

“I’m Just Asking Questions.”
An analysis of White supremacist pseudo-archaeology

by Rylan Vandersluis

An Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the

HONOURS PROGRAM

in the Department of Anthropology

© Rylan Vandersluis, 2024
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Abstract

Pseudo-archaeology is the rejection of academic archaeological explanations of the past, for the explicit purpose of inserting one's own speculative analysis. This research explores how white supremacists use pseudo-archaeology to propagate their ideology into the present, and how their ideas have adapted from their initial creation. It attempts to solve this question by a comparative synthetic analysis of the two case studies. The first is the ideologically dictated Archaeology that was carried out by Nazi academics under the Third Reich, which was analyzed through a meta-analysis of secondary sources on the given subject matter. The second is the conspiratorial rhetoric propagated by Graham Hancock's media, using his first book *Finger Prints of the Gods*, and his docutainment series *Ancient Apocalypse* as an analytical framework. This research reveals the continued legacy of white supremacist ideas into modern pseudo-archaeology with the use of prehistory as a medium, the concept of a white precursor civilization, and the use of pseudo-intellectual echo chambers to bolster their ideas. The results of this study also reveal the changes in their methodologies and how Nazi rhetoric has been adapted to modernity through the modification of the concept of "Aryaness" to just "Whiteness," The change from a war of races to a war against culture, and the effective modernization of propaganda. The results of this research attempt to unveil how Hancock has modified white supremacist history, in order to make it more palatable to the modern white audience.

Keywords

controlling history, Graham Hancock, prehistory, modernization, Nazi archaeology

Introduction

In an age of disinformation, we must actively fight what propagates these ideas, which is all too familiar in archaeology. As the layperson sees the past as intangible and distant, it becomes beneficial to the malevolent to use this perceived obfuscation to spread their ideologies and rhetoric. This research seeks to tackle the concept of pseudo-archaeology in regard to white supremacy, which is the rejection of academic archaeology for the explicit purpose of inserting one's own unscientific speculation. The history of archaeology is marred with white supremacy, which the work of Trigger accurately assesses as a catalyst for the discipline before receding in the latter half of the 20th century in his compendium *A History of Archaeological Thought*, but it also continues into modernity on the fringes of the discipline. In this research, I seek to assess and analyze how white supremacist pseudo-archaeology has evolved into the modern age and what has remained the same.

In this paper, I will seek to demonstrate the concepts of white supremacist pseudo-archaeology through the case study of the archaeology of the Third Reich, which has been compared with two of the works of Graham Hancock to demonstrate the continuities of their thoughts. It has revealed the propagation of Nazi archaeological ideas in modern pseudo-archaeology, relying upon many similar concepts to spread their ideology. They continue through the use of temporal periods with greater perceived room for speculation, such as prehistory. It allows for the abuse of the audience's lack of familiarity with humanity's past which is effective in spreading their concepts of an advanced race of people who initially ruled the world. In both cases, they rely upon these ideas through the use of mythos as academic proof of their given claims. It works as a cultural form of rhetoric that appeals to individuals' love of storytelling and its link to the deep past of human knowledge, which can be effectively used for

expanding upon a white person's confirmation bias. In both cases, they then use intellectual echo chambers to create a cycle of propaganda that has sought to prune all who intellectually challenge their non-academic paradigms. It then creates an ecosystem of discourse isolated from the academic world, which is dependent on ideologically formulated ideas. In which these systems synergize to move forward an agenda of white supremacy.

The ideas of Nazi scholars have been modified to fit the modern audience in the work of Hancock. The underpinning ideas of Third Reich scholars sought to justify the existence of ethnic Germans archaeologically across Eastern Europe for explicitly validating expansionist policy, which would be carried out throughout the course of the Second World War. The modern variations of these ideas are conceptually based on the idea of the superiority of 'whiteness' as a whole and are not currently being used for exterminationist rhetoric, like Hancock's historical counterparts. Hancock's claims are presented in a manner that is used to justify colonialism and the actions of European imperialist powers by arguing cultures do not progress without white intervention. The ideas of Hancock are also not intrinsically linked to that of the state apparatus like that of Nazi archaeologists, and therefore the ideology is decentralized and lacks rigidity making it have a higher level of adaptability to modern scrutiny. The ideas of Nazis hide themselves in Hancock's work and continue to propagate ideas of white supremacy, which have been adapted to suit the palatability of the modern white middle class to reinforce ideas of supremacy. In this age of disinformation, an intellectual battle is being fought over our history as a species, and if it is controlled by fringe ideas such as Hancock's and becomes tied to a state once more, the world may have to live through an exacerbation of the blood spilled by those who believe it once more.

Literary Review

A review of Nazi archaeological analysis revolves around the work of Betina Arnold's (date) pivotal piece *Arierdämmerung: Race and Archaeology in Nazi Germany*, which expands upon her previous ideas in *The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany*, and her work with Hasseman *Archaeology in Nazi Germany: The Legacy of the Faustian Bargain*. Arnold's writing comprises the most complete overview of ideas and concepts throughout literature published on this subject. The findings of their research show how prehistory was a large medium in Nazi archaeology for spreading their racial propaganda. She highlights Gustav Kossina's importance in growing prehistoric archaeology into a nationalist discipline in Germany and how its lack of funding was exploited by the Nazi party to ensure it would grow to fit their agenda of the Aryan history of Germany. Their use of their racialized archaeology to justify nationalism and extermination through Lebensraum policies by claiming the German heritage of a region. The use of fairytales and folklore as evidence of passed down knowledge of racial supremacy. Arnold's work is extremely detailed, which is important and helps define this subfield. The problem with her work is that it has been positioned as almost unassailable as very minimal Western academics have attempted to analyze German sources to her extent on the subject matter. Her pieces also debate the extent to which Kossina is responsible for prehistory being used as a medium for IPA. In the third Riech, which becomes linked to the state apparatus, she presents an essential argument that Kossina represented the general sentiment of the discipline at that time. Arnold's work on this subject matter is profound and prolific for an accurate top-down approach but falls short in delving into the minutia of the given topic.

Sczepański and Maischberger create a more accurate representation of how there was a much more extensive belief within the academic space of the ideas spread by the state. In both their pieces, they show examples of Nazi archaeologists and members of the SS Ahnenerbe and the research they conducted in accordance with guidelines set by the party. Sczepański focuses more on the individual aspects of a singular academic named Hans Shcleif and how he operated before, during, and after the war as a detailed case study showing the results of his state-motivated papers. Sczepański's article is limited in its ability to correlate his findings within a larger context and his relation to other academics in the region doing similar work to Scheleif and how his contribution differentiated or exemplified him as a study. The work of Maishberger helps show the correlation of how these Nazi academics advanced as opposed to others in their field who did actively contribute to the state in the case studies he presents, most notably in the case of Dr. Seigfried Fuchs, whose career directly benefited from his ties to the state. The other case studies presented by Maishberger help detail the three categorizations of Archaeologists in the Nazi regime, providing a case study of an academic who was a victim, a collaborator, and a Nazi. Maischberger case studies of each of the given archaeologists were relatively brief and did not explore the specifics of their published papers; instead, they only summarized one of their key career findings. The academic findings would have been beneficial in providing the given case studies, but the victim, a Jewish professor named Gerhard Besu, had none of his academic findings before his removal. The lack of this information on how concepts in prehistory shifted due to the Third Reich, like that shown in Arnold's work, leaves much to be desired in this piece academically.

