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Defamiliarizing Christian Time in Ottoman Place: George Sandys’s *A Relation of a Journey* Reconsidered

AMEER SOHRAWARDY

English poet and translator George Sandys’s two-year-pilgrimage to Jerusalem, through Ottoman territories, began in 1610. The years of Sandys’s travels are relevant for those interested in Anthropocene studies. Sixteen-ten marked the lowest point of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels in the last two millennia. Geographers Simon Lewis and Mark Maslin note in their seminal study, *Defining the Anthropocene* that the human population of the Americas between 1492 and the middle of the seventeenth century dropped from about sixty million to six million. This 90% loss of human population in the Americas and “the accompanying near-cessation of farming and reduction in reuse resulted in the regeneration of over 50 million hectares of forest, woody savanna and grassland.”¹ Lewis and Maslin’s disturbing conclusion is that the rampant deforestation of the Americas by European colonists in the 1500s was mitigated by the genocide of native Americans. From the levels of carbon dioxide identified in 1610, all increases in man-made organic distresses to the environment can be measured.² In short, 1610 was the beginning of the era of the Anthropocene.

Travelers who actually lived in 1610 and viewed the environment in places where the most expansive imperial power of the time exerted influence (eg: throughout Ottoman-controlled Eastern Europe and the Near East) reached conclusions about global environmental distress quite differently. I shall propose that such environmental distress was registered by the English pilgrim in 1610, in spaces he shared with Ottomans and Muslims. But unlike The New World, where formations of ‘colonizer’ and ‘colonized’ were unmistakable and an evaluation of ‘the Anthropocene’ is filtered through a distinctly Eurocentric narrative of religiously-sanctioned land plunder, in Ottoman-controlled lands, European Christians often mingled in civic and natural environs with their hosts and often identified environmental distress, culpability, and mitigation in equivalent measures. When European travelers subject to Ottoman rule noted man-made distresses to the environment in 1610, their expression took a form unconsidered by Lewis and Maslin—a form that challenges some of their Lewis and Maslin’s presumptions about the environment in the early modern period.

I submit that Sandys’s 1610-1615 pilgrimage account, *A Relation of a Journey Begun Anno Domini 1610*³ describes a contrapuntal narrative to that
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suggested by Lewis and Maslin. If 1610 was, for Lewis and Maslin, the start of a macabre era inaugurated by European imperialism and its aftermaths in the New World, Sandys’s work instead suggests environmental threat anxiously apprehended by Europeans who were more concerned about the far-reaching implications of Ottoman imperialism in Europe and the Far East than that of new European colonies in the Americas. This is not just a matter of different scopes of inquiry. Global-scale environmental distress was intuited by Europeans and Ottoman alike, in 1610, because their sensory acuities were attuned to the same environmental conditions, and to each other’s responses to those conditions. From a twenty-first century perspective, Lewis and Maslin’s dating may be scientifically valid. However, their approach to the events of 1610 does not take into consideration what I shall call ‘cultures of the environment’ at that time.

This paper proposes that preoccupations of ecological distress in 1610 aid us in interrogating presumptions of late 20th/early 21st century Anthropocenes. Rather than considering ecological distress in 1610 as the object of a phenomenological study only possible during our time, Sandys’s *A Relation* suggests that ecosystems and objects in nature had a subjective agency that demanded human attention. As I shall discuss, *A Relation* proposes to us a different perspective from which to define the Anthropocene - certainly as it is applied to the early modern period, but moreover as we understand its application in our own time.

*A Relation* suggests to those considering the Maslin and Lewis’ thesis that bodily or experiential evaluation of the environment, and the ways in which ideological or religious differences might have been transcended through the sensorial, is crucial to any formulation of the Anthropocene; especially one which dates inception to 1610.

