Narratives of Disaster
Kaisa Kaukiainen (University of Helsinki): The Anthropocene challenging biblical faith in Margaret Atwood’s *The Year of the Flood*

Margaret Atwood’s MaddAddam trilogy (Oryx and Crake 2003, The Year of the Flood 2009, MaddAddam 2013) describes a dystopian society where everything has gone wrong. The environmental crisis is reality, and the society is in a state of decline in all other aspects of life as well. Yet the most shattering aspect of Atwood’s depiction is that people are past caring. They have given up hope and any attempts to work for the common good, because it has become worthless. This all happens despite the advanced technology, which is without any hesitation used only for gaining profit for a small, privileged minority.

The Year of the Flood represents a Christianity-based sect, “God’s Gardeners”, which still cares for the nature. But even the sect has abandoned hope for waking the surrounding world, and mainly focuses on preparing for the “waterless flood” (which then arrives in the form of a pandemic). The narrative works on two different time planes: one preceding the apocalypse, and the other succeeding it.

My presentation concentrates on the God’s Gardeners’ godly responsibility to preserve nature. They have altered the biblical message to fit into their perception of co-existence with nature. However, as their name suggests, they still see themselves as gardeners, caretakers, and even though their goals are selfless, they adhere to this traditional biblical, and anthropocentric, view of humans as “the lords of creation”.

This perception is on a collision course with many views regarding the Anthropocene, and in fact, the post-apocalyptic depiction in the novel challenges it as well. Even when nature takes over, the influence of humans is visible. The anomalies created by humans have become part of nature.

Bio
I am a PhD student in University of Helsinki. I am doing my dissertation on religiousness in contemporary dystopian fiction. My corpus consists of works of Margaret Atwood, Octavia E. Butler, David Mitchell, and a sub-genre of young adult dystopias.
Britta Maria Colligs (University of Trier): “The Night the Trees Came”: Ali Shaw’s ecological disaster narrative as a call for due consideration

The concept of the Anthropocene, as well as the theory of ecocriticism, is a relatively modern idea indicating a rising awareness of the environmental situation of our times. Their focus shifts from a solely anthropocentric point of view towards the study of the relationship between humans and nature, consequently, granting nature and the environment an individual agency in the literature and an alternative reading helping a new perspective to emerge. Environmental narratives, and especially anthropogenic apocalyptic narratives, have been published numerously in recent years.

These kind of dystopian narratives often function as wake-up calls showing us what might happen if we do not start to consider our, humans, influence, predominantly negative influence, on nature and the environment; and ask what do we do, how do we act when we are faced with an ecological crisis? Ali Shaw’s ecological novel The Trees, published 2016, considers this relationship and interaction between humans and their environment after the whole world has been covered with a dense and primal forest overnight. The appearance of a primal forest seems to be an intense wake-up call for the entire human population, therefore, this paper will analyse the conflict between nature and humans in general and the struggle to find a way to live in that new world. Nature in form of a forest can be seen as an ominous presence in the text, which has a major influence on the behaviour of the differing characters and their moral coding. Consequently, the journey to the heart of the forest, the heart of wilderness, can also be analysed as a journey to the heart of the human psyche. The ambivalent perception of the new forest-world as either a utopian or a dystopian place plays a vital role in this analysis as well.

Bio
Britta Maria Colligs is a Ph.D. student and lecturer at the Department of English Studies at the University of Trier, Germany, with a specialisation in Ecocriticism and New Zealand Literature and Culture. Her research interests include the study of fantasy literature, with a focus on J. R. R. Tolkien’s creation and G. R. R. Martin’s world, in addition to contemporary British and New Zealand literature as well as the study of ecocriticism. She is currently working on her PhD thesis on ecocriticism in fantasy literature, where she analysis the characterisation and importance of the forests on various levels. (E-Mail Address: colligs@uni-trier.de)
Judith Eckenhoff (RWTH Aachen University): The Desert in Post-Apocalyptic Narratives

