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Arthur Conan Doyle's "Great New Adventure Story": Journalism in The Lost World

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Arthur Conan Doyle's "Great New Adventure Story": Journalism in *The Lost World*

In our Next Number will commence Conan Doyle's Great New Adventure Story, guaranteed to give a thrill to the most jaded reader of fiction.

—*Strand Magazine*, March 1912

George Newnes's popular illustrated monthly, the *Strand Magazine* (1891-1950), anticipated with great fanfare the serialization of Arthur Conan Doyle's latest work, *The Lost World* (April-November 1912). The advertisement above, delivered in large, bold lettering, and set within a box occupying half of the issue's final page, expresses much confidence in the "Great New Adventure Story"—in spite of the novel's own admission, in the first installment, that "the big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in, and there's no room for romance anywhere" (10).¹ Critics from Patrick Brantlinger onwards have long associated late-Victorian stories of swashbuckling male adventurers in exoticized, primitive locations with the British imperial project; thus, the disastrous Anglo-Boer Wars, Indian nationalism, and the expansion of American spheres of influence all seem plausible contexts for the decline of imperial romance after the turn of the century. In reference specifically to *The Lost World*, several scholars have argued that Doyle's noticeably hyperbolic—even comedic—use of adventure tropes perform an awareness that adventure fiction was fading with the fortunes of empire (Duncan xii-xiii, Dirda 35-36, Forman 28). The present essay, however, takes seriously the *Strand's* claim about *The Lost World's* novelty: what is "new" about it, especially if its plot strictly adheres to conventions of earlier "lost world" adventure fiction—an "offspring," according to Bradley Deane, of imperial romance (206)? Much like Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (first translated into English in 1871), *The Lost World* features a group of men, led by a Professor, who discover a prehistoric land. And, in a spirit similar to that of H. Rider Haggard's popular Allan Quatermain stories beginning with *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) or Rudyard Kipling's *The Man*

Who Would Be King (1888), *The Lost World* is a story of imperial encounter and plunder: the English adventurers—aided by “two half-breeds, one negro, and five Indians” (Summary, *Strand* 603)—not only discover extant prehistoric creatures, but also defeat a tribe of primitive ape-men and unearth hidden riches in the Amazon Basin.

The present discussion brings focus to the importance of journalism to the telling of the story, something more evident from the novel’s original serialization than from its eventual volume publication. I argue that the formal innovations Doyle makes in his adventure novel are based on particular developments in professional journalism after the turn of the century. In the years contemporaneous with the writing of *The Lost World*, Doyle was involved in a flurry of different journalistic endeavors and was therefore intimately attuned to changes in the field. He was a passionate advocate for individuals he felt to be unjustly accused of crimes, including the Anglo-Indian George Edalji and the German-born Jew Oscar Slater; a patriotic defender of England during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902); and, most relevant to *The Lost World*, he supported a campaign against the brutalities of slave labor under Leopold II of Belgium’s Congo Free State launched by E.D. Morel, the journalist that inspired the novel’s journalist-narrator, Edward Malone (Miller 257-62, 292-300, 204-19, 280-81). *The Lost World* registers Doyle’s high hopes for journalism in this period, particularly his nuanced understanding of how the rise of a newly professionalized, “objective” journalism might, paradoxically, return literary authority to romance. Specifically, the novel stages interplays between the conventions consolidated by an institutionalized network of journalists and the fantastical elements of adventure romance. Doyle’s decision to place the professional world of journalism in dialogue with the far-fetched imperial romance aimed to restore romance’s favor with the all-too-familiar, “jaded” Edwardian reader.² Doyle’s new romance might be conceptualized as an early example

of what John A. McClure terms “late imperial romance,” which is specifically concerned with “the politics of re-enchantment” in an increasingly secular and rational world (8).

My focus on the ways in which the form of *The Lost World* concerns itself with journalism’s effects on mass readerships illuminates a second point: Doyle’s novel shares anxieties about the press traditionally associated with canonical modernists. As Patrick Collier has noted, literary figures such as T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf all defined their work, to a degree, against a “crisis in journalism” that they traced back to the 1880s (7). For these authors, sensationalism ascribed to the New Journalism and the enormous influence of press barons like Alfred Harmsworth served as a “touch point for fears about the decline of Western culture” and the rise of a “distracted” and irrational reading public (Collier 14). As I will indicate, the position that Doyle takes within these growing debates is a distinct one that attempts to yoke together two professions that were drifting farther and farther apart. From within the very kind of popular fiction that many canonical modernists would have deemed complicit in the commercial enterprise of journalism, Doyle expresses similar concerns about the fickle attention of mass audiences and their tendency to arrive at erroneous judgments. But rather than distancing literature from journalism altogether, *The Lost World* envisions an alternative way to incorporate what Doyle felt to be the best aspects of both—ultimately, as a bid to retain large readerships without capitulating to their expectations.

From Romance versus Realism to Literature versus Journalism

The Lost World’s turn towards journalism in order to renew adventure fiction was a timely move because it effectively reframed an earlier debate between romance and realism as a “new” one between literature and journalism. In the 1880s, writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson theorized that romance could provide an antidote to the dull scientism of realism and

naturalism. Famously, Stevenson claimed that romance aspired “to obey the ideal laws of the day-dream,” while realism was confined to “the clink of teaspoons and the accents of the curate” (255, 258). According to Kenneth Graham, this so-called “romance revival”—which Nicholas Daly rebrands as a precursor to “popular modernisms”—reached its apex in 1887 because Haggard, Andrew Lang, and literary critic George Saintsbury each wrote manifestos that year on the salutary, corrective potential of romance against a deadening obsession with accuracy (66). Yet, as Andrea White has pointed out, adventure fiction—arguably from Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) onwards, but especially during its heyday in the late nineteenth century—was closely associated with the supposed factuality and authenticity of travel narratives (39-61). White sees Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883) as more “literary” than the adventure fictions of authors such as R.M. Ballantyne, Haggard, or G.A. Henty, for it seems less concerned with factual conventions (50).³ In general, however, adventure fiction was very much a staging ground for the tensions between romance and realism that Stevenson, Lang, and others theorized.

