

= She : A History of Adventure =

She ? subtitled A History of Adventure ? is a novel by H. Rider Haggard (1856 ? 1925) , first serialised in The Graphic magazine from October 1886 to January 1887 . She is one of the classics of imaginative literature , and one of the best @-@ selling books of all time , with over 100 million copies sold in 44 different languages as of 2013 . She was extraordinarily popular upon its release and has never been out of print . According to literary historian Andrew M. Stauffer , " She has always been Rider Haggard 's most popular and influential novel , challenged only by King Solomon 's Mines in this regard " .

The story is a first @-@ person narrative that follows the journey of Horace Holly and his ward Leo Vincey to a lost kingdom in the African interior . There they encounter a primitive race of natives and a mysterious white queen named Ayesha who reigns as the all @-@ powerful " She " , or " She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed " . In this work , Rider Haggard developed the conventions of the Lost World subgenre , which many later authors emulated .

She is placed firmly in the imperialist literature of nineteenth @-@ century England , and inspired by Rider Haggard 's experiences of South Africa and British colonialism . The story expresses numerous racial and evolutionary conceptions of the late Victorians , especially notions of degeneration and racial decline prominent during the fin de siècle . In the figure of She , the novel notably explored themes of female authority and feminine behaviour . It has received praise and criticism alike for its representation of womanhood .

= = Synopsis = =

A young Cambridge University professor , Horace Holly , is visited by a colleague , Vincey , who reveals that he will soon die . Vincey proceeds to tell Holly a fantastical tale of his family heritage . He charges Holly with the task of raising his young son , Leo (whom he has never seen) and gives Holly a locked iron box , with instructions that it is not to be opened until Leo turns 25 . Holly agrees , and indeed Vincey is found dead the next day . Holly raises the boy as his own ; when the box is opened on Leo 's 25th birthday they discover the ancient and mysterious " Sherd of Amenartas " , which seems to corroborate Leo 's father 's story . Holly , Leo and their servant , Job , follow instructions on the Sherd and travel to eastern Africa but are shipwrecked . They alone survive , together with their Arab captain , Mahomed ; after a perilous journey into an uncharted region of the African interior , they are captured by the savage Amahagger people . The adventurers learn that the natives are ruled by a fearsome white queen , who is worshiped as Hiya or " She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed " . The Amahagger are curious about the white @-@ skinned interlopers , having been warned of their coming by the mysterious queen .

Billali , the chief elder of one of the Amahagger tribes , takes charge of the three men , introducing them to the ways of his people . One of the Amahagger maidens , Ustane , takes a liking to Leo and , by kissing him and embracing him publicly , weds him according to Amahagger customs . Leo , likewise , grows very fond of her .

Billali tells Holly that he needs to go and report the white men 's arrival to She . In his absence , some of the Amahagger become restless and seize Mahomed , intending to eat him as part of a ritual " hotpot " . Realising what is about to happen , Holly shoots several of the Amahagger , killing Mahomed in the process ; in the ensuing struggle Leo is gravely wounded , but Ustane saves his life by throwing herself onto his prostrate body to shield him from spears . All seems lost as the Amahagger resolve to kill Ustane along with the white men but Billali returns in the nick of time and declares that the three men are under the protection of She . Leo 's condition , however , worsens and he nears death as Ustane faithfully tends to him .

They are taken to the home of the queen , which lies near the ruins of the lost city of Kôr , a once mighty civilisation that predated the Egyptians . The queen and her retinue live under a dormant volcano in a series of catacombs built as tombs for the people of Kôr . There , Holly is presented to the queen , a white sorceress named Ayesha . Her beauty is so great that it enchants any man who beholds it . She , who is veiled and lies behind a partition , warns Holly that the power of her

splendour arouses both desire and fear , but he is dubious . When she shows herself , however , Holly is enraptured and prostrates himself before her . Ayesha reveals that she has learned the secret of immortality and that she possesses other supernatural powers including the ability to read the minds of others , a form of telepathy and the ability to heal wounds and cure illness ; she is also revealed to have a tremendous knowledge of chemistry , but is notably unable to see into the future . She tells Holly that she has lived in the realm of Kôr for more than two millennia , awaiting the reincarnated return of her lover , Kallikrates (whom she had slain in a fit of jealous rage) . Later , when Holly inadvertently and secretly discovers Ayesha in her hidden chamber , he learns that she may have some degree of power to reanimate the dead .