Among the narratives of the Anthropocene, processes of desertification have taken on a prominent role as the kind of environmental development that poses a significant threat to human and non-human life on the planet. Land degradation (caused by drought, monocultures and industrial farming, or mining) makes large-scale anthropogenic impact on the planet visible and wastelands left in the wake of unchecked exploitation ostensibly suggest fatal long-term consequences. As post-apocalyptic and dystopian fictions have been receiving more popular and scholarly attention for their imaginative engagement with worst-case scenarios of civilization’s collapse alongside anthropogenic environmental transformation, desert and wasteland settings are often an integral part of their storyworlds. Narratives taking place in desert environments do not only evoke these real and pressing concerns, they also draw on the rich connotations of desert depictions in literary histories and myths of numerous cultural traditions. The desert holds a unique place in the human imagination, not least because of its significance in religious contexts as a space of spiritual growth and transcendent experience. It also represents “an absolute otherness that negates and exposes every construction and defense of human civilization and culture” (Jasper 2008), which makes it an obvious and interesting environment for the post-apocalyptic genre. This paper discusses the narrative and allegorical functions of the desert in two case studies: Nnedi Okorafor’s 2010 novel Who Fears Death and George Miller's 2015 film Mad Max: Fury Road. Taking ecocritical and cognitive approaches to narrative into account, the analysis pays particular attention to the ways in which the affective impact of the depicted environments can make real risks more tangible (Weik von Mossner 2017) and how immersive representations of space can contribute to narrative persuasion (James 2015).

Bio
Judith Eckenhoff is a research and teaching assistant at the Chair of Cognitive Literary Studies at RWTH Aachen University. She graduated from the University of Freiburg in 2016 with a Masters in Cultural Studies and is now working towards her PhD on post-apocalyptic fiction. Her research interests include cognitive narratology, ecocriticism, and Gothic studies.
Eva Simčić (University of Oslo): Writing of the Post-temporal: Narrative Fossility and the Anti-immersive Strategies in Three Speculative Fiction Novels

In *After finitude* (2008), Quentin Meillassoux puts forward a concept of ancestrality – philosophical challenge that categorizes theories according to their relationship to noumenon and the scientific claims. While ancestral points to a specific mode of temporality before the appearance of the transcendental subject, the accompanying geological material such as radioactive isotope, which Meillassoux calls the arche-fossil, serves as a proof for the period anterior to life.

Following Meillassoux’s terminology, I propose the expression narrative fossility as a term that could be applied to textual instances that testify to the posteriority of the subject or to the position in which narration as the body of storytelling is not a result of a subjective agency.

This presentation will examine the ways in which narrative fossility is articulated in three contemporary speculative fiction novels – Cormac McCarty’s *The Road* (2006), Reza Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia* (2008) and Luka Bekavac’s *Viljevo* (2013), all of which share a very specific form of ‘message in the bottle’ and in doing so narratively parenthesize subjectivity in varying degrees. My analysis of the novels will show that the use of anti-immersive strategies – narrative techniques that hinder the identification process of the reader – distorts the fictional communicational positions, constructs the fictional addressee as an entity external to the temporal regimes of the narrative universe.

I will argue that narrative fossility could be used as a tool for describing the formal aspect of narratives of catastrophe and extinction, which are currently being primarily explored as such on the level of content or the genre.