These tensions came to be reflected in a similar opposition between literature and journalism that would be more relevant for Doyle’s audience in 1912, by which time a fairly codified style of objectivity in journalism had taken hold. Nothing if not “accurate,” objectivity was supposed to adhere to facts and stay entirely away from fiction. The roots of this new-old opposition may also be traced to 1887, when Matthew Arnold criticized the New Journalism of the 1870s and 1880s—associated primarily with the figure of W.T. Stead—for its shameless borrowings from fiction. Like penny-press fiction, Arnold argued, the sensationalistic content, style, and methods of the New Journalism had “no concern whatever” about “get[ting] to the state of things as they truly are” (638).⁴ In a bid, therefore, to preserve the prestige of their recent professionalization, a new set of journalists turned their attention to the ways in which “good”

journalism could distance itself from cheap fiction and even literature more broadly. Politically, professionalization resulted in the creation of bodies such as the National Union of Journalists, founded in 1906 to protect the living standards of its members and to uphold the integrity of journalistic labor (Elliott 174). Rhetorically, sharper contrasts between the so-called objectivity of professional journalism and the biased guidance of the paternalistic Victorian author-editor began to emerge.

Within this developing model of what was considered a more responsible form of journalism, the professional's duty was to report "nothing but the facts," allowing readers the liberty to form their own judgments after reviewing these facts. Doyle's journalism reflects his support for these new ideals. When expressing his views on the Second Anglo-Boer War, Doyle made a point of opposing what he felt to be Stead's exaggerations and outright lies about atrocities committed by British soldiers. To his mother, Doyle wrote: "My indignation is excited by the Stead kind of man who traduces our soldiers most foully" (*Letters* 489). He boasts, in contrast, that his "pamphlet will make a great splash...after examining the evidence more closely and more impartially than most men I am sure that we have done right well from the start" (*Letters* 488). His own report on the Congo, Doyle claims, "contains the essential facts, and will enable the reader to form his own opinion upon the situation" (*Crime* vii). From such statements, it seems clear that for Doyle, there was no need for sensationalism: he had a faith that just the facts themselves might "make a great splash."⁵

Sociologist Michael Schudson describes objective journalism's exuberant faith in fact and factuality in the years before World War I as a "naïve empiricism" that viewed "facts...not [as] human statements about the world but aspects of the world itself" (6), a view that gained ground, no doubt, with developments in photojournalism and the early appearance of newsreels

by 1910.⁶ But Doyle's engagements with "fact" in his literary work—including his skepticism about the truth-value of photojournalism—thoroughly evince his understanding that factuality, like fiction, arises from a set of conventions. The conventions of objectivity and fact came so much into fashion in this period that their discursive presence even crept into the rhetoric of former supporters of the New Journalism. According to James D. Startt, the second-generation of New Journalists increasingly favored such notions as "accurate news reporting" and "comprehensive coverage" in order to maintain their relevance and respectability (281). The urgent calls to carve out a distinct space for professional journalism powerfully solidified the convention that facts held an authority apart from the journalist, who would become—much like a photograph or newsreel, supposedly—merely a channel for conveyance.

The idea of a personalized voice, then, tended to be relegated to literary realms. In a 1912 article for the *Fortnightly Review* entitled "Literature and Journalism," Thomas H. Escott insists that "the literary type of journalist, which was the natural product of the forces and interests then operating with newspaper readers and writers, developed in all concerned a temper and taste that have now disappeared" (123). Similarly, J.D. Symon's 1914 history of the press treats the development of objectivity as the culmination of journalism's progressive movement away from literature: "The great service of the press is that it promotes free discussion—above all, that it disseminates information; and implicitly, while no jot of influence is disclaimed, the journalist of the present day confesses that his first function is not comment" (105). With bravado, Symon concludes that "the public's idea of an editor as a long-suffering literary gentleman who is something of an artist ought now to be finally exploded" (99). An important implication of this distinction between the "long-suffering literary gentleman" and the "great service of the press" is a marked shift of authority from an investment in individual personality to an investment in

professional groups. Doyle invokes his own membership within a brotherhood of professional reporters sanctioned by “official” affiliations in the preface to his report on the Congo: “The witnesses of the crime are of all nations, and there is no possibility of error concerning facts. There are British consuls like Casement, Thesiger, Mitchell and Armstrong, all writing in their official capacity with every detail of fact and date” (*Crime* iii).

More problematically for Doyle were the accompanying notions that from a stylistic point of view, professional objective journalism needed to be formulaically impersonal and plain. According to Matthew Rubery, for literary contemporaries such as Joseph Conrad, objective journalism’s sober and detached ideal became the cause of some disturbing perceptual problems. Rubery registers, for instance, Conrad’s discomfort with reading newspaper accounts of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), because—in the author’s own words—“cold, silent, colourless print” inevitably distorted the potency of the real (144). I argue that Doyle shared some of these concerns that objective reporting might lull audiences into problematic indifference and detachment, even as he embraced its commitments to empiricism and professionalism. *The Lost World* takes aim, in particular, at a dogmatic skepticism—perpetuated by a growing acceptance of the authority of newspapers—that regarded truth as necessarily ordinary and unremarkable in style and in content. While interested in leveraging objective journalism’s professionalism to revive interest in adventure romance, Doyle’s novel also borrows claims to imaginative authenticity that writers like Stevenson invested in romance in order to expose the limitations of “naïve empiricism.”