Roche and Demtriuou, alongside Eickhoff, both add to the ideas of the academic sphere by revealing a deeper analysis of the university system and the changes enforced by the state. Roche

and Demtriou corroborate the ideas in much greater detail of the pruning of academia in Maischberg and Hare's paper by elaborating on specific institutions' changes to the discipline while also revealing the specific lectures given by Nazi academics in their lecture circuit during the Third Reich. The findings in this chapter expand on Hares's findings, which reveal the disputes of academia adjacent to the Third Reich. Roche and Demtriou contribute to how they interacted within their self-contained world of academia. Eickhoff reinforces the ideas of Hare and does not necessarily provide anything groundbreaking but equally validates their claims. In his paper, he discusses the relationship between the Dutch archaeologist van Giffen and Reinerth, the head of the SS Ahnenerbe. It reveals how Van Giffen sought to involve himself in Nazi archaeology and his lack of reservations in bending information to fit the given narrative of the state, giving credence to Arnold's claims of the concept of the "Faustian bargain" and prehistories' role in the propaganda of the Third Reich.

Kölbl-Ebert's paper on SS archaeology under the Ahnenerbe showed how they controlled all cave-based excavations due to their association with prehistoric sites. The findings by the Ahnenerbe were then used to justify Germany's cultural heritage throughout all of human existence. The findings further corroborate the claims of the ideas suggested by Arnold and Maischberger and how party ideology could be used to expand one's career but expand upon the idea of geology as a discipline. It adds to the given knowledge on the subject comparatively to the other papers, giving small summaries of several minor figures and how they contributed to Nazi policies of extermination. The document suffers from many problems similar to Maishcberger's because it lacks enough information on the findings and modes by which they came to their conclusions. Maishberger's and Kölbl-Ebert's papers both function with relative

similarity, but both are focused on different sections of academia, the former being archaeology and the latter being geological studies.

Halle's findings contribute significantly to the knowledge of this paper as it gives examples of the exact findings of two ardent Nazi archaeologists. It expands greatly where Arnold's work and Maischberger fail by elaborating on the individual findings of IPA and how they relate to conspiratorial archaeology as a whole. Halle's paper details some of the findings of the archaeologists Teudt and Willie, who, during the Third Reich, proclaimed their findings were Germans deep into the Stone Age, an advanced group that understood astronomy. Halle's paper provides a deep insight into how the overarching plans stated in previous literature were carried out. Halle's findings break down the individual sights worked upon, such as Extersteine, and the results of the entire dig and how it operated with the SS in the process. It makes this paper a critically important paper in which a large extent of replication needs to be conducted with other academics of the Third Reich in the future.

Mees' work ties into Arnold's claims throughout her work of the use of mythos as a modality for spreading propaganda of white supremacy. This paper explores the intellectual influences of the rise of Nazi archaeology, which expands upon the ideas of Arnold and Roche, and Demetriou, giving more explicit names to concepts in the discipline. It most notably explains the conceptual idea of Atlantis, which is significantly associated with nationalist archaeological thought as representing Aryans before the rise of the Third Reich within the writings of Rudbeck. Rudbeck was profoundly influential in the works of Kossina, creating a linearity of the ideas presented by Rudbeck to Hans Reinerth, the head of the SS Ahnenerbe, through Gustav Kossina, who was Reinerth's teacher, expanding upon the ideas of Eickhoff and Roche and Demetriou. Mees' work is influential in creating an accurate understanding of Nordic

nationalist influence in Nazi archaeology, expanding upon the ideas of Hare, and giving a sense of why the Norse nations sought to collaborate academically before their invasion. Mees inaccurately articulates Childe's work, presenting it as supportive of German Nationalism, which Trigger more accurately dismisses as false. This leads to the questioning of some of their statements due to this inaccurate assessment.

The work of Trigger was pivotal in this research as it gave a frame of reference to work against Nazi archaeology. Trigger was a scholar of Marxist thought within the archaeological discipline. His research is fundamental in understanding the ideas of the intellectual contemporaries who were diametrically opposed to the research produced during the Third Reich. Trigger's work led me to the work of Gordon V. Childe, which works as a primary source of reference to compare and elaborate on the focus on materiality, and from this understanding, you can generate potential information on a given people. Trigger's work lacks some breadth on the subject matter of Soviet archaeological research, which was largely in part due to a lack of shared information outside of the given nation. Childe's text, *The Danube in Prehistory*, exemplifies the counter-archaeology produced contemporaneously with scholars in the Third Reich. It accurately represents the Ideas Trigger suggests about non-state-lead Marxist archaeology at the time, which was grounded in materialism. The common misconception in the discipline around the concepts presented by Childe is that he supports the concepts of Kossina's Kulturkreis. However, this is not the case, as Kulturkreis is a concept that is directly tied to race. However, Childe analyzes it from a lens of materialism to reveal class-based divisions within the archaeological record. In the review of his work, it appears Childe has been misrepresented by several academics, such as Arnold or Maishberger.

The analysis of pseudo-archaeology in popular media is greatly lacking in the literature on the subject matter, but the findings of Schiele and Schiele. Their temporal analysis of the rise of pseudo-archaeology in popular media since the late 1990s tracks the direct effects of the popularization of this school of thought since the release of Graham Hancock's *Fingerprints of the Gods*. It reveals the growth is due to media incentivization by the high viewership rate in deceptive pseudo-intellectual media presented as factual results in high viewership. It shows large media conglomerates have invested in these fictitious documentaries for monetary incentivization, revealing the profitability of stating absurdist claims to make money. Schiele and Schiele's work is well presented and accurate, providing an explicit answer to their question. It reveals a new area of study that has not been fully explored but connects to two facets of why pseudo-archaeology continues in the cultural zeitgeist. Basset explains how this increase may be due to the legacy of archaeology and the lack of an informed public, which allows this to continue. Her piece builds upon many previous scholars in this literature review, such as Arnold, Maishberger, and Halle, and gives insight into the gaps within an informed public, which allows pseudo-archaeology to continue. Basset reveals the lack of the public's ability to become informed due to academia's segmentation from the broader society through paywalls. Basset's piece is accurate but suffers from a lack of further elaboration on how pseudo-archaeological ideas transverse temporal boundaries; rather, they seek to point out the destruction that leads to historic preservation.

Analytical Approach

The approach for this paper was a synthetic cultural analysis of Hancock's works in comparison to the case study of Nazi archaeology based on secondary sources. To reveal the continuities and modernizations of white supremacist thought. It was conducted through a meta-

analysis of secondary sources on the history of Nazi archaeology to gain a detailed understanding of how it functions.

The given case studies were cross-analyzed to understand the questions. What are the inherent similarities between archaeological methodologies under the Third Reich and Hancock's work? How has the propaganda employed by the Third Reich to spread the thematic elements of their racially motivated archaeology been adapted for modern viewers? Does the propaganda employed today have the same effect as it did during the Nazi regime? What has changed in the crux of the arguments? The inherent racial motivations of Nazi archaeology have become unpalatable to consumers in modernity; how has Hancock changed the conclusions of his rhetoric to apply to modern audiences, and how is it related to the individuals who shaped Nazi archaeology? The Nazi academic sphere was created with the explicit purpose of an ideological pseudo-intellectual ecosystem. How do modern echo chambers function similarly to the Third Reich's academic ecosystem, and how does Hancock fit into this matrix?

This study reviewed the major academic pieces on the subject matter to construct an accurate analysis of trends common in the archaeological discipline in Germany from the mid-1920s until 1945. This research will also analyze individuals in the Third Reich who operated within the academic system to understand how academics operated within the given confines of the state and the ideas produced to support their claims. In this mode of analysis, it should allow for a top-down analysis of the ideologically enforced structuring of Nazi academia. This piece will rely heavily on the works of ideological overview in Nazi archaeology in papers such as Arnold and Hassaman's *'Arierdammerung': race and archaeology*, in the synthetic analysis of individual case studies of Nazi academics like the works of Maischberger and Eickhoff for example. The meta-analysis of these sources will allow for accurate representations of

individuals operating in the entanglements of the performative aspects of ideologically driven archaeology in which Hancock is situated within modernity.

