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"Science Fiction and the Risks of the Anthropocene: Anticipated Transformations in Dale Pendell's *The Great Bay*"

Weik von Mossner, Alexa

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Covering the time span from 2021 to 16000 N.C., Dale Pendell's speculative novel *The Great Bay* chronicles the profound climatic, geological and ecological transformations that California undergoes during these fourteen millennia. Human life becomes unimaginably small on such a time scale, and Pendell responds to that representational challenge by compiling a wide variety of texts that zero in on individual humans at different points in the future rather than offering a continuous story or central character. In a way, that place is taken by the geographical region that is the focus of the narrative and gives the book its title. Timothy Morton has argued that because we live in the Anthropocene we can no longer understand history as exclusively human. Pendell's "Chronicle of the Collapse" suggests that the same is true for storytelling, offering readers the story of a nonhuman protagonist that changes slowly over time. The result is a highly fragmented narrative that is interesting for what it tries to achieve but at the same time remarkably unengaging. In its distant and distanced rendering of future ecological change and human anguish, *The Great Bay* is a grave reminder not only of the incalculable risks of the Anthropocene, but also of the basic tenets of realist storytelling. (Text from author's abstract)

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