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Anthropocene

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ABSTRACT: This article traces the relationship of widespread human catastrophe in late nineteenth-century adventure fictions to the equally disaster-focused discourse of the Anthropocene. Encompassing an entire people, continent, or species, destruction in adventure fiction laid a foundation in the West for imagining the Anthropocene. Using the broad frames of history, knowledge, and identity, my project suggests that narrating death and devastation may actually come at cross-purposes with the activist positionality of contemporary scientists, humanists, and lobbyists who write about the Anthropocene.

The cataclysmic endings typical of the Anglo-American adventure fiction genre have structured the West's encounters with ecological catastrophe since the late nineteenth century.[1] Usually set in or on the outskirts of the British Empire, adventure fictions tend to conclude with a battle between forces positioned as good and evil, light

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1. Numerous critics have noted the relationship of catastrophe to nineteenth-century fiction. In fact, Cara Murray explains, "Catastrophe flourished in this genre because it offered a new way of conceptualizing space and time that would be a boon to imperial developments" (Cara Murray, "Catastrophe and Development in the Adventure Romance," *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920* 53:2 [2010]: 150–169, at p. 150). See also Ailise Bulfin, "'The End of Time': M. P. Shiel and the 'Apocalyptic Imaginary,'" in *Victorian Time: Technologies, Standardizations, Catastrophes*, ed. Trish Ferguson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 153–177; Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2001), passim; Benjamin Morgan, "Fin du Globe: On Decadent Planets," *Victorian Studies* 58:4 (2016): 609–635.

and dark, colonized and savage. The death toll is high, and entire civilizations are leveled in the strife. In H. Rider Haggard's Meso-american lost world adventure *Heart of the World* (1895), for instance, to save her English husband and avenge their murdered son, the Aztec princess Maya drowns a city and all of its residents by releasing a sophisticated water sluice: "Now the flood struck the people, some thousands of them . . . and lo! in an instant they were gone. . . . Ere a man might count ten the most of the population of the City of the Heart had perished!"[2] Although Haggard was famous for "scenes of epic bloodbaths,"[3] he did not have a monopoly on slaughter-centered plots. Throughout the mid and late nineteenth and early twentieth century—particularly during the years of New Imperialism (1871–1914)—authors like Haggard, Frank Aubrey, R. M. Ballantyne, John Buchan, A. C. Doyle, G. A. Henty, Cutcliffe Hyne, W. H. G. Kingston, Talbot Mundy, Joseph Shield Nicholson, and Oliphant Smeaton could not imagine the Empire without imagining death and decimation. Whereas in adventure fictions set in Europe, such as Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1894), combat and destruction are limited to a few villains, in adventures set in Africa, Australia, South and Central America—any place the British considered an untamed wilderness—devastation is sublime in its immensity, and total in its consequences. With its anthropogenic destruction and unthinkable enormity, catastrophe took hold in the Western imagination by way of imperial romances. Encompassing an entire people, continent, or species, the Empire permitted Britons to wonder at the cause and consequences of large-scale destruction. News periodical reporting about historical spectacles of catastrophe—man-made (the 1879 Tay rail bridge collapse) and natural (the 1883 eruption of Krakatoa)—whetted the public's appetite for even more sensational calamities in fiction. In this way, adventure fiction laid a foundation in the West for imagining the Anthropocene.

Contemporary interest in the Anthropocene has led to a proliferation of definitions, but most scientists agree the term refers to an epoch in geological history caused by human actions, such as mining, nuclear tests, plastic waste, and fossil fuel extraction and use. Almost since its coinage by Paul Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer in 2000, the term has appealed to philosophers and humanists in addition to scientists. The idea of the Anthropocene dissolves the boundary sep-

2. H. Rider Haggard, *Heart of the World* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1896), p. 339.

3. Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 168.

arating humans from nature, whether as the supreme act of human narcissism, as Donna Haraway suggests, or else as the apotheosis of postmodern thought.[4] Because anthropogenic deposits accumulate gradually, estimates pinpointing the start of the Anthropocene range widely from the beginning of farming culture 8,000 years ago, to the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago, to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, to the 1950s "Great Acceleration," which marked a rise in resource consumption corresponding to human population growth.[5] Regardless of when it began, during the nineteenth century mass extinctions caused by human actions began to increase and serve as the inspiration for fictions. *Moby Dick* (1851), possibly the most famous novel recording a species' near total extermination, reflects Ashley Dawson's radical argument that the unequivocal culprit for large-scale species decimation is the relentless and unsustainable push of industrial production, which must absorb and expend animal bodies and habitats en masse. In the case of cetaceans, a particularly charismatic megafauna for novelists, "[c]ompetition led to increasingly sophisticated techniques of slaughter, from the faster sailing ships of the late eighteenth century that hunted right whales to near extinction in several decades, to the invention in the mid-nineteenth century of the explosive harpoon gun and huge steam-powered factory ships, which allowed whalers to hunt faster fin and sperm whales in devastating numbers."[6] Although Melville doubts the likelihood of total extermination in a chapter titled "Does the Whale's Magnitude Diminish?—Will He Perish?," Melville addressed a topic of popular fascination by evaluating the possibility of annihilating an entire species.[7] In fact, Captain FitzRoy notes in his 1839 narrative of the Beagle voyage (of *Origin of Species* fame) that in the area of Tierra del Fuego, "Whales frequent the surrounding waters at particular seasons . . . though their numbers are very much diminished by the annual attacks of so many whale-ships."[8] Juvenile

4. Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6:1 (2015): 159–165.

5. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 12; Colin N. Waters et al., "The Anthropocene Is Functionally and Stratigraphically Distinct from the Holocene," *Science* 351:6269 (January 2016): aad2622-1–aad2622-10.

6. Ashley Dawson, *Extinction: A Radical History* (New York: OR Books, 2016), p. 54.

7. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Tony Tanner, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 409.

8. Robert FitzRoy, *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty's Ships Adventure and Beagle: Between the Years 1826 and 1836* (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), vol. 2, p. 254.

adventure fictions such as W. H. G. Kingston's similarly themed *Peter the Whaler*, published the same year as Melville's classic, while less philosophical, treated slaughter as evidence of civilization's progress as well as subject matter fitted for romping good stories.[9] In light of shifting attitudes toward historical and critical theory in the wake of polysemous versions of "Anthropocene thinking,"[10] narratives of destruction, which have thrilled and horrified readers since the mid-nineteenth century, require renewed study. My project examines several adventure fictions to identify and critique themes and histories that accompany human-caused decimation.

This article traces the relationship of widespread environmental catastrophe in nineteenth-century adventure fictions to the equally disaster-focused discourse of the Anthropocene. Studying a range of Western, and mostly British, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century writers who depict death not in terms of a hero righteously slaying a select few villains, but instead as a plot point that is broad and largely indiscriminate, I will assess how ideas about human extinction in adventure fiction anticipate preoccupations with massive die-offs by recent critical theory, climate science, and environmental studies scholars.[11] My aim is not to suggest a causal link between these two discourses. Rather, by identifying similar themes, rhetorical devices, and narrative arcs, I am able to identify points of ideological crossover supported by these parallels. This project accommodates a more complex idea of rhetorical and narrative causality by adopting strategic presentism, which focuses on "the ways the past is at work

9. Kingston emphasizes the danger, excitement, and violence of a whale hunt in *Peter the Whaler* when the sailor Old David remarks of their dying quarry that he "[n]ever saw a whale in such a flurry" (p. 236). As Peter goes on to explain, "For upwards of two minutes the flurry continued, we all the while looking on, and no one daring to approach it; at the same time, a spout of blood and mucus and oil ascended into the air from its blow-holes, and sprinkled us all over" (William Henry Giles Kingston, *Peter the Whaler: His Early Life, and Adventures in the Arctic Regions and Other Parts of the World* [New York: C. S. Francis & Co., 1852], p. 236).