Reading *The Lost World* in the *Strand*

In this section, I look closely at the editorial presentation of *The Lost World*, focusing on the first two pages of the novel’s inaugural installment in the *Strand*’s April issue. The framing

of the story with a prominent headline, a boxed subheading, bold bylines, an epigraph, foreword, and a collection of images immediately seems overwrought in comparison with typical presentations of either literature or journalism in the *Strand*, or other similar illustrated magazines from the same period.⁷ In general, titles, bylines, and any subheadings rarely competed for prominence with the title of the magazine itself, and stories—whether serialized fiction or journalism—tended to be visually subordinate to the magazine’s editorial structure.⁸ “The Lost World” serial, however, seems to break free of the *Strand*’s mediating presence—both through the greater prominence of its title, bylines, and subheading, as well as through the sheer multitude of its framing devices (fig. 1). I suggest that the way in which the serial displaces the editorial structure of the *Strand* anticipates disruptions to literary and journalistic convention in Edward Malone’s subsequent first-person account of the story. *The Lost World*’s mission to make adventure romance new emerges, therefore, as a kind of two-step process, where the first problematizes the kinds of writing and reading practices that frame literature and journalism, and the second offers a resolution enacted via the experience of fictional writers and readers in the world presented by the diegesis.

Both the subheading—which mentions Malone’s affiliation with the fictional *Daily Gazette*—and the foreword proclaim that *The Lost World* is a work of journalism. The foreword, which directly precedes the opening lines of the first chapter, is an exaggerated statement of journalistic integrity that establishes the novel’s masquerade as journalism carefully sanctioned by a network of professional affiliation:

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

Vol. xliii.

APRIL, 1912.

No. 256.

THE LOST WORLD.

Being an account of the recent amazing adventures of
Professor George E. Challenger, Lord John Roxton,
Professor Summerlee, and Mr. E. D. Malone of the
"Daily Gazette."

BY
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

Illustrated by

Harry Rountree and the late Maple White.

I have wrought my simple plan
If I give one hour of joy
To the boy who's half a man,
Or the man who's half a boy.

FOREWORD.—Mr. E. D. Malone desires to state that both the injunction for restraint and the libel action have been withdrawn unreservedly by Professor G. E. Challenger, who, being satisfied that no criticism or comment in this book is meant in an offensive spirit, has guaranteed that he will place no impediment to its publication and circulation. Mr. E. D. Malone would wish also to express his gratitude to Mr. Patrick L. Forbes, of Roslyn Hill, Hampstead, for the skill and sympathy with which he has worked up the sketches which were brought from South America, and also to Mr. W. Ransford, of Elm Row, Hampstead, for his valuable expert help in dealing with the photographs.—Streatham, 1912.

CHAPTER I.

"THERE ARE HEROISMS ALL ROUND US."
MR. HUNGERTON, her father, really was the most tactless person upon earth—a fluffy, feathery, untidy cockatoo of a man, perfectly good-natured, but absolutely centred upon his own silly self. If anything could have driven me from Gladys, it



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would have been the thought of such a father-in-law. I am convinced that he really believed in his heart that I came round to the Chestnuts three days a week for the pleasure of his company, and very especially to hear his views upon bimetalism—a subject upon which he was by way of being an authority.

For an hour or more that evening I listened to his monotonous chirrup about bad money

Copyright, 1912, by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Fig. 1. Front page, first installment of "The Lost World." *The Strand Magazine*. Apr. 1912: 362.

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Supposedly a statement made by the editors at the *Daily Gazette*, the foreword contains a brief legal disclosure and acknowledgements for the images—a series of faked photographs and painted sketches not included in *The Lost World's* volume publication.⁹ The specter of an “impediment” from Challenger enhances the appeal of the narrative—but more specifically, the statement takes great pains to situate the work’s production within recently institutionalized practices of professional journalism. First, by employing protective legalese that precludes Challenger from changing his mind, the foreword strengthens its journalistic pretense with the legitimation of another, already established profession. Second, the acknowledgements allude to the professionalization of photojournalism (a development to which I will shortly return).

Yet, the obvious nature of the journalistic masquerade—the byline boldly announces the most famous fiction writer of the day—undercuts the decorousness of the professional journalist’s meticulously crafted foreword. The *Strand's* readers knew, of course, that this was no work of real journalism. More broadly, they would have been familiar with the authenticity topoi that often accompanied stories of adventure. Again, as White points out, adventure fiction,

often published side by side with firsthand travel narratives, made many borrowings from these narratives to legitimize its own authority apart from other popular forms of fiction. Based on travel writing, adventure claimed to be “educational and inspirational” (White 40). But Malone’s foreword makes an important revision to authenticating statements like Allan Quatermain’s promise, in Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*, to tell his story “in a plain, straightforward manner” (40). Specifically, the foreword seems less concerned with establishing the credibility of firsthand witness, but with affirming a brotherhood of professional affiliation orchestrated by journalism and its codified practices. Arguably, the foreword is also not particularly concerned with verisimilitude—as adventure fiction’s authenticity topoi usually are—but with streamlining professional procedures. As such, Doyle’s journalistic masquerade marks authenticating power’s shift away from the individual correspondent to a system of professional relations.¹⁰

