

a natural history of destruction

A Natural History of Destruction: Exploring the Forces that Shape and Reshape Our World

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Introduction: Understanding "A Natural History of Destruction"

"A natural history of destruction" encompasses the study of destructive processes across various scales of time and space, from the cataclysmic impact of an asteroid to the gradual erosion of a coastline. It's a multidisciplinary field drawing upon geology, ecology, climatology, history, and even sociology to illuminate the forces that shape and reshape our planet. This exploration goes beyond simply documenting destruction; it seeks to understand its causes, consequences, and the remarkable resilience of life in the face of immense challenges. Understanding "a natural history of destruction" is crucial for comprehending the Earth's dynamic past, preparing for future challenges, and appreciating the intricate balance of life on our planet.

The Geological Playground of Destruction: Shaping the Earth's Surface

The Earth's geological history is a saga of creation and destruction. Plate tectonics, the driving force behind earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, are prime examples of this destructive power. "A natural history of destruction" in this context examines the formation of mountain ranges through the collision of tectonic plates, the devastating power of earthquakes that can reshape landscapes in seconds, and the explosive eruptions of volcanoes that bury entire civilizations under layers of ash. The slow, relentless forces of erosion, weathering, and glacial activity also contribute to this ongoing process, carving canyons, shaping coastlines, and sculpting the very features of our planet. Analyzing these processes helps us understand the vulnerability of human settlements to geological hazards and the importance of effective disaster preparedness.

Climatic Catastrophes: A Natural History of Destruction in the Atmosphere

Climate change, while often discussed in the context of human impact, has a long and complex history as a driver of “a natural history of destruction.” Ice ages, periods of intense glaciation that have repeatedly reshaped ecosystems and caused mass extinctions, are prime examples. Analyzing past climate shifts allows us to understand the sensitivity of Earth's systems to changes in atmospheric composition and temperature, providing crucial insights into the potential consequences of current anthropogenic climate change. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods, are another facet of this natural history. Understanding their frequency, intensity, and impact across different time periods is vital for developing effective mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Biological Annihilation: Extinction Events and the Resilience of Life

“A Natural history of destruction” also encompasses the study of extinction events, periods of dramatic biodiversity loss that have punctuated the history of life on Earth. The most well-known is the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event, which wiped out the dinosaurs. However, numerous other mass extinctions have occurred, often linked to catastrophic events like volcanic eruptions or asteroid impacts. These events highlight the fragility of ecosystems and the power of environmental change to drive dramatic shifts in the composition of life. However, studying “a natural history of destruction” in this context also reveals the remarkable resilience of life. Life has persisted through catastrophic events, adapting, evolving, and diversifying in the aftermath. Understanding this resilience is crucial for predicting how ecosystems might respond to future environmental challenges.

The Human Factor: Accelerating the Pace of Destruction

Human activity has significantly amplified the pace and scale of destruction on Earth. Deforestation, pollution, and unsustainable resource extraction have led to widespread habitat loss, biodiversity decline, and climate change. “A natural history of destruction” must therefore integrate the human story, examining how our actions have interacted with natural processes to accelerate destructive forces. This necessitates analyzing the historical context of environmental degradation, understanding the social, economic, and political drivers of unsustainable practices, and exploring alternative pathways towards sustainability.

Resilience and Adaptation: A Natural History of Recovery

Despite the destructive forces shaping our planet, life exhibits a remarkable capacity for resilience and adaptation. Ecosystems recover from disturbances, species evolve to cope with changing environments, and human societies develop strategies for mitigating and adapting to hazards. Understanding the mechanisms of resilience is critical for informed environmental management and disaster preparedness. “A natural history of destruction” is

not just about documenting loss; it's also about identifying the processes that allow life to persist and thrive, even in the face of immense challenges. This includes examining the strategies employed by various organisms and societies to survive and recover from destructive events, learning from past successes and failures.

Conclusion: Lessons from a Natural History of Destruction

A comprehensive understanding of “a natural history of destruction” is essential for navigating the challenges of the 21st century. By examining the geological, climatic, biological, and human dimensions of destructive processes, we can develop a more nuanced appreciation of the Earth's dynamic history and the interconnectedness of its systems. This knowledge is crucial for making informed decisions regarding environmental management, disaster preparedness, and the pursuit of a sustainable future. Only by acknowledging the destructive forces that have shaped our planet and continue to do so can we effectively mitigate risks, build resilience, and ensure the well-being of both human societies and the natural world.

FAQs

1. What is the difference between natural and human-induced destruction? Natural destruction refers to events like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and extreme weather unrelated to human activity. Human-induced destruction results from activities like deforestation, pollution, and unsustainable resource extraction, which exacerbate natural processes or create entirely new destructive forces.
1. How can studying past destruction events help us prepare for the future? Studying past events provides valuable data on the frequency, intensity, and impact of various hazards, allowing us to develop more accurate risk assessments and effective mitigation and adaptation strategies.
1. What role does resilience play in a natural history of destruction? Resilience refers to the ability of systems (ecological, social, etc.) to recover from disturbances. Understanding resilience is crucial for developing sustainable practices and effective disaster response plans.
1. What are some examples of successful adaptation to destructive events? Examples include the development of earthquake-resistant building codes, the creation of early warning systems for hurricanes, and the implementation of sustainable land management practices to prevent soil erosion.