Keywords: ancestrality, narrative fossility, anti-immersive strategies, narratives of catastrophe and extinction

**Bio**

Eva Simčić is a doctoral research fellow at the Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages the University of Oslo. Her research interests include rhetorical narratology, speculative materialism and post-Yugoslav literature.
Teemu Paavolainen (University of Tampere): Theatrum Mundi: Performativity in The Anthropo(S)Cene

The paper addresses questions of human and non-human agency in the Anthropocene in terms of ‘performativity,’ adapted from Judith Butler’s use of the term, and also from Richard Schechner’s work on different ‘magnitudes of performance’ – evoking the problem of ‘scale framing’ as theorized by Timothy Clark and Timothy Morton. Thinking planetary change through different narratives agency and embodiment (by Clark, Morton, Mark Turner, and possibly one US president), two arguable extremes are proposed for thinking performativity, in the causal sense of bringing about some change in the world: a traditionally vertical model based on individual action and antagonism, and the more extended, horizontal human performance – “All the world’s a stage” – that is the Anthropo(s)cene. Where the one is direct, singular, vertical, and fast, the other is systemic, plural, horizontal, and slow beyond human perception.

In one sense, of course, the Anthropocene only comes into being through different discourses: much as any scientific approach will perform realities rather than just observing them readymade, it is a function of our methods, narratives, assumptions, and prejudices. And still, it is indeed a matter not of natural change but of human performance, in the Butlerian sense of reiterated practices regularly confused with essential nature. That the relevant range of practices (from agriculture to automobility) seem to virtually define human conduct and being, is because they are not only ‘restored’ or ‘twice-behaved’ (Schechner) but infinitely behaved, massively reiterated – over tens and thousands of generations slowly spanning the globe – and also non-humanly distributed. In this performance, both scene and agency are complicated as nature itself is understood as performed – as concept, as category, as discourse, as the ‘essence’ undermined by any performative argument – and performed by a human kind that only appears as a hypothetical entity beyond any real sense of individual intention.

Bio
Teemu Paavolainen is a research fellow at the Centre for Practice as Research in Theatre, University of Tampere. His Theatre/Ecology/Cognition: Theorizing Performer-Object Interaction in Grotowski, Kantor, and Meyerhold was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2012, and his second book, Theatricality and Performativity: Writings on Texture From Plato’s Cave to Urban Activism, is forthcoming with Palgrave in the early 2018. Paavolainen’s research articles have been published in Performance Philosophy, Theatre Symposium, Nordic Theatre Studies, and The Cognitive Humanities (2016). His work has been generously funded by the Academy of Finland (2012–15), the Finnish Cultural Foundation (2015–17), and the Kone Foundation (2017–20).
Current multidisciplinary approaches to the Anthropocene have identified several questions and problems: 1) How to do transdisciplinary Anthropocene research, 2) How to speculate on the future of the planet in scientifically sound yet socially sustainable and culturally meaningful ways, 3) How to give the Anthropocene more concrete, sensible forms, and 4) How to join the sciences with politics to address the ecological and social challenges involved? In the humanities and social sciences the Anthropocene has been studied – and criticized – as a narrative. Critical evaluations of the Anthropocene narrative are necessary and will help in answering the questions outlined above: the narrative approach highlights the role of humanities in the Anthropocene research and it will aid the important work of making the epoch and the possible futures more tangible. To a certain extent, communicating through narratives may help to inform policy-making. However, not all texts or other accounts on the Anthropocene have a narrative form. Moreover, what are or can be accounts on the Anthropocene remains an open question, as we are only beginning to witness the planetary systemic changes and the ways they are inter-relating.

In my paper I will explore the idea of Anthropocene documents. Etymologically, ‘document’ derives from the latin docere which means to teach, to show. In medieval times, documentum meant lesson but also proof. On this etymological base an Anthropocene document is both a proof of the anthropogenic planetary change and a lesson on its ecological, social, economic, cultural and other effects and consequences. Drawing on Bruno Latour’s compositionalism I will suggest that an important task for humanities is to gather these documents and to analyze them without simplifying the naturalcultural and materialsemiotic complexities involved. As a current non-fictive example of an Anthropocene document affecting the lives of all Finnish people in the near future I will discuss the Government Report on Medium-term Climate Change Plan for 2030 – Towards Climate-Smart Day-to-Day Living.

