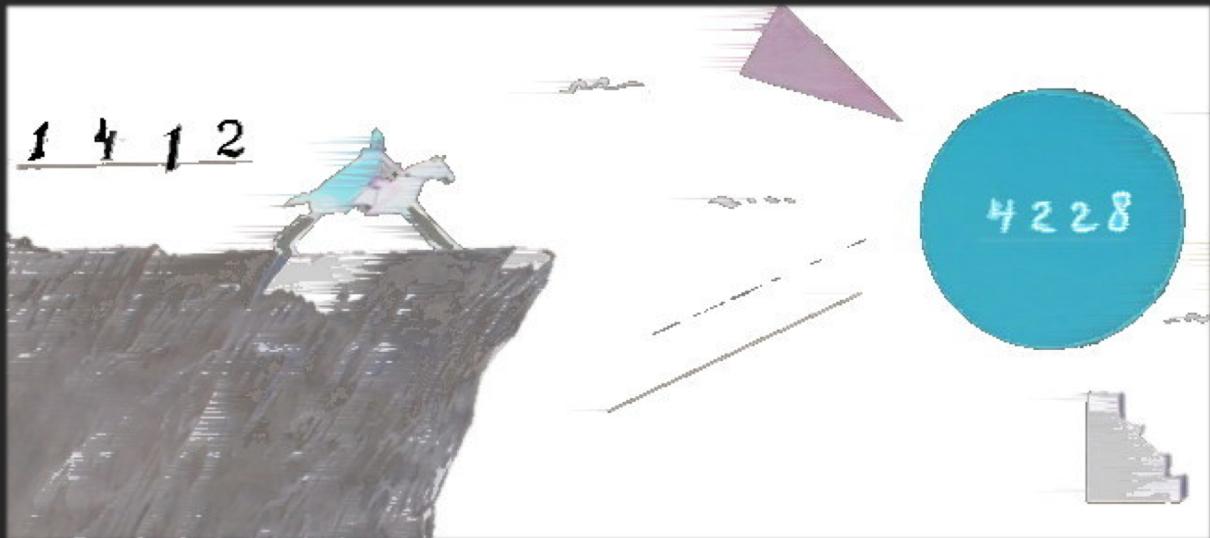


ALIENOCENE – THEORY/FICTION

# EVICTED FROM THE FUTURE



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Overcoming the concept of “progress” and overcoming the concept of “period of decline” are two sides of one and the same thing.

—Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*

I begin by discussing fictions of the end... so we begin with apocalypse...

—Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*

## The end of the world as we know it

offers an obvious point of departure for thinking about environmental crisis on a planetary scale.<sup>i</sup> Global warming and the attendant transformations of the Anthropocene estrange time by destabilizing the straightforward, secular assumption that pasts and presents *have* futures; that things just keep on going; that time and history keep unfolding, for better or worse. As I argue elsewhere with regard to anticolonial movements, one way that history comes to be imbued with meaning is by understanding it as the working out of “past’s futures”: the temporal unfolding of dynamic projects of anticipation, which may be refashioned or renounced when the future turns out to be other than what was imagined in the past.<sup>ii</sup> This mode of expectation is confounded by the past’s future inscribed in carbon, the not yet fully realized effects upon the Earth system of burning fuels that fossilized over millions of years. These effects are expected to endure thousands of years into the future, as the harm the body of the planet remembers. This inexorable past’s future of climate change seems to jeopardize, at the scale of human experience, the inexorability of futurity itself. This reconfiguration of past and future posits modernity’s progress narratives as confounded once and for all by a future utterly different from that which fossil fuels once promised.

The narrative genre and critical register commonly enlisted to make sense of this unthinkable predicament is eco-apocalypse. Like utopia, eco-apocalypse is premised upon imagining alternative worlds radically different from our own: it aims to imagine the unimaginable. One remarkable aspect of the present moment is the imaginative *inertia* of its utopias—or at least those visions of a better world imagined from within what Niger Delta poet Ogaga Ifowodo has called the petroleum-fueled “chain of ease.” Such halfhearted utopianism dreams of nothing so much as a familiar future: life continuing basically as it is now, with all the costs (still) externalized, displaced outside the frame of the narrative, the predicaments of the present transformed only in so far as we won’t have had to change very much after all. We don’t like thinking about climate change, British novelist John Lanchester wrote in 2007, “because we’re worried that if we start we will have no choice but to think about nothing else.”<sup>iii</sup> This *not thinking* is connected to the weak, passive utopianism of living as if somehow everything will be fine.