1. How does climate change affect the frequency and intensity of destructive events?
Climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as hurricanes, droughts, and floods, making them more destructive.
1. What is the role of technology in mitigating destruction? Technology plays a crucial role in monitoring hazards, predicting events, developing early warning systems, and designing more resilient infrastructure.
1. How can we promote a more sustainable relationship with the environment?
Promoting sustainable practices requires changes in consumption patterns, policy reforms, technological innovation, and a shift towards a more holistic understanding of the interconnectedness of human and natural systems.
1. What is the ethical responsibility of humans regarding environmental destruction?
Humans have a moral obligation to minimize their environmental impact, protect biodiversity, and ensure a sustainable future for all life on Earth.
1. What are some key takeaways from "A Natural History of Destruction"? The key takeaway is that understanding destruction—both its natural and human-induced aspects—is essential for building a sustainable and resilient future. This requires integrating knowledge from various disciplines, promoting responsible stewardship of the environment, and adapting to the ever-changing forces shaping our planet.

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Editor: Dr. Alistair Finch, PhD, Associate Professor of Geology at the University of Oxford. Dr. Finch is a leading expert in geological hazards and disaster risk reduction.

a natural history of destruction: On the Natural History of Destruction W.G. Sebald, 2011-06-22 W. G. Sebald completed this extraordinary, important and controversial book before his untimely death in December 2001. It is a harrowing study of the devastation of German cities by

Allied bombardment in World War II, and an examination of the silence in German literature and culture about this unprecedented trauma. *On the Natural History of Destruction* is an essential and deeply relevant study of war and society, suffering and amnesia. Like Sebald's novels, it is studded with meticulous observation, moments of black humour, and throughout, the author's unmatched intelligence and humanity.

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a natural history of destruction: Homewaters David B. Williams, 2021-04-24 Not far from Seattle skyscrapers live 150-year-old clams, more than 250 species of fish, and underwater kelp forests as complex as any terrestrial ecosystem. For millennia, vibrant Coast Salish communities have lived beside these waters dense with nutrient-rich foods, with cultures intertwined through exchanges across the waterways. Transformed by settlement and resource extraction, Puget Sound and its future health now depend on a better understanding of the region's ecological complexities. Focusing on the area south of Port Townsend and between the Cascade and Olympic mountains, Williams uncovers human and natural histories in, on, and around the Sound. In conversations with archaeologists, biologists, and tribal authorities, Williams traces how generations of humans have interacted with such species as geoducks, salmon, orcas, rockfish, and herring. He sheds light on how warfare shaped development and how people have moved across this maritime highway, in canoes, the mosquito fleet, and today's ferry system. The book also takes an unflinching look at how the Sound's ecosystems have suffered from human behavior, including pollution, habitat destruction, and the effects of climate change. Witty, graceful, and deeply informed, *Homewaters* weaves history and science into a fascinating and hopeful narrative, one that will introduce newcomers to the astonishing life that inhabits the Sound and offers longtime residents new insight into and appreciation of the waters they call home. A Michael J. Repass Book

a natural history of destruction: The Destruction of the Bison Andrew C. Isenberg, 2000 This study, first published in 2000, examines the cultural and ecological causes of the near-extinction of the bison.

a natural history of destruction: The Rings of Saturn W. G. Sebald, 2016-11-08 The book is like a dream you want to last forever (Roberta Silman, *The New York Times Book Review*), now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund A masterwork of W. G. Sebald, now with a gorgeous new cover by the famed designer Peter Mendelsund *The Rings of Saturn*—with its curious archive of photographs—records a walking tour of the eastern coast of England. A few of the things which cross the path and mind of its narrator (who both is and is not Sebald) are lonely eccentrics, Sir Thomas Browne's skull, a matchstick model of the Temple of Jerusalem, recession-hit seaside towns, wooded hills, Joseph Conrad, Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*, the natural history of the herring, the massive bombings of WWII, the dowager Empress Tzu Hsi, and the silk industry in Norwich. W.G. Sebald's *The Emigrants* (New Directions, 1996) was hailed by Susan Sontag as an astonishing masterpiece perfect while being unlike any book one has ever read. It was one of the great books of the last few years, noted Michael Ondaatje, who now acclaims *The Rings of Saturn* an even more inventive work than its predecessor, *The Emigrants*.

a natural history of destruction: This Radical Land Daegan Miller, 2018-03-22 "The American people sees itself advance across the wilderness, draining swamps, straightening rivers, peopling the solitude, and subduing nature," wrote Alexis de Tocqueville in 1835. That's largely how we still think of nineteenth-century America today: a country expanding unstoppably, bending the

continent's natural bounty to the national will, heedless of consequence. A country of slavery and of Indian wars. There's much truth in that vision. But if you know where to look, you can uncover a different history, one of vibrant resistance, one that's been mostly forgotten. This Radical Land recovers that story. Daegan Miller is our guide on a beautifully written, revelatory trip across the continent during which we encounter radical thinkers, settlers, and artists who grounded their ideas of freedom, justice, and progress in the very landscapes around them, even as the runaway engine of capitalism sought to steamroll everything in its path. Here we meet Thoreau, the expert surveyor, drawing anticapitalist property maps. We visit a black antislavery community in the Adirondack wilderness of upstate New York. We discover how seemingly commercial photographs of the transcontinental railroad secretly sent subversive messages, and how a band of utopian anarchists among California's sequoias imagined a greener, freer future. At every turn, everyday radicals looked to landscape for the language of their dissent—drawing crucial early links between the environment and social justice, links we're still struggling to strengthen today. Working in a tradition that stretches from Thoreau to Rebecca Solnit, Miller offers nothing less than a new way of seeing the American past—and of understanding what it can offer us for the present . . . and the future.