The previously stated methodologies for a generative framework will be compared against the modern pseudo-archaeologist Graham Hancock's two most influential pieces. The first is his 1995 novel *Fingerprints of the Gods*, a highly influential piece in modern pseudo-archaeology, which the work of Schiele and Schiele attribute to starting the increase in popularity in this sphere of pseudo-intellectualism. (Schiele & Schiele, 2022) It will be analyzed in conjunction with the documentary *Ancient Apocalypse*, a 2022 Netflix 'documentary' which presents Hancock's ideas and hypothetical concepts to all platform viewers. Hancock's ideas will then be analyzed for similarities in concepts to that of the white supremacist ideas propagated as dogma by the Third Reich and the methodologies which have also remained congruent. Hancock will then be analyzed within the pseudo-intellectual sphere to reveal how he operates as a figure within this sphere and how it operates with similarities to the Nazi's academic sphere.

The paper also seeks to highlight how concepts have continued into modernity while mutating away from their origins in the Third Reich to reach a wider audience. The paper will seek to highlight and differentiate the ideas of Nazi scholarship and that of Hancock to reveal how their ideas have mutated and adapted for modern audiences. The changes within this discourse are of equal importance to their continuities, as they reveal the level of adaptability within their ideas and how the ideology of white supremacy has changed. It will hopefully give insight into the cultural adaptations of white supremacy in pseudo-archaeology as a whole and what changes were necessitated in order to remain within the cultural zeitgeist.

Background

The Third Reich was a fascist ethno-nationalist regime that used white supremacy as a driving force of unification under their ideology, which relied heavily upon archaeological evidence to justify its existence. As Nazi dogmatic views stated, the existence of racial groups people belonged to, where the most 'superior' of these racial groups were the Aryans, which Germans were descendants of. (Dow, 2014). The ideas that were foundational to these ideas were predicated upon the works of Francis Galton's expansion of the Lamarckian classification system, which presented a rigid separation of races as subspecies of humans.(Arnold, 2008; Arnold & Hassmann, 1996) These ideas were then further expanded upon by the influential novel *The Passing of the Great Race*, claiming and expanding upon the ideas of 'racial superiority' of the Nordic peoples who needed to be saved from complete 'degeneration' of having children with 'inferior races' who in his eyes, caused the First World War. (Grant, 1916) His ideas were deeply influential within the Nazi party, as well as in archaeological spheres in Norway, through that of Olof Rudbeck, a Scandinavian ethno-nationalist. (Mees, 2006, p. 185) It would then grow and fuse with German ethnonationalism under the stewardship of Gustav Kossina. (Arnold & Hassmann, 1996; Mees, 2006;Szczepański, 2009)

The Weimar period of Germany, which followed the end of the First World War and the subsequent signing of the Treaties of Versailles, was one of economic uncertainty that fueled nationalism and simultaneously birthed prehistoric archaeology within the nation. The aforementioned Kossina was the main figurehead of prehistoric archaeology in Germany throughout the 1920s, when he began to shape the discipline into specifically working to justify the continuous existence of the Aryan race. (Mees, 2006) The explicit nature of his ideas is found in his concept of Kulturkies, which subdivided typologies of artifacts along racial

boundaries. (Arnold, 2008) The explicit focus was on the artifacts and Prehistory being inherently German in nature, as shown by the “1909 Kossinna founded the German Society for Prehistory in Berlin, later more aptly named the Society for German Prehistory.” (Arnold, 2008, p. 124). The terminology change was deliberate to allow for larger funding to be acquired by the discipline by inserting itself into the growing swell of Germanic ethnonationalism of the late 1920s. (Arnold, 2008). Kossinna would claim prehistory was underfunded and forgotten by the establishment, but in reality, it was suffering equally like all new disciplines were in the Weimar period due to the economic pressures of the Treaty of Versailles (Arnold & Hassmann, 1996). Kossinna’s appeals to nationalism and tying it directly to the discipline of Prehistory within Germany set a course for the discipline, and he would pass away just a year before Hitler seized power. It made way for the new captains, Alfred Rosenberg and Heinrich Himmler, to take the helm of Prehistory in Germany.

In Nazi Germany funding, prehistoric archaeology would never struggle to attain funding as long as it served their agenda of white supremacy and Lebensraum. Funding could now be attained from two separate sources, one through the academic sphere, which was initially controlled by the chief Ideologue of the Nazi’s Amt Rosenberg. The second option for funding, which eventually absorbed the first, was directly underneath Heinrich Himmler. Himmler initially controlled the Ahnenerbe as a wing of the Schutzstaffel (SS), whose goal was to prove a “scientific theory of Germanic dominance.”(Arnold & Hassmann, 1996, p. 73). The Ahnenerbe stayed separate from academic archaeology and would be controlled by a number of the students of the late Kossinna, such as Hans Reinerth, who studied under him at the end of his life at the University of Tübingen.(Arnold, 2008; Mees, 2006) Himmler would later gain full control of all archaeological funding for both the late 1930s and the end of the Second World War. (Dow,

2014, Szczepański, 2009) The concept of Lebensraum, or living space, was a major underpinning for the ideas of prehistoric archaeology, which sought to claim Germans had lived in a given region in the past; therefore, it justified conquest. The entirety of the Second World War would be justified to the public by excavations and prehistoric typological analysis proving that lands originally belonged to the Aryans. (Eickhoff, 2005) It essentially meant that Nazi archaeologists legitimated the Holocaust, and the exterminationist nature of the Eastern front, by claiming the land they found was inherently German, so only they had the right to it. It also supported the claims of Nazi ideologues that people of Jewish descent did not belong within a 'racially pure Germany' as they would be omitted from the historical record. It has led to scholars' analysis of archaeologists' role in the Third Reich as the "Handmaidens of Genocide." (Arnold, 2006, p. 11)

The Nazi's archaeological legacy continued on since the end of the Second World War in a number of fringe pseudo-archaeologists around the globe as they may have been defeated, but their ideas remained. Arnold also criticizes this as being symptomatic of the Western German government not taking into full account the need to expand the post-war process of deNazification into the field of archaeology, as even the most fervent of Nazi archaeologists who did much of the groundwork justifying the Holocaust escaped the clutches of the hangman. The ideas of these academics did not vanish into thin air; instead, they began to percolate into the world of pseudo-archaeology, as pseudo-intellectualism was the basis of their research. It is in postwar Europe where Graham Hancock first enters the picture.

Graham Hancock was born into a post-war Europe in 1950, where the miasma of Nazi archaeology had already begun to fuse itself with this sect of pseudo-intellectualism. Hancock grew up with these ideas around him influencing his opinions, and as a journalist, he would have

a naturally inquisitive nature within himself. Hancock's initial publications were based on his work with a number of Journalism publications and his experiences in Africa. (Hancock, 2024) The reality is he fell for conspiracy and rejection of academic authority, resulting in publishing his own works of pseudo-archaeology in prehistory, the first of which was *Fingerprints of the Gods* in 1995. The world of prehistoric pseudo-archaeology cannot be divorced from the concepts created by the Nazis as their ideas were so incredibly well-funded and pervasive that it inherently makes it have underlying concepts of white supremacy. He has gone on to publish a multitude of books, podcasts, TV series, and other forms of media. The most recent one is *Ancient Apocalypse*, which allows him to present his ideas on one of the largest streaming platforms in the world.

As white supremacy is inherent to the findings of pseudo-archaeologists due to the breadth of Nazi research, it makes it inevitable that Hancock or any other pseudo-archaeologist will spread their ideas. Hancock is just the most notable of these individuals, making him the most important to target and analyze due to this continuity, as it allows the voices of a regime of malefactors to speak through a modern voice. Whether or not Hancock is doing this deliberately or unbeknownst to him, he serves to bring to light ideas that have had real-world negative ramifications for the mainstream. The propaganda of the Third Reich was driven by an ideology of hate, which formulated all of their speculations with the deliberate control of history itself as its goal. The concept of using archaeology to directly support ideas of an ideology, like that of the Nazis or how Hancock cherry-picks data to attack academic archaeology, will be referred to as ideologically premeditated archaeology (IPA) throughout the rest of this paper. This paper will seek to answer how Hancock's IPA has evolved Nazi thought and how their propaganda is

equally effective regardless that almost a century has passed since Gustav Kossina ideologically changed fringe prehistory forever.