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Concerns about environmental threat were expressed during the early modern period through intermingling cultural and religious predilection with ecological evaluation. We recall the moment from Shakespeare’s *Richard II* when the titular king, self-described as “the deputy elected by the Lord,” confidently decrees, “This earth shall have a feeling and these stones / Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king / Shall falter under foul rebellion's arms.” Later he must admit to the Duke of Aumerle, “That power I have, discharge / let them go / To ear the land that hath some hope to grow, / For I have none.” Richard’s ‘ear’ doubles as both anatomical and agricultural referent: Those who listen to the land, like a farmer who ears his crops, are more favored than those who speak on its behalf. And for those who claim to speak for their environs in God’s name, the consequences are more severe still. Richard learns a bitter lesson: Those who already have a feeling for the Earth and what she permits (eg: the farmer) will “grow” in hope while he sinks into disgrace.

Having seen the failures of Richard to be guided by the environment, Henry IV realizes that the stability of one’s political rule over others rests upon accepting the rule of one’s natural environs over oneself. At the beginning of the
first part of *Henry IV*, the titular king cancels his pilgrimage to Jerusalem as atonement for perceived, possible complicity in the murder of Richard II. Instead, King Henry appoints a retinue to go to the Holy Lands in his stead. “Forthwith a power of English shall we levy;” he decrees, “To chase these pagans in those holy fields / Over whose acres walk’d those blessed feet / Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail’d / For our advantage on the bitter cross.” Through “acres,” Henry establishes a link between place and time, and uses the bogeyman of the Turk to justify not fleeing to Jerusalem when a more imminent holy war needs to be won on English soil. Henry understands that the environment exists simultaneously in two types of time scales: one shorter and comprehensible to human understanding and the other longer, Biblical in its transcendent importance. His deictic juxtaposition of “fourteen hundred years ago” and “our purpose now” relies upon the twin scales of Biblical, epochal time and mortal, geopolitical time to borrow validation for the other (eg: English) holy lands that he is staying to defend.

Just as Crusaders travelling to a Christ-less Jerusalem at Henry’s present moment are accredited with undertaking a holy mission because the place of those acres exists in both Biblical and present time, so too does Henry characterize the soil that he stays to defend as both present, geopolitical place (eg: “The thirsty entrails of this soil [of England]” at present risk to “daub her lips with her own children’s blood”) and significant since the time of Christ.

King Henry’s son, Prince Hal acts upon the implications of this lesson as even his father does not have the foresight to do. Having distanced himself from the hermetic, courtly embroilments which turned his father’s former allies turned into embittered rebels, Henry V fortifies his influence over the Scots, the Welsh, and the Irish by repeatedly emphasizing putative environmental intimacies that they share. Henry’s adoption and symbolic consumption of Fluellen’s Welsh leek—“I will wear it for a memorable honour, for I am Welsh, you know, good countryman”—does more than just subsume foreign division within England under the alarm of a foreign threat from without. The leek episode isn’t just a monarch’s modification to regal attitudes towards subjecthood that began two reigns before him; although it is certainly that as well.

Through the ingested leek, Henry V lets the land nourish him. He accepts within his own body and the body politic that which isn’t native or familiar to it. Henry V’s leek borrows authority from the land by literally consuming its output. The King must accept the leek at the level of its taste, texture, appearance. And in so doing, Henry’s connection to common ground that he claims Fluellen and he share is authenticated at the affective, bodily level (eg: through the olfactory, the salival and the digestive common to Britons, Scots, Welsh, and Irish).

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Ecosystems significant to the Protestant pilgrim, yet located in Ottoman-controlled territories, dominate Sandys’s account. Ostensibly, the environs through which Sandys travelled were imbued with signification because figures like the Virgin Mary and Christ had come into contact with certain hills, caves, rocks and streams present there. He notices about the fig trees of Mount Olivet, “so often [were they] blest with the presence of Christ, and apparition of Angels.” Reflecting on a particular stone in a garden at Gethesman, Sandys writes, “there is also a stone, whereon they say that our Lady sate, and beheld the martyrdom of Saint Steuen, who suffered on the side of the opposite hill.” Travel through the ‘environs of Christ and his disciples’ allows the pilgrim access to Biblical figures and events through their own five senses; the rocks, the streams, the trees and the pilgrim’s sensorial responses to those places are equally important to revering (and vivifying) the divinity of the environment.