The epigraph, however, written by Doyle himself, returns *The Lost World* to the norms of adventure romance’s connection to “boys’ own” literature: “I have wrought my simple plan / If I give one hour of joy / To the boy who’s half a man, / Or the man who’s half a boy.” Here, Doyle rehearses the familiar ideal that adventure romance facilitates an escape into fantastic—yet instructive—realms of excitement and delight, in a vein not too different from Haggard’s dedication for *King Solomon’s Mines*: “To all the big and little boys who read it” (37). The pages of mass-market magazines for boys such as the *Boy’s Own Paper*, *Pluck*, *Magnet*, and *Boys of England* contained numerous other adventure stories aimed at molding boys, as Kelly Boyd argues, into “proper men who could take their place in the imperial project” (49). As Doyle himself admitted to his mother, *The Lost World* was “more a boys book than any I have done” (*Letters* 578). The equivalency that Doyle makes between “the boy who’s half a man” and “the man who’s half a boy” would seem to solidify the earlier sense of continuity between brave boys

and effective imperial administrators that many adventure stories fostered. Yet, for Doyle, boyhood is not just a time before the emergence of the full-fledged, adult male hero: it is a time of a salutary form of imaginative credulity all too often lost in adulthood. The epigraph's dedication to boys who are half men, or men who are half boys, then, rather interrupts the *telos* of childhood's progression into manhood. Doyle suggests that there is a quality of imagination in boys that men could do well to recover. As I argue later, the narrative indicates that this tension between credulity and skepticism staged by the epigraph is symptomatic of widening distinctions between literary and journalistic conventions.

The bylines bring particular attention to the power of conventions to determine expectations about genre, through staging confusion between the “signs” of fiction and of fact. Besides the central, authorial byline, the illustrator's byline—“Illustrated by Harry Rountree and the late Maple White”—combines a real person with a fictional character. Harry Rountree was Doyle's well-known, commissioned illustrator, while Maple White is a fictional American explorer who perished in South America prior to the main action of the story. Including Rountree and White together under the same byline gently pranks the reader, who might regard Maple White as a real-life illustrator before encountering him in the fictional narrative. This sequencing of a reader's potential mistake followed by retrospective recognition brings attention to what I argue to be *The Lost World's* particular concern that journalistic conventions about the real were playing too great a role in shaping understandings about reality.

Complementarily, the set of images that accompany the features I have just described enact more visually based confusions between literary and journalistic conventions (fig. 2). The page is taken up by seven painted images from the adventures of the narrative surrounding a portrait of Professor Challenger. In spite of the portrait's painted appearance, the image is

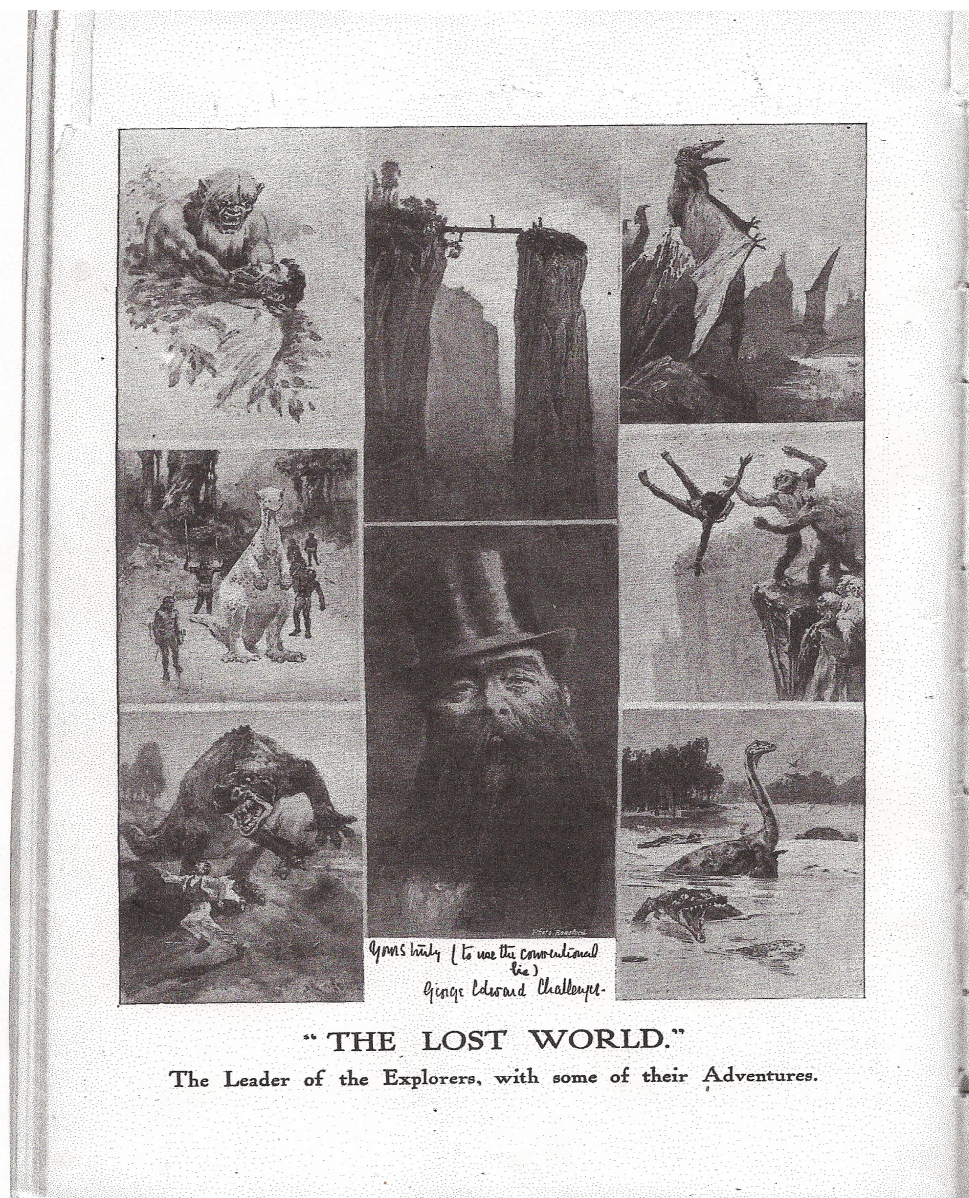


Fig. 2. Painted images of the men's travels with a painted-over halftone of Doyle as Challenger.