The next evening She visits Leo to heal him . But upon seeing his face , she is stunned and declares him to be the reincarnation of Kallikrates . She saves him and becomes jealous of Ustane . The latter is ordered to leave Leo and never to set her eyes on him again . Ustane refuses , however , and Ayesha eventually strikes her dead with magic . Despite the murder of their friend , Holly and Leo cannot free themselves from the power of Ayesha 's beauty and Leo becomes bewitched . In explaining her history , Ayesha shows Leo the perfectly preserved body of Kallikrates , which she has kept with her , but she then dissolves the remains with a powerful acid , confident that Leo is indeed the reincarnation of her former lover .

In the climax of the novel , Ayesha takes the two men to see the Pillar of Fire , passing through the ruined city of Kôr into the heart of the ancient volcano . She is determined that Leo should bathe in the fire to become immortal and remain with her forever , and that together they can become the immortal and all @-@ powerful rulers of the world . After a perilous journey , they come to a great cavern , but at the last Leo doubts the safety of entering the flame . To allay his fears , Ayesha steps into the Spirit of Life , but with this second immersion , the life @-@ preserving power is lost and Ayesha begins to revert to her true age . Holly speculates that it may be that a second exposure undoes the effects of the previous or the Spirit of Life spews death on occasion . Before their eyes , Ayesha withers away in the fire , and her body shrinks . The sight is so shocking that Job dies in fright . Before dying , She tells Leo , " Forget me not . I shall come again ! "

= = = Characters = = =

Horace Holly ? protagonist and narrator , Holly is a Cambridge man whose keen intellect and knowledge was developed to compensate for his ape @-@ like appearance . Holly knows a number of ancient languages , including Greek , Arabic , and Hebrew , which allow him to communicate with the Amahagger (who speak a form of Arabic) and She (who knows all three languages) . Holly 's interest in archaeology and the origins of civilisation lead him to explore the ruins of Kôr .

Leo Vincey ? ward of Horace Holly , Leo is an attractive , physically active young English gentleman with a thick head of blond hair . He is the confidant of Holly and befriends Ustane . According to She , Leo resembles Kallikrates in appearance and is his reincarnation .

Ayesha ? the title character of the novel , called Hiya by the native Amahagger , or " She " (She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed) . Ayesha was born over 2 @,@ 000 years ago amongst the Arabs , mastering the lore of the ancients and becoming a great sorceress . Learning of the Pillar of Life in the African interior , she journeyed to the ruined kingdom of Kôr , feigning friendship with a hermit who was the keeper of the Flame that granted immortality . She bathed in the Pillar of Life 's fire .

Job ? Holly 's trusted servant . Job is a working @-@ class man and highly suspicious and judgmental of non @-@ English peoples . He is also a devout Protestant . Of all the travellers , he is especially disgusted by the Amahagger and fearful of She .

Billali ? an elder of one of the Amahagger tribes .

Ustane ? an Amahagger maiden . She becomes romantically attached to Leo , caring for him when he is injured , acting as his protector , and defying She to stay with him .

Kallikrates ? an ancient Greek , the husband of Amenartas , and ancestor of Leo . Two thousand years ago , he and Amenartas fled Egypt , seeking a haven in the African interior where they met Ayesha . There , She fell in love with him , promising to give him the secret of immortality if he would

kill Amenartas . He refused , and , enraged , She struck him down .

Amenartas ? an ancient Egyptian priestess and ancestress of the Vincey family . As a priestess of Isis , she was protected from the power of She . When Ayesha slew Kallikrates , she expelled Amenartas from her realm . Amenartas gave birth to Kallikrates ' son , beginning the line of the Vinceys (Leo 's ancestors) .

= = Background = =

= = = South Africa = = =

In 1875 , Haggard was sent to Cape Town , South Africa as secretary to Sir Henry Bulwer , the lieutenant @-@ governor of Natal . Haggard wrote in his memoirs of his aspirations to become a colonial governor himself , and of his youthful excitement at the prospects . The major event during his time in Africa was Britain 's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 . Haggard was part of the expedition that established British control over the Boer republic , and which helped raise the Union flag over the capital of Pretoria on 24 May 1877 . Writing of the moment , Haggard declared :

Haggard had advocated the British annexation of the Boer republic in a journal article entitled " The Transvaal " , published in the May 1877 issue of Macmillan 's Magazine . He maintained that it was Britain 's " mission to conquer and hold in subjection " lesser races , " not from thirst of conquest but for the sake of law , justice , and order " . However , Boer resistance to British rule and the resulting Anglo @-@ Zulu war caused the imperial government in London to withdraw from pursuing British sovereignty over the South African interior . Haggard considered this to be a " great betrayal " by Prime Minister Gladstone and the Liberal Party , which " no lapse of time ever can solace or even alleviate " . He became increasingly disillusioned with the realities of colonial Africa . Victorian scholar Patrick Brantlinger notes in his introduction to She : " Little that Haggard witnessed matched the romantic depictions of ' the dark continent ' in boys ' adventure novels , in the press , and even in such bestselling explorers ' journals as David Livingstone 's Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa (1857) . "