Despite the passage of so many human lifetimes, Sandys and his readers appear to remain in what we would call the same ‘epoch’ of ecological time as Christ and his disciples. The religious signification of the rock (and of the fig tree) depend upon being able to read, in the material of the natural object before one, (what a 21st century reader might recognize as the object at its atomic level), a link between present and past observer. Like Shakespeare’s leek in Henry V, the pilgrim must recognize the olive or fig tree before him/her in its own material specificity. The fig trees of Mount Olivet belong, in their particular materiality, to mortal time. But the trees also belong to an epochal time within which both Christ and Sandys co-exist.

Sandys seems to subscribe to a mode of early modern cognition linking religion to the environment which would later be echoed by Descartes. The French philosopher argued that if the divinity of Christ was indeed infinite and beyond what the human was able to think concerning it, and if Logos was the basic informational matrix of cognition at the time, then grounding Creation would require one to consider its inseparability from the chiastic nature of materiality. This approach is evident throughout A Relation. To reference just the Gethesman garden instance, the Virgin Mary is both reified by, but at the same time enchants the stone that can be touched in the present moment.

Natural environs occupy space pluralistically. To cite one noteworthy example, Sandys writes about the olive and fig trees which once ‘bedekted’ Mount Olivet “heretofore with palmes…pleasantly rich when husbanded, [are] now $upbraiding the barbarous with his neglected pregnancy.” Those trees are significant because Christ once came into contact with them; but they are also significant because they mark the point of Sandys’s spatial communion with Christ (eg: in modern terms, their location remains at a latitudinal and longitudinal intersection unchanged since Christ’s time).

And just as natural environs occupy space pluralistically, they also exist in
multiple registers of time. Because the fig and olive trees of Sandys’s present moment have not been recently husbanded, now the trees are upbraiding the barbarous. The Muslims of the present moment become barbarous due to their environmental neglect.

Unlike King Henry’s use of ‘ago’ and ‘now’ to make infidels out of malcontents like Worcester, and Biblical fields out of the acres that Henry chooses to defend, Sandys’s present-progressive “upbraiding” and his deictic “now” suggest a resistance to associating the environment with religion in ways that make the environment a time-less tool in the service of religion.

The trees appear to assist Sandys in critiquing the Turks who hold possession of Mount Olivet. For those of Sandys’s readers interested in a confirmation of the barbarity of the Turk, environmental neglect appears to be a useful measure. The environment appears to be little more than an instrument for amplifying existing prejudices.

However, Sandys’s “are now upbraiding” also suggests a productive tension between how those trees can be used to issue invective against the Turk and the independent agency of a tree (eg: to “bedeck Mount Olivet”). The environment, understood through the bodily or the affective, assists faith even as it resists cooptation by (religious) ideology. Recounting the Sepulcher of the blessed Virgin, Sandys observes, ‘A hundred paces past where Pilate presented Christ to the people, before Christ’s crucifixion, “they say that the blessed Virgine stood when her Sonne passed by.”19 Exactly sixty-five paces beyond that, “they say that . . . [Simon of Cyrene assisted Christ]” in bearing the burden of the cross.” Sandys’s remarks allow the reader, should he or she find himself where Sandys is, to use the measure of his/her own foot to find the place of Christ’s crucifixion. Sandys’s affective model suggests a coeval-ness of Sandys and Christ because of bodily movement and sensorial acuity; a coeval-ness which transcended (and transcends) time through the medium of shared environs.

The recollection of movement in one’s body and senses is an act of temporal translation. The paces aren’t simply a measure of distance. Unalloyed by cultural, religion or politics, these paces are as available to the Turk and his feet as they are to the Protestant or the Catholic and hers.