From Thule to Hancock

The ideological linkage between Hancock and Nazi scholarship comes from the main idea and claim that an advanced society existed in prehistory who were wiped out by a cataclysmic event. Hancock touts this idea as being the crux of his findings, but it comes from the ideological predecessors of even the Nazi regime, the Thule society. (Hancock, 1995; *Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022; Kurlander, 2017). The Thule Society was an organization of individuals living in Weimar, Germany, that blended the concepts of ethnonationalism with the spiritualism movement, which swept across Europe and North America following the First World War. (Kurlander, 2017) It was also highly influential in generating concepts that would evolve into Nazi ideology, as many of its members would be prominent in the regime, such as Heinrich Himmler. (Kurlander, 2017) This organization's pseudo-intellectuals, who would later be influential, focused largely on racial speculation and created concepts such as the racial superiority of the people of the north, who were deemed the Aryans. (Mees, 2006; Kurlander, 2017; François, 2023) The Thule society held Aryans in the highest regard, and those who populated this area were seen as incredibly advanced culturally and spiritually. (François, 2023) This group of occultist proto-Nazis believed that “ Atlantis, as the North Atlantic island civilization of Thule,” was the “capital of a proto-Aryan civilization called Hyperborea,” but there eventually was “destruction of this ancient civilization through a global flood.”(Kurlander, 2017, p. 16-17) The destruction of this advanced race of Aryans was destroyed due to the theory of “Eternal Ice” when, in prehistory, a series of “ice moons were satellites of Earth before crashing into our planet's surface, events said to have triggered the Biblical flood.”(François,

2023, p.21) These Ideas would underpin many research projects during the Third Reich and be published by influential nazi academics such as William Teudt in 1934. (Halle, 2005;) More notably, in 1936, the Hörbinger Society, named after the man who created the Eternal Ice theory, would be added to the Ahnenerbe at Himmler's request. (François, 2023) The ideas of the Thule society were of great importance to formulating Nazi dogmatic views of prehistory. Himmler, who would later control all of archaeological academia, supported and believed their ideas from their point of conception and welcomed them with open arms in the Third Reich. These highly unlikely speculations of Aryan racial superiority, however, continue as the significant claims of Hancock's works.

Hancock has essentially taken these claims from the Thule society and used them as his own defining interpretation of the past, in which he also justifies the existence of an advanced society deep in the past that was wiped out by an asteroid. In Hancock's most recent documentary, *Ancient Apocalypse*, he claims as his hypothesis at the beginning of the first episode that we as humans have forgotten our past, including "a lost advanced civilization of the Ice Age."(*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022, e.1, 1:31-1:35) He spends the course of the documentary and the next seven episodes, supporting this claim with data tailored to fit his IPA. Hancock uses several profound sites which are marvels of prehistoric human engineering, such as Gunung Padang in Indonesia and Nan Madol in Micronesia, where he asks, "Could Gunung Padang's architects made it across the Pacific to Micronesia?"(*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022a, 25:10-25:15) Hancock makes this claim that they both use Basalt as a material for building, block which is the only thing which connects the two sites, yet still alludes to a shared ancient culture to be a potential answer. Hancock ends the episode by concluding that this advanced culture was wiped out by a giant flood. Hancock, in his book *Fingerprints of the Gods*, repetitively makes cyclical

arguments of flood myths across the globe wiping out these peoples who existed before, using the story of Noah from the Bible, Virachocha from Andean myths, the epic of Gilgamesh, and several others as evidence. (Hancock, 1995) Hancock then comes to the conclusion they were wiped out due to multiple asteroids hitting Earth. In *Fingerprints of the Gods*, he claims the continental displacement hypothesis; in *Ancient Apocalypse*, he claims the Younger Dryas impact Hypothesis. (Hancock, 1995) The Continental displacement Hypothesis states an asteroid hit Earth at the end of the last ice age, displacing the tectonic plates and shifting Antarctica to its modern position from an original position in the southern Atlantic parallel to central Africa. (Hancock, 1995) The Younger Dryas Impact hypothesis states that an asteroid hit our atmosphere at the end of the last Ice Age, resulting in it fracturing and having an airburst impact effect, which caused the sudden melting of the ice sheets across North America, bringing on the Younger Dryas period and massive global flooding. (*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022)

Hancock has essentially directly copied the ideas that the Nazis used to support the ideas of their racial superiority and spread them as the main findings for his novel and documentary. The specificities of their ideas have changed, but their essential argument remains with a high degree of similarities. Hancock has just altered the concepts to be more believable in modern terms. Aryan Hyperboreans wiped out by the theory of Eternal Ice are no longer a palatable idea to the given audience. Instead, he presents it as an advanced culture wiped out by an asteroid using the Younger Dryas impact hypothesis. Hancock has moved away from the continental displacement theory, as it is easier to disprove through tectonic analysis than the Younger Dryas impact Hypothesis. The ideas of Hancock are directly derivative of that of the incredibly Influential Thule society within the Third Reich, making his main finding and argument Nazi propaganda.

Lebensraum, Colonialism, and White Guilt

The use of typological classification allows for a reductionist approach which both Nazi scholars and Hancock use to move forward a narrative of white supremacy. This is a direct continuation of Kossina's concept of *Kulturkies* or the distinguishing of archaeological finds based on racial groups, which became common within archaeology from 1933 onward in Germany, coinciding with the rise of Nazi archaeologists. (Laurence Hare, 2014, p.7) A notable example of this during the Nazi era of archaeology was the findings in the lecture "Germanic Temples in the Early Stone Age" given by Herman Wille to the Society for Germanic Prehistory."(Halle, 2005, p. 99). Wille claims the advanced nature of these 'Aryans' as advanced having the archetype of "the Christian Crypt" located beneath an "apse."(Halle, 2005, p. 98) Analyzing artifacts along racial lines creates boundaries within typologies, making it easier to prove racial superiority. Artifact analysis tied to race allows evidence to be manipulated to indicate modern practices being perpetuated deep into the past as being advanced and racially intrinsic. The use of this technique was fundamental to the justification of conquest by the Third Reich and Lebensraum. (Arnold, 2008) Using an analysis of artifacts that could be attributed to race groups allowed for the justification of conquest due to typological analysis, which was made to indicate an association with Aryan culture. The historical precedent set by this falsified analysis would allow for the drawn conclusion of ownership of regions to Germany.

The abuse of typological analysis along racial lines continues into modern pseudo-archaeology and is used as a significant source of evidence by Hancock in proving this advanced culture was, in fact, white. Hancock continues this trend in his book *Fingerprints of the Gods*, where he speculates that Olmec statues in the town of Santiago Tuxtla, Mexico, "portrayed a subject with unmistakable negroid."(Hancock, 1995, p. 124) He continuously, through the early

portions of the book, is fixated on racial analysis of artifacts. In Mexico and other regions of Latin America, he analyzes statues depicting key figures in Maya, Olmec, and Mexica who, within their mythologically, brought technology as Caucasians. He does this numerous times, for example, in his analysis of a jade statuette in the tomb of La Venta, also in Mexico, as having “depicted an elderly Caucasian, dressed in long robes, with a goatee beard.”(Hancock, 1995, p. 153) His speculations continue with his interpretation of the site of Monte Alban, stating, “Artists had attempted to portray the same negroid subjects and the same goatee-bearded Caucasians as I had seen at La Venta.”(Hancock, 1995 p. 149) He also claims that Viracocha, another important individual in Latin American mythos, was depicted as stating that “Viracocha’s bushy beard and pale complexion made him sound like a Caucasian.”(Hancock, 1995, p. 53) It is important to highlight his claims on the ‘race’ of Viracocha in the second to last paragraph of chapter 5. He then proceeds to end the chapter by raising the question, “Who provided the model for the Viracochas?”(Hancock, 1995, p.53) Hancock’s analysis of artifacts in Latin America distinctly leads to the conclusion that this advanced culture was racially defined as white people. It directly connects to the conceptual notion of Gustav Kossina of Kulturkies by using racialized parameters to define typologies that are superimposed upon his observations. Hancock also wants the audience to directly infer that these are Europeans, as well as he states even more plainly that some of the Figures cared at the Site of la Venta “were those of an Anglo-Saxon.”(Hancock, 1995 p. 137) Hancock brazenly states in his first novel, which underpins the rest of his claims into modern times. In *Ancient Apocalypse* in episode 5, as just “Bearded figures with Robes.”(*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022e,17:50-17:52) that whenever he refers to an advanced culture that spanned the globe, they were, in fact, white men from an advanced civilization. Hancock’s first book unmistakably asserts that white people seeded culture in Latin America,

which in the context of the rest of his work, such as *Ancient Apocalypse*, means they seeded culture globally, which he achieves through the methodology of artifact analysis which is derivative of the white supremacist scholar Kossina.