This cognitive inertia is the shadow or leeward side of “ecocatastrophe”—a recurrent motif that Leerom Medovoi traces throughout the history of capitalism, from Malthus to the neoliberal present—which “serves as a mechanism for insisting upon biopolitical reform, calculated change to the environment (and/or to the population) before it is too late,” and thereby “facilitates some kind of regulatory transition between accumulation regimes.”<sup>iv</sup> As a mode of riding out the periodic waves of crisis and contradiction upon which capitalism thrives, passive utopianism doesn’t so much deny the need for reform as imagine that such transitions can be effected without really changing anything. Within this banal unthinkingness lurks a horror nonetheless: the ominous recognition that we might actually choose the death of nature over the death of capitalism. Such not-thinking is the ultimate externalization.

Either not-thinking, or thinking of nothing else. The latter response aptly describes eco-apocalypse, a narrative form with pitfalls of its own. In a more

spectacular way, eco-apocalypse can also shut down the hard work of imagining futurity meaningfully. By seizing the imagination, eco-apocalypse amounts to unimagining the future, rendering it *still* unimaginable. Both environmentalists and their opponents have worried about the limits of using apocalyptic fears to mobilize change. Images of our own destruction can generate denial or a literary pleasure of catharsis, neither of which does much to loosen attachments to the status quo. But I have a different concern about the political liabilities of eco-apocalypse: As the narrative expression of a crisis of futurity, eco-apocalypse can misrecognize the present.

The imaginative lure of eco-apocalypse can obscure attention to the mundane loss of futurity theorized by James Ferguson, who observes that mid-twentieth-century promises of modernization in Africa have been abandoned, and narratives of development disavowed. The industrialized, affluent West was once construed as a possible future for the rest of the world, but now, he argues, the progress narrative of “history” reverts to the stasis of “hierarchy,” “behind” returns to “beneath.”<sup>v</sup> Inequality endures into an indefinite future of longing for infrastructure. This “crisis of futurity,” Mary Louise Pratt writes in a similar vein, looms “all over the planet,” among people who “live conscious of their redundancy to a global economic order which is able to make them aware of its existence and their superfluity . . . expelled from [its] narratives of futurity.”<sup>vi</sup> What does it mean to be evicted from the future in this way: to confront not the “end” of the world, but having been shut out of the temporal horizon of its desires and ends? A Niger Delta activist interviewed in Sandy Cioffi’s documentary film *Sweet Crude* (2010) describes the predicament of underdevelopment in terms of its contrast with the good life—that is, American life as depicted on TV. This scene underlines a contradiction of contemporary globalization: The global culture industry circulates images of affluence more effectively than global capitalism distributes wealth. What is distinctive about the unevenness of world-imagining

in the era of satellite TV, social media, and the Internet is that the excluded tend to have vivid images of what they are excluded from.

How to calibrate these crises of futurity—the future lost to climate change as the belated cost of modernity’s chain of ease, as opposed to never having enjoyed the benefits of modernity to begin with? To understand vulnerability to environmental harm as “unevenly universal”<sup>vii</sup> is to recognize its inflection by histories of unequal relation to both capital and carbon accumulation, in which economic and ecological modes of harm intersect. To focus on the universality of vulnerability at the expense of the unevenness—to move too quickly to ideas of the human as species, or community as planetary—is not so much a quarantine as a gentrification of the imagination, a gesture toward new forms of community that is blind to the displacements it causes. Narratives of eco-apocalypse can effect a gentrification of the imagination, if time and futurity become an axis of difference that displaces or disguises the socioeconomic axis of inequality in the present. The weak utopianism of a future all but unchanged is also a desire for privilege intact. In literary terms, the predominant narrative forms for imagining futurity are inadequate for apprehending the challenges of the present. The shapes of the future imagined in eco-apocalypse can serve as an alibi for persistent histories of inequality, thereby leaving other futures—what the theorist of utopia Ernst Bloch called “real” futures—still unimagined.