10. Jeremy Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), p. 55.

11. The focus on the mass death of humans caused by human actions sets my study apart from much important scholarship about extinction, which has tended to focus on animals, rather than human beings. See William M. Adams, *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation* (London: Earthscan, 2004), passim; Dawson, *Extinction* (above, n. 6), passim; Ursula K. Heise, *Imagining Extinction: The Cultural Meanings of Endangered Species* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), passim; Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History* (New York: Macmillan, 2014), passim; John Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body: Violence, Identity and Ecology in Victorian Adventure Fiction* (London: Anthem, 2012), passim; David Quammen, *The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinctions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), passim.

in the exigencies of the present."[12] Acknowledging the alterity of the past as it relates to the Anthropocene renders this discourse strange and unfamiliar, and this defamiliarization enables a more complex kind of historicism. Strategic presentism offers the best means for answering important questions concerning the role that scientific measurement, speculative projection, and wild-minded imagination have all played in the cultural history of massive die-offs since the nineteenth century. I use the broad frames of history, knowledge, and identity to build on the already substantial body of scholarship devoted to Victorian and Edwardian cultural studies and the Anthropocene.[13] My project, which focuses particularly upon lost world fictions in which groups of people are wiped from the earth, suggests that narrating death and devastation may actually come at cross-purposes with the activist positionality of many twenty-first century scientists, humanists, and environmentalists laboring to slow or reverse human-caused ecological devastation in their writing about the Anthropocene. As Amy Elias and Christian Moraru explain, invoking Spivak's idea of planetarity, the complex figuration of the history of capital and the environment "represents a transcultural phenomenon whose economical and political underpinnings cannot be ignored but whose preeminent thrust is ethical."[14] It is important to study the cultural history of adventure fiction's decimation-positive plots because these engage with the moral imperative underlying much critical discourse about the Anthropocene. While this writing is intended to promote environmental stewardship through anticapitalistic, anti-imperialist, and antiracist policies, my critique will suggest that, far from being repelled by the plots and prognoses of these nonfiction texts, tales of annihilation may do less to produce change than to foster complacency in readers habituated to mass-death.

History

As an epochal designator, ideas of historicity inhabit a central space within "Anthropocene Thinking." One of its most important re-

12. David Sweeney Coombs and Danielle Coriale, "Introduction," *Victorian Studies* 59:1 (2016): 87–89, at p. 88. I am indebted to all the contributions to the 2016 *Victorian Studies* V21 forum on "strategic presentism."

13. John Plotz, "The Victorian Anthropocene: George Marsh and the Tangled Bank of Darwinian Environmentalism," *Australasian Journal of Criticism and Cultural Ecology* 4:1 (2014): 52–64; Jesse Oak Taylor, *The Sky of Our Manufacture: The London Fog in British Fiction from Dickens to Woolf* (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2016), passim.

14. Amy Elias and Christian Moraru, "Introduction: The Planetary Condition," in *The Planetary Turn: Relationality and Geoaesthetics in the Twenty-First Century* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015), pp. xi–xxxvii, at p. xii.

percussions for critical theory has been the dissolution of a divide separating natural from human history. No longer the province of human beings alone, any record of events must also account for environmental change. This tenant is one of the founding propositions of the environmentalist movement, beginning with Bill McKibben's *The End of Nature* (1989), and appearing most recently in Ursula Heise's *Imagining Extinction* (2016).[15] But the enormity of this shift for historians, as Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests, lies in its break from the established ideas of Giambattista Vico and Thomas Hobbes that "humans, could have proper knowledge of only civil and political institutions because we made them, while nature remains God's work and ultimately inscrutable to man."[16] Enlightenment ideas upholding the divide separating civilization from the natural world had imposed limitations on what humans could know about nature. But as the nineteenth century advanced, so did acceptance of the notion that the histories of nature and culture are shared.

In the minds of most late nineteenth-century fiction of Empire authors, history was the exclusive purview of the West. Thinking particularly of the recent archaeological excavation of Great Zimbabwe, which many in England considered to be the remains of a Phoenician civilization rather than truly African, Haggard remarks in the 1896 preface he composed for A. Wilmot's *Monomotapa* (Rhodesia),

> Southern and South Central Africa has been named the country without a past. Till within recent years its untravelled expanses were supposed from the beginning to have harboured nothing but wild beasts and black men almost as wild, who for ages without number had pursued their path of destruction as they rolled southward from the human reservoir of the north, each wave of them submerging that which preceded it.[17]

The only history possible in the jungles of Africa, Haggard contends, is the history white civilization imports.[18] Using contemporary archaeology to repackage Hegel's infamous claim that "What we prop-

15. Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), passim; Heise, *Imagining Extinction*, (above, n. 11), passim.

16. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35:2 (2009): 197–222, at p. 201.

17. H. Rider Haggard, preface to *Monomotapa (Rhodesia): Its Monuments, and Its History from the Most Ancient Times to the Present Century*, by A. Wilmot (London: T. F. Unwin, 1896), pp. xiii–xxiv, at p. xiii.

18. Great Zimbabwe is not the only example of an archaeological site credited to an ancient white or Middle Eastern civilization. Cyrus Newcomb's *The Book of Algoonah* (St. Louis: Little & Becker, 1884) argues that the North American mound builders were Assyrian.

erly understand by Africa, is the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature," Haggard revives the notion that because the Empire is dominated by wild and natural places, before the arrival of white men these regions must "be presented here only as on the threshold of the World's History."[19] Adventure fiction writers reproduced the idea of an ahistorical Africa by suggesting that the arrival of white imperialists is revolutionary because it results in a violent and often genocidal jolt, which causes the region to break out of its perceived prehistoric stasis.

Strange as it seems, the premise that nature only counts as part of history once the hand of white culture can be seen in it recapitulates a claim common within the discourse of contemporary postcolonial environmental criticism.[20] While the repercussions, particularly negative ones, of the Anthropocene are global, this geologic change can be traced overwhelmingly to European and North American actors. If civilization in the West, which industrialized more quickly than other parts of the globe, is by and large responsible for anthropogenic alteration, then the new historical era of the Anthropocene continues a narrative stating that Occidental events exclusively, or at least predominantly, count as historically relevant. Overlaps in these narratives are not benign. They cultivate the type of anthropocentric historical thinking that Donna Haraway's recent work on kinship resists: "No species, not even our own arrogant one pretending to be good individuals in so-called modern Western scripts, acts alone;

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19. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. John Sibree, rev. ed. (New York: Co-operative Publication Society, 1900), p. 99. For more on Haggard and the anthropology, see Kate Holterhoff, "Egyptology and Darwinian Evolution in Conan Doyle and H. Rider Haggard: The Scientific Imagination," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 60:3 (2017): 314–340; Shawn Malley, "'Time Hath No Power Against Identity': Historical Continuity and Archaeological Adventure in H. Rider Haggard's *She*," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 40:3 (1997): 275–297; Gerald Monsman, "Of Diamonds and Deities: Social Anthropology in H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 43:3 (2000): 280–296; Richard Pearson, "Archaeology and Gothic Desire: Vitality beyond the Grave in H. Rider Haggard's Ancient Egypt," in *Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ruth Robbins and Julian Wolfreys (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2000), pp. 218–257.

20. Ian Baucom, "History 4°: Postcolonial Method and Anthropocene Time," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1:1 (2014): 123–142; Gilbert Caluya, "Fragments for a Postcolonial Critique of the Anthropocene," in *Rethinking Invasion Ecologies from the Environmental Humanities*, ed. Iain McCalman (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 31–44; Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan, "Introduction: A Postcolonial Environmental Humanities," in *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities: Postcolonial Approaches*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Jill Didur, and Anthony Carrigan (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 1–32.

assemblages of organic species and of abiotic actors make history."[21] For this reason, Haraway prefers to think of the Anthropocene less as an "epoch" (before and after) than a "boundary event" (a transition; possibly one of many).[22] Much postcolonial and environmental humanities research concerning the nineteenth century and Anthropocene thinking adopts a similar historical model that looks beyond human actors to consider the climate and the biological history of the planet on a geologic scale. For instance, Jesse Oak Taylor has explained, "Reimagining human being as species being (the term used by the young Marx to articulate that aspect of our innate being from which we are alienated under capital) lies at the heart of both evolutionary theory and much of Victorian political economy."[23] Haraway, Taylor, and others' strategies for identifying connections rather than binaries opens up to critique the range of narratives concerning historical change that Europeans moralized—especially as they relate to the history and logic of capitalism.

Although critics have just begun to tease out the significance of histories of production, consumption, private property, wage labor, and market-share competition, to this era of human-caused catastrophe, capitalism is without a doubt the mechanism and logic of these destructive alterations to the earth's ecosystems and geology. Jason Moore has coined the term "world-ecology" to describe the tension between "relational thinking about capitalism" with "a new method that grasps humanity-in-nature as a world-historical process."[24] World-ecology fosters ways of understanding the history of capitalism as intertwined with the earth's species and geological history. Chakrabarty has similarly argued, "The crisis of climate change calls for thinking" that combines "the immiscible chronologies of capital and species history."[25] But while these models for understanding the Anthropocene and capitalism have helped to make sense of the planetarity (Spivak) of these intertwined histories, they have also underscored their unevenness. Although anthropogenic consumption and production practices in the West have overwhelmingly caused global warming and species loss, the suffering that ac-

21. Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene" (above, n. 4), p. 159.