Hancock claims that ancient advanced white civilizations formed the backbone of the culture around the world, which is making an assertion that justifies colonialism to the given audience. The racialization of Hancock's assertion that this advanced culture existed globally, which he constantly states in *Ancient Apocalypse* and *Fingerprints of The Gods*, through his racialized lens of analysis, is deliberately a mode of justifying colonialism. He states that the incredibly advanced ancient sites, such as the Megalithic temples in Malta, Nan Madol in Micronesia, and GöbekliTepe in Turkey, were built by cultural exchange, with the subtext of it being the result of white people. (*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022a; *Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022b; *Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022e) It is an incredibly racist claim stating that all of the great things of culture were built by white people, but what he is implying is that they fell into disrepair after they left. His ideas are reminiscent of imperialist thought, that cultures are inherently stagnant before interaction with white people, which was a justification for much of colonialism. He is stating to his audience that white people built all of these incredible cultures around the globe and that other races were incapable of advancement without our interference. Hancock is carrying out IPA in the exact same way the Nazis did to come to the conclusion of global white supremacy. In the modern world, where global capitalism dominates as a direct result of the imperialism of white Europeans, Hancock is justifying it to his white audience, which benefits the most greatly from it. His underlying message is that white supremacy is justified due to white people being the only ones who advance civilization. It is a modification of Nazi archaeology

that sought to justify Lebensraum in their research but now eases white guilt about the exploitative nature of white supremacy in Capitalism.

Archaeology in the Third Reich was intrinsically linked to Lebensraum, as claiming Germanic racial findings in a region justified conquest and, therefore, eradication of its current inhabitants. The research was most notably carried out by the Ahnenerbe in Eastern Europe. The Sites in this region were temporal periods of “Early Germanic, Old Prussian, Teutonic,” and all were attributed to the Aryan race. (Szczepański, 2009, pg.89). The findings of these given digs would allow for justification ideologically for the genocidal actions carried out by the German state in the process of invasion and purifying the land that once belonged to them. (Arnold & Hassmann, 1996) We can see the direct continuities of these nazi ideals, which, if they were enforced by a state apparatus, could use Hancock's claims for the same genocidal purpose. If all of the great things in History, in Hancocks eyes, are derivative of white settler colonialism, it can lead to incredibly dangerous extrapolations along that line of thinking. The Nazis used their ideology for the genocide of minority populations within their empire and a war of extermination against the Soviet Union. What is to stop another government that values ideology over human lives to stop it from occurring once more, leading to death and destruction on an unprecedented level? The Nazis weaponized history leading to the aforementioned outcome, and Hancock has now modernized it for a general white audience as Hancock's findings expand racial supremacy through history to all white people now rather than restricting it to just Aryans in the past. He is essentially putting a loaded handgun on a table, and the question now lies with which white supremacists will pick it up.

Mythos and Presenting the Past

The use of mythos as a means of spreading ideology is not new but is deeply compelling due to a general preconceived notion of the intangibility of our deep past as humans while using cultural tales as a mode of accessing this deep past. Prior to Kossina or other influential Nazi academics, ethnonationalism was at the heart of the discipline within the ideas of Europeans. Nordic academics such as Rudbeck came to the same conclusions as the Thule society, insisting “the notion that the Scandinavian North could be equated with Plato’s Atlantis”(Mees, 2006, p. 185) which would directly affect the Ideas of William Teudt a prominent academic in the Nazi era who would go on to write a study named “Atlantis, Runes, and the Aryan race.”(Mees, 2006, p. 190) In which Teudt would conclude his academic study finding that Aryans were the inhabitants of Atlantis. (Mees, 2006) This goes hand in hand with the obsession of Greece in Germany, particularly the works of Plato, which were so influential in Nazi society that they were seen as having to be German in origin. (Kim, 2017) Nazi archaeologists manipulated their ideology so that Greeks were derivative of Germanic peoples. A notable member of the Ahnenerbe, Seigfried Fuchs, published “Greek Groups of Finds from the Early Bronze Age and their Links with Foreign Regions: A Contribution to the Indogermanisation of Greece.” (Maischberger, 2002, p. 213) The inherent fascination and need for the classical Greek civilizations to be German was inherent to much of the archaeology under the Nazi regime carried out in the Mediterranean, as it sought to prove this civilization which was perceived as advanced, had to be inherently Aryan in Nature.

Hancock also uses the myth of Atlantis for the purpose of IPA, as it also works as a modern cultural touchstone to fit his narrative about a prehistoric advanced civilization. In *Ancient Apocalypse*, he more explicitly explains the site of the Bimini Road in the Bahamas,

which could have been a road leading to Atlantis. (*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022d.) The parallels between Nazi thought and Hancock's statements both use this call into classical writing, as it is a point of commonality for most people who lack intricate knowledge of the past. The use of an advanced civilization that existed long ago, as described by Plato, falls directly in line with the narrative they seek to propagate. Using something known, such as the fall of Atlantis, while implementing their own ideas of an advanced race of people who are a part of the given groups justifies predisposed biases. The audience of both Hancock and Nazi scholars want to believe in their superiority, so they use it as a method to suspend disbelief while reinforcing innate biases within white individuals. Understanding complex concepts such as the cultures of the deep past is confusing, so using cultural touchstones serves as a deeply effective rhetorical strategy that reaches a broad audience. The myth of Atlantis serves this purpose directly, as it is a commonly known concept among a white or German audience, and tying people's history to such a captivating story is deeply influential in convincing their audience.

Mythos must be understood as a starting entry point into their belief system. Hancock and Nazi academics both used it to spread their propaganda. The ordinary person could associate well with mythos due to their low entry level, meaning since they are of cultural prominence, they have a high likelihood of familiarity with the audience. This is why Nazis used the concept of the Heroic journey to reinforce cultural ideas, such as masculinity and patriarchal principles needed to fuel their war machine. (Arnold, 2006) Mythos and its ambiguity allow for the ease of modification in the story for IPA. The Nazi's use of stories such as Herakles or Hercules became reinterpreted under an ideological lens, such as the 1937 analysis concluded that a "fateful conflict between Greece and the Orient," revealing to the audience that "all races are fatefully forced to struggle within an alien-human environment."(Altekamp, 2017, p. 304) Nazi

ideologues perverted the myth of Herakles to the audience by superimposing a lens of analysis so the audience could receive the ideologically correct answer.

Hancock does this similarly throughout his works. A notable example is his findings on the Popul Vuh, which Hancock uses as proof of advanced peoples, in which he states that the “achievements of this race aroused the envy of several of the most powerful deities.”(Hancock, 1995, p.158) While this may not be an explicitly well-known story, it is used later in relation to the story of Quetzalcoatl, which has a larger reach of knowledge to the audience due to its fame as a giant feathered serpent god. Hancock states these Ideas again when he uses the same strategy, referring to the mythos of Quetzalcoatl and Osiris as representatives of an ancient advanced culture that brought civilization across the globe. (*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022b) The vague understanding of this mythology by the common audience is used in the exact same methodologies as the Nazis did with both Atlantis and Herakles.