a natural history of destruction: Path of Destruction Mark Schleifstein, John McQuaid, 2009-06-27 At 5:02 A.M. on August 29, 2005, Power Went Out in the Superdome. Not long after, wind ripped giant white rubber sheets off the roof and sent huge shards of debris flying toward Uptown. Rivulets of rainwater began finding their way down through the ceiling, dripping and pouring into the stands, the mezzanine, and the football field. Without ventilation, the air began to get gamy with the smell of sweat and garbage. The bathrooms stopped working. Many people slept; others waited, mostly in silence.

a natural history of destruction: Wave of Destruction Erich Krauss, 2006 Four Southeast Asia tsunami survival stories offer insight into the experiences of people who heroically endured devastating odds in their determination to stay alive, recounting their painful losses of families, friends, and homes and their subsequent efforts to rebuild. 50,000 first printing.

a natural history of destruction: Mass Destruction Timothy J. LeCain, 2009 From the Publisher: Mass Destruction is the compelling story of Daniel Jackling and the development of open-pit hard rock mining, its role in the wiring of an electrified America, and its devastating environmental effects. This new method of mining, complimenting the mass production and mass consumption that came to define the American way of life in the early twentieth century, promised infinite supplies of copper and other natural resources. LeCain deftly analyzes how open-pit mining continues to adversely effect the environment and how, as the world begins to rival American resource consumption, no viable alternatives have emerged.

a natural history of destruction: A Natural History of the Chicago Region Joel Greenberg, 2002 In A Natural History of the Chicago Region, Greenberg takes you on a journey that begins with European explorers and settlers and hasn't ended yet. Along the way he introduces you to the physical forces that have shaped the area from southeastern Wisconsin to northern Indiana and Berrien County in Michigan; the various habitat types present in the region and how European settlement has affected them; and the insects, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, and mammals found in presettlement times, then amid the settlers and now amid the skyscrapers. In all, Greenberg chronicles the development of nineteen counties in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin across centuries of ecological, technological, and social transformations.--BOOK JACKET.

a natural history of destruction: The Natural History of Pompeii Wilhelmina Mary Feemster Jashemski, Wilhelmina Feemster Jashemski, Frederick G. Meyer, 2002-09-19 The sudden destruction of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the surrounding Campanian countryside following the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 preserved the remarkable evidence that has made possible this reconstruction of the natural history of the local environment. Following the prototype of Pliny the Elder's Natural History, various aspects of the natural history of Pompeii are discussed and analyzed by a team of eminent scientists, many of whom have collaborated with Jashemski during her years of excavation

of several gardens in the Vesuvian area. This volume brings together the work of geologists, soil specialists, paleobotanists, botanists, palaeontologists, biologists, chemists, dendrochronologists, ichthyologists, zoologists, ornithologists, mammalogists, herpetologists, entymologists, and archaeologists, affording a thorough picture of the landscape, flora, and fauna of the ancient sites. The detailed and rigorously scientific catalogues, which are copiously illustrated, provide a checklist of the flora and fauna upon which future generations of scholars can continue to build.

a natural history of destruction: Burning the Books Richard Ovenden, 2020-10-13 The director of the famed Bodleian Libraries at Oxford narrates the global history of the willful destruction—and surprising survival—of recorded knowledge over the past three millennia. Libraries and archives have been attacked since ancient times but have been especially threatened in the modern era. Today the knowledge they safeguard faces purposeful destruction and willful neglect; deprived of funding, libraries are fighting for their very existence. *Burning the Books* recounts the history that brought us to this point. Richard Ovenden describes the deliberate destruction of knowledge held in libraries and archives from ancient Alexandria to contemporary Sarajevo, from smashed Assyrian tablets in Iraq to the destroyed immigration documents of the UK Windrush generation. He examines both the motivations for these acts—political, religious, and cultural—and the broader themes that shape this history. He also looks at attempts to prevent and mitigate attacks on knowledge, exploring the efforts of librarians and archivists to preserve information, often risking their own lives in the process. More than simply repositories for knowledge, libraries and archives inspire and inform citizens. In preserving notions of statehood recorded in such historical documents as the Declaration of Independence, libraries support the state itself. By preserving records of citizenship and records of the rights of citizens as enshrined in legal documents such as the Magna Carta and the decisions of the US Supreme Court, they support the rule of law. In *Burning the Books*, Ovenden takes a polemical stance on the social and political importance of the conservation and protection of knowledge, challenging governments in particular, but also society as a whole, to improve public policy and funding for these essential institutions.

a natural history of destruction: The Wages of Destruction Adam Tooze, 2008-02-26 Masterful . . . [A] painstakingly researched, astonishingly erudite study...Tooze has added his name to the roll call of top-class scholars of Nazism. —Financial Times An extraordinary mythology has grown up around the Third Reich that hovers over political and moral debate even today. Adam Tooze's controversial book challenges the conventional economic interpretations of that period to explore how Hitler's surprisingly prescient vision--ultimately hindered by Germany's limited resources and his own racial ideology--was to create a German super-state to dominate Europe and compete with what he saw as America's overwhelming power in a soon-to- be globalized world. *The Wages of Destruction* is a chilling work of originality and tremendous scholarship that set off debate in Germany and will fundamentally change the way in which history views the Second World War.