In this regard, Sandys’s travel account shares affinities with Sir Thomas More’s arguments in Dialogue Concerning Heresies of 1529. More refuted arguments against pilgrimage narratives by noting that the likely effect of spiritually homogenized spaces would be spiritually disenchanted spaces. The True Church of God is made up of “all the good men and chosen people of god that be predestynate to be saved in what part so ever they be, and how so ever they be scateryd here one and there one.”20

Indeed, the bodily and the affective is a means for Briton and non-Briton to co-exist in natural settings with a heightened vigilance against distinctions between the religious and the environmental. Sandys reports, “In a canton of the wall, right against the North end of the Sepulcher, there is a clift in the rock, where the Turks do affirme that our Lady (eg: the Virgin Mary) did hide her selfe, when persecuted by the Iewes, into which I haue seene their women (eg: the Ottoman women) to creepe, and giue the cold rocke affectionate kisses.”21 Here, the object
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of Sandys’s ecological observation appears to be the sacred rock.

However, we realize that the enchanting quality of the rock comes as much from the affection shown by the Ottoman women to it as it does from its Marian affiliation. The distance between the current pilgrim (safe from harm and longing for communion with the past in that niche) and Mary, fearful, persecuted and hiding, is bridged by substance of the rock. The pilgrim’s lips on that rock bring him or her closer to the locale of Mary’s emotions even as the feeling of cold touch reminds the pilgrim of his or her present moment.

The diachronic and polysemous character of Nature depicted in Sandys’s account (eg: the rock at Gethesman is both of Sandys’s time and Christ’s) was meaningful to both those who believed in Christ’s divinity and those who did not. The ability of an Ottoman woman to fit into a niche carved within a cave wall neither gathers significance through the enchantment of the Biblically-significant place nor loses it through the religion of the woman venerating it. The enchanted rock begins from a multifaceted, relational account of embodied becoming, and not from an assertion that Nature is fundamentally other to Culture. Or put differently, one epistemology makes room for multiple ontologies.

Elsewhere, Sandys describes a particular hue of purple for which the city of Tyros was once acclaimed. Their particular hue of purple (“a die of soueraigne estimation” esteemed by monarchs the world over22) came from a shellfish native to Tyrian waters. “The fisher-men [of Tyros] stroue to take them [the shellfish] alie: for with their liues they [the fish] cast vp that tincture.”23 Sandys laments that this “Purple is now no more to be had: either extinct in kind, or because the places of their frequenting are now possest by the barbarous Mahometans.”24 Human beings have harvested the shellfish to the point of species extinction. The costs of this injustice are the loss of an esteemed hue of purple, recognized in both Christian and Turk eye, admired equally by Briton and Ottoman subject. Detecting catastrophic environmental risk, A Relation suggests to us, depends upon human cognition of the sensory, the affective, and the experiential to counteract the effects of cultural and spatial prejudice latent in any study of shared spaces.

Henry V’s leek and Sandys’s purple dye aren’t merely cultural symbols in the way that the acres of Jerusalem might be. Both the leek and the purple color exist, sanctioned, without the necessity of another time referent. Sandys’s purple hue observation expresses an anxiety about environmental threat in terms of a relationship between the materiality of religious and non-religious objects. Unlike religious relics and locales, which had contested significations, items produced by the Earth were a nexus for agreement. A leek had a taste, a texture, and a smell that was uncontestable - even accounting for the spectrum of acuities possessed by the human palate. The bodily experience of eating a leek, viewing a particular hue of purple, or standing in a certain holy niche was equivalent (if not the same) for a Muslim, a Christian, an Englishman, or a Turk.
If 1610 was, for Lewis and Maslin, the start of a macabre era – one in which human population numbers were pitted against carbon dioxide numbers; one in which the Earth’s ‘carrying capacity’ first began to be tested; an ‘era’ whose frightening implication was that genocide alleviated climatic distress—then Sandys’s assessment of environmental depredation and human culpability reply back, as it were, from this very era in provocative and timely ways. Sandys’s account is particularly febrile in that it identifies, at a time before English imperial hegemony, concerns about man-made environmental depredation and neglect in the subcultures and local ecosystems shared by Christians, Muslims, Europeans and Turk. Sandys can claim that the acres of Jerusalem represent hallowed ground. But he cannot make that claim on behalf of any part of the environment within the acres of Jerusalem which could have been experienced through a human’s five senses.