Mythos is inherently ambiguous as it is passed down intergenerationally allowing the audience to feel connected to the deep past through the unknown origins in time of a myth. The use of mythos allows the expected audience to relate to the findings of IPA more easily due to a pre-established familiarity with the cultural impacts of mythos. The problem with understanding the deep past is the audience's inability to empathize with people who lived thousands of years before us. Using mythos depicting peoples as heroes in the case of Quetzalcoatl and Herakles, whose tales are heroic and human despite being fantastical, creates an effective mode of communicating with the given audience. In combination with stories like that of Atlantis, which was supposedly created by one of the profound ancient Greek scholars, it allows a long distance of time to relate to those who struggle with this concept as they are now a part of the legacy of the story. The inherent humanity of mythos is what makes it an effective

weapon in pseudo-archaeology, as this rhetoric does not seek out the intelligentsia. This strategy is effective for those whose knowledge of the past is directly linked to mythology, such as the bible. It also functions as an effective piece of rhetoric that can be spread by word of mouth, separate from the pedagogy of the given ideas. Simple known events culturally become tied to ideology and deeper meaning, which can be grasped fluidly by people within an individual's social sphere. It may appear as a cynical approach, but this is what makes propaganda highly effective. The modality of mythos allows individuals to traverse space and time, creating a reference point that can be used to effectively feed white supremacist rhetoric while simultaneously making it infectious to all people who have familiarity with the given stories.

A Revolution in Hate

The use of the echo chamber is shared between Hancock and Nazi archaeologists as a means of continuing propaganda without leaving the given ecosystem. The Third Reich did this through the pruning of academics who did not align with their given views while arresting the growth of new ideas that could challenge their ideology. A notable prehistoric academic removed from academia for being of Jewish descent was Gerhard Bersu, who had to flee from Germany to Britain during the prelude to the Second World War. (Arnold, 2008; Maischberger, 2002) His expulsion was directly linked to his cultural link to the Jewish faith, meaning his very existence within academia challenged Nazi Ideology due to his not being of Aryan descent. Bersu's expulsion was part of a much larger plan put forward by the Historical ideologues of the Third Reich that "the only restriction imposed on science and learning in the Germany of their day was that research should be in the interest of the German people." (Eickhoff, 2005, p. 74) Eickhoff is directly quoting a statement of H. Gummel addressing concerns of the British archaeologist G. Clark about the potential dangers of a monolith forming in German historical academia based

around Nazi ideology in 1938. (Eickhoff, 2005, p. 74) The laws within the Third Reich ousted those who sought to challenge it on a historical basis through the removal of information that did not support their ideas and the individuals who challenged Nazi dogma. The expulsion of Bersu is a case study commonly touched upon within the literature, but the purging of those who did not agree with the Third Reich's academic goals needs to be examined further in the context of archaeology. It can be stated that archaeological academia as a whole created an echo chamber that only allowed the ideas of Aryan supremacy and its justification to reverberate inside itself.

Once the Third Reich became intellectually self-insulated, it used the economic force of the state to incentivize publishing ideologically aligned pieces while negating funding to those who did not uphold IPA. One of the main ways the Nazi regime's academic support base grew rapidly was due to their *carte blanche* approach to funding and supporting racially motivated archaeology. The *Ahnenerbe* had books, editors, journals, dig sites, museums, and large funding to be granted to those who bent the knee to Himmler. (Dow, 2014; Eickhoff, 2005; Maischberger, 2002; Szczepański, n.d.) The struggling and impoverished academics of the Weimar Period now had access to a glut of funding, which meant economic stability after the crushing economic strains of post-Great War Germany. Arnold and Hassaman refer to this in the discipline as the "Faustian Bargain" by rejecting one's international credibility for growing one's career and financial stability within this ecosystem through complying with the Nazi state apparatus. (Arnold & Hassmann, 1996) It is essential to clarify that the options were also greatly limited within the field of prehistory, specifically in that it was directly controlled by the state. It meant that to keep a job; one had to provide historical propaganda through archaeological evidence or be altogether barred from funding. (Szczepański, 2009)

Hancock operates under highly similar constraints of Nazi academia, seeking to attack all who challenge his concepts which he seeks to perpetuate within the modern pseudo-intellectual echo chamber. Hancock pursues this through the attack of the archaeological pedagogy. In Chapter 39 of the vignette *Who's Sphinx Is It Anyways of Fingerprints of the Gods*, Hancock attacks Dr. Zahi Hawass' analysis of the Great Sphinx of Giza. Hawass' analysis is predicated by centuries of prior research, which states it was built by the pharaoh Khafre. Hancock refers to Hawass's complex analysis in his book as the “current flavor of the month happened to be with Egyptologists.”(Hancock, 1995, p. 337-38) While Hancock claims that the Sphinx was created by “architects of an as yet unidentified high civilization of prehistoric antiquity” and asserts he would refuse to leave his positionality until “there was some completely hard and unambiguous evidence which would settle the matter one way or the other.”(Hancock, 1995, p. 337-38) Hancock directly attacks the credibility of academic archaeology and the difficulty of creating unambiguous evidence to play on the conspiratorial nature of his audience. He also refuses to accept evidence that he deems insufficient while relying purely on speculative analysis of his own. Hancock wants the audience to not trust the answers from academia and to listen to his ideas of the past instead. He further continues this idea of the true past being withheld from you throughout *Ancient Apocalypse*. In episode 6, Hancock is denied access to the site of Grand Serpent's Mound in Adams County, Ohio. He then has a monologue in front of the entrance to the site claiming he was denied on “ideological and personal grounds” and that historical interpretation of the site was being upheld through “censorship.” (*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022f, 17:29-18:08) It is important to note the music crescendos and then ceases upon finishing the email denying him entry from the site, where he then proclaims he is being censored. At the start of his first episode, he states that “perhaps there's been a Forgotten episode in Human History.

But perhaps the extremely arrogant and patronizing attitude of mainstream academia is stopping us from considering that as a possibility.”(*Ancient Apocalypse*, 2022a, 2:55-3:05) Hancock attempts to rhetorically discredit mainstream archaeology, refusing answers based on a body of research that contains countless hours of work to ascertain a conclusion. He then hand waives it away as unbelievable before claiming censorship when there is pushback by academia for his pseudo-archaeology in the case of Grand Serpents Mound. Hancock is using conspiratorial thinking to reinforce confirmation bias in order to get the audience to reject academia as a whole. Hancock also appeals to those in modern culture who actively attack censorship, which, in this case, is the modern right wing, in order to stoke their belief within his concept. He is creating a narrative for the audience to interpret that academia does have definitive proof of their claims and is withholding information from you and attacking those who speak out against it. He wants to make himself appear as an outsider who is just asking questions. When in reality, Hancock is appealing to his audience to reject the entirety of academic archaeology for the purpose of incorporating them into his own ecosystem, a decentralized version of Nazi archaeology. Hancock has created his own methodology for removing those from the greater discourse of historical understanding without the state's coercion while still remaining highly effective upon his audience. In positioning himself as a crusader of free speech, an outsider of academia, and a contrarian of the establishment, he appeals to the audience to follow his ideas instead.