22. Ibid., p. 160.

23. Jesse Oak Taylor, "Where Is Victorian Ecocriticism?," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 43:4 (2015): 877–894, at p. 878.

24. Jason W. Moore, *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 3.

25. Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History" (above, n. 16), p. 220.

companies these actions spans the entire planet. In this respect, the discourse surrounding the Anthropocene has come to serve the same function as the discourse of globalization. In most accounts of the Anthropocene, this era began with the acceleration of Western civilization, or at least the environmental destruction it produces and exports. Perpetuated by uneven economic development and usage of natural resources, the legible and pernicious traces of industry—deforestation, heavy metals, radioactive waste, plastic contaminants, et cetera—all form the characters from which the record of our era is written. Accounts of massive and cumulative destruction have interested romance writers in Britain since the nineteenth century, but the notion of historical change caused by the West's expansiveness appears most often in the genocidal extermination of native populations in adventure fictions set in preindustrial regions.

Many authors characterized Africa as the boilerplate for human destruction on a massive scale. In Haggard's *She* (1887), for example, English explorer Horace Holly reasons, "A country like Africa . . . is sure to be full of the relics of long dead and forgotten civilisations."[26] Similarly, in the South African adventure *Prester John* (1910), John Buchan expresses the historical precedence, and even necessity, of profligate loss of life. David Crawfurd, a Scottish colonialist, attempts to dissuade the black Christian minister and revolutionary Rev. John Laputa from revolting against the British by asking, "If you are a Christian, what sort of Christianity is it to deluge the land with blood?"[27] In response, the intelligent and educated Laputa responds:

> The best. . . . The house must be swept and garnished before the man of the house can dwell in it. You have read history. Such a purging has descended on the Church at many times, and the world has awakened to a new hope. It is the same in all religions. The temples grow tawdry and foul and must be cleansed, and, let me remind you, the cleanser has always come out of the desert.[28]

Although Buchan suggests the horror and reprehensibility of this attitude, and Crawfurd successfully thwarts this insurrection, no reader could argue that Laputa's account of religion and history is incorrect. Several critics have noted that what makes Lauputa so disturbing to white readers is his position as an educated and Christian native African in the role of the divinely appointed savior of his peo-

26. H. Rider Haggard, *She: A History of Adventure* (London: Longmans Green and Co., 1887), p. 62.

27. John Buchan, *Prester John* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1910), p. 203.

28. Ibid.

ple.[29] By creating a black African incarnation of the white Abyssinian conqueror Prester John, Buchan inverts the convention of having European colonizers bring political and social upheaval to the Empire. Africa was the locus for legendary decimation well before the Scramble for Africa, and, unless white men committed to preserving the status quo can thwart it, this region will continue in this vein of violence well into the future.

A comparable attitude toward mass-death appears in the South American adventure fiction *The Lost World* (1912), although here Arthur Conan Doyle underlines Haggard's point that history cannot occur without the presence of Europeans.[30] On an expedition to the mysterious plateau modeled on Mount Roraima, four adventurers—the reporter Edward Malone, the explorer Lord John Roxton, and the scientists George Edward Challenger and Professor Summerlee—discover and must survive in an environment populated by prehistoric creatures including dinosaurs and ape-men. In order for the adventurers to escape, they must team up with natives to fight a grand battle against the savage ape-men, a species modeled on recently discovered early hominids including the *Homo neanderthalensis* and the Piltdown Man hoax. Challenger situates this cross-species war not as a particular historical event bearing only local importance; rather, he explains, it is representative of natural laws requiring mass extinctions:

> What, my friends, is the conquest of one nation by another? It is meaningless. Each produces the same result. But those fierce fights, when in the dawn of the ages the cave-dwellers held their own against the tiger folk, or the elephants first found that they had a master, those were the real conquests the victories that count. By this strange turn of fate we have seen and helped to decide even such a contest. Now upon this plateau the future must ever be for man.[31]

Challenger is attracted to this macrohistory. Using the discourse of evolutionary science, he argues that the natural course of selection

29. See T. J. Couzens, "'The Old Africa of a Boy's Dream'—Towards Interpreting Buchan's 'Prester John,'" *English Studies in Africa* 24:1 (1981): 12–17; Yumna Siddiqi, *Anxieties of Empire and the Fiction of Intrigue* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 111–114.

30. For more on the role of destruction in *Lost World*, see Bradley Deane, "Imperial Barbarians: Primitive Masculinity in Lost World Fiction," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36:1 (2008): 205–225, at pp. 211–212; Robert Fraser, *Victorian Quest Romance: Stevenson, Haggard, Kipling, and Conan Doyle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 66–74; Murray, "Catastrophe and Development in the Adventure Romance" (above, n. 1), p. 152.

31. Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Lost World* (New York: A. L. Burt, 1912), p. 257.

must include extinction and the submission of lower races. In this way, Doyle sets his English imperialist apart from Joseph Conrad's fictional Mr. Kurtz, and his more famous injunction to "Exterminate all the brutes!"[32] Unlike this call for slaughter in *Heart of Darkness* (1899), which causes Kurtz to sound both insane and homicidal, the imperialists of *The Lost World* are able to apply a veneer of scientism and rationality to their butchery by interweaving ideas of Empire with uniformitarian geology. While Doyle's plateau represents a sort of evolutionary and historical limbo at the novel's beginning, the Anglo-Saxon race upsets this balance and jumpstarts the wheels of time to destructive, but ostensibly not unnatural or immoral, ends.

Both Buchan and Doyle suggest that bloodiness is a necessary part of world history because by eradicating less fit and therefore less evolved individuals, or as Haggard euphemistically puts it, by "submerging that which preceded it,"[33] large-scale human die-offs actually spur development and improvement. This sentiment certainly appears in James Bonwick's characterization of the aboriginal Tasmanians in *The Last of the Tasmanians* (1870). As he explains, "Not able to amalgamate, the other unfortunate condition followed— *they perished*."[34] Throughout the nineteenth century, imperialists explained the seemingly inevitable destruction of native populations as the consequence of a providential "law of destruction," or else a pathetic necessity: "the Blacks go before the superior Caucasian race, as the old, gigantic Saurians before other types of beings, and we have but to shrug our shoulders, and cry, 'Poor fellows!'"[35] Although he rejects this line of reasoning, in a prefatory letter published with David Livingstone's *Cambridge Lectures* (1858), Reverend Adam Sedgwick notes the popularity of the opinion that, "when sunk below a certain level . . . no power under heaven can reclaim the Savage— that he is doomed to death by the God who created him . . . that by the laws of nature, which are the voice of God, he is predestined to

32. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism*, 4th ed., ed. Paul B Armstrong (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), p. 50.

33. Haggard, preface (above, n. 17), p. xiii.

34. James Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians: Or, The Black War of Van Diemen's Land* (London: Sampson Low, Son, & Marston, 1870), p. 374. For recent critical and historical overviews of the genocide in Tasmania (a not uncontroversial label) and "Australia's History Wars" more broadly, see Tom Lawson, *The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), passim; Benjamin Madley, "From Terror to Genocide: Britain's Tasmanian Penal Colony and Australia's History Wars," *Journal of British Studies* 47:1 (2008): 77–106; Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2004), pp. 142–170.

35. Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians* (above, n. 34), p. 375.

be torn out of the soil like a rank weed, or slaughtered like a wild beast of the forest."[36] Protestations against this attitude abound, especially among missionaries, but in adventure fictions the destruction of savage races suggests the continued appeal and relevance of this idea.