To the student of the Anthropocene, *A Relation* effaces one of the paradoxes of the term without dismissing its usefulness altogether: By considering ‘the environment’ as a scalar translation of one’s purview of enquiry from the individual tree to forest, one lends validity to ‘the Anthropocene.’ However, in that translation, one risks losing sight of a tree’s sensorial meaning to the observer within the complex cultural matrices of the time. Reading a pilgrimage narrative such as Sandys’s, this sensorial significance becomes apparent. So too does the fact that mass-scale environmental threats were voiced in narratives of 1610 with scalar translations of both space and time accounting for the ways in which cultures and environments were shared by Europeans and non-Europeans.

Early modern scholars interested in the Anthropocene would benefit from looking more closely at the many interactions between Christians and Muslims within shared environments. Such inquiry would better help us understand what a global Anthropocene that shares its era with Shakespeare and Sandys might mean. A consideration of *A Relation* presses us to consider whether or not the measure of human costs to the environment can also be taken on a scale of sentience experienced by culturally-diverse peoples within commonly-shared spaces.

If narratives of rising carbon levels in the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries do not account for the “utter loss” of a plant species or the imminent disappearance of a particular shade of naturally-derived purple dye, they do so at their own peril. The 1610 dating of the Anthropocene must account for such narratives if our models of the Anthropocene are to recognize their own cultural blind spots (eg: beginning with the perspective of dwellers in the most densely-populated, shared lands at that time and how they registered environmental endangerment and proposed novel approaches to mitigation).

If one benefit of the Anthropocene is the construction of new historical and literary narratives, insofar as the dialectic between nature and culture constantly calls for a re-orientation of temporal scales, then Sandys’s work suggests forgotten or unconsidered narratives from the early modern period. In *A Relation*, Nature is no longer the backdrop to culture, nor are short term histories less
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important than deep time. *A Relation* blurs for us the boundary between the slow passage of geological time and quick pointillism of human history.

If Maslin and Lewis argue that “post-1492 humans on the two hemispheres were connected, trade became global and…the modern ‘world system’ [was established],” Sandys’s account suggests to us that such purported ‘hemispheric’ connections already existed in shared religious spaces.

When describing two hot water baths in Troy near the site of ruined Christian temples, Sandys notes that “the one choked with rubidge, the other yet in use, though under a simple couverture. But now the ruines bear not altogether that forme, *lessened daily by the Turks, who carry the pillars and stones vnto Constantinople* to adorne the buildings of the Great Bassa, as they now do from Cyzicus.” Although imperial re-organization may be the Turk’s ultimate goal (eg: the materials of Christian temples serve to adorn the buildings of the Bassa), the Bassa nevertheless selects the rubbish choking naturally-occurring hot water springs for that purpose. As remarkable as this is, Sandys’s notation of it is equally remarkable.

Sandys’s 1610 account of environmental concern also reminds us of how a consideration of theology might yet serve us. *A Relation* gestures towards a divinity in the environment that is open to any number of forms. It serves as a primer to modern scientific inquiry, suggesting that matter should be understood beyond its tangible thingness and include an understanding of the energy and organizational data patterns that determine the ontic essence of phenomenal things. The settlement of European empires away from lands already claimed by the Ottomans meant that alterations to carbon and carbon dioxide levels in the New World were, to some extent, counterfactuals to levels not so affected in the Ottoman Empire.

Postcolonial theorists interested in the Anthropocene also stand to benefit from the early modern perspectives on shared environmental obligation and distress provided by Sandys. Contemporary models of postcolonial Anthropocene studies ask, how can one make out the political filaments of spaces of ‘religious’ and ‘nature’, when those very words—‘religion’ and ‘nature’—obscure that which comprises the spatial and political formations under investigation? *A Relation* responds to such a challenge by putting “the very categories ‘nature’ and ‘religion’ under erasure such that the politics of these kinds of geographies can be made visible,” to recall the challenge posed by postcolonial critic, Tariq Jazeel. Putting ‘religion’ and ‘culture’ under erasure involves tracing the link between mortal and ecological time found in local eco-systems and detecting, in those shared spaces, ecological concerns that bound pilgrims of different beliefs to each other.