Hancock's new academic sphere, which he tantalizes the audience to join, is overwhelmingly white, male, and derivative of white supremacist conspiracies. *Fingerprints of the Gods* cites numerous theorists; one for example, is Robert Buval, an Egyptian of British descent who went to school in England. On his website, named after Buval himself, you will see his self-purported ‘articles’ which also attack Dr. Hawass while claiming one of his books was a

part of “the ancient 'magical knowledge' and the Hermetic Tradition that carried it across the ages and into the mainstream of our modern western intellectual and esoteric tradition.”(Bauval, n.d.) If his concepts interest you, there are hyperlinks that will take you directly to Amazon to buy his books or go on tours with him throughout Egypt, which appear to have ended in 2015. (Bauval, n.d.) You can also read all of his articles without a paywall to further ingratiate yourself into his ideas. Academic sources are predominantly blocked behind large fees by hosting corporations or are limited to abstracts for the common person. This exacerbates the previous claims of Hancock through the notion of: if academia has nothing to hide, why can I not access their findings? On Bauval's website, there are hyperlinks that take you across the internet within the ideological sphere of Hancock. It will introduce you to the ideas of another pseudo-archaeologist, Robert Schoch, and where you can purchase tickets to see him present live this June at *Cosmic Summit*, an event that claims to “allow you to explore suppressed data.”(*Cosmic Summit*, 2024, 0:55-0:58) Again, the audience can easily access all of Schoch’s papers, with hyperlinks to his books supporting his outlandish claims. The level of accessibility of this pseudo-intellectual field makes it an effective form of propaganda due to its ease of access. The ideas they spread are outrageous, but all of their ideas are easily accessible and easily readable. Academics are kept from the masses and usually trickle down through improperly interpreted news articles, which link inaccessible articles in journals to the average person. In similarities to the Nazis, the ease of accessing pseudo-intellectual ideas makes it highly effective as a means of spreading propaganda as a whole, as a person can more easily access their work and concepts than the findings of their academic adversaries.

Hancock and his fellow conspiratorial pseudo-archaeologists follow the same motivations to spread their ideology as their Nazi counterparts, monetary incentivization. In Schiele and

Schiele's study of the rise of pseudo-archaeology, they concluded media companies had increased funding for these types of 'documentaries' due to their lucrative nature. (Schiele & Schiele, 2022) The abilities of human beings have always been staggering and breathtaking to someone who does not understand the formulated culture behind a site that allowed for the creation of megalithic structures such as the Great Sphinx of Giza or the Great Pyramid of Cholula. It becomes easy to spread conspiracy. As pseudo-archaeology is driven by confirmation biases against the academic elite, misleading the public that advanced peoples or aliens are responsible is a gold mine. Hancock spreads these outlandish theories to the public so he can monetize his work in books, TV shows, podcasts, and speaking tours. Every major controversial event in Hancock's life where academia attacks him fills his pockets as those who have fallen victim to his propaganda support him financially.

Hancock is a symptom of a large world of pseudo-intellectuals who prey upon contrarians to academia and monetarily benefit from the distrust of the establishment. Hancock has appeared on the Joe Rogan Experience 11 times, which, according to Spotify and Apple Music, is the most popular podcast globally. (*Graham Hancock Episodes - Joe Rogan Podcast*, 2024; *Most Popular Podcasts of 2022 - Apple Podcasts for Creators*, n.d.; Spotify, 2024) Rogan is a problematic figure who will platform anyone he finds interesting, which has continuously embroiled him in controversy. Two notable examples of this were when Rogan interviewed a confirmed neo-Nazi by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Milo Yinopolis, and a man classified by the Canadian government as the former head of the white supremacist terrorist organization, the Proud Boys, Gavin Mccginnes. (Canada, 2018; Nick Martin, 2018) It is up for debate if Rogan himself is a white supremacist, but his platforming of them allows for the intermingling of groups who associate with these ideologies to overlap with Hancock's work. Rogan is used

throughout the course of *Ancient Apocalypse* as a common motif, appearing in half of the episodes in the series, parroting his ideas to both his and Hancock's shared fan base. Hancock's ideas, which are inherently white supremacist, benefit from the popularity of Rogan monetarily. Rogan may not proclaim himself to be a white supremacist, but his association with them directly funds their propaganda. Hancock has successfully used the medium of the internet to spread his propaganda once more, and the lucrative nature of spreading white supremacy incentivizes him to continue. In all, similarities between massive monetary incentivization and social status could be achieved by propagating the rhetoric of the Reich. It recursively returns to the all-important concept of Arnold and Hassaman of the 'Faustian bargain' but in the new light of the modern world.(Arnold & Hassmann, 1996) It is the same reason that Nazi archaeologists like Hans Möbius, who ascended from a middling academic to great monetary success in supporting the ideology of the Reich. (Maischberger, 2002) Money motivates these middling individuals to support this ideology even if they are not primed to believe their ideas. The Nazis made it the only way to be financially viable as an archaeologist. In modern times, the free markets' love for outsiders crusading for free speech allows for a large swath of money for those willing to propagate their ideas.

Hancock, in a number of ways, has expanded upon his effectiveness in propaganda in comparison to that of the Nazi regime. The Nazi propaganda was bound to a person having to move through physical space to learn about their rhetoric. A person had to go to a dig site to see the 'proof' of Aryans in the deep past, like that of field trips in which "Hundreds of children saw the excavation during work, the students from the lowest classes of the country school in Stary Dzierzgoń" in occupied Poland. (Szczepański, 2009, p.90) You were limited by needing to go to "Museums for proto-history were established, such as the one in Freiburg," or lectures at

universities on the subject matter. (Hare, 2014, p. 127) The ideas they spread could also be accessed in books or movies. (Arnold, 2008) All of these methods were highly effective at spreading ideas as they all came to the same conclusion of ‘Aryan supremacy.’ The Nazis made it easy for people to believe it was a simple answer reinforcing internal biases of superiority. An individual still had to traverse physical distances to be propagandized and attain any knowledge in the aforementioned sources of knowledge. Hancock has updated this to create white supremacist rhetoric on demand. In modernity, becoming radicalized to white supremacist history does not require traversing physical space or interacting with anyone due to the internet. You can listen to a podcast instantaneously on any electronic device, and if that interests you further, you can click a link directly to his website and read his ideas for free. You can then click another link and buy and download his book, or turn on Netflix and have his ideas told to you without reading. Hancock is dangerous due to the prolific nature in which he shares his propaganda. He has made it accessible to a level that the head of the Nazi propaganda administration, Joseph Goebbels, would be proud of him. It is now possible for radicalization and full indoctrination into the system without physically moving. His ideas are so simplistic in their conclusion that they allow the audience to be radicalized against academia with a high degree of efficiency. It also cannot be contested effectively in the same regard as the ideas that debunk his claims are inaccessible due to the complexity of findings, academic language, and paywalls.

Conclusion

The synthetic analysis of these works has revealed some startling similarities in the continuities of Nazi archaeology through the work of Hancock. Hancock has modernized his ideas of white supremacy to the modern white audience as he has modified the Nazi theory of an

advanced race that was wiped out by an asteroid through an altered variant of the same narrative. Hancock proves these same ideas through the method of Kulturkies used by Nazi academics. In his works, he seeks to define the advanced peoples that seeded the globe culturally as white, which, to the modern audience, justifies colonialism and neo-imperialist policies. It is a direct modification of the archaeology carried out by the Ahnenerbe under Himmler for the ideological justification of Lebensraum. It highlights the dangers of Hancock's reductionist analysis, which could be used to justify genocide once more, as it was in the case of the Nazis perpetrating the Holocaust. Hancock has essentially opened a door once more to the next populist who promotes his historical narratives to co-opt these ideas as a blank cheque for brutality, essentially defining him as a modern Gustav Kossina.

Hancock co-opts mythos in a similar function to that of the Third Reich as it serves as a cultural touchstone to the general audience, upon which their ideology can be superimposed. The use of Plato's Atlantis creates a narrative that supports the ideas of an advanced civilization that was eventually destroyed, which, when ideology is superimposed upon, allows the general audience to be convinced they were white or Aryans. The use of mythos is effective as a direct ability to connect the public to an established deep past in which the general familiarity in modern terms, such as Quetzal-Coatl in the case of Hancock or Herakles in the case of Nazis, allows a level of familiarity with the audience which can be abused for propaganda. Mythology is used in the same concepts of both Nazi Germany and the Findings of Hancock as they allow an understanding of the past that connects with a broad audience by inserting them into the myths' legacy.