During his time in South Africa , Haggard developed an intense hatred for the Boers , but also came to admire the Zulus . However , his admiration of the Zulus did not extend to other African peoples ; rather , he shared many of the assumptions that underlay contemporary Victorian politics and philosophy , such as those expressed by James Hunt , the President of the Anthropological Society of London : " the Negro is inferior intellectually to the European ... [and] can only be humanised and civilised by Europeans . The analogies are far more numerous between the Negro and apes , than between the European and apes . " The Victorian belief in the inherent inferiority of the ' darker races ' made them the object of a civilising impulse in the European Scramble for Africa . Although disenchanted with the colonial effort , Haggard remained committed to this ideology . He believed that the British " alone of all the nations in the world appear to be able to control coloured races without the exercise of cruelty " .

= = = Return to Britain = = =

Rider Haggard returned to Britain in 1881 . At the time , England was increasingly beset by the social and cultural anxieties that marked the fin de siècle . One of the most prominent concerns was the fear of political and racial decline , encapsulated in Max Nordau 's Degeneration (1895) . Barely half a century earlier , Thomas Babington Macaulay had declared " the history of England " to be " emphatically the history of progress " , but late @-@ Victorians living in the wake of Darwinian evolution had lost the earlier positivism of their age . Uncertainty over the immutability of Britain 's historical identity , what historian Tim Murray has called the " threat of the past " , was manifested in the Victorian obsession with ancient times and archaeology . Haggard was greatly interested in the ruins discovered at Zimbabwe in the 1870s . In 1896 , he provided the preface to a monograph that detailed a history of the site , declaring :

Haggard was strongly influenced by archaeology and evolutionary theories , especially ideas about the " racialisation " of historical decline prevalent during the fin de siècle . His distaste for the Boers stemmed in part from their depiction as a ' mixed ' race , descended from various European stock and intermarried with African locals . Lack of racial purity was seen as leading to evolutionary degeneration and national decline , a concept which he embodied in the Amahagger people .

By the time that Haggard began writing *She* , society had more anxiety about the role of women . Debates regarding " The Woman Question " dominated Britain during the fin de siècle , as well as anxieties over the increasing position and independence of the " New Woman " . Alarm over social degeneration and societal decadence further fanned concerns over the woman 's movement and female liberalisation , which challenged the traditional conception of Victorian womanhood . The role and rights of women had changed dramatically since the early part of the century , as they entered the workforce , received better education , and gained more political and legal independence . Writing in 1894 , Haggard believed that marriage was the natural state for women : " Notwithstanding the energetic repudiations of the fact that confront us at every turn , it may be taken for granted that in most cases it is the natural mission of women to marry ; that ? always in most cases ? if they do not marry they become narrowed , live a half life only , and suffer in health of body and of mind . " He created the character of She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed " who provided a touchstone for many of the anxieties surrounding the New Woman in late @-@ Victorian England " .

= = Concept and creation = =

According to Haggard 's daughter Lilius , the phrase " She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed " originated from his childhood and " the particularly hideous aspect " of one rag @-@ doll : " This doll was something of a fetish , and Rider , as a small child , was terrified of her , a fact soon discovered by an unscrupulous nurse who made full use of it to frighten him into obedience . Why or how it came to be called She @-@ Who @-@ Must @-@ Be @-@ Obeyed he could not remember " . Haggard wrote that " the title *She* " was taken " from a certain rag doll , so named , which a nurse at Bradenham used to bring out of some dark recess in order to terrify those of my brothers and sisters who were in her charge . "

In his autobiography , Haggard spoke of how he composed *She* within a six @-@ week period of February and March 1886 , having just completed *Jess* , which was published in 1887 . Haggard claimed that this period was an intensely creative moment : the text " was never rewritten , and the manuscript carries but few corrections " . Haggard went on to declare : " The fact is that it was written at white heat , almost without rest , and that is the best way to compose . " He admitted to having had no clear story in mind when he began writing :

Various scholars have detected a number of analogues to *She* in earlier literature . According to Brantlinger , Haggard certainly read and was aware of the stories of Edward Bulwer @-@ Lytton , in particular *A Strange Story* (1862) which includes a mysterious , veiled woman called " Ayesha " , and *The Coming Race* (1871) about the discovery of a subterranean civilisation . Similarly , the name of the underground civilisation in *She* , known as Kôr , is derived from Norse mythological romance , where the " deathbed " of the goddess Hel is called Kôr and means " disease " in Old Norse . In *She* , a plague destroyed the original inhabitants of Kôr .