As an example of the multiple crises of futurity and histories of accumulation at work in environmental imagining, consider “Postcards from the Future,” a photographic collaboration by visual artists Robert Graves and Didier Madoc-Jones. This series of images, exhibited at the Museum of London and the National Theatre in 2010 and 2011, features iconic London views typically featured on postcards but reimagines them as proleptic Kodak moments from a future where the most spectacular effects of climate change no longer exist solely in the imagination.<sup>viii</sup> An aerial view of a watery cityscape visualizes London as

Venice. Camels replace horses at the Horse Guards Parade. Rice paddies and water buffaloes appear in front of Parliament Square. Monkeys surveil the city from St. Paul's Cathedral, and laundry hangs from the Gherkin, the financial services skyscraper repurposed as an apartment block for climate migrants who flood the city. Wind turbines and water lilies sprout from an inundated Piccadilly Circus.

These arresting images are not merely memories, but *mementoes* of the future. “Postcards from the Future” recasts the generic conventions of the postcard, which effects a twofold transmission of memory: “wish you were here” consolidates one’s memories in the act of sharing them with other people, while reassuring the faraway recipient, “I haven’t forgotten you.” As a mass-produced cultural form that conveys personal messages through the medium of an open letter, postcards are more effective at the second task of memory than the first: they aren’t actually a great technology for transmitting other people’s vacation memories, but they do let us know we haven’t been forgotten.

Graves and Madoc-Jones explain that they seek to “create illusory spaces in which people can explore the issues of a changed world and not reject them as ‘stuff that happens to other people.’” But postcards are, by definition, documents of stuff that happens to other people! The power of “Postcards from the Future” must lie in that second task of memory, reminding people that they haven’t been forgotten. If we take the project’s title literally, “Postcards *from* the Future”—with the Future as sender rather than temporal location—then these postcards are the Future’s way of saying to the viewer, “I haven’t forgotten you.” The implicit, reciprocal question—have you forgotten me? —is explicit in the project’s tagline, which transforms the conventional postcard sentiment, “wish you were here,” into a question: “wish you were *here*?” And if not, what are you going to do to make sure that you don’t arrive here, or that “here” never arrives, that London never becomes what you see here? This recasting of the postcard genre intersects with the rhetorical premise of apocalyptic narratives, whose vivid depictions of

grim trajectories aim to inspire change and effect a plot twist, in which their anticipated futures never will have arrived.

What is most disturbing about of “Postcards from the Future” is its conflation of time and space as axes of difference. In addition to “*wish you were here?*”, some of these images also seem to ask, “*don’t you wish they weren’t here?*”—where “*they*” are hordes of climate refugees. In an aerial view of Buckingham Palace hemmed in by thousands of shanties, or a street-level view of Trafalgar Square as crowded bazaar, the density of improvised habitation suggests an Orientalized “Third World” (in the unfortunate, vulgar sense of overpopulation, corruption, and state failure) scaling the white cliffs of Dover that tower a bit less over rising, uncalm seas. These images from 2010–11 are eerily prescient of subsequent climate and migration pressures, yet they are also stubborn vestiges of imperialist temporal imaginaries. The xenophobia unleashed by recent desperate waves of migration to Europe and the United States only underscores the racial anxiety at work in “Postcards from the Future,” in which the environment is both narrative protagonist and geopolitical threat.