Adventure fiction uses a Whiggish historicism to make devastation appear inevitable and even moral. Before the dramatic battle against *Lost World*'s ape-men, seemingly all of Doyle's explorers express the necessity and desirability of this race's probable extinction. As a reporter, Malone adopts a fitting tone of objectivity, matter-of-factly stating that "man was to be supreme and the man-beast to find forever his allotted place."[37] Lord Roxton's attitude toward this massacre is more vindictive, explaining, "[F]or my part I have a score to settle with these monkey-folk, and if it ends by wiping them off the face of the earth I don't see that the earth need fret about it."[38] However, there is no hint of detached objectivity or calculated revenge in Challenger's response to the war that will completely eliminate the missing link race. As the most uncouth member of the party, it should perhaps come as little surprise that throughout the battle, "Challenger's eyes were shining with the lust of slaughter."[39] Conservation and charity does not factor into the agenda of Doyle's explorers. The ape-men's clubs and confused brutality prove no match for the explorers' firearms and the organized military strategy they impose upon their allies among the South American natives. Their task was always to verify, record, and exploit, not to preserve and protect. While the British travelers realize the uniqueness, scarcity, and scientific interest of the ape-men, they feel no remorse for the part they play in this race's extinction. Although Challenger's close physical approximation to this race of missing links lends his attitude a fratricidal cast (Roxton notes that Challenger and the ape-men "might have been kinsmen"[40]), the scientist goes so far as to characterize witnessing the extinction of a race as a privilege owing to its scientific and historical importance. Far from lamenting the annihilation of an entire population, Challenger categorizes the skirmish as "typi-

36. David Livingstone, *Dr. Livingstone's Cambridge Lectures: Together with a Prefatory Letter by the Rev. Professor Sedgwick*, ed. Adam Sedgwick and William Monk (London: Deighton, Bell and Co.; Bell and Daldy, 1858), p. viii.

37. Doyle, *The Lost World* (above, n. 31), p. 256.

38. Ibid., pp. 250–251.

39. Ibid., p. 257.

40. Ibid., p. 222.

cal" of the "decisive battles of history—the battles which have deter-mined the fate of the world."[41]

The history of Western civilization is the history of death and destruction. Whether explained through an inevitable and pathetic narrative of progress, or else as the bellicose strategy employed by the imperialists like Challenger, in adventure fictions the end is al-ways the same. Total destruction of a race is central to the plots of these fictions, and readers revel in narratives of current and immi-nent annihilation—especially when white men are the cause. Con-sider American novelist Mayne Reid's assertion of the Delaware tribe in *The Scalp Hunters* (1851), "Theirs had been a wonderful history. War their school, war their worship, war their pastime, war their profession. They are now but a remnant. Their story will soon be ended."[42] Here the loss of this tribe, made famous for its violence, which, "on the Atlantic shores, first gave battle to the pale-faced invader,"[43] is treated as an impending and unavoidable necessity. Because the "pale-faced invader" must be accommodated, the Dela-ware—like all native peoples—must be eliminated. A similar elegiac tone appears prior to the great battle of Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) labeled "The Last Stand of the Greys." Quatermain depicts this war between rival Kukuana factions (a fictional people modeled on the Zulu), and the inevitable death of these warriors, as deeply moving because it signals the loss of greatness:

> I looked down the long lines of waving black plumes and stern faces beneath them, and sighed to think that within one short hour most, if not all, of those magnificent veteran warriors . . . would be laid dead or dying in the dust. It could not be otherwise; they were being condemned, with that wise reckless-ness of human life which marks the great general, and often saves his forces and attains his ends, to certain slaughter, in order to give their cause and the remainder of the army a chance of success. They were foredoomed to die, and they knew the truth.[44]

Of course, Haggard's English adventurers Quatermain, Captain Good, and Sir Henry Curtis are not merely disinterested observers in the drama; they play an active part in this "foredoomed" devas-

41. Ibid., p. 257.

42. Thomas Mayne Reid, *The Scalp Hunters; or, Romantic Adventures in Northern Mexico* (London: Charles J. Skeet, 1851), vol. 1, p. 266.

43. Ibid.

44. H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*, ed. Gerald Monsman (Brantford: Broadview, 2002), p. 177.

tation. Because the rightful King of Kukuanaland, Umbopa/Ignosi, lived among white colonialists during his youth, and he returns to his homeland with British travelers, the war to depose the wicked Twala—however just or inevitable—could not have occurred without British intervention. Like Reid's Delawares, Haggard characterizes these Kukuana warriors as an honorable and majestic race worthy of the emotional investment of white readers. Unlike Doyle's villainous and animalistic ape-men, the picturesque quality of the Greys makes their demise all the more touching and therefore attractive. Haggard admired the Zulu people. He understood that it was the Zulu warrior's loyalty and courage that won the battle at Rourke's Drift, if not the 1879 Anglo-Zulu war. Not just historically significant, the model of these and other noble savage warriors may actually improve the white readers destined, authors like Bonwick contended, to replace them.

Adventure fiction has long been recognized as a tool of Empire,[45] and because of this it offers a window into capitalism and the environment's layered histories. Throughout the nineteenth century, colonialist projects had the dual effect of making the white Europeans who exploited the natural resources of occupied regions wealthy, while at the same time permitting them to feel a sense of patronizing stewardship toward the indigenous peoples, landscapes, and animals of any place perceived to be untamed and natural. In Britain particularly, the raw materials imported from Africa, India, and Central America allowed this industrial nation to prosper while ensconcing as fact Rudyard Kipling's pernicious "White Man's Burden."[46] Unsurprisingly, considering its ideological function, the Empire served as a locus of much imaginative energy. Authors of adventure fiction set themselves the task of fantasizing about far-off regions marked by pristine wildernesses, lost civilizations, great wealth, and exciting because of cataclysmic mass destruction. In these texts, the deceased number in the thousands, and often encompass an entire race. Imperialists must kill—often in large numbers—in order to overcome

45. Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 191–195; Joseph A Kestner, *Masculinities in British Adventure Fiction, 1880–1915* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 2–12; Miller, *Empire and the Animal Body* (above, n. 11), passim; Julia Reid, "'Gladstone Bags, Shooting Boots, and Bryant & May's Matches': Empire, Commerce, and the Imperial Romance in the 'Graphic's' Serialization of H. Rider Haggard's 'She,'" *Studies in the Novel* 43:2 (2011): 152–178; Anna Vaninskaya, "The Late-Victorian Romance Revival: A Generic Excursus," *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 51:1 (2008): 57–79.

46. Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" [1899], in *Rudyard Kipling's Verse* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1940), pp. 321–323.

environmental and native dangers. Whether death comes from God as a divine judgment, or else as a human-caused war, the genocidal and racist logic of these imperialists sets the tone for the sort of anthropogenic colonialism, which continues into the present. In this way, Doyle, Haggard, Reid, and many others offer an uncomfortable melding of the ideas from Anthropocene figurations of capital, history, and adventure. "What *Anthropocene* names is *mass extinction*,"[47] Timothy Morton explains, but in adventure fiction bloodiness perpetuates the longstanding racist and imperialist argument that the environment only becomes historical upon the arrival of Europeans.

Knowledge

The Anthropocene has not simply overwritten the idea of history. As a discourse built upon projections, it has adjusted epistemological approaches to acquiring and evaluating knowledge about the past. Comprised of a series of more or less scientific what-ifs, narratives of ecological catastrophe make oracles of its experts. Rather than constructing knowledge through the empirical study of *what is*, geology, ecology, climatology, biology, archaeology, and atmospheric chemistry, to name a few prominent disciplines, are now engaged in predicting *what will be*. Technologists have scrambled to build increasingly more sophisticated software to model the probable outcomes of anthropogenic change. Illustratively, when speaking of the importance of ocean heat content for measuring rates of climate change, James Hansen explains that "if solar irradiance begins to pick up, as most solar physicists predict, I expect ocean heat uptake to reflect that change," which will thereby demonstrate "the planet's energy imbalance."[48] When published in the ever-growing number of popular science books written to educate and warn the public about the Anthropocene's relentless and severe consequences, the estimates and predictions of these authorities tend to extremes. Roy Scranton underscores many of climate change's most apocalyptic possibilities in *Learning to Die* (2015) by citing "worst-case estimates."[49] He asserts that melted ice sheets in polar regions of the globe "suggest we

47. Timothy Morton, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Term *Anthropocene*," *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1:2 (2014): 257–264, at p. 258.

48. James Hansen, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), p. 108.

49. Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2015), p. 15.

might see seven or eight feet of sea level rise as soon as 2040."[50] Similarly, in *The Long Thaw* (2016), David Archer cautions, "The potential for planetary devastation posed by the methane hydrate reservoir . . . seems comparable to the destructive potential from nuclear winter or from a comet or asteroid impact."[51] It has become a rhetorical convention in Anthropocene literature to avoid dispassionate or optimistic projections. Heralds of climate change and mass extinction—scientists, critical theorists, and environmentalists alike—present a united and committed front in upholding a picture of the future at its gravest. In this respect, these scientific diviners seem to have taken their cues from the tactics and rhetoric of prophets.