According to Haggard , he wrote the final scene of Ayesha 's demise while waiting for his literary agent , A. P. Watt , to return to his offices . Upon completion , he entered Watt 's office and threw the manuscript " ... on the table with the remark : ' There is what I shall be remembered by ' " .

An interesting and obscure reference to *She* appears in Lieut . George Witton 's 1907 Book , *Scapegoats of the Empire ; The True Story of the Bushveldt Carbineers* :

" By midday we reached the Letaba Valley , in the Majajes Mountains , inhabited by a powerful tribe of natives once ruled by a princess said to be the prototype of Rider Haggard 's ' *She* ' . "

= = = Publication = = =

She was first published as a serial story in the *Graphic*, a large folio magazine printed weekly in London, between October 1886 and January 1887. The serialisation was accompanied with illustrations by E. K. Johnson. An American edition was published by Harper and Bros. in New York on 24 December 1886; this included the Johnson illustrations. On 1 January 1887, an English edition was published by Longmans, Green, and Co., but without any images. It was the first publication of *She* in book format, and featured significant textual revisions from the *Graphic* serial made by Haggard. He made further revisions for an 1888 edition, which included illustrations by Maurice Greiffenhagen and C. H. M. Kerr. In 2006 a Broadview publication of *She* became the first edition to reproduce the *Graphic* serial text since 1887.

== Narrative revisions ==

Haggard contended that romances such as *She* or *King Solomon's Mines* were best left unrevised, because "wine of this character loses its bouquet when it is poured from glass to glass." However, he made a number of alterations to the original *Graphic* version of *She* before its publication as a novel in 1887. One of the most significant was to the third chapter concerning the sherd, which was substantially expanded from the original to include the tale of Amenartas in uncial and cursive Greek scripts. Facsimile illustrations were also included of an antique vase, made @-@ up by Haggard's sister @-@ in @-@ law Agnes Barber to resemble the sherd of Amenartas. A number of footnotes were also included containing historical references from the narrator. Haggard was keen to stress the historicity of the narrative, improving some of the information about geography and the history of ancient civilisations in chapters 4, 13, and 17.

The 1887 novel also featured a substantial rewrite of the "hotpot" scene in chapter eight, when Mahomed is killed. In the original serialisation of *She*, the cannibal Amahagger grow restless and hungry and place a large heated pot over the head of Mahomed, enacting the hotpotting ritual before eating him. Haggard's stories were criticised at the time for their violence, and he toned down this scene for the novel publication. The novel revised the hotpotting incident, with Mahomed dying instead when Holly shoots him accidentally in the scuffle with the Amahagger. Comparing the serial and novel editions of *She*, Stauffer describes the more compact narrative of the original as a reflection of the intense but short burst of creativity in which Haggard composed the story, arguing that "the style and grammar of the *Graphic* [edition] is more energetic and immediate", although as he noted, "sometimes more flawed".

Haggard continued to revise *She* for later publications, with the "New Edition" of 1888 containing over 400 minor alterations. The last revision by Haggard to be published was in 1896.

= Genre =

== Fantasy and science fiction ==

She is one of the foundational works of fantasy literature, coming around the time of *The Princess and the Goblin* (1858) by George MacDonald, William Morris' *The Wood Beyond the World* and *The Well at the World's End*, and the short stories of Lord Dunsany. It is marked by a strong element of "the marvelous" in the figure of Ayesha, a two @-@ thousand @-@ year @-@ old sorceress, and the 'Spirit of the World', an undying fire that confers immortality. Indeed, Haggard's story is one of the first in modern literature to feature "a slight intrusion of something unreal" into a very real world? a hallmark of the fantasy genre. Similarly, the carefully constructed "fantasy history" of *She* foreshadows the use of this technique that characterises later fantasies such as *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Wheel of Time* series, and which imparts a "degree of security" to the secondary world. However, the story of *She* is firmly ensconced in what fantasy theorists call 'primary world reality', with the lost kingdom of Kôr, the realm ruled by the supernatural *She*, a fantastic "Tertiary World" at once directly part of and at the same time indirectly set apart from normative "primary" reality. Along with Haggard's prior novel, *King Solomon's Mines*, *She* laid

the blueprints for the " Lost World " subgenre in fantasy literature , as well as the convention of the " lost race " . As Brantlinger has noted of the novel 's importance to the development of the " secondary world " in fantasy literature : " Haggard may seem peripheral to the development of science fiction , and yet his African quest romances could easily be transposed to other planets and galaxies " . In his history of science fiction , Billion Year Spree , Brian Aldiss notes the frequency with which Ayesha 's death in the Pillar of Fire has been imitated by later science fiction and fantasy writers : " From Haggard on , crumbling women , priestesses , or empresses ? all symbols of women as Untouchable and Unmakeable ? fill the pages of many a scientific romance " .