Similar anxieties suffuse “The Coming Anarchy,” Robert Kaplan’s warning about threats that environmental degradation and resource wars in West Africa and beyond could pose to US national security. The recurrent motif in Kaplan’s 1994 *Atlantic Monthly* essay, widely cited during the Clinton years, is a stretch limo gliding through the potholed streets of New York, whose passengers are the United States and Europe. Outside the stretch limo is the “rest of mankind . . . a rundown, crowded planet of skinhead Cossacks and juju warriors, . . . battling over scraps of overused earth in guerrilla conflicts that ripple across continents.”<sup>ix</sup> Kaplan’s coming eco-anarchy is supposed to frighten because, far from progress narratives’ certitudes about the developed world offering “to the less developed, the image of its own future,” as Marx wrote, Kaplan imagines a dark future anterior, *a future inferior*, in which “Third World problems” (and people) will have

arrived in the First World, pounding on the tinted windows of the stretch limo. (Imagine a menacing mob of squeegee men and women, or worse.) Kaplan inverts assumptions about the shape of the future that underwrote developmentalist impulses during and after the era of high imperialism. Despite his self-professed travel “by foot, bus, and bush taxi in more than sixty countries,” Kaplan’s remains a quarantined imagination: He drums up fears of “Third World” scarcity, disease, and overpopulation as the anarchy coming to America, with hardly a glance at their relationship to the history of European imperialism or the pressures of First World overconsumption. For Kaplan, colonialism was little more than a mapmaking enterprise.

In this context, “Postcards from the Future” read as souvenirs of their own obsolescence, when leisure tourism is overshadowed by forced and uncontrolled migration. What is strange about the artists’ stated desire to move past thinking about climate change as “stuff that happens to other people” is that their postcards depict a future where Londoners will live like, and London will look like, people and places in the Global South. Domesticating climate change, the artists Orientalize London—in a way different from, yet related to, colonial-inspired fashions like paisley or peacock feathers, or earlier waves of migration spurred by European imperialism and its afterlives. When time and space as axes of difference merge like this, latitude, not longitude, determines Greenwich Mean Time. The world-imagining in these images plays upon a reverse colonial fear: that the Third World present offers an image of the First World’s future.

This dynamic is at work in the production of these images. Photographs from Kenya and Morocco were superimposed over a photo of Trafalgar Square; photographs of ninety shanty homes in Kenya were digitally multiplied to 20 million dwellings and superimposed over an aerial view of Buckingham Palace. This digital superimposition of images of the Global South visualizes the future imposition of climate refugees. These images address global warming’s

derangement of time through a politically freighted scrambling of space. Depicting London as displaced from its proper latitude, home to populations displaced from elsewhere, it looks like the empire blights back. But as with Kaplan's stretch limo, these images do not necessarily convey the unevenness in the history, present, and projected future of climate injustice, where the effects of emissions by the industrial North will be felt disproportionately by those in the Global South. To revise the slogan of postcolonial migrants to Britain—"We are here because you were there"—the slogan of climate migrants could be "we are here because your emissions are everywhere." *Like so much else, the future will be unevenly distributed.*

The fears these apocalyptic narratives trade upon aren't just about nature-becoming-unfriendly. They project into the future histories of inequality that remain unacknowledged and unresolved. They offer a fraught version of reading for the planet, by which I mean reading from near to there, tracing lines of risk and responsibility that link and divide specific sites. But these images depict here *as there*. Their defamiliarizing surprise might elicit aversion and disavowal, solidarity, or something else entirely. Perhaps they reveal that an apocalyptic future is already here, but unevenly distributed, being lived by other people. They also risk naturalizing the privilege of not having to live apocalyptically, not yet. In other words, no single politics attaches to the insight that others inhabit a degraded future that has already arrived, that one person's apocalyptic future is another's precarious present. One could read that difference historically and confront the injustice of the present, but one could also see it as natural, civilizational, menacing, and in need of quarantine—a coming anarchy.

This apocalyptic inversion of progress narratives, which posits the Third World as the frightening future of the First, turns upside down the old imperial habit of Europeans denying the coevalness of the colonized, refusing to recognize that everyone inhabits the same moment in time. In the colonial era, European

perceptions of people as “backward,” “behind” or “beneath” were invoked to justify conquest and civilizing projects. Europe’s others were once seen as inhabiting a lesser past; here they are seen as inhabiting its projected future inferior. Temporality again functions as a mode of othering, but the order is reversed.