Historically, prophets of doom were chosen tools of the gods. These visionaries have access to privileged and therefore divine intelligence about the future; they peer behind the veil to detect and decipher cosmic truths. Divine sources of information make oracles omniscient and liminal. Owing to their closeness to God, these sages ought not to be ignored, but the risk of belief is great. By exaggerating danger or trumpeting falsehoods (crying wolf), prophets exhaust the trust of their followers, and yet they chance a loss of credibility by mistakenly ignoring or downplaying genuine threats. Moreover, unpopular messages might result in a prophet's execution (the Bible is full of murdered prophets like John the Baptist). But it is the implicit critique of the status quo that causes Anthropocene prophets to join the ranks traditionally occupied by mystical or religious doomsayers. As destruction is generally the result of God or Nature's displeasure, prophesying catastrophe simultaneously critiques the powers that be. Those profiting from, or at least comfortable with, the status quo are bound to resent a challenge. Corporations that create air and water pollution also tend to number among those who most vociferously deny the impact of human actions on the environment.[52] Chemical, automobile, and fossil fuel manufacturers, among countless other industries, have the most to lose by acknowledging climate change through the imposition of fines and regulations. Because capitalism must maintain and even strengthen current power

50. Ibid.

51. David Archer, *The Long Thaw: How Humans Are Changing the Next 100,000 Years of Earth's Climate* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016), p. 132.

52. Suzanne Goldenberg and Helena Bengtsson, "Biggest US Coal Company Funded Dozens of Groups Questioning Climate Change," *Guardian*, June 13, 2016, http://www .theguardian.com/environment/2016/jun/13/peabody-energy-coal-mining-climate -change-denial-funding.

structures, those laboring to disrupt the anthropogenic production-consumption cycle must assume the roles of soothsayers.

Few narratives of destruction in adventure fiction lack foreshadowing or, more often, clear warning prophesies of coming catastrophe. Edward Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), a model for mid- and late nineteenth-century romance fictions of catastrophe, includes numerous supernatural signs preceding the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. These include an "Etruscan prophecy which saith, 'When the mountain opens, the city shall fall—when the smoke crowns the Hill of the Parched Fields, there shall be woe and weeping in the hearths of the Children of the Sea.'"[53] In Andrew Lang's satirical *The End of Phaeacia* (1887), natives treat Lang's pompous and foolish missionary narrator with revulsion after a shipwreck strands him on their island. Their contempt stems from a prophecy stating, "[W]hen a man, having a chimney pot on his head, and four eyes, appears, and when a sail-less ship also comes, sailing without wind and breathing smoke, then will destruction fall upon the Scherian island."[54] Using poetic, oblique, and antiquated language, these forewarnings of doom tend to include vague details (Lang's "chimney pot" is a top hat, "four eyes" are eyeglasses), which only make sense in the event's aftermath. Prophecies regarding the destruction of a race in adventure fictions often include a rationale as well as threats. For instance, in Cutcliffe Hyne's *The Lost Continent* (1899), a priest prophesies to the wicked Phorenice, Empress of Atlantis, "you shall see this Royal Pyramid, which you have polluted with your debaucheries, torn tier from tier, and stone from stone, and scattered as feathers spread before a wind."[55] This prediction is fulfilled when the city sinks beneath the waves, decisively ending Phorenice's reign. In adventure fiction, all prophecies are teleological expressions of authorial wish fulfillment. Revelations unmask the writer's own contemporary political, social, and/or religious ideology, and these literary devices range in execution from ham-fisted to subtly complex. A prophecy concerning the enormous, halved, and heart-shaped emerald from which Haggard's *Heart of the World* takes its name skews toward the latter. Because, according to legend, this

53. Edward Bulwer Lytton, *The Last Days of Pompeii* (London: Richard Bentley, 1839), p. 360.

54. Andrew Lang, *The End of Phaeacia*, in *In the Wrong Paradise, and Other Stories* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1886), pp. 1–107, at p. 24.

55. C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne, "The Lost Continent," *Pearson's Magazine* 8 (December 1899): 779–807, at p. 788.

emerald Heart is central to the reinstatement of an Indian sovereign in Mexico, Haggard's prophecy seems to advance an anti-imperialist message. Upon receiving the gemstone, Ignatio, the rightful Emperor of Mexico, learns that "the natives believe when the two halves of this stone come together, the men of white blood will be driven from Central America and an Indian emperor shall rule from sea to sea."[56] Although the Catholic priest who relates this story rejects it as baseless superstition, this story's truthful kernel lies in its articulation of a serious and broad ambivalence about Western imperialism, and Haggard's antagonism toward some non-English colonizers specifically. Because the Spanish-descended regime in Mexico oppresses the native people, prophesied destruction in *Heart of the World* vindicates the novelist's aspiration to rid the country of this Spanish "white blood."

Haggard's prophets condemn the reigning Spanish government by suggesting that an ideal future will only be possible under British control. Unsurprisingly, Spanish-Mexican villains such as the thieving and murderous Don Pedro Moreno abound in this romance fiction. In contrast, the leadership of James Strickland, an English adventurer and the manager of a silver mine in the city of Cumarvo, Tamaulipas, sets him apart from "the Mexican owners of land in the neighbourhood . . . because he paid his men a fair wage."[57] An emerald acts as a fitting—because valuable—emblem of the true economic message the native prophecy reveals. Extracting resources from the land must be done in a way that permits the conditions of production to continue. The Mexican owners pay less than subsistence wages because "Indian life is cheap."[58] Cruelty and mismanagement means that these owners can only imperfectly work the land they occupy. Haggard takes every opportunity to inject his patriotic politics into the plot by having the Indians express their preference for an English style of governance. Ignacio and Strickland make a good team in business and on their quest to the City of the Heart because they are fitted to extract the greatest possible value from Mexico's people and natural resources. Strickland's English education and inborn Anglo-Saxon qualities signify that he is welcome in Indian territories, and he stands upon equal footing with Ignacio and the princess Maya, representatives of the native aristocracy. Although the prophecy of the emerald Heart is not fulfilled, by destroying the

56. Haggard, *Heart of the World* (above, n. 2), p. 20.

57. Ibid., p. 30.

58. Ibid.

vestiges of this magnificent Aztec civilization, which Ignacio and Strickland would surely have fostered by means of industrial capitalism, Haggard's adventure exemplifies his position that the British imperial project is superior to those of rival European colonizers. Destruction and calamity must accompany the faulty leadership of the Spanish Mexican characters, whose style of governance permits silver mines to lay dormant (before Strickland's arrival), the natives to be treated as slaves, and the magic and wonder of the City of the Heart to be utterly lost.

Because advancing Western imperialism is the ideological purpose of most adventure fictions, supernatural foresight sometimes anticipates the redemption of the land, rather than its destruction. In Frank Aubrey's South American adventure fiction *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* (1897), the city and people of Manoa (El Dorado) flourish at the novel's end because the English-raised, but native-Manoan, Leonard Elwood marries the princess Ulama, and will one day ascend the throne. The Manoan people await the return of their legendary and immortal King Mellenda, and the redemption of their city, a time that "some old prophecies . . . amongst the people" claim "is very near, if it is not indeed overpast."[59] When the English adventurers' mysterious companion Monella reveals himself to be Mellenda, he fulfills the prophecy by purging the land of the Dark Brotherhood and the carnivorous devil tree. However, true redemption is only possible by way of English involvement. In many respects, Aubrey's story inverts the plot of *Heart of the World*. Haggard's romance is a tragedy because Ignacio fails in his "hopes for the regeneration of the Indians,"[60] and Strickland's spirit is broken by the death of his wife Maya and their son. Unlike Strickland and Ignacio, who are barred from meaningful leadership, Aubrey's El Dorado prospers because Mellenda cedes his rule to a steward of English values. In fact, Aubrey's Preface to *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* makes his imperialist aspirations explicit. Advocating South American exploration as a means "to show better reason for claiming Roraima as a British possession," Aubrey explains, "One of the avowed objects of this book, therefore, is to stimulate public interest, and arouse public attention to the considerations that actually underlie the 'Venezuelan Question.'"[61] In this way, Aubrey's fictional lost civilization located

59. Frank Aubrey, *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* (New York: New Amsterdam Book Company, 1897), p. 196.

60. Haggard, *Heart of the World* (above, n. 2), p. 346.

61. Aubrey, *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* (above, n. 59), pp. vii–ix.

on Mount Roraima, at the borders of Venezuela, Guyana, and Brazil, serves as an imperial fantasy, with Elmwood's elevation to the throne representing British control over the region.