= = = Adventure romance = = =

She is part of the adventure subgenre of literature which was especially popular at the end of the 19th century , but which remains an important form of fiction to the present day . Along with works such as Treasure Island (1883) and Prince Otto (1885) by Robert Louis Stevenson , and Jules Verne 's A Journey to the Centre of the Earth (1871) and Around the World in Eighty Days (1875) , She had an important formative effect on the development of the adventure novel . Indeed , Rider Haggard is credited with inventing the romance of archaeological exploration which began in King Solomon 's Mines and crystallised in She . One of the most notable modern forms of this genre is the Indiana Jones movie series , as well as the Tarzan novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs and recently Alan Moore 's The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2000) . In such fictional narratives the explorer is the hero , with the drama unfolding as they are cast into " the nostrum of the living past " . Holly and Leo are prototypes of the adventurer , who has become a critical figure in modern fiction .

= = = Imperial Gothic = = =

She is also one of the central texts in the development of Imperial Gothic . Many late @-@ Victorian authors during the fin de siècle employed Gothic conventions and motifs in their writing , stressing and alluding to the supernatural , the ghostly , and the demonic . As Brantlinger has noted , " Connected to imperialist adventure fiction , these interests often imply anxieties about the stability of Britain , of the British Empire , or , more generally , of Western civilisation " . Novels like Dracula and the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde present depictions of repressed , foreign , and demonic forces at the heart of the imperial polity . In She the danger is raised in the form of Ayesha herself :

She 's threat to replace Queen Victoria with herself echoes the underlying anxiety over imperialism and European colonialism emblematic of the Imperial Gothic genre . Indeed , Judith Wilt characterises the narrative of She , in which British imperialist penetration of Africa (represented by Holly , Leo , and Job) suddenly suffers a potential " counter @-@ attack " (from Ayesha) , as one of the archetypal illustrations of the " reverse colonialism " motif in Victorian Gothic . Similarly , She marks one of the first fictional examples to raise the spectre of the natural decline of civilisation , and by extension , British imperial power , which would become an increasingly frequent theme in Gothic and invasion literature until the onset of World War I.

= = Style = =

Rider Haggard 's writing style was the source of much criticism in reviews of She and his other works . His harshest critic was Augustus Moore , who wrote " God help English literature when English people lay aside their Waverley novels , and the works of Defoe , Swift , Thackeray , Charlotte Brontë , George Eliot , and even Charles Reade for the penny dreadfuls of Mr Haggard " ; adding , " The man who could write ' he spoke to She ' can have no ear at all " . A more common sentiment was expressed by the review of She in Blackwood 's Edinburgh Magazine : " Mr. Rider Haggard is not an exquisite workman like Mr. [Robert Louis] Stevenson , but he has a great deal of power in his way , and rougher qualities which are more likely , perhaps , to ' take the town ' than skill more delicate " .

Modern literary criticism has tended to be more circumspect . As Victorian scholar Daniel Karlin has

noted , " That Haggard 's style is frequently bathetic or clumsy cannot be denied ; but the matter is not so easily settled " . Stauffer cites the passage where Holly is meditating as he tries to fall asleep as emblematic of " the charges against " Haggard 's writing . In this scene , Holly lays down ,

The passage concludes with a wry remark from Holly , " I at last managed to get to sleep , a fact for which anybody who reads this narrative , if anybody ever does , may very probably be thankful " . According to Stauffer , " the disarming deflation of the passage goes a long way toward redeeming it , and is typical of the winning contradictions of the narrator 's style " . Tom Pocock in *Rider Haggard and the Lost Empire* has also highlighted the " literary framework " that Haggard constructs throughout much of the narrative , referencing Keats , Shakespeare , and Classical literature to imbue the story with a " Gothic sensibility " . Yet as Stauffer notes , " Ultimately , however , one thinks of Haggard 's plots , episodes , and images as the source of his lasting reputation and influence .

= = Themes = =

= = = Imperialism = = =

She is set firmly in the imperialist literature of the late @-@ Victorian period . The so @-@ called " New Imperialism " marking the last quarter of the 19th century witnessed a further expansion of British power , particularly on the African continent , and was characterised by a seemingly confident sentiment in the merits of empire and English civilisation . Thus She " invokes a particularly British view of the world " as Rider Haggard projects concepts of the English self against the foreign otherness of Africa . One such example occurs when Holly is first ushered into the presence of Ayesha , walking into the chamber behind a grovelling Billali who warns Holly to follow his example , or " a surety she will blast thee where thou standest " . Indeed , She is preoccupied with stressing quintessential British qualities through the " adventure " of empire , usually in contrast to foreign barbarism . However , the notion of imperialism is further compounded by the figure of She , who is herself a foreign colonising force . " In a sense then " , writes Stauffer , " a single property line divides the realm of Queen Victoria and that of She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed , two white queens who rule dark @-@ skinned natives of the African continent " .