This new denial of coevalness conjoins the two crises of futurity enumerated earlier: The consequences of carbon accumulation in the future are imagined to look a lot like being on the wrong end of capital accumulation in the present, with little acknowledgment of the shared but uneven history that joins them. This temporal imaginary, newly emergent yet drawing upon longstanding Eurocentric habits of mind, illustrates the necessity of a long view of capitalism’s expansion *through the production of inequality and unevenness on a global scale*. It also demonstrates the pertinence of postcolonial critique in the shadow of the Anthropocene. Beginning with “The Climate of History” (2009), Dipesh Chakrabarty’s provocations on the Anthropocene broke new discursive ground while effecting foreclosures of their own. The political/postcolonial perspective of his previous historiographical work has given way to a planetary/parametric concern with the boundary conditions within which (human) life is possible—a shift that risks euphemizing the differentiated, yet conjoined histories of carbon and capital. As Anthropocene species-talk gains ground in public conversation, this approach is analogous to seeking explanations for postcolonial misery anywhere but in the history of imperialism and underdevelopment. Climate change becomes one more opportunity to forget colonialism and empire.

One additional example illustrates the brittleness of extant modes of world-imagining in the future tense. “Poison,” a short story by Henrietta Rose-Innes, won the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2008; it appeared in *African Pens: New Writing from Southern Africa*, a collection featuring the winners of a competition judged by J. M. Coetzee.<sup>x</sup> “Poison” stands apart from the other stories

in *African Pens*, many of them documentary/realist accounts of HIV/AIDS or crime as challenges confronting South African society in the new century. In a more speculative vein, “Poison” is an eco-apocalypse set in an imagined present, a few days after a massive chemical explosion causes a mass exodus from Cape Town. Its protagonist, Lynn, is a young white woman belatedly fleeing the city who runs out of gas just short of a highway travel stop. The tensions in the story—between the apocalyptic and the ordinary, and between the global and the South African-inflected—are pertinent to the challenge of imagining futurity without reinscribing troubled histories. “Poison” can be read as a generic running-out-of-gas story, its roadside travel stop full of junk food familiar to any driver or passenger who inhabits the consumer end of corporate globalization, encircled within petromodernity’s chain of ease. The dead birds and mysterious oily rain falling from the sky are stock images of eco-apocalypse, as are the infrastructural failures following the explosion: The gas station runs out of gas, the electric grid and cell network fizzle out, the toilet stops flushing. The story offers hints of a Robinsonade, when the shipwrecked protagonist at the deserted petrol-pump island takes an inventory of food, potable liquid, and potential tools.

In this generic, could-happen-anywhere-within-a-certain-class-stratum reading of the story, what is striking is the inertia with which Lynn confronts eco-apocalypse. She waits too long to leave the city; she passes up a seat in a gassed-up vehicle because she’s certain “rescue services” will arrive, and, besides, where is there to go? She kicks off her high heels and untucks her tailored shirt, fighting the impulse to curl up and sleep, “nothing . . . required of her except to wait” (4). The only imaginative resources she has to confront the menacing contaminated future, now looming in her car’s rearview mirror like the storm of progress that blasts Walter Benjamin’s angel of history, are those of an individualized bourgeois discipline and her failings in that regard: “It was typical; she struggled to get things together. . . . She should have kept things cleaner, looked after things better. . . .

When this was all over, she was definitely going on a proper detox. Give up all junk food, alcohol. Some time soon" (2, 9, 10). So she resolves at the story's end, opening another bag of chips after three days with no help in sight. Even the comically inadequate gesture of a "proper detox" as a response to a poisoned city is voiced in the indefinite, never-to-arrive future of resolutions not meant to be kept: contained—safely, yet precariously—within the horizon and habits of ordinary time.

This dual sense of the ordinary—as both comforting and discomfiting in its inadequacy—is crucial to the story. The absurdity of wearing high heels to a mass evacuation verges on parody, but the story aims beyond caricature toward a broader crisis of futurity, where people cling to a life they know is unsustainable because there seem to be no alternatives on offer. Lynn's body plays a contradictory role in the plot: The disaster's extremity registers physiologically rather than cognitively. At pivotal moments, bouts of nausea and diarrhea conspire with indecisiveness ("delivered her from decision" (5)) and get in the way of her ability to act. This is inertia in both the colloquial sense of immobility and the Newtonian sense of resistance to change in an object's state, even a state of motion: the difficulty of changing the environmental order of things and slowing the momentum of harm.