Since Haggard and Aubrey's lifetimes, neo-imperialist strategies for exploiting the natural resources of foreign countries—especially debates concerning wage labor rates and the appropriation of state-owned assets by transnational private businesses—have evolved and expanded. The acceleration of technological innovation, increased demand, and broadening investment all signify that ideas about the industriousness of the West exemplified by Strickland's silver mine and Elmwood's just reign have not diminished. In fact, Haggard's mine demonstrates what Dawson and other ecological critics term "extractivism."[62] Recent policies permit "denuding many poor nations, shunting their minerals, flora, and fauna to consumer markets in industrialized nations. This new extractivism should be seen for what it is: a fresh wave of imperialism that is decimating poorer nations by removing the biological foundation of their collective future."[63] Although environmentalists today realize that extraction is unsustainable and polluting, and not advantageous, as *Heart of the World* suggests, the logic of capitalism requires the wheels of production and consumption to continue and expand relentlessly.

Although I focus primarily on adventure fiction's depictions of mass-death in human rather than animal populations,[64] it is worth pausing to note that animals are frequently extracted or else cultivated as raw materials in these plots. Critics like E. R. Jenkins and John Miller have noted that in these adventures white men alone know how best to treat the Empire's wild fauna.[65] In *The Giraffe Hunters* (1867) by Mayne Reid, a Scots-Irish American novelist, for in-

62. Dawson, *Extinction* (above, n. 6), p. 87; Elizabeth Miller, *Extraction Ecologies and the Literature of the Long Exhaustion, 1830s–1930s*, forthcoming; Liisa L. North and Ricardo Grinspun, "Neo-Extractivism and the New Latin American Developmentalism: The Missing Piece of Rural Transformation," *Third World Quarterly* 37:8 (2016): 1483–1504.

63. Dawson, *Extinction* (above, n. 6), p. 87.

64. For a list of critical studies of environmental scholarship concerning animals, see n. 11

65. E. R. Jenkins explains of children's literature set in South Africa: "Initially, writers such as T. Mayne Reid portrayed hunters killing predators for trophies or the thrill of the chase and the danger involved; but as the twentieth century advanced, writers such as Percy FitzPatrick and Victor Pohl put more emphasis on other motives. For example, they suggested that visiting hunters killed predators in order to protect local residents, or because the predators were depleting the supply of antelope that the hunters wanted to shoot for the pot" (E. R. Jenkins, "English South African Children's Literature and the Environment," *Literator* 25:3 (2004): 107–124, at p. 109).

stance, the boy heroes discover a spring poisoned by the local Bechuana tribe surrounded by two hundred rotting antelope corpses. The boys disapprove of "this method for wantonly destroying animal life, practised by many of the native African tribes."[66] In addition to the rancid smell, the presence of carrion, and the "fear that they had entered some valley of death," this cruel method of hunting is abhorrent because wasteful and lazy.[67] "For the sake of procuring three or four antelopes for food, with the least trouble, the Bechuanas had destroyed a whole herd. This is the usual economy practised by those who live in a land teeming with a too great abundance of animal life."[68] The narrator's censorious tone suggests the virtue of letting white colonists manage Africa's abundant, but not infinite, resources. Allan Quatermain expresses similar sentiments during a wasteful hippopotamus hunt in Haggard's *She and Allan* (1921). Led by the drunken English colonist Captain Robertson, hundreds of African natives from various tribes blockade more than a hundred hippopotami in a culvert to shoot the trapped beasts. While Robertson's tender-hearted daughter Inez "hated to see great beasts killed" on principle, and the noble Zulu warrior Umslopogaas refuses to use a rifle to participate in the slaughter, Quatermain joins in, but complains that although the scene was "remarkable. . . . Still, in a way, to me it was unpleasant, for I flatter myself that I am a sportsman and a battle of this sort is not sport as I understand the term."[69] The disorderly and inefficient slaughter of these panicked creatures leaves more injured than dead, and highlights the stereotypically abysmal shooting of the armed natives. In fact, while errant bullets and charging hippos cause Quatermain and Umslopogaas to fear for their lives, several natives are actually killed and wounded in the fray. This scene is framed in lighthearted terms, but Haggard suggests in no uncertain terms that animals and humans alike benefit by leaving the hunting of these creatures to sportsmanlike professionals. Although published fifty-four years apart, wildlife permits representative Anglo-American authors of adventure fiction to dramatize two significant themes: first, the stereotype of African fecundity and abundance, and second, the superior economy of white colonists for managing, extracting, and profiting from commoditized creatures.

66. Thomas Mayne Reid, *The Giraffe Hunters* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1867), vol. 2, p. 187.

67. Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 186–187.

68. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 189.

69. H. Rider Haggard, *She and Allan* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1921), pp. 85, 90.

The industriousness of white colonists is the sole avenue for avoiding prophesied calamity—if it can be avoided at all—in most fin-de-siècle adventure fictions. Today, ecologists urge ending human intervention in nature through the cessation of manufacturing and extraction. Boarding up mines, letting fields go fallow, and halting logging operations are all necessary to the preservation of this planet's ecosystems.[70] Carbon taxes, conservation nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the institution of parks and nature preserves are just a few methods environmentalists have tried to slow down global industrialization and the extraction of natural resources. Of course, the wheels of capitalism in Moore's world-ecology have not halted. Incentivizing Brazilians not to deforest the Amazon, or Kenyans to stop poaching elephants must be a losing battle until global demand diminishes or supply-side economics is discontinued. The amount philanthropists, NGOs, and foreign governments have been willing to invest in environmental causes has never met or surpassed the amount garnered through the extraction and sale of natural resources. Ironically, the native populations of Africa and South and Central America that nineteenth-century Western imperialists accused of being unproductive and therefore prophesied to destruction now increasingly contribute to Anthropocene change's bloodiest and most devastating environmental aspects by actively participating in global commercial systems.[71]

Identity

By redefining the relationship of humans to their environment, and thereby undermining an ethic of industriousness central to Western ways of knowing, the Anthropocene has shattered humanity's sense of self. Breaking apart liberal notions of identity at their core, this epoch suggests that instead of autonomous individuals with unique gifts, life experiences, and prejudices, residents of earth—plants, animals, and human beings—all number among the mass of organisms impacted, however unequally, by human-caused outcomes like climate change and anthropogenic pollution. Because the damage is as irrevocable as it is universal, during the Anthropocene blame and responsibility are moot. The size of an individual's carbon footprint will not determine whether or not they are affected by global

70. Elias and Moraru, "Introduction" (above, n. 14), p. xxiii.

71. For a history and analysis of developing countries within the world economy, see Deepak Nayyar, *Catch Up: Developing Countries in the World Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), passim. For a discussion of the relationship between the Anthropocene and first and third world economic development, see Adolfo Figueroa, *Economics of the Anthropocene Age* (Cham: Springer, 2017), pp. 2–4, 14–15.

warming. In fact (and unfairly), wealth is the most ready means for escaping its consequences. Morton has noted the iniquitousness of the Anthropocene, which, although it "is the product of Western humans, mostly Americans," nevertheless "unjustly lumps together the whole human race."[72] Natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions do not select victims and survivors on the basis of desert. Humans are so many inconsequential ants readying for total obliteration under the foot of an unnoticing titan. When faced with annihilation, differences bleed together and homogenize. In this respect, perhaps the most psychologically disturbing consequence to Western ways of interpreting the past and future spurred by the Anthropocene is the establishment of universalizing narratives. Instead of an identity of autonomous individuality, the Anthropocene threatens humanity with a promiscuous cross-species, interracial, and planetary lumpishness.

A robust sense of individualism, honor, valor, and autonomy distinguished the heroes of American and British adventure fictions. However, during the latter half of the nineteenth-century, the longstanding ideal of individualism—upheld by both liberals and conservatives as unique to the Western character[73]—provided a source of anxiety for nineteenth-century adventure fiction authors. During an era in which the doctrines of socialism and liberalism vied with one another in importance,[74] the genre of adventure fiction exposes anxieties concerning how individuals ought best to express the virtues of self-help and self-sufficiency advocated by J. S. Mill and other nineteenth-century philosophical liberals. While derring-do and heroism are hallmarks of adventure fiction's white, male protagonists, the lost world subgenre often places characters in seemingly insurmountable situations to suggest the inconsequentiality of individual merit and self-reliance in the face of forces too colossal to be repulsed.[75]

72. Morton, "How I Learned to Stop Worrying" (above, n. 47), p. 261.

73. Jack Crittenden, *Beyond Individualism: Reconstituting the Liberal Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), passim; Lauren M. E. Goodlad, "'Character Worth Speaking Of': Individuality, John Stuart Mill, and the Critique of Liberalism," *Victorians Institute Journal* 36 (2008): 7–45; Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), passim.