= = = Race and evolution = = =

Like many of his Victorian contemporaries , Rider Haggard " proceeds on the assumption that whites are naturally superior to blacks , and that Britain 's imperial extensions into Africa are a noble , civilising enterprise " . Although Haggard penned a number of novels that portrayed Africans in a comparatively realistic light , She was not among their number . Even in *King Solomon 's Mines* , the representation of Umbopa (who was based on an actual warrior) and the Kukuanas , drew upon Haggard 's knowledge and understanding of the Zulus . In contrast , She makes no such distinctions . Ayesha , the English travellers , and the ancient inhabitants of Kôr are all white embodiments of civilisation , while the darker Amahagger , as a people , illustrate notions of savagery , barbarity , and superstition . Nonetheless , the " racial politics of the novel are more complex than they first appear " , given that Ayesha is in origin an ancient Arabian , Leo is descended from , and physically resembles a blond Hellenistic Greek , while Holly is said to resemble a baboon in facial appearance ? an animal Victorians typically associated with black Africans . Whilst critics like Wendy Katz , Patricia Murphy , and Susan Gubar have analysed the strong racist undercurrent in She , Andrew Stauffer has taken note of the qualifications through which " the novel suggests deeper connections among the races , an ancient genealogy of ethnicities and civilizations in which every character is a hybrid " .

Indeed , there is a strong Darwinian undercurrent framing the representation of race in She , stemming from Haggard 's own interest in evolutionary theory and archaeological history . In particular the theme of racial degeneration is a prominent aspect in the novel . Moving into the fin de

siècle , late @-@ Victorians were increasingly concerned about cultural and national decline resulting from racial decay . In *She* , this evolutionary concept of degeneration is manifested in Ayesha and the Amahagger . Haggard represents the Amahagger as a debased mixture of ethnicities , " a curious mingling of races " , originally descended from the inhabitants of Kôr but having intermarried with Arabs and Africans . Racial hybridisation of any kind " entailed degeneration " to Victorians , a " decline from the pure blood " of the initial races , and thus " an aspect of their degeneration is the idea that the Amahagger have lost whatever elements of civilization their Kôr ancestors may have imparted to them " . Thus , Ayesha proudly proclaims her own racial purity as a quality to be admired : " for Arabian am I by birth , even ' al Arab al Ariba ' (an Arab of the Arabs) , and of the race of our father Yárab , the son of Khâtan [...] of the true Arab blood " . However , the novel 's starkest evocation of the evolutionary principle occurs in the regressive demise of Ayesha . Stepping into the Pillar of Fire , the immortal *She* begins to wither and decay , undergoing as death what Judith Wilt describes as the " ultimate Darwinian nightmare " , evolution in reverse .

= = = Female authority and sexuality = = =

When Rider Haggard first conceived of *She* he began with the theme of " an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love " . Although ostensibly a romance , the novel is part of the wider discourse regarding women and womanhood in late @-@ Victorian Britain . Many scholars have noted how *She* was published as a book in 1887 , the year of Queen Victoria 's Golden Jubilee , and Adrienne Munich argues that Haggard 's story " could fittingly be considered an ominous literary monument to Victoria after fifty years of her reign " . Indeed , in her devotion to Kallikrates (two thousand years after his death) , Ayesha echoes the long @-@ lasting fidelity of Victoria to her husband , Albert . However , unlike the " benign " Victoria , the question of female authority is realised to the extreme in the figure of *She* @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed , whose autonomous will seemingly embodies Victorian anti @-@ feminist fears of New Women desiring ' absolute personal independence coupled with supreme power over men ' . Haggard constantly emphasises this anxiety over female authority in *She* , so that even the rationally minded and misogynistic Holly , who has put his " heart away from such vanity as woman 's loveliness " , ultimately falls upon his knees and worships Ayesha " as never woman was worshipped " . Similarly , although the masculine and chivalric Leo is determined to reject Ayesha for killing the devoted native girl Ustane , he too quickly falls under her will . In fact , Ayesha 's absolute command over the male sex is one of the most startling and unnerving aspects of the story .