“The Lost World.” *The Strand Magazine*. Apr. 1912: 361.

marked “photo Ransford” in the bottom right-hand corner (William Ransford was a photographer friend of Patrick L. Forbes, Doyle’s brother-in-law; Malone features both men in his acknowledgements). The image of Challenger is also Doyle in disguise, which suggests the portrait’s photographic basis. The hybrid look of the image may be explained by some important transitions in photographic technologies around the turn of the century. From the 1880s to the pre-war era, mixed-media use of painting and photography remained the norm. Aesthetic enhancements to photographic halftones before they were reproduced for a mass audience were common within the burgeoning field of photojournalism (Beegan 177-78). The practice, moreover, of including photomechanical, hand, and hybrid images side by side—as if without distinction—was also quite usual in illustrated periodicals like the *Strand*. Yet, associations of photography with truthfulness—what Gerry Beegan identifies with a still prevalent “failure to see the act of representation within reproduction” in our own cultural practices today—began to emerge with the professionalization of photojournalism as an occupation with skills and purposes apart from the art of illustration (205). According to Carmichael Thomas in 1905, for example, photographs—even if they need to be touched up—were uniquely the basis for “truthful testimony” (qtd. in Beegan 168). In light of these transitional developments in attitudes towards photography, Doyle’s ambiguously photographic image seems deliberately to work against the growing attachments of truth to photography and falsehood to hand-produced images.

In other words, since photography and art were increasingly becoming visual markers for the separation between journalism and literature after the turn of the century, Doyle’s fictional-photographic image provides a visual component to his flexible approach towards genre. The forged scrawl under the image of Challenger—“Yours Truly (to use the conventional lie), George Edward Challenger”—underscores the point that convention may fail to mark the

dividing line between truth and falsehood: the signatory stamp of authenticity is an obvious forgery (for the picture clearly features the well-known Doyle), and the parenthetical expression explicitly brings focus to the inauthenticity of the formal valediction, “Yours Truly.”

The playful confusions from these first two pages de-naturalize meanings attached to journalism and literature, the stakes of which become clearer in the narrative itself. Although the play between authenticity and falsehood, fact and fiction was largely part and parcel of adventure romance from its inception, Doyle’s particular focus on the categories of literature and journalism uncovers the distinct presentism of his novel’s philosophical aims. *The Lost World* ultimately envisions reconciliation between the imagination of romance and the empiricism of journalism that would prove transformational for the problematic reader of mass-market fiction and journalism. Doyle’s disruptive mingling of literary and journalistic conventions all from *within* literature gives a clue to the structure of this reconciliation: in Doyle’s view, literary imagination is more capacious than journalistic empiricism and therefore the former must contain the latter. A “realistic” photographic image in the serial, featuring Doyle as Challenger surrounded by his friends as Malone, Professor Summerlee, and Lord Roxton, neatly coalesces this idea (fig. 3). Writing to his mother about this very image, Doyle emphasizes the breadth of his literary play with photojournalistic conventions and instruments of empirical discovery: “In a rather impish mood I set myself to make the pictures realistic. I and two friends made ourselves up to resemble members of the mythical exploring party, and were photographed at a table spread with globes and instruments” (*Letters* 583). In seeking his mother’s praise—he requested that she “admire” the pictures in the *Strand* (*Letters* 582)—Doyle signals the ease with which his literature incorporates the visual vocabularies of journalism. Correspondingly, he clarifies that the “globes and instruments” of empirical study, scientific measurement, and observational



E. D. Malone, "Daily Gazette." Prof. Summerlee, F.R.S. Prof. G. E. Challenger, F.R.S., F.R.G.S. Lord John Roxton.
 THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPLORING PARTY.
 Copyright. From a Photograph by William Ransford.

Fig. 3. Doyle's image of the explorers, with Ransford as Malone, Forbes as both Professor Summerlee and Lord John Roxton, and Doyle himself as Challenger. "The Lost World." *The Strand Magazine*. May 1912: 487.

verification have been reappropriated as props for an imaginative exploit. These statements suggest *The Lost World* is ultimately a work of journalistic literature. Yet, within the narrative, Malone models a form of literary journalism that resolves the problem of a London audience whose lack of imaginative judgment prevents the proper perception of truth.

The Labors of the Literary Journalist

Edward Malone is Doyle's ideal, modern journalist: a figure that yokes together the imaginative radicalism of the writer of romance and the rigorous adherence to truth associated with the new professional journalist. Like his real-life counterpart Morel, Malone joins together morally urgent, vivid accounts and rigorous research and documentation. Morel's description of the report on the Congo by Roger Casement—the inspiration for sportsman Lord Roxton—opposes voyeurism and sensationalism, but also does not advocate sparing readers the details of human exploitation. In Morel's words, the Casement Report (1904) made “terrible disclosures of man's inhumanity to man with wonderful self-restraint, coupled with considerable artistic skill—without once verging on the sensational or what people call fanatic” (167). Malone is a figure who, to a large degree, perfects such an ideal: he successfully mobilizes public opinion through carefully balanced rhetorical strategies that undo perceived oppositions between the documentary drive of journalism and “artistic skill” of literature.