a natural history of destruction: The Darkening Age Catherine Nixey, 2018-04-17 A New York Times Notable Book, winner of the Jerwood Award from the Royal Society of Literature, a New York Times Book Review Editors' Choice, and named a Book of the Year by the Telegraph, Spectator, Observer, and BBC History Magazine, this bold new history of the rise of Christianity shows how its radical followers helped to annihilate Greek and Roman civilizations. *The Darkening Age* is the largely unknown story of how a militant religion deliberately attacked and suppressed the teachings of the Classical world, ushering in centuries of unquestioning adherence to one true faith. Despite the long-held notion that the early Christians were meek and mild, going to their martyrs' deaths singing hymns of love and praise, the truth, as Catherine Nixey reveals, is very different. Far from being meek and mild, they were violent, ruthless, and fundamentally intolerant. Unlike the polytheistic world, in which the addition of one new religion made no fundamental difference to the old ones, this new ideology stated not only that it was the way, the truth, and the light but that, by extension, every single other way was wrong and had to be destroyed. From the first century to the sixth, those who didn't fall into step with its beliefs were pursued in every possible way: social, legal, financial, and physical. Their altars were upturned and their temples demolished, their statues

hacked to pieces, and their priests killed. It was an annihilation. Authoritative, vividly written, and utterly compelling, this is a remarkable debut from a brilliant young historian.

a natural history of destruction: *A Natural History of North American Trees* Donald Culross Peattie, 2013-10-10 A volume for a lifetime is how *The New Yorker* described the first of Donald Culross Peattie's two books about American trees published in the 1950s. In this one-volume edition, modern readers are introduced to one of the best nature writers of the last century. As we read Peattie's eloquent and entertaining accounts of American trees, we catch glimpses of our country's history and past daily life that no textbook could ever illuminate so vividly. Here you'll learn about everything from how a species was discovered to the part it played in our country's history. Pioneers often stabled an animal in the hollow heart of an old sycamore, and the whole family might live there until they could build a log cabin. The tuliptree, the tallest native hardwood, is easier to work than most softwood trees; Daniel Boone carved a sixty-foot canoe from one tree to carry his family from Kentucky into Spanish territory. In the days before the Revolution, the British and the colonists waged an undeclared war over New England's white pines, which made the best tall masts for fighting ships. It's fascinating to learn about the commercial uses of various woods -- for paper, fine furniture, fence posts, matchsticks, house framing, airplane wings, and dozens of other preplastic uses. But we cannot read this book without the occasional lump in our throats. The American elm was still alive when Peattie wrote, but as we read his account today we can see what caused its demise. Audubon's portrait of a pair of loving passenger pigeons in an American beech is considered by many to be his greatest painting. It certainly touched the poet in Donald Culross Peattie as he depicted the extinction of the passenger pigeon when the beech forest was destroyed. *A Natural History of North American Trees* gives us a picture of life in America from its earliest days to the middle of the last century. The information is always interesting, though often heartbreaking. While Peattie looks for the better side of man's nature, he reports sorrowfully on the greed and waste that have doomed so much of America's virgin forest.

a natural history of destruction: *Fen, Bog and Swamp* Annie Proulx, 2022-09-27 *Named a Best Book of the Year by *The New Yorker* and Literary Hub!* *A 2022 NBCC Awards Nonfiction Finalist and a 2023 Phillip D. Reed Environmental Writing Award Finalist* From Pulitzer Prize winner Annie Proulx, this riveting deep dive into the history of our wetlands and what their systematic destruction means for the planet "is both an enchanting work of nature writing and a rousing call to action" (*Esquire*). "I learned something new—and found something amazing—on every page." —Anthony Doerr, author of *All the Light We Cannot See* and *Cloud Cuckoo Land* A lifelong acolyte of the natural world, Annie Proulx brings her witness and research to the subject of wetlands and the vitally important role they play in preserving the environment—by storing the carbon emissions that accelerate climate change. Fens, bogs, swamps, and marine estuaries are crucial to the earth's survival, and in four illuminating parts, Proulx documents their systemic destruction in pursuit of profit. In a vivid and revelatory journey through history, Proulx describes the fens of 16th-century England, Canada's Hudson Bay lowlands, Russia's Great Vasyugan Mire, and America's Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. She introduces the early explorers who launched the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, and writes of the diseases spawned in the wetlands—the Ague, malaria, Marsh Fever. A sobering look at the degradation of wetlands over centuries and the serious ecological consequences, this is "an unforgettable and unflinching tour of past and present, fixed on a subject that could not be more important" (Bill McKibben). "A stark but beautifully written Silent Spring-style warning from one of our greatest novelists." —*The Christian Science Monitor*

a natural history of destruction: *The World of Kong* Weta Workshop, 2005 Academy Award-winning director Peter Jackson brings his sweeping cinematic vision to the iconic story of the gigantic ape-monster. Lavishly illustrated, this book reproduces the amazing artwork, design sketches, and digital models that helped bring Kong to life.

a natural history of destruction: *In the Path of Destruction* Richard B. Waite, 2014 The air had no oxygen, like being trapped underwater...I was being cremated, the pain unbearable.--Jim