Bio
Karoliina Lummaa is a postdoctoral researcher specialized in literature studies and environmental humanities. Currently, she is working in the research project “Messy Worlds” (PI professor Lea Rojola, University of Turku) with her focus on the cultural meanings of waste in contemporary Finnish literature. In 2016, together with colleagues working in the fields of arts and social and natural sciences, she co-founded the multidisciplinary environmental research unit BIOS. Lummaa’s publications include research articles and co-edited anthologies devoted to the Anthropocene, multidisciplinary environmental research, literature studies and posthumanism. She is the author of monographs *Poliittinen siivekäs* (2010) and *Kui trittitii! Finnish Avian Poetics* (2017).
Between 1965 and 1982, the composer John Cage published a series of observations, notes, and thoughts on politics, science, arts & culture, and the environment. In his perhaps most politically inclined work, Cage’s Diary vigorously draws attention to a world in environmental and social struggle. As the author of the silent piece knows that sustainable coexistence is only to be achieved through bottom-up anarchy, the politics of the Diary should thus themselves be questioned. How to improve the world?, reads the subtitle, opening a kaleidoscope of innumerable, juxtaposed narratives and voices from a broad range of spiritual, cultural, and scientific research. Perhaps, the Diary bring us closest to the thoughts & intentions of an author who throughout his oeuvre has worked on the abolition of the author’s signature using chance and indeterminacy.

In this paper, I will show how the contradictory duality of this apolitical-political piece of literature creates – very much unintentionally – a challenging narrative of the Anthropocene by resisting any linear political interpretation. Juxtaposed information appears simultaneously, unstructured, diffused – for the attentive reader to engage actively with the presented stories. Parallels to contemporary news feeds lie at hand, yet the Diary provides more: When Cage refers to the Vietnam War, declining bird migrations into rural Wisconsin, and Buckminster Fuller’s architectural plans for future social housing, literary research must look closer, finding a more publicly engaged artist than we have known so far. By carefully evaluating Cage’s poetic techniques, especially with a critical look at the question of fiction, it becomes clear that John Cage’s Diary is anything else but silent acceptance of the status quo – it rather engages with long unheard noises of the environment.

Keywords: Anthropocene, John Cage, environment, narrative, politics, silence.

Bio
Jonas Mirbeth studied German Studies and Comparative Literature at Johannes Gutenberg-Universitaet Mainz and Freie Universitaet Berlin. He is pursuing an application for a PhD at Northwestern University, Chicago on the influences of 1920-30s avant-garde literary journals on the writings of composer John Cage, encompassing questions on the discourse on script, non-violence, and public engagement of writers during the first half of the 20th century. He has spoken previously on parts of the lesser known conceptual writings of John Cage, which merge avant-garde poetry with Zen-Buddhist notions of emptiness and respect for the environment, at conferences in Helsinki (November 2016) and Warsaw (April 2017). Jonas works as an editor for Berlin based publishing companies with a focus on philosophy and cultural studies.
Thursday 14–15.30

Agency in the Anthropocene

Bo Pettersson (University of Helsinki): A Theory of Agency in Literature and Beyond: Exemplified by Literary Animals in the Anthropocene

Russian formalists and structuralist narratologists discussed narrative in terms of agency, from Vladimir Propp’s thirty-one functions to A. J. Greimas’s three basic patterns. One of the problems with such structuring of agency is its static character, despite its narrative functions. However, I take my cue from them, especially the latter, in trying to devise an even simpler and more encompassing theory of agency that might be able to account for how creatures behave and how the actions of creatures are represented in literature and beyond.

As I see it, all agency can profitably be perceived as based on a single scheme: [A helps] X wants (to) Y by Z [opposing B], which when represented is subject to the meta-scheme N (author/narrator/speaker) tells scheme to I (interlocutor/s). In the scheme, X always represents an agent, whereas Z and Y (and at times A and B) also may stand for ‘means or state of affairs’. I attempt to show how this comes across in literature and various media and then show what use the scheme can have by applying it to the portrayal of animals in fiction and poetry in the Anthropocene.