In particular, Doyle dramatizes the success of Malone's literary journalism in two public assemblies that bookend the action of the story. The meta-fictional performances of these assemblies notably distinguish *The Lost World* from adventure romances that derive authority from firsthand witness. Malone is far more self-conscious—even jaded himself—about his own narrative's authenticity because of his sensitivity to the modern crowd's expectations.¹¹ Before writing about the men's extraordinary encounter with a pterodactyl, for instance, Malone tells his editor: “I shall not dare to publish these articles unless I can bring back my proofs to England, or I shall be hailed as the journalistic Munchausen of all time...you would not care to stake the whole credit of the *Gazette* upon this adventure until we can meet the chorus of criticism and scepticism such articles must of necessity elicit” (85). Similarly, after his first, full sighting of a tribe of ape-people, Malone writes: “I do not know how I am to make you realize it, or how in a

few years I shall bring myself to believe in it if I live to sit once more on a lounge in the Savage Club and look out on the drab solidity of the Embankment” (143). In each of these statements, Malone is acutely aware of empiricism’s visual demands, as well as the specific limitations—in terms of expectations—on what the empirical should look like. For Malone’s London (himself included, he admits), neither a pterodactyl nor ape-people would fit within the familiar paradigms of belief: reality is the “drab solidity of the Embankment” (or the gray of newsprint).

Malone’s strategies for coping with the problem of a skeptical audience are in full play, however, at the first public assembly conducted just prior to the adventurers’ departure for the Amazon. Malone narrates the proceedings of the assembly in an article for the *Gazette*, detailing a verbal confrontation between the scientifically dogmatic Professor Challenger and a popular lecturer named Waldron. At the assembly, Challenger asserts his belief in facts as self-evident truths and Waldron displays a blatant disregard of truth in the service of a catchy presentation. As the individual who writes about this confrontation, Malone not only mediates the experience for the fictional *Gazette* readers (and readers of *The Lost World*), but also between these two extreme positions. By aligning himself with the flourishes of Waldron’s lecture through ventriloquial techniques while maintaining an ironic distance from the content of the popular lecturer’s speech, Malone deftly ushers his *Gazette* readership away from dogmatism.

Malone values Waldron’s communicative competency, his “merit of knowing how to assimilate the ideas of other men, and to pass them on in a way which was intelligible and even interesting to the lay public” (40). Consequently, Malone assimilates Waldron’s lecture to his own article, co-opting the dramatic language of the presentation for his own description, how “he pictured the solidification, the cooling, the wrinkling which formed the mountains, the steam which turned to water, the slow preparation of the stage upon which was to be played the

inexplicable drama of life” (41). As Malone’s account of Waldron’s lecture progresses, the journalist merges his own voice and Waldron’s through novelistic free indirect discourse:

This brought the lecturer to the great ladder of animal life, beginning low down in molluscs and feeble sea creatures, then up rung by rung through the reptiles and fishes, till at last we came to a kangaroo-rat, a creature which brought forth its young alive, the direct ancestor of all mammals, and presumably, therefore of everyone in the audience. (“No, no,” from a sceptical student in the back row.) If the young gentleman in the red tie who cried “No, no,” and who presumably claimed to have been hatched out of an egg, would wait upon him after the lecture, he would be glad to see such a curiosity. (Laughter). It was strange to think that the climax of all the age-long processes of Nature had been the creation of that gentleman in the red tie. (41)

This passage begins with Malone’s third-person narration separate from the voice of Waldron, but following the parenthetical interruption by the student at the back, Malone’s voice and Waldron’s come together. Here, Malone borrows rhetorical power by making Waldron’s joke his own: Malone wants his own readers to share in the parenthetical laughter of Waldron’s assembly audience. Following the laughter, Malone’s voice remains merged with Waldron’s so as to replay the mocking insult against “that gentleman in the red tie” for his *Gazette* audience. The rhetorical power that Malone essentially leaches from Waldron thus depends on engaging audiences through identifiably literary (dramatic, novelistic) forms.

Yet Malone’s identifications with Waldron are balanced by moments of deliberate distancing. That Waldron is good at “assimilating the ideas of other men,” for example, might be a backhanded compliment. In another instance, Malone’s description of how “the precession of the Equinox or the formation of a vertebrate became a highly humorous process as treated by

him” suggests the absurdity of treating such slow and mundane processes with humor (40). The subtle irony in such comments sets Malone apart from the commercially motivated journalism that Kipling criticizes in *The Light That Failed* (1890)—the kind of reporting that “supplied the masses, and all it demanded was picturesqueness and abundance of detail” (35). Much like *The Lost World*, Kipling’s story of a sketch artist who struggles against “selling out” to journalism wrestles with contemporary debates about the role of journalism—and especially journalistic images—in relation to the whims of mass readerships. While Kipling’s protagonist plots an escape from journalism beholden to “the masses” to work on his art, however, Malone’s affiliation with professional and objective journalism enables him to find middle ground.

In the first public assembly, when Challenger finally interrupts Waldron, Malone importantly describes the confrontation as one waged between the “rancid Baconian” and the “Shakespearean” (42). Malone emphasizes the divergence between empiricism and imagination, journalism and literature, but he ultimately works to bring the two positions together (42). At first, Malone maintains boundaries between himself and the “rancid” empiricist by quoting Challenger’s speech on the existence of prehistoric creatures directly (rather than absorbing his speech indirectly, as he does Waldron’s). He demonstrates that Challenger’s refusal to employ literary imagination in his account ironically leads the assembly to reject his rather inherently sensational truths and accept Waldron’s less sensational falsehoods. Doyle had almost exactly the same thing to say about the Society for Psychical Research (which he joined in 1891) as Malone does about Challenger. In Doyle’s defense of spiritualism in *The New Revelation* (1918), he writes: “One feels that in their desire to avoid sensationalism they discourage the world from knowing...the splendid work they are doing” (31). Nonetheless, Malone would stand behind Challenger’s claims—and Doyle behind the SPR’s.