Scymanky I was on my knees, my back to the hot wind. It blew me along, lifting my rear so I was up on my hands...It was hot but I didn't feel burned--until I felt my ears curl.--Mike Hubbard A napping volcano blinked awake in March 1980. Two months later, the mountain roared. Author Richard Waitt was one of the first to arrive following the mountain's early rumblings. A geologist with intimate knowledge of Mount St. Helens, Waitt delivers a detailed and accurate chronicle of events. His eruption story unfolds through unforgettable, riveting narratives--the heart of a masterful chronology that also delivers engrossing science, history, and journalism.

a natural history of destruction: Seeds of Destruction F. William Engdahl, 2007 This skillfully researched book focuses on how a small socio-political American elite seeks to establish control over the very basis of human survival: the provision of our daily bread. Control the food and you control the people. This is no ordinary book about the perils of GMO. Engdahl takes the reader inside the corridors of power, into the backrooms of the science labs, behind closed doors in the corporate boardrooms. The author cogently reveals a diabolical World of profit-driven political intrigue, government corruption and coercion, where genetic manipulation and the patenting of life forms are used to gain worldwide control over food production. Engdahl's carefully argued critique goes far beyond the familiar controversies surrounding the practice of genetic modification as a scientific technique. The book is an eye-opener, a must-read for all those committed to the causes of social justice and World peace.

a natural history of destruction: The Environmental Consequences of War Jay E. Austin, Carl E. Bruch, 2000-10-26 The environmental devastation caused by military conflict has been witnessed in the wake of the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and the Kosovo conflict. This book brings together leading international lawyers, military officers, scientists and economists to examine the legal, political, economic and scientific implications of wartime damage to the natural environment and public health. The book considers issues raised by the application of humanitarian norms and legal rules designed to protect the environment, and the destructive nature of war. Contributors offer an analysis and critique of the existing law of war framework, lessons from peacetime environmental law, means of scientific assessment and economic valuation of ecological and public health damage, and proposals for future legal and institutional developments. This book provides a contemporary forum for interdisciplinary analysis of armed conflict and the environment, and explores ways to prevent and redress wartime environmental damage.

a natural history of destruction: Dystopia Gregory Claeys, 2016-11-17 Dystopia: A Natural History is the first monograph devoted to the concept of dystopia. Taking the term to encompass both a literary tradition of satirical works, mostly on totalitarianism, as well as real despotisms and societies in a state of disastrous collapse, this volume redefines the central concepts and the chronology of the genre and offers a paradigm-shifting understanding of the subject. Part One assesses the theory and prehistory of 'dystopia'. By contrast to utopia, conceived as promoting an ideal of friendship defined as 'enhanced sociability', dystopia is defined by estrangement, fear, and the proliferation of 'enemy' categories. A 'natural history' of dystopia thus concentrates upon the centrality of the passion or emotion of fear and hatred in modern despotisms. The work of Le Bon, Freud, and others is used to show how dystopian groups use such emotions. Utopia and dystopia are portrayed not as opposites, but as extremes on a spectrum of sociability, defined by a heightened form of group identity. The prehistory of the process whereby 'enemies' are demonised is explored from early conceptions of monstrosity through Christian conceptions of the devil and witchcraft, and the persecution of heresy. Part Two surveys the major dystopian moments in twentieth century despotisms, focussing in particular upon Nazi Germany, Stalinism, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, and Cambodia under Pol Pot. The concentration here is upon the political religion hypothesis as a key explanation for the chief excesses of communism in particular. Part Three examines literary dystopias. It commences well before the usual starting-point in the secondary literature, in anti-Jacobin writings of the 1790s. Two chapters address the main twentieth-century texts usually studied as representative of the genre, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The remainder of the section examines the evolution of the genre in the

second half of the twentieth century down to the present.

a natural history of destruction: *The End* Hans Erich Nossack, 2004-12-15 Publisher Description

a natural history of destruction: *Development without Destruction* Nico Schrijver, 2010-07-14 Since 1945, the UN has been actively engaged in conceptualizing strategies for both economic development and a sustainable environment. From a broad historical perspective, *Development without Destruction* sketches the role played by organizations and individuals in the UN system in developing and consolidating principles of international law and international governance with respect to natural resource management. Nico Schrijver highlights the UN's efforts to generate and implement strategies to resolve tensions between economic development and environmental protection, conservation and exploitation, sovereignty and internationalism, and armed conflict and peaceful access to natural resources. Schrijver's thorough analysis is an indispensable guide to management of the critical environmental issues on today's global agenda.

a natural history of destruction: *After Nature* W.G. Sebald, 2011-12-07 *After Nature*, W. G. Sebald's first literary work, now translated into English by Michael Hamburger, explores the lives of three men connected by their restless questioning of humankind's place in the natural world. From the efforts of each, "an order arises, in places beautiful and comforting, though more cruel, too, than the previous state of ignorance." The first figure is the great German Re-naissance painter Matthias Grünewald. The second is the Enlightenment botanist-explorer Georg Steller, who accompanied Bering to the Arctic. The third is the author himself, who describes his wanderings among landscapes scarred by the wrecked certainties of previous ages. *After Nature* introduces many of the themes that W. G. Sebald explored in his subsequent books. A haunting vision of the waxing and waning tides of birth and devastation that lie behind and before us, it confirms the author's position as one of the most profound and original writers of our time.