Lynn could be a surrogate for the rapt but ultimately unmoved reader of apocalyptic narratives, where the future is so unthinkable that the thought grooves of the status quo are impossible to escape. Lynn confronts disaster by not thinking about it, lest she think of nothing else, as John Lanchester fears. "Poison" offers a richly imagined, gently satirical account of a particular quarantine of the imagination: the gap between knowledge and action that shapes the impasses of the present. Rose-Innes shows what the inability to act in the face of disaster looks and feels like—even while living and breathing through it, the pores of one's skin

seeping its oily black residue, which, Lynn observes, “show[s] up worse” on white people (2).

Indeed, this place being South Africa, other narratives are at work, among them the racialized polarities of automobility, where white people tend to drive passenger cars and black people tend to walk or take minibus taxis. The geographic and historical specificity of this running-out-gas narrative comes into focus when Lynn’s “unnerving” sensations of standing on a “road surface not meant to be touched with hands or feet, to be examined too closely or in stillness” give way to “thoughts of the people she’d seen so many times on the side of the highway, walking along verges not designed for human passage, covering incomprehensible distances” (5–6). In a racially charged moment, she declines a seat on a minibus taxi—“it’s not that,” she insists, refusing to voice the unspoken assumption that middle-class white women don’t ride in such vaguely dangerous vehicles, the transport network of the poor and carless (4).

Juxtaposing Kaplan’s creepy stretch limo with this minibus taxi, I understand Rose-Innes to be cognizant of histories of social division that inform the experience and imagination of eco-apocalypse, in a way that “The Coming Anarchy” and “Postcards from the Future” are not. In “Poison,” the “throat-slitting gesture” (1) of the gas station attendant signals that the station has run out of gas, but it also evokes white fears of racial apocalypse: white South Africans running out of time. In the explosion’s aftermath, clinging to the broken chain of ease, Lynn is uncertainly poised between longing for infrastructure and her previous privileged position of taking infrastructure for granted. Except for Lynn, everyone manages to leave the station in one vehicular arrangement or another; no one else waits for rescue by the state, perhaps because so many South Africans have gotten by *in spite of* the state.

“Poison” is punctuated by a series of grim postcards from the future. Lynn glances back repeatedly at Devil’s Peak—a quintessential Cape Town postcard site

since the genre's earliest days. The mountain is enshrouded in a terrifying new weather system (some of the most vivid writing in the story): an “oily cloud . . . [its] plume twice as high as the mountain,” the air an “alien gel,” the “tainted sun . . . a pink bleached disk, like the moon of a different planet” (1, 6). This alien sky offers an Anthropocene imaginary in its multiple aspects, fusing this strange weather with industrial chemistry’s rearrangement of molecules across bodies and biomes: these anthropogenic changes have unpredictable, uncontrollable effects that render Earth unhomely. The counterpart to the sinister weather looming over the city behind Lynn is the pastoral promise of the rural landscape before her, “an old two-wire fence . . . holding back the veld,” a “stringy cow [with] grassy breath,” an avid goat (7). Another intertextual modulation is at work here: a shift from Maureen Smales’s embrace of the vast unknown of the bush, at the end of the revolutionary apocalypse imagined in Nadine Gordimer’s *July’s People*, to the South African pastoral of which Coetzee (Rose-Innes’s professor at the University of Cape Town) is the Anglophone critic and practitioner par excellence. The will-to-innocence in this variant of the pastoral wishes away the harms of history and the centuries of struggle over land whose trace remains in fences running over the veld like scars. Rose-Innes’s Anthropocene imaginary broadens the scope and the *kinds* of history the pastoral holds at bay. At the story’s end, Lynn turns her back on the catastrophe hanging over Table Mountain: “She wanted to face clear skies, sweet-smelling veld.” The sound she longs to hear is no longer the blaring sirens and reassuring bullhorns of first responders, but the croak of a frog, “just one, starting its evening song beyond the fence” (10).