The diachronic and polysynonymous character of nature depicted in Sandys’s account show how Nature is an assemblage of affects. Critics like Jazeel who conceptualize in such terms about subaltern geographies, without concrete examples for credible evidence, would find a wealth of insight in early modern accounts such as Sandys’s. Throughout Sandys’s work, such examples are in abundance. (The rock at Gethesmane that Sandys describes mobilizes contingency and generalizability at the same time.)
Literature possesses the capability to accommodate the immensities of time and the scope of the planet without dissolving the singularity of one point of view or experience. Sandys and his contemporaries can help us consider anew how to accommodate critical claims of human difference with accounts of collective human agency on the environment. If the literary text constructs “us” as a species, it does not sublate our particularities, nor does it dismiss the singularity of experience. The universal (eg: human/species) that the text sketches out for us is not just a concept; it emerges as a literary experience of singularity.

“The point of living in the epoch of the Anthropocene”, Bruno Latour reminds us in “Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene,” is that all agents share the same shape-changing destiny, a destiny that cannot be followed, documented, told, and represented by using any of the older traits associated with subjectivity or objectivity.35 “Far from trying to ‘reconcile’ or ‘combine’ nature and society,” Latour remarks, “the task, the crucial political task, is on the contrary to distribute agency as far and in as differentiated a way as possible—until, that is, we have thoroughly lost any relation between those two concepts of object and subject.”36 The frisson between ‘the religious’ and ‘the environmental’ that Sandys depicts can guide us to responding to the challenging work that Latour details. I have suggested that one such direction is to hold any 1610 model of the Anthropocene accountable to the imperatives of both the time it wishes to understand as well as to its own time.

Notes

3. All references to the text will be taken from George Sandys, A Relation of a Journey Begun Anno Domini 1610. Four Bookes Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy, and Ilands Adjoyning. London: Printed for W. Barrett, 1615.
4. Sandys’s narrative proper begins with his departure from Venice, from whence he travels down the Adriatic, through the Aegean, to arrive at Istanbul; the rest of his extensive Levantine travels are set entirely in Ottoman territories. From Istanbul, Sandys took a ship bound for Alexandria. Upon reaching Cairo, he set out in a caravan for Jerusalem. The caravan reached Jerusalem in time for Easter celebrations. Sandys returned to Italy via Malta and Sicily, and by March 1612, he seemed to have returned to England.
5. “More broadly, the formal definition of the Anthropocene makes scientists arbiters, to an extent, of the human-environment relationship…Evidence will define whether the geological community formally ratifies a human-activity-induced geological time unit” (Lewis and Maslin, “Defining the Anthropocene,” 171).
9. Henry’s esteem of the Biblical significance of England reminds us of John of Gaunt’s lines from Richard II: “This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England, / This nurse, this
teeming womb of royal kings,/ Fear'd by their breed and famous by their birth, / Renowned for their deeds as far from home,/ For Christian service and true chivalry, / As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry,/ Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son” (2.1.51-58).


11. “The power of God,” he writes, “must be essentially present in all places, even in the tiniest leaf.” Martin Luther, “That These Words of Christ, ‘This is My Body,’ etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics,” in Luther’s Works. Volume 37, Word and Sacrament 111 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1976), 57. Christ so “fills all things” that he is “present in all creatures, and I might find him in stone, in fire, in water.” Martin Luther, “The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ—Against the Fanatics,” in Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings, ed. Timothy F. Lull and William R. Russell (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 228. In these claims Luther is by no means alone. The assertion of God abiding in all of creation has been present in Christian theology since its beginning.


14. I am using ‘epoch’ not strictly as a designation of chronological division and demarcation, but as a measure of time during which cognitive reportage about a species stays consistent.