My point is that in order to be of use in literary or media studies, my scheme and meta-scheme must be interrelated as well as given analytical and processual precision in various contexts. Hopefully, this schematic and dynamic view might help to corroborate Charles Darwin’s famous statement (in The Descent of Man) that the difference between man and the higher animals is one of degree, not kind, and thus better to understand agency and how it is represented in the Anthropocene.

Bio
Bo Pettersson is Professor of the Literature of the United States and former Head of English of Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki. He has published widely on Anglo-American and other literature in relation to literary, narrative and metaphor theory. His most recent study is How Literary Worlds Are Shaped. A Comparative Poetics of Literary Imagination (De Gruyter, 2016).
Essi Vatilo (University of Tampere): Agency in Trouble in the Anthropocene

In Sean McMullen’s “The Precedent”, agency is problematised as a requirement for responsibility as all of humanity is audited for causing climate change. The story balances between collective responsibility that includes entire generations and individual accountability for small-scale actions. It acknowledges the power of collective movements that are more than the sum of their parts, but judgement is passed on individuals regardless of mitigating social circumstances. In the process of getting justice for the environment, the environment is almost completely ignored.

I will focus on how “The Precedent” presents and contrasts individual, aggregated and collective action and consequences and how these are compatible with traditional views of agency and how they challenge them. Responsibility is often seen to rely on agency, causality and intentionality, assuming the existence of a rational agent whose actions are based on deliberate choices. The vast scale and long timeframe of climate change and its negative consequences make such a view problematic, and yet it persists in the verdicts of the World Audit that ignore social and political structures and make personal choices the sole basis for judgement. Thus, the story problematizes agency in responsibility for climate change. It shows the power of collective action but in the verdicts takes a very individualistic view to responsibility. The audit is also very anthropocentric. The environmental consequences of climate change stay in the background while justice is dealt between humans for harm caused to humans. The environment is merely the medium for the harm and for the punishment of the convicted.

Bio

Essi Vatilo is a PhD candidate at the University of Tampere. She is writing her dissertation on collective responsibility in Anglophone science fiction, focusing on climate change, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering in a selection of sf novels, short stories, television series and movies from the 1980s to the present.
Cave paintings, preserved eggs and mounted birds. Dusty glass cabinets, museums and universities, Google searches. The great auk, an extinct bird species, seems to appear everywhere where Tanja, the protagonist of Maarit Verronen’s novel Keihäslintu (2004, “Garefowl”) turns to. According to the psychoanalytical theory, monomaniac behavior is a response to a trauma taking place when the subject has lost their control to the external conditions. I propose that the cultural concept of monomania, which has traditionally been linked to the anxieties of the modernity, has also potential conveying the experience of mass extinction in the era of the Anthropocene. In this paper, Verronen’s monomania is treated as the aesthetic sensibility linked to the trope of “numerical sublime”, coined by Ursula K. Heise. Heise sees the trope as an emerging figure in the narratives of species extinction.

The Anthropocene, the need to understand humanity as a geological force altering the planet, distorts our common dichotomies of external and internal, nature and human, object and subject. Especially the human agency, which in the discourse of the Anthropocene has to be understood as a planetary force, is called into question. In my reading, obsessive monomaniac behavior is a symptom of and a metaphor for the wounded and dislocated sense of human agency. Verronen’s prose fiction suggests that the cure for these kinds of anxieties lies in developing a sense of spatial agency – in engaging actively with the external, or externalized, conditions. But how do we do that?