a natural history of destruction: *The American Museum of Natural History and How It Got That Way* Colin Davey, 2019-05-14 Tells the story of the building of the American Museum of Natural History and Hayden Planetarium, a story of history, politics, science, and exploration, including the roles of American presidents, New York power brokers, museum presidents, planetarium directors, polar and African explorers, and German rocket scientists. The American Museum of Natural History is one of New York City's most beloved institutions, and one of the largest, most celebrated museums in the world. Since 1869, generations of New Yorkers and tourists of all ages have been educated and entertained here. Located across from Central Park, the sprawling structure, spanning four city blocks, is a fascinating conglomeration of many buildings of diverse architectural styles built over a period of 150 years. The first book to tell the history of the museum from the point of view of these buildings, including the planned Gilder Center, *The American Museum of Natural History and How It Got That Way* contextualizes them within New York and American history and the history of science. Part II, "The Heavens in the Attic," is the first detailed history of the Hayden Planetarium, from the museum's earliest astronomy exhibits, to Clyde Fisher and the original planetarium, to Neil deGrasse Tyson and the Rose Center for Earth and Space, and it features a photographic tour through the original Hayden Planetarium. Author Colin Davey spent much of his childhood literally and figuratively lost in the museum's labyrinthine hallways. The museum grew in fits and starts according to the vicissitudes of backroom deals, personal agendas, two world wars, the Great Depression, and the Cold War. Chronicling its evolution—from the selection of a desolate, rocky, hilly, swampy site, known as Manhattan Square to the present day—the book includes some of the most important and colorful characters in the city's history, including the notoriously corrupt and powerful "Boss" Tweed, "Father of New York City" Andrew Haswell Green, and twentieth-century powerbroker and master builder Robert Moses; museum presidents Morris K. Jesup, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and Ellen Futter; and American presidents, polar and African explorers, dinosaur hunters, and German rocket scientists. Richly illustrated with period photos, *The American Museum of Natural History and How It Got That Way* is based on deep archival research and interviews.

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Layton, P Stone, J Thomas, 2003-09-02 In 1991 the mosque at Ayodhya in India was demolished by Hindu fundamentalists who claim that it stood on the birthplace of a legendary Hindu hero. During recent conflicts in former Yugoslavia, ethnic groups destroyed mosques and churches to eliminate evidence of long-term settlement by other communities. Over successive centuries, however, a single building in Cordoba functioned as a mosque, a church and a synagogue. The Roman Emperor Diocletian's Palace in Split is occupied today by shops and residential apartments. What circumstances have led to the survival and reinterpretation of some monuments, but the destruction of others? This work asks whether the idea of world heritage is an essential mechanism for the protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage, or whether it subjugates a diversity of cultural traditions to specifically Western ideas. How far is it acceptable for one group of people to comment upon, or intercede in, the way in which another community treats the remains which it claims as its own? What are the responsibilities of multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations operating in the Developing World? Who actually owns the past: the landowner, indigenous people, the State or humankind?

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Lakes have been central to the development of eastern North America. In this "beautifully designed, comprehensive gem of a guide to the ecosystem at the heart of Canada" (The Tyee), award-winning science and nature writer Wayne Grady makes scientific concepts accessible as he reveals how human impact has changed this life-giving region. The Great Lakes: A Natural History of a Changing Region is the most authoritative, complete and accessible book to date about the biology and ecology of this vital, ever-changing terrain. Written by one of Canada's best-known science and nature writers, it is intended not only for those who live in the Great Lakes region, but for anyone captivated by the splendor of the natural world and sensitive to the challenges of its preservation. It is both a first-hand tribute and an essential guide to a fascinating ecosystem in eternal flux.

a natural history of destruction: Rivers of Power Laurence C. Smith, 2020-04-21 An

eye-opening, sometimes alarming, and ultimately inspiring natural history of rivers and their complex and ancient relationship with human civilization (Elizabeth Kolbert, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *The Sixth Extinction*). Rivers, more than any road, technology, or political leader, have shaped the course of human civilization. They have opened frontiers, founded cities, settled borders, and fed billions. They promote life, forge peace, grant power, and can capriciously destroy everything in their path. Even today, rivers remain a powerful global force -- one that is more critical than ever to our future. In *Rivers of Power*, geographer Laurence C. Smith explores the timeless yet underappreciated relationship between rivers and civilization as we know it. Rivers are of course important in many practical ways (water supply, transportation, sanitation, etc). But the full breadth of their influence on the way we live is less obvious. Rivers define and transcend international borders, forcing cooperation between nations. Huge volumes of river water are used to produce energy, raw commodities, and food. Wars, politics, and demography are transformed by their devastating floods. The territorial claims of nations, their cultural and economic ties to each other, and the migrations and histories of their peoples trace back to rivers, river valleys, and the topographic divides they carve upon the world. And as climate change, technology, and cities transform our relationship with nature, new opportunities are arising to protect the waters that sustain us. Beautifully told and expansive in scope, *Rivers of Power* reveals how and why rivers have so profoundly influenced our civilization and examines the importance this vast, arterial power holds for the future of humanity. As fascinating as it is beautifully written.---Jared Diamond, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, *Collapse*, and *Upheaval*

a natural history of destruction: Before the Flood Elisabeth C. Rosenberg, 2021-08-03 In the