Rose-Innes offers a new variation on the South African pastoral as an escape from history: not merely colonial conquest and racialized exploitation (which neither protagonist nor author can escape), but also unevenly universal vulnerability to environmental harm. While it is impossible not to want the future Lynn wants—clear skies, frog songs, and better living “when this is all over”—this

imagined future bears the poisonous traces of a South African literary history that reveal it to be a retreat into an idealized past. That future is rusted out, like the broken-down car Lynn nests herself into at the story's end, when automobility has run out of gas. She notices that it's the same model as her car, but twenty years older—literalizing almost too neatly the structure of another's degraded past becoming one's degraded future.

The shapes of the futures imagined in “Postcards from the Future” and “Poison” are only fully legible in relation to *histories* of exploitation that endure into the present. These histories are thickly mediated through literary traditions, itineraries of reading, and narrative forms (like eco-apocalypse and pastoral) that accrete in world-ecological, world-systemic fashion; that is, both “global” and national, but also more local than that—as in iconic London sites, or the distinctive topography of the Cape, with which these examples are enmeshed in webs of intertextual relation. Neither World Literature nor Anthropocene discourse can do without postcolonial studies’ attention to these multiscalar histories.

In temporal terms, the melancholy lure of eco-apocalypse can be far too easy; the desire to imagine our own destruction, or living on in the aftermath of collapse, distracts attention from the collapse and the alternatives already at work in the present. (In “Poison,” Lynn notes that the sunlight is “an end-of-the-world shade of pewter,” which “had always been the color of the light in places like this” (3)). Rather than eco-apocalypse or desires for ending otherwise in the face of a future inferior, we need to cultivate desires for something other than an ending. To imagine change under the sign of hope, or at least something other than apocalypse or business as usual—even while acknowledging the constraints upon life in a more-than-human world. This means being alert and alive to “zones of exclusion” as “social spaces where life is being *lived* otherwise”<sup>xi</sup> and to what Frederick Buell describes as “living on through loss . . . ways of living in nature as it is now . . . [with] love of what remains.”<sup>xii</sup> Such a capacity to reimagine

alternative possibility in the present, beyond the terms of a postcard politics, might be able to grapple more meaningfully with pasts that aren't even past, and futures—both imagined and unimagined—that may never arrive.

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<sup>i</sup> This essay is adapted from *The Disposition of Nature: Environmental Crisis and World Literature*, forthcoming from Fordham University Press in December 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> Jennifer Wenzel, *Bulletproof: Afterlives of Anticolonial Millenarian Movements in South Africa and Beyond* (Chicago and KwaZulu-Natal, 2009).

<sup>iii</sup> John Lanchester, "Warmer, Warmer." *London Review of Books* 29.6 (March 22, 2007): 3–9.

<sup>iv</sup> Leerom Medovoi, "The Biopolitical Unconscious: Toward an Eco-Marxist Literary Theory." *Mediations* 24.2 (Spring 2009): 122–38, 136.

<sup>v</sup> James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006): 177–93.

<sup>vi</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Planetary Longings: Sitting in the Light of the Great Solar TV." In *World Writing: Poetics, Ethics, Globalization*, edited by Mary Gallagher. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008): 207–22, 210-11.

<sup>vii</sup> Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011): 64.

<sup>viii</sup> See [http://www.london-futures.com/postcard\\_images/](http://www.london-futures.com/postcard_images/).

<sup>ix</sup> Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy." *Atlantic Monthly* 273.2 (February 1994): 44–76.

<sup>x</sup> Henrietta Rose-Innes, "Poison." In *African Pens: New Writing from Southern Africa 2007*. (Claremont, South Africa: Spearhead, 2007): 1–10.

<sup>xi</sup> Pratt, 212.

<sup>xii</sup> Frederick Buell, *From Apocalypse to Way of Life: Environmental Crisis in the American Century*. (New York: Routledge, 2003): 290.