The methodologies of using the past as propaganda by both the Nazi regime and Hancock were created by forming their own ecosystems, which allow for individuals once inside to be

trapped by their ideology. The Nazi regime created echo chambers by withholding funding from all research that did not support their ideas and purging all in academia who did not directly support their findings or ideology. It allowed for their ideas to remain completely unchallenged so they could be more effective as a means of spreading white supremacist ideas. Hancock creates his own echo chambers, separate from the state, where he actively attacks academia as inaccurate and lacking definitive evidence. He also draws upon the audience's distrust of authority and the difficulty of accessing academic information to further conspiratorial thinking to reject academia. Hancock's ideas and other pseudo-archaeological findings are then easily accessible due to their popularity and economic success, which incentivizes them to work together to be more monetarily successful. It has created an easily accessible echo chamber of modern conspiratorial archaeology that is incentivized due to the large amounts of profits that can be acquired. The ideas can then reach a massive audience as they can be accessed for free on Hancock's website or through popular modes of media such as the *Joe Rogan Experience*. Allowing Hancock's findings to be highly effective in spreading propaganda, which can not easily be challenged due to the pervasiveness of his conclusions, the difficulty debunking them, and the inaccessibility of academia.

Hancock has now effectively created a means to control history once more. We must seek to challenge and debunk his claims actively, as evidence suggests they are directly derivative, in use of the same methodologies, and with a greater degree of efficiency spreading white supremacy. As if Hancock's theories are taken with seriousness from a state apparatus once more, they have the potential to drive a people to madness as genocidal fervor once more.

Limitations of Research

The limits of this research are within its scope; limiting to only two works of Hancock's makes it so it dramatically narrows the entirety of his conclusions in relation to the findings of the Third Reich. The research on the Third Reich was also a significant limitation as the work of Arnold forms a monolith within the discipline, which most sources are based on, making all meta-analyses of secondary sources revolve around her analysis as a whole. The time of this project also hindered the scope of the research, limiting research sources on the subject matter and resulting in the use of fewer yet more dense sources relevant to the meta-analysis. This source is also limited by my own personal biases against Hancock, as we find him a profoundly problematic and reductionist individual who was perceived as bigoted prior to research.

The research of this paper opens several new areas to research, such as how other entities of IPA function in similarities. What are the different forms of pseudo-archaeology that have been conducted that influence Hancock? Research into the cultural analysis of modern white supremacist pseudo-intellectual echo chambers and how they operate and spread messages. Hancock also focuses highly on astrological analysis in his work and a detailed analysis of how his work pertains to that area of Nazi pseudo-intellectualism.

Bibliography

- Altekamp, S. (2017). Classical Archaeology in Nazi Germany. In H. Roche & K. N. Demetriou (Eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*. BRILL.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (1). (2022a, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (2). (2022b, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (3). (2022c, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (4). (2022d, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (5). (2022e, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (6). (2022f, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (7). (2022g, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Ancient Apocalypse* (8). (2022h, November 10). [Documentary]. Netflix.
- Apple. (2023, January). *Most popular podcasts of 2022—Apple Podcasts for Creators*. Podcasts.Apple.Com.
- Arnold, B. (2006). “Arierdämmerung”: Race and archaeology in Nazi Germany. *World Archaeology*, 38(1), 8–31.
- Arnold, B. (2008). The Past as Propaganda: Totalitarian Archaeology in Nazi Germany. In T. Murray & C. Evans (Eds.), *Histories of Archaeology: A Reader in the History of Archaeology* (p. 0). Oxford University Press.
- Arnold, B., & Hassmann, H. (1996). Archaeology in Nazi Germany: The legacy of the Faustian bargain. In C. Fawcett & P. L. Kohl (Eds.), *Nationalism, Politics and the Practice of Archaeology* (pp. 70–81). Cambridge University Press.
- Bassett, A. (2013). Pseudo-archaeology: The Appropriation and Commercialization of Cultural Heritage. *Spectrum*, 3(1).

- Bauval, R. (n.d.). *The Official Website of Robert Bauval—Home Page*. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from <https://www.robertbauval.co.uk/index.html>
- Canada, P. S. (2018, December 21). *Currently listed entities*.
- Childe, V. G. (1976). *The Danube in prehistory*. AMS Press.
- Cosmic Summit*. (n.d.). Cosmic Summit 2024. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from <https://cosmicsummit.com/>
- Dow, J. R. (2014). In search of all things Nordic, in South Tyrol (Italy): The SS Ancestral inheritance's cultural commission 1940- 1943. *Journal of American Folklore*, 127(506), 365–400.
- Eickhoff, M. (2005). German archaeology and National Socialism. Some historiographical remarks. *Archaeological Dialogues*, 12(1), 73–90. [5](#)
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Archaeology of Knowledge* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- François, S. (2023). Nazi Esotericism: Between Völkisch thought and fantasy. In *Nazi Occultism*. Routledge.
- Graham Hancock Episodes—Joe Rogan Podcast*. (2024, April 16). JRE Podcast. <https://www.jreodcast.com/guest/graham-hancock/>
- Grant, M. (1916). The Passing of the Great Race. *Geographical Review*, 2(5), 354–360.
- Halle, U. (2005). Archaeology in the Third Reich. Academic scholarship and the rise of the 'lunatic fringe.' *Archaeological Dialogues*, 12(1), 91–102.
- Hancock, G. (2024). *Biography for Graham Hancock & Santha Faiia—Graham Hancock Official Website*. <https://grahamhancock.com/bio/>
- Hancock, G. (1995). *Fingerprints of the Gods*. Three Rivers Press.

- Johnson, M. (2020). *Archaeological theory: An introduction* (Third edition.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Kim, A. (2017). An Antique Echo: Plato and the Nazis. In H. Roche & K. N. Demetriou (Eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*. BRILL.
- Kölbl-Ebert, M. (2022). Prehistoric archaeology in Nazi Germany the role of Quaternary geologists. *Travaux Du Comité Français d'Histoire de La Géologie, 3ème série*(tome 36 bis), 59–74.
- Kurlander, E. (2017). THE SUPERNATURAL ROOTS OF NAZISM: Ario-Germanic Religion, Border Science, and the Austro-German Occult Revival, 1889–1914. In *Hitler's Monsters* (pp. 3–32). Yale University Press.
- Laurence Hare, J. (2014). Nazi archaeology abroad: German prehistorians and the international dynamics of collaboration. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48(1), 1–24.
- Maischberger, M. (2002). German archaeology during the Third Reich, 1933–45: A case study based on archival evidence. *Antiquity*, 76(291), 209–218.
- Mees, B. (2006). Germanische Sturmflut: From the Old Norse Twilight to the Fascist New Dawn*. *Studia Neophilologica*, 78(2), 184–198.
- Nick Martin. (2018, 06). *Milo Yiannopoulos tried to troll a Jewish journalist with Nazi symbols but it backfired on him*. Southern Poverty Law Center.
- Schiele, A., & Schiele, B. (2022). Archaeological representations in the media: The dominance of pseudo-Archeology. *Review of Science, Mathematics and ICT Education*, 16(1), Article 1.
- Spotify. (n.d.). *Podcast Charts*. Podcast Charts. Retrieved April 22, 2024, from <https://podcastcharts.byspotify.com/us>

- Szczepański, S. (2009). ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF THE NAZIS:
HIMMLER'S PROPAGANDA AND THE EXCAVATIONS AT THE HILLFORT
SITE IN STARY DZIERZGOŃ (ALT CHRISTBURG). *LIETUVOS ARCHEOLOGIJA*,
T. 35, 83-94.
- Trigger, B. G. (2006). *A History of Archaeological Thought* (2nd ed.). Cambridge
University Press.