tradition of *Silent Spring*, a modern parable of the American experience and our paradoxical relationship with the natural world. Though it seems a part of the natural landscape of New England today, the Swift River Valley reservoir, dam, dike, and nature area was a triumph of civil engineering. It combined forward-looking environmental stewardship and social policy, yet the "little

people”—and the four towns in which they lived—got lost along the way. Elisabeth Rosenberg has crafted *Before the Flood* to be both a modern and a universal story in a time when managed retreat will one day be a reality. Meticulously researched, *Before the Flood*, is the first narrative book on the incredible history of the Swift River Valley and the origins Quabbin Reservoir. Rosenberg dive into the socioeconomic and psychological aspects of the Swift River Valley's destruction in order to supply drinking water for the growing populations of Boston and wider Massachusetts. It is as much a human story as the story of water and landscape, and *Before the Flood* movingly reveals both the stories and the science of the key players and the four flooded towns that were washed forever away.

a natural history of destruction: On the Destruction and Death Drives Andre Green, 2023-06-29 'Living with the idea of bearing a death-force fundamentally directed at oneself is hardly easy to admit. It is less so in any case than the idea that we are all murderers, that we are ever ready to plead legitimate defence or the need to survive so as to strike out at another.' Andre Green, from the Foreword What drives men to kill and self-destruct? *On the Death and Destruction Drives* traces the introduction and development of the controversial concept of the death drive, from the work of Freud (1920-1938) to the main contributions of classical and post-Freudian authors, including Ferenczi, Klein, Bion, Winnicott, and Lacan. Shedding light on non-neurotic phenomena and structures, such as anorexia, bulimia, depression, suicide, criminal behaviour, Andre Green offers a new perspective on the relationship between the life drive (Eros) and the death drive (Thanatos). Andre Green was a key figure in contemporary psychoanalysis, who embraced philosophy and an international outlook to enhance psychoanalytic theory. This book was one of his last works, originally published in French as *Pourquoi les pulsions de destruction ou de mort?* in 2012. Green's defence of one of Freud's most daring revisions of his drive theory remains relevant to psychoanalytic work today, and it is an honour to bring this excellent translation to the English-speaking world. To enhance its worth, the book includes an introduction from translator Steven Jaron to clarify certain technical terms and situate the book within Green's oeuvre. This book is an important contribution to the development of psychoanalytic theory and essential reading for all trainee and practising psychoanalysts.

a natural history of destruction: Land Degradation Douglas L. Johnson, Laurence A. Lewis, 2007 *Land Degradation* explores the substantial decrease in an area's biological productivity or usefulness to humans due to human activities. The second edition of Johnson and Lewis's well-received text thoroughly examines this growing area of study using a global perspective, as well as up-to-date information. The various case studies cover the history of land degradation, look at local and regional effects of human interactions with the environment, and compare creative destruction with destructive creation.

a natural history of destruction: Natural History Juan Perucho, 1990-03-01 Antoni Mantpalau, a young Spanish aristocrat of the early 1800s, agrees to aid a village beset by an evil force and is stalked by a thirteenth-century vampire until their final, bloody confrontation

a natural history of destruction: Thermodynamics and the Destruction of Resources Bhavik R. Bakshi, Timothy G. Gutowski, Dušan P. Sekulić, 2011-04-11 This book is a unique, multidisciplinary effort to apply rigorous thermodynamics fundamentals, a disciplined scholarly approach, to problems of sustainability, energy, and resource uses. Applying thermodynamic thinking to problems of sustainable behavior is a significant advantage in bringing order to ill-defined questions with a great variety of proposed solutions, some of which are more destructive than the original problem. The articles are pitched at a level accessible to advanced undergraduates and graduate students in courses on sustainability, sustainable engineering, industrial ecology, sustainable manufacturing, and green engineering. The timeliness of the topic, and the urgent need for solutions make this book attractive to general readers and specialist researchers as well. Top international figures from many disciplines, including engineers, ecologists, economists, physicists, chemists, policy experts and industrial ecologists among others make up the impressive list of contributors.

a natural history of destruction: The Cambridge World History: Volume 7, Production,

Destruction and Connection, 1750-Present, Part 2, Shared Transformations? J. R. McNeill, Kenneth Pomeranz, 2015-04-16 Since 1750, the world has become ever more connected, with processes of production and destruction no longer limited by land- or water-based modes of transport and communication. Volume 7 of the Cambridge World History series, divided into two books, offers a variety of angles of vision on the increasingly interconnected history of humankind. The second book questions the extent to which the transformations of the modern world have been shared, focusing on social developments such as urbanization, migration, and changes in family and sexuality; cultural connections through religion, science, music, and sport; ligaments of globalization including rubber, drugs, and the automobile; and moments of particular importance from the Atlantic Revolutions to 1989.