Bio
Sarianna Kankkunen is a postgraduate student working on her doctoral thesis ”Harassing Habitats. Experienced Space in Maarit Verronen’s Prose Fiction”. She’s a member of the European PhDnet “Literary and Cultural Studies” and writes a co-supervised thesis between the University of Helsinki and Justus-Liebig Universität Gießen, Germany. Her research interests include the spatial turn in the humanities, environmental humanities, dystopia, and contemporary Finnish fiction.
Narratives of Horror

Sean Matharoo (University of California, Riverside): In the Deserts of Madness: Mapping Wild Affective Spaces and Speculative Pessimism in the Metaphysical Horror of Tobe Hooper’s *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and Bruno Dumont’s *Twentynine Palms*

In this presentation, which is part of a forthcoming book chapter for The Spaces and Places of Horror (Vernon Press 2018), I demonstrate that Tobe Hooper’s American art-horror film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974) and Bruno Dumont’s New French Extremity film *Twentynine Palms* (2003) map wild affective spaces anterior to the disciplinary order of representational thought, or what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari call “smooth spaces.” Such uncontrollable spaces—the Texas highway and homestead in Hooper’s film and the California highway, the desert town Twentynine Palms, and Joshua Tree National Park in Dumont’s film—appear to offer a freedom of meaning-making through the exploration of affect, allowing for becomings-ecosophical useful when confronting the overwhelming reality of the Anthropocene. I contend, however, that they subvert their own mappings of these smooth spaces by pessimistically emphasizing a metaphysical horror that reminds us of the ultimate meaninglessness that is the human’s position in an irrepressibly violent universe.

I closely read several scenes from the films, giving particular attention to sound-image relations vis-à-vis the writings of French composer Michel Chion to prove how they render a form of affective perception generative of non-anthropocentric meanings. Both films’ mappings of wild affective spaces, thus, escape what Quentin Meillassoux has called “correlationism,” or the representational idea that one may only access one’s own subjective impressions of exterior objects. I conclude that these films present a speculative pessimism that, concomitantly, is an ethical call to become responsible to the alterity of the nonhuman. This configuration illuminates horror fiction’s penchant for speculating on cosmic realities that horrify us in order to then return us to our environments with a more nuanced sense of shared ethical responsibility. Significant to the othering of the natural world this presentation critiques is the impossibility of thinking, from an anthropocentric perspective, nonhuman traumas.

Bio

Sean Matharoo is a Ph.D. candidate of Comparative Literature at University of California, Riverside, where he studies Francophone, Anglophone, and Arabic speculative media and philosophy. He has published an article, book reviews, encyclopedia entries, and interviews in Horror Studies, Science Fiction Studies, the Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts, Science Fiction Film and Television, The Eaton Journal of Archival Research in Science Fiction, Horror Literature Through History, and The Los Angeles Review of Books. As the recipient of a 2017-18 Fulbright U.S. Student Award, he is writing his dissertation at Ghent University in Belgium this year.
Emily Bourke (Trinity College Dublin): Expanding Ecohorror: Reading the Anthropocene in *The Birds*

Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963) has long been considered a foundational text of the ecohorror genre. At the same time, however, critics tend to view the animal attacks that it depicts as having little to do with humankind’s impact on the natural world. In other words, its influence on ecohorror is understood to be more structural than it is thematic; later texts would take themes of the Anthropocene such as pollution, deforestation, and climate change, and append them to the “nature strikes back” formula of *The Birds*.

This paper seeks to challenge the dominant view of this narrative, arguing that a close, ecocritical reading of the text can shed light on more subtle ecological influences at work. Looking at the choice of birds as antagonists in both the film and in Daphne Du Maurier’s original story, as well as its links with nuclear anxiety and apocalyptic dread, demonstrates close parallels with — and developments of — themes of anthropogenic catastrophe that began to emerge in 1950s ecohorror texts. Although it may not be as explicitly didactic as ecohorror films released in subsequent decades, a deep unease about humanity’s influence on the plant is woven into the story.