In her role as the seductive femme fatale , Ayesha is part of " a long tradition of male fantasy that includes Homer 's Circe , Shakespeare 's Cleopatra , and Keats 's ' La Belle Dame sans Merci ' " . Brantlinger identifies the theme of " the white (or at least light @-@ skinned) queen ruling a black or brown @-@ skinned savage race " as " a powerfully erotic one " with its opposite being " the image of the helpless white woman captured by savages and threatened , at least , with rape " . The figure of *She* both inspires male desire and dominates male sovereignty , represented in her conquest of the enlightened Victorians Holly and Leo . The two Englishmen embody the powers of manhood , with Leo a reflection of masculine physicality and Holly a representation of man 's intellectual strength ; but both are conquered by the feminine powers of *She* , who rules as much through sex @-@ appeal as through sorcery , immortality , and will . Thus Steven Arata describes her as " the veiled woman , that ubiquitous nineteenth @-@ century figure of male desire and anxiety , whose body is Truth but a Truth that blasts " . Similarly , Sarah Gilbert sees the theme of feminine sexuality and authority realised in Ayesha as critical to the novel 's success : " Unlike the women earlier Victorian writers had idealised or excoriated , *She* was neither an angel nor a monster . Rather , *She* was an odd but significant blend of the two types ? an angelically chaste woman with monstrous powers , a monstrously passionate woman with angelic charms " .

= = Reception = =

After its publication in 1887 *She* became an immediate success . According to *The Literary World* " Mr. Rider Haggard has made for himself a new field in fiction " . Comparing the novel to *King Solomon 's Mines* the review declared : " The book before us displays all the same qualities , and we anticipate for it a similar popularity . There is even more imagination in the later than in the earlier story ; it contains scenes of greater sensuous beauty and also of more gruesome horror " . *The Public Opinion* was equally rapturous in its praise :

The fantasy of *She* received particular acclaim from Victorian readers and critics . The review appearing in *The Academy* on 15 January was impressed by the " grown @-@ up " vision of the novel , declaring " the more impossible it gets the better Mr. Haggard does it ... his astonishing imagination , and a certain *vraisemblance* [" *verisimilitude* " (French)] makes the most impossible adventures appear true " . This sentiment was echoed in *The Queen : The Lady 's Newspaper* , with the reviewer pronouncing that " this is a tale in the hands of a writer not so able as Mr. Haggard might easily have become absurd ; but he has treated it with so much vividness and picturesque power as to invest it with unflagging interest , and given to the mystery a port of philosophic possibility that makes us quite willing to submit to the illusion .

The Spectator was more equivocal in its appraisal of *She* . The review described the narrative as " very stirring " and " exciting " and of " remarkable imaginative power " , adding : " The ingenuity of the story ... is as subtle as ever romancer invented , and from the day when Leo and Holly land on the coast of Africa , to the day when the Pillar of Fire is revealed to them by the all but immortal ' She @-@ who @-@ must @-@ be @-@ obeyed ' , the interest of the tale rises higher and higher with every new turn in its course " . However , the review took issue with the characterisation of *She* and the manner of her demise : " To the present writer there is a sense of the ludicrous in the end of *She* that spoiled , instead of concluding with imaginative fitness , the thread of the impossible worked into the substance of this vivid and brilliantly told story " . Haggard was moved to respond to the criticism of *Ayesha 's* death , writing that " in the insolence of her strength and loveliness , she lifts herself up against the Omnipotent . Therefore , at the appointed time she is swept away by It ... Vengeance , more heavy because more long delayed , strikes her in her proudest part ? her beauty " .

A number of reviews were more critical of Haggard 's work . Although the reviewer of *She* in *Blackwood 's Edinburgh Magazine* considered it better than *King Solomon 's Mines* , he opined , " Mr. Rider Haggard has not proved as yet that he has anything that can be called imagination at all ... It might be wrought up into an unparalleled stage effect : but it is rather a failure in pen and ink . The more fearful and wonderful such circumstances are intended to be , the more absurd is the failure of them " . Even more scathing was Augustus Moore in the May edition of *Time : A Monthly Miscellany* , who declared : " In Mr Haggard 's book I find none of the powerful imagination , the elaborate detail , the vivid English which would entitle his work to be described as a romance ... [rather] it seems to me to be the method of the modern melodrama " . Moore was particularly dismissive of the novel 's style and prose : " Mr Haggard cannot write English at all . I do not merely refer to his bad grammar , which a boy at a Boarding School would deserve to be birched for ... It can only have been written by a man who not only knew nothing , but cared nothing for ' English undefiled ' " . Haggard 's English was a common source of criticisms , but Moore was even dismissive of the character of *She* who widely garnered universal praise . " *Ayesha* " , Moore declares , " is about as impressive as the singing chambermaid who represents the naughty fairy of a pantomime in tights and a tow wig " . Concluding his review , Moore wondered at the success that had greeted *She* :

Despite such criticism , the reception that met *She* was overwhelmingly positive and echoed the sentiments expressed by anthropologist and literary critic Andrew Lang before the story 's first publication : " I think *She* is one of the most astonishing romances I ever read . The more impossible it is , the better you do it , till it seems like a story from the literature of another planet " .

