**Environ M30: Final Exam**

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1. Briefly outline one strength and one weakness in using the language of disaster and apocalypse to talk about climate change, as Mike Hulme characterizes it.
   1. Hulme notes that no specific linguistic rhetoric on the framing of climate change is “absolutely wrong,” rather than the language surrounding the issue can be used to elicit action and appeal to specific audiences, which other framings/languages may not have been able to. Specifically, Hulme suggests that a strength of the language of disaster and apocalypse (the catastrophe framing, 1 of 6) is that it can be used to “engage those who see Nature as ephemeral (egalitarian)” (Hulme 229) and those that are worried about the future (of nature, biodiversity, Earth, humanity, etc.). On the other hand, a weakness of the language of disaster presents itself as possibly “unguided weapons” which can be used to “threaten society into behavioral change” (Hulme 233: Box 7.1) when the scientific facts do not representatively back up the rhetoric. So, the problem lies in usage as apocalyptic language can both engage an unmotivated audience (strength) and lead an audience astray and force unguided [behavioral] change (weakness).
2. Define what Alfred Crosby means by the “Columbian Exchange.”
   1. Crosby defines the “Columbian Exchange” as the specific exchange of living organisms across the New World (Americas) and the Old World (Eurasia and Africa) of the early 1500s. This is supported by Crosby’s interview with the *Smithsonian Magazine* in 2011 and the extensive description of differences in plant, animal, and microbial life Columbus encountered in the New World in the text *The Columbian Exchange*. Crosby focuses his definition on the exchange of plants, animals, and diseases, specifically syphilis, as compared to the exchange of slaves and textiles, rum, and other manufactured goods.
3. Please identify the first-person narrator of Ted Chiang’s “The Great Silence” and explain why they bring up the Fermi paradox.
   1. The narrator describes themselves as a “Puerto Rican parrot.”. The Fermi Paradox is the idea that “intelligent species actively try to conceal their presence to avoid being targeted by hostile invaders,” which the narrator uses to create a juxtaposition between these reclusive aliens and the Puerto Rican parrot species to highlight that the never-ending search for hidden alien species misses the fact that there are species on Earth that meet all the same criteria but are still forgotten. The topic is also used as a transition from the discussion of humanity’s great efforts behind the Arecibo transceiver to the discussion of the lackluster attention and care for the endangered Puerto Rican parrot and African grey parrot species, which has been shown to be the exact intelligent, communicative species the transceiver was intended to find. Specifically, Chiang discusses the African grey parrot, Alex, who was proven to not only be communicative but intelligent enough to understand human language, yet was left aside instead for the search for extraterrestrial life – emphasizing the issues with the selectivity of characteristic megafauna as a part of multispecies justice.
4. In the graphic novel *Virunga*, the only speaking animal is a weaverbird. What does it contribute to the overall narrative about endangered species conservation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?
   1. The weaverbird appears to speak to Esther and compels her to “empty her mind” as what seems to be a method of coming to terms with her tragedy from rape to conservation efforts and fights against rebel groups. There is a panel that Esther imagines is the weaverbird’s perspective (looking through its eye) which observes an outline of Esther’s body depicting a hollow person. This is intended to reflect the draining efforts of conservationists in the Congo for multispecies justice while fighting a losing battle against the rebels and a failed government – perpetuating the environmental justice narrative (specifically participatory and capabilities justice).
5. Briefly compare how scientists are portrayed in *The Day After Tomorrow* and *Qapirangajuq*.
   1. *The Day After Tomorrow* (TDAT) portrays scientists as “anarchists become heroes,” while *Qapirangajuq* depicts scientists with more nuance in their accuracy and exaggeration. The public and government first ignore Jack Hall, the protagonist and climatologist in TDAT, about his cries on the impending climate catastrophe but develops into the people’s savior when he makes contact with his son and the groups trapped in New York City (and is proven right by the catastrophes). On the other hand, *Qapirangajuq* displays a few Inuit members who believe scientists have misconstrued the state of the environment, specifically when suggesting the endangerment of seals and bears, but also interviews other Inuit members who suggest scientists are correct about their statements on climate change as their people have seen firsthand the change in seal migration patterns. TDAT suggests scientists are our saviors and we should listen to them to prevent catastrophic climate change, while *Qapirangajuq*’s nuance, seemingly, represents more accurately the public’s current perception of scientists: possessing valid claims about the environment but perhaps exaggerating the extent of the results, which can conflict with the first-hand experiences of the public.
6. How does the short story “Le Déluge” engage with the issues of climate justice?
   1. Mossner’s “Le Déluge” hits all 3 major points of the climate justice masterplot: (1) climate change is a political problem on socio-economic well-being, (2) a central focus on the globalization of problems with nations with the least impact suffering the most, and (3) transgenerational justice with the lack of responsibility and procrastination. The introduction juxtaposes Jack’s concern for the Philippines (by his apology and the narrator’s description) despite entering a lavish restaurant in New York City – suggesting the major contributors to climate change in the US disproportionately affect less impactful countries to climate change (2). Jake also struggles with making decisions as the narrator notes, “he used to be better at this” and “whatever he does a death knell for hundreds or thousands,” and the focus on the supply chain issues suggests the tropical storm issue (which we assume to be due to climate change) is an issue of how it will impact the citizens of NYC rather than the focus on preventing climate change at its roots (1). Finally, throughout the passage, Jake had “close[d] all files related to work” and hooked up to a VR system which placed them in an African veldt (from Ray Bradbury’s “The Veldt”), which is not only an indication of Jake procrastinating his tasks and delaying his responsibilities (3), but also a metaphor for the “veldt” he is in as in Bradbury’s “Veldt” the parents were killed in the virtual veldt while in “Le Déluge,” Jake and his date seem to be enjoying the scenery – unaware of the impending doom around the corner for him and his date (a synecdoche for his generation’s disregard for the problems at hand – transgenerational justice).