74. See Grant Allen, "Individualism and Socialism," *The Contemporary Review* 55 (May 1889): 730–741; Oscar Wilde, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," *Fortnightly Review* 55 (February 1891): 292–319.

75. Martin Hall identifies "a tripartite skeleton of creation, destruction and discovery" in lost world fictions, with the second stage featuring a "Dark Disaster" that tends to take on "the form of an earthquake, anthropomorphized as the work of an unseen

The mythical civilization of Atlantis served as the boilerplate for late nineteenth-century stories of global cataclysm.[76] Beginning with Ignatius Donnelly's nonfiction *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World* (1882), a number of fictions set on this legendary continent began to appear. Many adventure fictions about Atlantis center on Atlantean survivals. Sometimes explorers encounter these Atlanteans in suspended animation, as is the case with Haggard's *When the World Shook* (1919), but more often they discover vestiges of an Atlantean culture that has continued since prehistoric times. Because the Atlanteans have not mixed with the outside world, these fictions all qualify as a lost world adventures. In several of these, such as French novelist Andre Laurie's *Crystal City Under the Sea* (1896) and William Kingsland's *A Child's Story of Atlantis* (1908), the Atlanteans live in a bubble city on the ocean floor.[77] In other fictions, they populate some remote wilderness, as happens in Olaf W. Anderson's *Treasure Vault of Atlantis* (1925), which is set in South America, and Gerald Breckenridge's adventure set in North Africa, *Radio Boys Seek the Lost Atlantis* (1923). Yet in all of these adventures, destruction forms the core of the Atlantis myth. In Oliphant Smeaton's hollow earth romance *A Mystery in the Pacific* (1899), a descendent of the Atlantean race says of the homeland of his forbears, "I do not pretend to know where 'Aztlan' [Atlantis] was; all we know is that it was destroyed in a frightful earthquake."[78] In Laurie's *The Crystal* City, a maiden named Atlantis relates details about the catastrophe that drove the people of Atlantide to an underwater existence: "The earth opened and melted away, carrying with it thousands of people . . . and the heavens rained flames which burned the monuments which the cataclysm had spared. Huge sea waves submerged the coast, and ab-

monster" (Martin Hall, "The Legend of the Lost City; Or, the Man with Golden Balls," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 21:2 [1995]: 179–199, at p. 180). The first stage is the civilization's bucolic golden age, while the third is the discovery of this lost civilization's relics by intrepid contemporary explorers or archaeologists. See also Ben Carver, *Alternate Histories and Nineteenth-Century Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2017), pp. 151–206.

76. For a classic survey of the Atlantis myth in literature, see L. Sprague de Camp, *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature* (New York: Dover, 1970), passim.

77. DC Comics offers a continuation of this version of the Atlantis myth. The superhero Aquaman, who first appeared in 1941, plays a central role in the *Justice League* franchise films. Played by Jason Momoa in *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), *Justice League* (2017), and *Aquaman* (2018), Aquaman is the King of the subaqueous kingdom of Atlantis.

78. William Henry Oliphant Smeaton, *A Mystery of the Pacific* (London: Blackie & Son, 1899), p. 233.

sorbed and drowned all who sought to escape in that direction!"[79] In order for the myth of Atlantis to take root, the continent and the majority of its people must perish.

Perhaps most famously, decimation acts as the great species and social leveler in Hyne's historical romance set in the prehistoric past, *The Lost Continent*. Hyne's narrator, a priest and statesman named Deucalion, records the final years of Atlantis, as well as the mechanism of its ruin. Like Pantites and Aristodemus of Sparta, the only Spartans to survive and provide eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Thermopylae,[80] as the lone, male survivor of Atlantis's absolute destruction, Deucalion's account is singular. He records numerous prophecies of ruin, such as the oracle's prediction that "The City of Atlantis, the great continent that is beyond, and all that are in them are doomed to unutterable destruction. Of old it was foreseen that this great wiping-out would happen through the sins of men."[81] It is for this reason that Hyne focuses so much attention on moralizing extinction. At the same time that the gods annihilate the sinful, advanced Atlantean race, numerous prehistoric animals are also destroyed. The Atlantean people coexisted with several now-extinct (and some imaginary) creatures such as mammoths, cave-tigers, cave-bears, and reptilian sea monsters. Although beasts did nothing to deserve this end, when earthquakes and volcanic eruptions level the continent, all living things inhabiting it perish. Dr. Coppinger, the nineteenth-century scholar who translates Deucalion's history of Atlantis, underscores the sublimity of this total devastation, explaining, "Whole species have died out since this was written, just as a whole continent has been swept away and three civilisations quenched."[82] Destruction is total and indiscriminate in Hyne's *Lost Continent*. Neither the ferocity of the beasts inhabiting the surrounding countryside, nor the moral blamelessness of some the city's residents spares their lives from continent-wide destruction. Survival of the fittest signifies nothing during epoch-shaping, and human-caused, acts of cataclysm. Meanwhile, the Empress Phorenice and

79. Andre Laurie, *The Crystal City*, trans. L. A. Smith (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1896), p. 175.

80. David Branscome, *Textual Rivals: Self-Presentation in Herodotus' Histories* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 71. In Frank Miller's graphic novel *300* (Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics, 1999), which retells the battle from the Spartan perspective, Aristodemus alone survives.

81. C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne, "The Lost Continent," *Pearson's Magazine* 8 (December 1899): 779–807, at p. 801.

82. Ibid., p. 144.

her aristocratic court die just as ignominiously as the lower-class citizens she keeps reduced to abject poverty. When Deucalion arrives in Atlantis after many years abroad, he compares the extreme destitution and inequality of the poor to the opulence of the rich, noting, "Men and women had died of hunger in these streets these latter years, and rotted where they lay, and we trod their bones underfoot as we walked. Yet rising out of this squalor and this misery were great pyramids and palaces, the like of which for splendour and magnificence had never been."[83] For all their importance, moral and class distinctions dissolve in response to total destruction. Wealth cannot save the powerful upper classes from divine retribution any more than the justice and pathos vouchsafed to the wretched poor can save the meek. World-ending destruction is merciless and undistinguishing; it claims the lives of rich and poor, just and unjust, humble and proud alike. In Hyne's Atlantis, the sea swallows up all vestiges of this once mighty land and every inhabitant.

There is something about nineteenth-century romances depicting world leveling—their reveling in total extinction and universal misery—that resembles Anthropocene narratives about end times. Accounts of global warming are dripped in pathos to play up the essential connectedness of all living creatures. In *Storms of My Grandchildren* (2009), for instance, James Hansen urges implementing environmentalist policies out of a sense of empathy with future generations. It is fitting, then, that in order to exemplify his argument Hansen includes photos of Jake, his adorable eleven-month-old grandchild.[84] While images of this infant may be self-serving and parochial in the context of a book concerning climate science, the idea that greenhouse gas emissions will injure a child effectively moves readers to recognize the unity of all future human beings through their shared identity as "grandchildren." In other books, unity is expressed as a form of hybridity. Although in *Wildlife in the Anthropocene* (2015) Jamie Lorimer is careful to explain that "[m]ultinaturalism is not relativism," he demonstrates the essential connectedness of all living things by virtue of the fact that "[w]ildlife is everywhere. It is among us—in our bodies, our homes, and our cities, as well as in the familiar territories that concern conservationists."[85] Nicole Shukin describes a less pathetic and more horrible sort of oneness

83. Ibid., p. 295.

84. James Hansen, *Storms of My Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and Our Last Chance to Save Humanity* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), p. 237.