= = Modern interpretations = =

= = = Feminist = = =

Feminist literary historians have tended to define the figure of She as a literary manifestation of male alarm over the "learned and crusading new woman". In this view, Ayesha is a terrifying and dominant figure, a prominent and influential rendering of the misogynistic "fictive explorations of female authority" undertaken by male writers that ushered in literary modernism. Ann Ardis, for instance, views the fears Holly harbours over Ayesha's plan to return to England as being "exactly those voiced about the New Woman's entrance in the public arena". According to the feminist interpretation of the narrative, the death of She acts as a kind of teleological "judgement" of her transgression of Victorian gender boundaries, with Ardis likening it to a "witch @-@ burning". However, to Rider Haggard, She was an investigation into love and immortality and the demise of Ayesha the moral end of this exploration:

Indeed, far from being a radical or threatening manifestation of womanhood, recent academics have noted the extent to which the character of She conforms to traditional conceptions of Victorian femininity; in particular her deferring devotion to Kallikrates / Leo, whom she swears wifely obedience to at the story's climax: "'Behold!' and she took his [Leo's] hand and placed it upon her shapely head, and then bent herself slowly down till one knee for an instant touched the ground? 'Behold! in token of submission do I bow me to my lord! Behold!' and she kissed him on the lips, 'in token of my wifely love do I kiss my lord'." Ayesha declares this to be the "first most holy hour of completed womanhood".

= = Legacy = =

She is one of the most influential novels in modern literature, with authors like Rudyard Kipling, Henry Miller, Graham Greene, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Margaret Atwood all acknowledging the importance of the work to their own and others' writing. With over 83 million copies sold, the work is one of the biggest selling fictional titles of all time and has been translated into 44 languages. According to Stauffer, "She has always been Rider Haggard's most popular and influential novel, challenged only by King Solomon's Mines in this regard". Such was the popularity and influence of the novel that it was cited in the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, the latter describing the character of She as a manifestation of the anima figure.

The story is one of the most important texts of imaginative literature and had a lasting impact on the fantasy genre, directly giving rise to the 'lost civilisation' tales of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and the creation of mythologised locations such as Shangri @-@ la. Tolkien recognised the importance of She to his own fantasy works, especially in its foregrounding of a fictional history and narrative. The figure of She is also considered by many scholars to be a formative influence on Galadriel - Ayesha's reflecting pool seems to be a direct precursor of Galadriel's mirror. Other characters in Tolkien's Legendarium also seem to have been influenced, including Shelob (who is referred to as "She" and "Her" in the text), and the escape across the chasm is highly reminiscent of the escape of the Fellowship across the chasm in Moria. Indeed, Haggard's characterisation of Ayesha became the prototype of the female antagonist in modern fantasy literature, most famously realised in the figure of the White Witch, Jadis, from C. S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Kor and Ayesha appear in Alan Moore's *Nemo: Heart of Ice*.

= = = Adaptations = = =

She has been adapted for the cinema at least ten times, and was one of the earliest films to be made in 1899 as *La Colonne de feu* (The Pillar of Fire), by Georges Méliès. A 1911 version starred Marguerite Snow, a British @-@ produced version appeared in 1916 and in 1917 Valeska Suratt appeared in a production for Fox which is lost. In 1925 a silent film of She, starring Betty Blythe, was produced with the active participation of Rider Haggard, who wrote the intertitles. The film combines elements from all the books in the series.

A decade later another cinematic version of the novel was released, featuring Helen Gahagan, Randolph Scott and Nigel Bruce. This 1935 adaptation was set in the Arctic, rather than Africa,

and depicts the ancient civilisation of the story in an Art Deco style , with music by Max Steiner .

The 1965 film , *She* , was produced by Hammer Film Productions and starred Ursula Andress as Ayesha and John Richardson as her reincarnated love , with Peter Cushing and Bernard Cribbins as other members of the expedition .

In 2001 another adaption was released direct @-@ to @-@ video with Ian Duncan as Leo Vincey , Ophélie Winter as Ayesha and Marie Bäumer as Roxane .

Tim McInnerny starred as Holly with Mia Soteriou as Ayesha and Oliver Chris as Leo in a two @-@ part adaptation on BBC Radio 4 's Classic Serial , originally broadcast on 2 July and 9 July 2006 .

In 2007 a rock @-@ opera / musical version of *She* was recorded live at the Wyspianski Theatre , Katowice , Poland by Clive Nolan and was released on DVD . In February 2012 the Nolan version of *She* had its first UK performance at the Playhouse in Cheltenham .