Malone's apparent opposition between the methods of Francis Bacon and William Shakespeare, importantly, alludes to a theory—one massively popular during the Edwardian era—that brought the two figures together: namely, that Bacon was the author of plays attributed to Shakespeare. The allusion suggests that Malone has not discarded his empirical motivations as a journalist, in spite of his criticisms of Challenger. Moreover, the scholar who exposed the “Ireland forgeries” in the 1790s—in which engraver Samuel Ireland falsely claimed that his teenage son's plays were newly discovered manuscripts of Shakespeare—was named Edmond Malone, the first modern textual editor of Shakespeare's works (Lockwood 120-22). Malone the historical scholar's famously painstaking treatment of literary style as empirical evidence makes him a good associate for Doyle's fictional Malone, who ultimately seeks synergies between the literary and the journalistic, the imagined and the empirically verifiable.

During the course of the men's explorations, sensational events backed by empirical verification end up serving as powerful justifications for Malone's practice of literary journalism. Despite having access himself to the firsthand, visual verification of dinosaurs and the so-called “missing link” between man and ape, Malone remains concerned—unlike the confident and “straightforward” Allan Quatermain—about the ways in which he will seem credible to Londoners. An establishment Savage Club member named Tarp Henry crystallizes London's jaded expectations in the following statement: “My dear chap, things don't happen like that in real life. People don't stumble upon enormous discoveries and then lose their evidence. Leave that to the novelists. The fellow is as full of tricks as the monkey-house at the Zoo. It's absolute bosh” (38). Malone knows that his literary journalism may not be enough to bring his skeptical readers around to believing him; hence, he boldly brings back material proof of prehistoric existence in the form of a live pterodactyl.

Of course, empirically verifiable sensation may be furnished from within the walls of fiction, but if Malone is supposed to be Doyle's spokesperson for reconciliation between science and imagination, journalistic and literary methods, Malone's capacity to produce sensational evidence only serves, by contrast, to highlight the limitations that the real world presented for Doyle. As Doyle himself expressed at a lunch in honor of the explorer Robert Peary in May 1910, "romance writers are a class of people who very much dislike being hampered by facts" (*Letters* 578). It seems that the best that Doyle could do was to capitalize on contemporary interest in paleontological exploration to make the creatures of his imagining seem less unreal. As R.D. Batory and W.A.S. Sarjeant, Rosamond Dalziell, and Ross G. Forman have all noted, Doyle drew voraciously from non-fictional accounts and documentation to construct his story. Doyle's potential involvement with the famous Piltdown "discovery" of a prehistoric skull in Sussex (where Doyle played golf) a month after the publication of *The Lost World*, as well as his spirited defense, in 1922, of the Cottingley fairies photographs, perhaps hint at the author's deep desire to produce discoveries in his own world. Whether Doyle was at all aware, ultimately, that these hoaxes were fabrications of material evidence, his vocal support for the authenticity of both indicates his investment in alerting England to the reality of romance in the modern world.

Even if *The Lost World*, as fiction, could not convince readers of the existence of dinosaurs or "the missing link," at the very least, the novel seeks to persuade them to interrogate their own expectations about the work of literature versus the work of journalism. As *The Lost World* vividly illustrates, these more abstract expectations about form have concrete effects on Londoners' capacities to apprehend the remarkable occurrences that unfold around them. The climactic scene of the pterodactyl's release during a second assembly—dramatized in the final November installment—reveals the ultimate insignificance of the pterodactyl, even to the

London audience within the story, as a denizen of a prehistoric world, and its greater import as a metaphor for the imaginative flexibility that modern readers have “lost” (and then found) when the proof is finally released from the box. Macdona, Malone’s colleague at the *Gazette* who narrates the action of the second assembly, skillfully builds suspense until the moment of the pterodactyl’s release only to turn his gaze away from the pterodactyl itself and instead towards the assembly audience:

‘Then—oh! how shall one describe what took place then—when the full exuberance of the majority and the full reaction of the minority united to make one great wave of enthusiasm, which rolled from the back of the hall, gathering volume as it came, swept over the orchestra, submerged the platform, and carried the four heroes upon its crest?’ (184-85)

Macdona’s focus on the audience instead of the pterodactyl suggests how “enthusiasm” in the modern world was as fictional as an inhabitant of the “lost world” itself, how alien a more flexible conception for how truth should look had become. When Macdona does refer to the pterodactyl, he does so in metaphorical terms that tend to negate the materiality of the creature. It is “the devil of our childhood in person” (184), an ambiguous chimera that either signifies a feared monster during our childhood or our lost childhood itself. Regardless of whether the pterodactyl revives the fears of childhood, or is the return of childhood itself, this resurfacing of childhood transforms—to borrow words from the epigraph—the man into half a boy.

Macdona’s literary mediation of the final assembly is significant, for Macdona is another journalist affiliated with the London establishment who has not experienced what Malone has experienced. As such, Macdona’s collaboration in taking up Malone’s literary journalism consolidates a bond between two times and places—modern London, linked with grayness,

ordinariness, and skepticism, and prehistoric South America, associated with color, sensation, and make-believe. In particular, Macdona and Malone's shared Irish origins provide an important additional context for understanding their collaboration. As Catherine Wynne has shown, Doyle was fond of connecting his own Irishness to his late-in-life interest in fairies, folklore, and the supernatural. According to Wynne, Doyle's fiction often maps the tensions and conflicts within his own commitments—to both modern science and spiritualism—onto his mixed national heritage (i.e., he ascribed British rationalism to his training at the University of Edinburgh and Irish predilections for the occult to his Roman Catholic father). Hence, Malone and Macdona—like other Irish characters from Doyle's fiction such as the infamous Moriarty, or as Wynne points out, Paul Gilroy of *The Parasite* (1894)—seem especially predisposed toward believing in that which occurs beyond the pale of typical, empirical observation (143-78).