22. Sandys, A Relation, 215. The Tyrian purple is preferred to the African which resembles a violet or “our [English] scarlet, which name doth seeme to be deriued from them. For Tyrus was called Sar, in that build vpon a rocke, which gauue a name vnto Syria by the Arabians (they pronouncing scan for san, and scar for sar) and the fish was likewise named Sar or Scar” (216).


25. Scholars interested in the manifestations of the Anthropocene outside of Continental Europe have already trained their gaze on Near East geopolitics. Dipesh Chakrabarty’s Provincializing Europe (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2000) is the most obvious starting point. But writers on ‘postcolonial ecologies,’ such as DeLoughrey and Handley, have voiced concern about the ‘western’ appropriation of ‘non-western’ ecological or ecopolitical relations (Postcolonial Ecologies, eds. Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey and George B. Handley [Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011], 19–20). Climate change and Anthropocene discourse have been criticized for underrepresenting the neo-
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colonial element of the distribution of both human impact and intervention (e.g. see Yasmin Gunaratnam and Nigel Clark, “Pre-Race, Post-Race: Climate Change and Planetary Humanism,” darkMatter, July 2012). This also extends to Anthropocene aesthetics, diagnosed by Nicolas Mirzoeff as an ‘unintended supplement to imperial aesthetics’ that still distinguish between First World prowess and Third World deficiency (Visualizing the Anthropocene [Durham: Duke UP, 2014]: 220, 225–6). Social anthropologists such as Chris Hann, for instance, have advised that “Anthropologists should collaborate with archaeologists and global historians to grasp the social preconditions for the emergence of the Anthropocene.” Hann dates the ‘anthropocene’ as “a pan-Eurasian story which begins in the late Bronze Age.” He argues that, “Industrial capitalism, the Great Divergence between East and West in the nineteenth century, the modernization paradigms of the twentieth (both socialist and capitalist), and the postmodern ‘overheated’ globalization of the twenty-first, are all to be understood as recent consequences of these beginnings.” See “The Anthropocene and Anthropology: Micro and Macro Perspectives,” European Journal of Social Theory 20.1 (2017): 183–196, at 194.


27. “On the right hand stood Iericho, a Cite of Fame (and in the time of the Christians an Episcopal sea) beautiful in her Palmes, but chiefly proud of her Balsamum, a plant then onely thought particular vnto Iurie, which grew most plentifully in this valley, and on the sides of the Westerne mountains which confine it; being about two cubits high, growing upright, and yearely pruned of her superfluous branches. In the sommer they [the Turks] lanced the rute with a stone (not to be touched with steele) but not deeper then the inward filme, for otherwise it forthwith perished from whence those fragrant and precious teers of Christ did distill” (Sandys, A Relation, 197).

29. Sandys, A Relation, 22 (emphasis mine).

30. When he passes through Alexandria, Sandys points out to his reader that, contrary to popular conception, the Ottoman sultan does not pay the Abyssinian emperor to re-direct the course of the Nile River to flow into Turkish territories. About Sandys’s reactions, we might observe a dilemma common to the subaltern subject. In attempting to re-essentialize the Islam of the Turk as the cause of his barbarity towards the environment, Sandys cannot help but to include incidents such as that of the hot water baths and Alexandria. Lands and environments commonly shared and venerated by Muslims and Christians cannot have a secular ‘outside’ against which to define ‘inner’ religious identity. To imagine a socio-spatial dialectic from which either Christianity or Islam can be excluded from environments that they hold in equal veneration proves impossible for Sandys to accomplish—despite conscious efforts to the contrary. See Tariq Jazeel,”Subaltern Geographies: Geographical Knowledge and Postcolonial Strategy,” Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography 35 (2014) 88–103, at 97.

31. Niels Gregersen writes in “God, Information, and Complexity: From Descriptive to Explorative Metaphysics” in Theology and Science 11.4 (2013): 394–423 that “Scientists have expanded the concept of matter to include its stuff character (as evidenced in quarks, electrons, atoms, molecules, etc.), the energy of matter (the kinetic potential and changeability of physical matter), and the informational structure of matter (its capacity for pattern formulation)” (396).

34. Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe, 2.
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