In light of this, I will argue that ecohorror is most usefully viewed primarily as a *horror of the Anthropocene*, that is, rather than simply being horror that includes representations of plants and animals, it is informed by worries about humankind’s wider influence on the planet’s ecosystems. This definition resists overdetermination of a text’s constituent parts — that is, whether it *must* feature animals, or they *must* be seeking revenge, or it *must* explicitly promote an environmentalist message — and instead allows us to identify texts, sometimes unexpected ones, that respond to and reflect modern environmental anxieties in a wide variety of ways.

**Bio**

Emily Bourke is a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Research Scholar at the School of English, Trinity College Dublin, currently in the final year of her PhD. Her research traces the development of ecohorror themes in American fiction and film from 1945 to the present day. She is Assistant Editor for the *Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* and co-organiser of ‘Gothic Nature: New Directions in Ecohorror and the Ecogothic,’ a two-day conference taking place in Dublin this November.
Markus Huppert (University of Trier): Growing Environmental Consciousness in the Apocalyptic Zombie Narrative

The modern Zombie narrative, the tale of the dead rising from their graves and coming back to consume the living, has been an essential part of the horror film of the last fifty years. Created near the beginning of the Anthropocene, George A. Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968) is widely considered the founding text of the zombie genre. The film constructs a scenario in which humans are suddenly confronted with the appearance of a new predatory species, thereby creating a new eco-hierarchy. Romero’s follow-up texts Dawn of the Dead (1978), Day of the Dead (1985) and Land of the Dead (2005) continue the narrative of the zombie apocalypse and see humankind lose its place at the top of the food chain to its undead counterpart.

A deeper analysis of the human/zombie relationship in these four films reveals a growing environmental consciousness in their narratives. While the zombies are disregarded as “things” and killed without a second thought in the first film, the sequels contain an increasing number of scenes in which the human characters reflect on their relationship with the zombies and question their own violent and selfish actions. They learn to accept them as creatures with a right to exist and re-evaluate their own role in the eco-system.

Each of the films includes one major scene in which the human characters discuss their views on the zombie species. This paper will examine these key scenes to pinpoint how the human reception of the zombies parallels a growing consciousness about our place within the eco-system in the age of the Anthropocene. The language of the human figures to describe the zombies changes from aggressive othering to actively searching for mutuality. Thus the human figures’ acceptance of the new species increases significantly as they recognize the zombie as a part of nature.

Bio

Markus Huppert is currently a Ph.D. student in the field of English Literature and Media at the University of Trier, Germany. His Ph.D. project investigates the narrative of the zombie apocalypse within the larger context of the invasion narrative. His research interests include nostalgia, pop-culture, horror narratives and environmental narratives. He wrote his master’s thesis on the subject of Star Wars and nostalgia. These interests carry over to his work outside of university: he broadcasts regular programs on campus radio as well as podcasts on pop-culture and film, also often including environmental subjects, such as the depiction of the Earth’s possible future in film.
Friday 9.30–11.30

Possible Futures, Remembering the Past
Jouni Teittinen (University of Turku): On Proleptic Mourning and Other Traces of the Future

Sylvia Meyer has noted that fictions of climate change can often be grouped into narratives of catastrophe and narratives of that catastrophe's anticipation. The closely connected notion of the anthropocene is itself strongly anticipatory, not only through the implied future disasters triggered by man's mark on Earth's systems, but also in the fantasy of some future geologist "read[ing] our future-anterior bones, our plastics, our mining trails and holes" (Kathryn Yusoff). The narratives of anticipation prompted by the anthropocene, then, do not only anticipate a coming disaster, but employ the perspective of the future perfect in anticipating what kind of an age ours will turn out to have been. What destruction we will have planted, yes, but also how today's personal and cultural activities and experiences come to variously matter against the projected perspective of cataclysmic loss.