In the end, Macdona's containment of the material existence of the pterodactyl within its more abstract, metaphorical value echoes the containment of journalistic empiricism within the literary imagination that *The Lost World* itself enacts. As Doyle would later express in *The New Revelation*:

[T]he physical phenomena which have been proved up to the hilt for all who care to examine the evidence, are really of no account, and that their real value consists in the fact that they support and give objective reality to an immense body of knowledge which must deeply modify our previous religious views. (40)

In contending that empirical, “physical” evidence for the occult—even if it exists in abundance—has no “real value” in itself other than to “support” an expanded “knowledge” of a greater spiritualist reality, Doyle redefines “objective reality” as a specialized and subordinate category of the real. Just as the pterodactyl's “real value” to the world of the story lies in its

serving as a metaphor for a lost appreciation for life's romantic possibilities, so too is *The Lost World's* "real value" in its representation of a similar "lost world" of writers and readers "jaded" by modern expectations about the work of journalism versus that of literature. Perhaps Doyle reasoned that if Malone and Macdona's literary journalism could awaken their modern audiences from their skeptical slumber, his journalistic fiction might do the same for his.

The Lost World's representation of mass audiences as problematic for the journalist who cares to do more than to entertain resonates with concerns among writers well into the twentieth century and beyond. As Mark Morrison has argued, the experience of World War I catapulted both British and American modernists out of a prior optimism about art's ability to influence the critical judgment of mass audiences. To a large degree, Doyle's novel—particularly in its original, serial form—captures this rather exuberant moment of possibility, in which the wide reach of the press might join with the literary imagination to awaken the supposedly somnolent, over-satiated mass reader of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods. Yet the sense of a break between the ambitions of writers before and after the war should not preclude a view of possible continuities. For instance, T.S. Eliot's attributions, in April 1922, of literary London's state of "torpid indifference" to newspapers and "the journalistic life" resonate with *The Lost World's* fears that journalism's new principles of objectivity were stripping away at the imagination of the reading public ("London Letter" 510). Eliot also complains of a general disregard for "adventure and experiment" in literature of his day, and he asserts that "daring...may do no harm, and may even please; for it makes the reader feel that he is daring too" (510-11). This language of adventure and daring is suggestive; perhaps it even illuminates the distinct ways in which Doyle's supposedly "belated" adventure romance was moving in the direction of an

Eliotic ethos of adventurous form—but yet with a commitment to the social aims of the press, and a much broader audience in mind.

Notes

¹For reasons of accessibility, page references to quotations are from the 2008 Oxford edition. Further references are to this edition, unless otherwise indicated.

²The “jaded reader” was a common trope frequently invoked in advertisements and reviews, especially in relation to the “thrills” that romance offered. See Zieger on “media addiction” for more on fast-paced consumption of print and the anesthetized late nineteenth-century reader.

³Henty’s stories often referenced real-life British heroes and also borrowed claims to authenticity from the author’s own firsthand experience as a reporter and war correspondent. See also Bleiler on the lesser-known David Ker, who served as a war reporter in the Russian Army and subsequently wrote several “lost world” fictions for boys (404).

⁴See Wiener on the New Journalism’s borrowings from mid-Victorian newspaper fiction.

⁵Similar arguments were made by investigative journalists like James Greenwood, who conducted undercover tours of London’s East End in the 1870s to gather information that would inspire greater social responsibility. Urban, investigative journalism was accompanied by a new genre of “slum fiction” by authors such as Arthur Morrison, George Gissing, and Jack London, who staked the authority of their lurid, naturalistic accounts on real-life living conditions.

⁶See Hiley and McKernan on the first newreel to appear in Britain, *Pathe’s Animated Gazette*, followed by the *Caumont Graphic* and the *Warwick Bioscope Chronicle*. Each of these formulaically packaged bundles of “actuality footage” were released bi-weekly (187).

⁷For instance, *The Idler* (1892-1911) or *The English Illustrated Magazine* (1883-1913). In general, however, the *Strand* was without significant competitors (Pound 32-33). See Reid for a discussion of Haggard's *She* in *The Graphic* (October 1886 to January 1887) as one of the other, more famous serializations of adventure fiction.

⁸Other fiction that made the front page of the *Strand* before "The Lost World" serial lacks the visual interest that I describe here. The front-page fictions that bookend *The Lost World* (Richard Marsh's adventures of "Judith Lee" and Doyle's "The Fall of Lord Barrymore") include fairly basic titles and byline. The *Strand* presents Doyle's "The Hound of the Baskervilles" (August 1901-April 1902)—the most popular Holmes story—simply as well. The serialization of *The Poison Belt* (March-July 1913), *The Lost World's* sequel, retains some of the more dramatic visual elements of "The Lost World" serial, including the boxed subheading and the double-line below the masthead, but lacks the complication of the other elements I discuss.

⁹The first edition (Hodder and Stoughton / Doran) does not include Doyle's faked photographs or sketches, and instead has its own set of illustrations by Joseph Clement Coll. Yet *Strand* editor Greenhough Smith emphasized the importance of the original inclusions when he singled out *The Lost World* as "the very best serial...that I have ever done, especially when it has the trimmings of faked photos, maps and plans" (*Letters* 583).

¹⁰Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) evinces a similar faith in professional networks. For a discussion of the vampire's defeat at the hands of a group of middle-class, male professionals, see Daly 30-51. See Richards on the ways in which *Dracula's* narrative resembles newspapers and periodicals of the day.

¹¹For context, see late nineteenth-century French sociologists Tarde and Le Bon on the volatility of crowds and the concept of "herd mentality." Plotz charts diverse perceptions about crowds

earlier in the century and assigns responsibility to Tarde and Le Bon for the “relative narrowing of the definitional possibilities [for the crowd] by the end of the century” (196).

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