abolition: A Journal of Insurgent Politics* 1(1): 240–247.
- Heynen N, Aiello D, Keegan C, et al. (2018) The enduring struggle for social justice and the city. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 108(2): 301–316.
- Hulme M (2019) Is it too late (to stop dangerous climate change)? *WIREs Climate Change* 11: e619. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/wcc.619> (accessed 10 December 2020).
- Hulme M (2020) Climate change forever: the future of an idea. *Scottish Geographical Journal* 136(1-4): 118–122.
- Ince A (2019) Fragments of an anti-fascist geography: interrogating racism, nationalism, and state power. *Geography Compass* 2019; 13: e12420.
- Inwood J and Alderman D (2020) ‘The care and feeding of power structures’: reconceptualizing geospatial intelligence through the counter-mapping efforts of the student nonviolent coordinating committee. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(3): 705–723.
- Jazeel T (2019) Singularity: a manifesto for incomparable geographies. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 40: 5–21.
- Jazeel T and Legg S (eds) (2019) *Subaltern Geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Kirk A (2017) *Doom Towns: The People and Landscapes of Atomic Testing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Klein J.-F, Peyroulou J.-P, Dorigny M, et al. (2019) *Grand atlas des empires coloniaux: Premières colonisations, empires coloniaux, décolonisations (XVe-XXIe siècles)*. Paris: AUTREPART.
- Kobayashi A (2017) Historical geography in the service of social justice. *Historical Geography* 45: 2–16.
- Legg S (2020) ‘Political atmospherics’: the India round table conference’s atmospheric environments, bodies and representations, London 1930–1932. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(3): 774–792.
- Lilla M (2016) *The Shipwrecked Mind: On Political Reaction*. New York, NY: New York Review of Books.
- Livingstone D (2020) Climate and civilisation. In: Boyden M (ed.) *Climate in American Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 58–74.
- Loren-Méndez M and Pinzón-Ayala D (2020) Spatial legal history of Spanish Mediterranean geography: the last phase of Franco’s regime, 1959–1975. *Geographical Review*. Epub ahead of print 14 July 2020. DOI: 10.1080/00167428.2020.1782204.
- Lowenthal D (2019) *Quest for the Unity of Knowledge*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- McCarthy J (2019) Authoritarianism, populism, and the environment: comparative experiences, insights, and

- perspectives. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 109(2): 301–313.
- McDonagh B (2018) Feminist historical geographies: doing and being. *Gender, Place & Culture* 25(11): 1563–1578.
- MacDonald G (2020) Climate, capital, conflict: geographies of success or failure in the twenty-first century. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 110(6): 2011–2031.
- McGeachan C (2017) Historical geography III: hope persists. *Progress in Human Geography* 43(2): 351–362.
- McGeachan C (2014) Historical geography I: what remains? *Progress in Human Geography* 38(6): 824–837.
- Mahoney M and Hulme M (2018) Epistemic geographies of climate change: science, space and politics. *Progress in Human Geography* 42(3): 395–424.
- Mahoney M and Randalls S (eds) (2020) *Weather, Climate, and the Geographical Imagination: Placing Atmospheric Knowledges*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Malm A (2018) *The Progress of this Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World*. London: Verso.
- Mann G (2019) Doom. In: Antipode editorial collective (eds) *Keywords in Radical Geography: Antipode at 50 Antipode*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, pp. 90–94. DOI: 10.1002/9781119558071.ch16.
- Masco J (2021) *The Future of Fallout, and Other Episodes in Radioactive World-Making*. London and Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Merrill S and Pries J (2019) Translocalising and relocalising antifascist struggles: from #KämpaShowan to #KämpaMalmö. *Antipode* 51(1): 248–270.
- Mignolo W (2019) What does it mean to decolonize? In: Mignolo W and Walsh C *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 105–134.
- Millar S and Mitchell D (2017) The tight dialectic: the Anthropocene and the capitalist production of nature. *Antipode* 49: 75–93.
- Mishra P (2018) *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*. London: Penguin.
- Mukherjee N (2020) *Spatial Imaginings in the Age of Colonial Cartographic Reason: Maps, Landscapes, Travelogues in Britain and India*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Mukhopadhyay A (2018) *Imperial Technology and 'Native' Agency: A Social History of Railways in Colonial India, 1850-1920*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Nishiyama H (2019) Geopolitics of disregard: living a colonial life in Okinawa. *Political Geography* 74: 102042.
- Ogborn M (2019) *The Freedom of Speech: Talk and Slavery in the Anglo-Caribbean World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Orain O and Robic M-C (eds) (2020) Mai-Juin 68, une anamnèse, special issue. *L'Espace géographique* 1: 1–127.
- Rogerson C and Rogerson J (2020) Racialized landscapes of tourism: from Jim Crow USA to Apartheid South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography* 48: 7–21.
- Schwarz B (2017) Decolonization as tragedy? In: Arnold M, Hilton M and Rieger J (eds) *History After Hobsbawm: Writing the Past for the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 96–120. Available at: <https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/-chapter-6> (accessed 8 February 2020).
- Sharp J (2019) Practicing subalternity? Nyerere's Tanzania, the Dar School, and postcolonial geopolitical imaginations. In: Jazeel T and Legg S (eds) *Subaltern Geographies*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, pp. 74–93.
- Sheppard E and Barnes TJ (2019) Baltimore as truth spot: David Harvey, Johns Hopkins, and urban activism. In: Barnes TJ and Sheppard E (eds) *Spatial Histories of Radical Geography: North America and Beyond*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons Ltd, pp. 183–209.
- Singaravélou P, Miske K and Ball M (2020) *Décolonisations*. Paris: SEUIL.
- Stoler AL (2008) *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Stoler AL (2016) *Duress: Imperial Durabilities of Our Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Tolia-Kelly D, Cabral D, Legg S, et al. (2020) Historical geographies of the 21st century: challenging our praxis. *Journal of Historical Geography* 69: 1–4.
- Wainwright J and Mann G (2018) *Climate Leviathan: A Political Theory of Our Planetary Future*. London: Verso.
- Wynn G (2019) Nature we cannot see. In: Coates C and Wynn G (eds) *The Nature of Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, pp. 143–166.
- Wynn G (2020) Framing an ecology of hope. *Environmental History* 25(1): 2–34.
- Yusoff K (2018) *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.