85. Jamie Lorimer, *Wildlife in the Anthropocene: Conservation after Nature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), pp. 182, 180.

in her plea to end the treatment of animals as consumer products. In a portion of *Animal Capital* (2009) concerned with Foucault's biopower, Shukin warns that one consequence of growing and harvesting animals like commodities is the possibility of mass illness and death in human beings:

> we may have arrived at a historic conjuncture in which pandemic, by posing an indiscriminate threat to human species life on a global scale, levels the uneven distribution of exposure to disease previously accommodated within the history of biopower. Those dominant countries, classes, and populations once able to secure relative immunity from the pressure of the biological are suddenly confronted with the fact that their historical immunity may have expired as disease threatens to irrupt out of or exceed those techniques of biopower that managed to contain it.[86]

During a pandemic, the rosters of the dead will include the affluent as well as the impoverished. Like Hansen's plea to think of the children, exceptionalism has no place in the era of human-caused geological change. The implication behind much writing about the Anthropocene is that the effects of human beings on the environment cannot be safely contained. There are no outside observers when everyone is implicated and dependent on the earth and its resources. It is not so much that global ruin erases identity, as it renders this catastrophe no longer meaningful.

Lost world fictions, and particularly those set in Atlantis, strike a very similar tone to the Anthropocene writers who contend that differences melt away in an era of human-caused calamity. As Paul Dukes explains in *Minutes to Midnight: History and the Anthropocene Era from 1763* (2011), "[G]ood and evil, praise and blame, are concepts that must be jettisoned in an understanding of scientific history that is the imperative of the Anthropocene Era as it threatens to come to an end."[87] The West's reliance on the self-sufficient liberal individual becomes moot in the face of larger-than-life forces. While in domestic fictions it is up to heroes or the Almighty to mete out a just death to villains, in the unmapped wilds of the Empire, death is massive in scale and indiscriminate in its casualties. Patrick Brantlinger has argued that many recurrent themes in Imperial Gothic literature reflect three central anxieties: "individual regression or going native; an invasion of civilization by the forces of barbarism or demonism; and the diminution of opportunities for ad-

86. Nicole Shukin, *Animal Capital: Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp. 182–183.

87. Paul Dukes, *Minutes to Midnight: History and the Anthropocene Era from 1763* (London: Anthem Press, 2011), p. 132.

venture and heroism in the modern world."[88] Wholesale die-offs in lost world fictions, which suggest the essential homogeneity of all living things, seem to extend these core anxieties. Rather than characters formed through ability and effort, the Anthropocene threatens the individual's freedom by numbering him among the immeasurable victims of forces too enormous to be repulsed. Bradley Deane has noted that the mythic quality of the lost worlds encountered in the Empire made them spaces for imagining ontological truths: "In nearly every case, the stories dramatize the rediscovery in apparently alien territories of some fundamental unity, thus refiguring the frontier as an uncanny space in which the grand narrative of progress collapses to reveal a timeless model of imperial character."[89] In addition to undermining Whiggish histories of progress, identifying a cosmic and material oneness in the lost civilizations occupying the Empire has the dual consequence of revealing an essential similarity uniting all living things. This realization was not wholly abhorrent to late Victorians. In fact, many Europeans embraced the idea that white men are un-extraordinary because, as part of Darwin's tangled bank, they share an entwined history with plants, animals, and every other so-called human race.

Ideas about the white race's exceptionalness resided uneasily beside the notion of a "fundamental unity" in adventure fiction, but by drawing attention to the concept of a common progenitor, particularly our ape-like ancestors, Darwin inspired imperialists like Cecil Rhodes to actively brag about rejecting the artificial and milquetoast niceties of British decorum by acting "on the basis of a barbarian."[90] While realist fictions by George Eliot and Henry James investigated humanity's more cerebral qualities, the romance fiction genre—which according to Andrew Lang is characterized by "the love of adventure, and of mystery, and of a good fight"[91]—insisted on civilized man's bestial and violent roots. Fictions of Empire maintained Lang's premise, and inspired Haggard to assert, "We are all savages under our white skins."[92] The adventurers' identity is in many respects primeval and barbaric, which does much toward explaining

88. Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), p. 230.

89. Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 206.

90. Lewis Michell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Cecil John Rhodes, 1853–1902* (London: E. Arnold, 1910), vol. 2, p. 12.

91. Andrew Lang, "Realism and Romance," *The Contemporary Review* 52 (1887): 683–693, at p. 692.

92. Lang, *In the Wrong Paradise and Other Stories* (above, n. 54), p. v.

why death and violence often accompany the arrival of white travelers in fiction. When Aubrey's three white explorers arrive just in time to thwart the attempted murder of princess Ulama in *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado*, before even introducing themselves they apologize that "fate has so ordered it that our arrival has been marked by the shedding of blood."[93] In point of fact, by becoming more natural or savage, British imperialists considered themselves better able to occupy the Empire's most far-flung territories. Illustratively, *The Lost World* plays with the definitions of civilized and savage, because, although the ape-men's destruction serves to recapitulate the Anglo-Saxon race's position above any rival race perceived to be developmentally lower, Lord Roxton characterizes the ape-men's chief as "a sort of red Challenger, with every one of our friend's beauty points, only just a trifle more so."[94] Similarly, in *King Solomon's Mines*, Sir Henry Curtis chooses to dress like an African warrior before battle in a leopard-skin mantle, an ostrich feather headdress, and an ox-tail loincloth, reasoning, "When you are in Kukuanaland, do as the Kukuanas do."[95] In the case of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* (1894), savagery helps Mowgli, the bestial "man's cub,"[96] to survive in wild and dangerous locales, and Robert Baden-Powell's Wolf Cubs (later Cub Scouts) modeled healthy play by mimicking Mowgli's wild animal friends. Again and again in fictions of Empire, white colonizers aimed to blur the line separating civilized European from native. As a supreme act of wish fulfillment, by successfully integrating with their surroundings, these aggressive adventurers conquered their adversaries and survived to dictate their own history, knowledge, and identity. Exaggerated accounts of individualistic masculinity combined with the lone survivor motif underscores, rather than discredits, Western anxieties concerning destruction at a total and undiscriminating scale.

Both contemporary writing about climate change and fin-de-siècle lost world romances do not so much deny identity, as suggest its inconsequentiality. In lost world fictions, and particularly those set in Atlantis, obliteration acts as a form of leveling and homogenization. Indeed, there can be no greater guarantee that a race of remarkable individuals remains lost than their total eradication. This nineteenth-century tactic of collapsing identities along class, race, and even species lines reappears in much contemporary Anthropo-

93. Aubrey, *The Devil-Tree of El Dorado* (above, n. 59), p. 116.

94. Doyle, *The Lost World* (above, n. 31), p. 222.

95. H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (above, n. 44), p. 166.

96. Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Books*, ed. Daniel Karlin (New York: Penguin, 1989), p. 38.

cene writing. Both thematically and in its underlying anxieties, Anthropocene writing and lost world fictions grapple with not only total desolation's unfathomable grandness, but also the consequences of allowing living creatures to become an undistinguished mass.

Conclusion

It is not enough to recognize thematic similarities connecting the contemporary discourse of the Anthropocene with late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century adventure fiction plots. Scholars ought also to consider the dangers involved in these overlaps. I have identified the three major frames of history, knowledge, and identity to suggest points of intersection in how these two literary forms from disparate time periods express destruction. These categories permit me to show that, beyond the prescience and pedigree of lost world fictions, the conjunction of Anthropocene writing with adventure fictions also illuminates the conventionality and aesthetic appeal of devastation. Scenes of mass-calamity, especially if they are far away in time and space, do not shock audiences. More often, they serve as the picturesque backdrops against which melodrama, romantic encounters, and other exciting plot points play out. When the protagonist of Reid's *Scalp-Hunters* muses, "[I]t seemed as if everything was dead around us, and Nature was laid out in her winding-sheet,"[97] he not only anticipates descriptions of anthropogenic desolation—Exxon Valdez, Love Canal, bleaching events at the Great Barrier Reef—Reid also effectively heightens the reader's pleasure in consuming this poetic because wild and desolate American setting. Rather than invoking compassion or spurring change, adventure fiction's narratives of ruin function to excite readers and vindicate the acquisitive policies of journalist John L. O'Sullivan, of manifest destiny fame. During the era of Western expansionism, depictions of death on a massive scale are pernicious and ideological. Indeed, what is a wasteland if not a blank slate begging for interpolation? While psychologizing the reasons for desolation's attractiveness lies beyond the scope of this study, the cultural, political, and historical repercussions of ideas of total loss cannot be overstated. If Slavoj Žižek is correct, and we are "Living in the End Times,"[98] then it is essential to examine the fictions that anticipated and in a sense established a discourse surrounding mass death that continues in writings on anthropogenic climate change into the present.

97. Thomas Mayne Reid, *The Scalp Hunters* (above, n. 42), vol. 1, p. 209.

98. Slavoj Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (London: Verso, 2011).