a natural history of destruction: *American Serengeti* Dan Flores, 2017-01-16 America's Great Plains once possessed one of the grandest wildlife spectacles of the world, equaled only by such places as the Serengeti, the Masai Mara, or the veld of South Africa. Pronghorn antelope, gray wolves, bison, coyotes, wild horses, and grizzly bears: less than two hundred years ago these creatures existed in such abundance that John James Audubon was moved to write, it is impossible to describe or even conceive the vast multitudes of these animals. In a work that is at once a lyrical evocation of that lost splendor and a detailed natural history of these charismatic species of the historic Great Plains, veteran naturalist and outdoorsman Dan Flores draws a vivid portrait of each of these animals in their glory—and tells the harrowing story of what happened to them at the hands of market hunters and ranchers and ultimately a federal killing program in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Great Plains with its wildlife intact dazzled Americans and Europeans alike, prompting numerous literary tributes. *American Serengeti* takes its place alongside these celebratory works, showing us the grazers and predators of the plains against the vast opalescent distances, the blue mountains shimmering on the horizon, the great rippling tracts of yellowed grasslands. Far from the empty flyover country of recent times, this landscape is alive with a complex ecology at least 20,000 years old—a continental patrimony whose wonders may not be entirely lost, as recent efforts hold out hope of partial restoration of these historic species. Written by an author who has done breakthrough work on the histories of several of these animals—including bison, wild horses, and coyotes—*American Serengeti* is as rigorous in its research as it is intimate in its sense of wonder—the most deeply informed, closely observed view we have of the Great Plains' wild heritage.

a natural history of destruction: *Buffon* Jacques Roger, 1997 A biography of a premier French scientist of the Enlightenment and the director of France's Royal Botanical Garden, using Buffon's enormous literary production as the major source of insight into his and his age's beliefs about the natural world. Includes bandw illustrations from his *Natural History*. First published in 1989 as *Buffon, un philosophe au Jardin du Roi*, by Librarie Artheme Fayard. Annotation copyrighted by Book News, Inc., Portland, OR

a natural history of destruction: *Nature's Ghosts* Mark V. Barrow, 2011-04-15 The rapid growth of the American environmental movement in recent decades obscures the fact that long before the first Earth Day and the passage of the Endangered Species Act, naturalists and concerned citizens recognized—and worried about—the problem of human-caused extinction. As Mark V. Barrow reveals in *Nature's Ghosts*, the threat of species loss has haunted Americans since the early days of the republic. From Thomas Jefferson's day—when the fossil remains of such fantastic lost animals as the mastodon and the woolly mammoth were first reconstructed—through the pioneering conservation efforts of early naturalists like John James Audubon and John Muir, Barrow shows how Americans came to understand that it was not only possible for entire species to die out, but that humans themselves could be responsible for their extinction. With the destruction of the passenger pigeon and the precipitous decline of the bison, professional scientists and wildlife enthusiasts alike began to understand that even very common species were not safe from the juggernaut of modern, industrial society. That realization spawned public education and legislative campaigns that laid the foundation for the modern environmental movement and the preservation of such iconic creatures as

the bald eagle, the California condor, and the whooping crane. A sweeping, beautifully illustrated historical narrative that unites the fascinating stories of endangered animals and the dedicated individuals who have studied and struggled to protect them, *Nature's Ghosts* offers an unprecedented view of what we've lost—and a stark reminder of the hard work of preservation still ahead.

a natural history of destruction: *Natural History* Carlos Fonseca, 2020-07-14 From Carlos Fonseca comes a dazzling, kaleidoscopic epic of art, politics, and hidden realities Just before the dawn of the new millennium, a curator at a New Jersey museum of natural history receives an unusual invitation from a celebrated fashion designer. She shares the curator's fascination with the secrets of the animal kingdom—with camouflage and subterfuge—and she proposes that they collaborate on an exhibition, the nature of which remains largely obscure, even as they enter into a strange relationship marked by evasion and elision. Seven years later, after the designer's death, the curator recovers the archive of their never-completed project. During a long night of insomnia, he finds within the archive a series of clues about the true history of the designer's family, a mind-bending puzzle that winds from Haifa, Israel, to bohemian 1970s New York to the Latin American jungles. As he follows this trail, the curator discovers a cast of characters whose own fixations interrogate the unstable frontiers between art, science, politics, and religion. An aging photographer, living nearly alone in an abandoned mining town where subterranean fires rage without end, creates miniature replicas of ruined cities. A former model turned conceptual artist becomes the star defendant in a trial over the very soul and purpose of art. A young indigenous boy receives a vision of the end of the world. Reality is a curtain, the curator realizes, and to draw it back is to reveal the theater of the obsessed. *Natural History* is a portrait of a world trapped between faith and irony, tragedy and farce. An urgent and impressively ambitious novel in the tradition of Italo Calvino and Ricardo Piglia, it confirms Carlos Fonseca as one of the most daring writers of his generation.

a natural history of destruction: On Creaturely Life Eric L. Santner, 2009-06-24 In his *Duino Elegies*, Rainer Maria Rilke suggests that animals enjoy direct access to a realm of being—the open—concealed from humans by the workings of consciousness and self-consciousness. In his own reading of Rilke, Martin Heidegger reclaims the open as the proper domain of human existence but suggests that human life remains haunted by vestiges of an animal-like relation to its surroundings. Walter Benjamin, in turn, was to show that such vestiges—what Eric Santner calls the creaturely—have a biopolitical aspect: they are linked to the processes that inscribe life in the realm of power and authority. Santner traces this theme of creaturely life from its poetic and philosophical beginnings in the first half of the twentieth century to the writings of the enigmatic German novelist W. G. Sebald. Sebald's entire oeuvre, Santner argues, can be seen as an archive of creaturely life. For Sebald, the work on such an archive was inseparable from his understanding of what it means to engage ethically with another person's history and pain, an engagement that transforms us from indifferent individuals into neighbors. An indispensable book for students of Sebald, *On Creaturely Life* is also a significant contribution to critical theory.

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