Along these lines, the notion of the anthropocene might be claimed to intensify the age-old notion that the present is defined not only by way of its past but also of its future(s). In recent years, many commentators have drawn attention to the anticipatory structures of experience prompted by climate change, anthropocene and future-as-catastrophe more generally, introducing such terms as proleptic mourning, future melancholy and pretrauma. This presentation aims to review and weigh in on some of these temporally convoluted concepts, as well as on their relation to anthropocene's future anterior, taking its premise from the perhaps counter-intuitive notion that (in Mark Currie's words) "memory has a form that lends itself to anticipation as much as to recollection."

Bio
Jouni Teittinen is a doctoral student in Comparative Literature at the University of Turku, Finland. His dissertation concerns the thematic, structural and philosophical questions pertaining to time and temporality in post-apocalyptic literature, especially with respect to issues of memory, archive, extinction and the notion of the future anterior. He has published on human-animal relations and presented, besides apocalypse and animals, on Emerson and American romanticism.
Emanuel Herold (University of Bremen): Are Desirable Futures Still Possible? On the Construction of Anthropocene Futures

Since its popularization by Paul J. Crutzen und Eugene Stroemer, the concept of the “Anthropocene” has made its way into a variety of disciplinary discourses. Scientists, social scientists, and humanities scholars debate what it means to claim that humanity has become a geological force and what the “Anthropocene futures” will look like. Which geological traces will remain of human activities in the coming millennia? Will humanity be able to intentionally alter the Earth system? Is it enough to think of geo-engineering projects in this regard or should there be a larger focus on social transformations? In my contribution, I will look at notions of futurity which circulate through this transdisciplinary discourse. What becomes apparent is that constructions of the future based on probability and extrapolation give privilege to scenarios of technological intervention into the Earth system – at the price of neglecting opportunities for social transformation. However, a look at the more recent literary phenomenon of climate change fiction (or “cli-fi”) appears to indicate how discussions about Anthropocene futures could include social aspects more prominently and even explore the normative dimension of all this: In which world do we want to live?

The challenge to think about Anthropocene futures thus lies in a complex epistemology of the future. A variety of temporalities needs to be considered, without privileging one over the other – because that amounts to reducing the prospects for mankind to the uncanny alternative of either successful terraforming or inevitable catastrophe.

Bio
Emanuel Herold finished his M.A. studies in social theory at the University of Jena and is currently working on his Ph.D. at the University of Bremen. His interests include science and technology studies, sociology of time, and sociological theory. He is currently focused on utopian and dystopian narratives, especially climate change fiction.

In narrative visions of future New York, especially after Hurricane Sandy (2012), the city is depicted as struggling with its shore line, and water is increasingly imbued with a new sense of agency. In media, policy and planning texts it has become fashionable to speak of New York’s water as a “sixth borough” (see e.g. Oneprize 2011). While such metaphorical language gestures towards the new meanings that are given to urban waterscapes, it also points, paradoxically, to their continued lack of political or legal status. Agency as related to making choices towards the future remains, in narratives, the prerogative of humans, working alone or together. But how are choice and agency presented in different kinds of narratives, and to what extent does contemporary climate fiction live up to the expectations raised in the media as climate wake-up calls?

In my paper, part of a three-year research project examining future visions of cities at the water, I look at narratives of future New York. A key text is Kim Stanley Robinson’s 2140 (2016), which has been hailed (somewhat prematurely) as one the first “utopian” or optimistic climate fiction novels depicting a future New York City. Robinson’s novel will be juxtaposed with non-fictional texts: urban planning documents, the New York City Comprehensive Waterfront plan, in particular (2011), and (semi-fictional) scientific texts such as Naomi Oreskes’ The Collapse of Western Civilization (2014). I’m particularly interested in how different kinds of textual narratives describe pathways towards possible futures, and will draw in my analysis on futures studies concepts such as the differentiation between fact and futura, and future presents and present futures (Adam & Groves 2007).

Bio
Lieven Ameel is researcher at the University of Helsinki. He holds a PhD in comparative literature and Finnish literature (JLU Giessen & University of Helsinki), and is adjunct professor in urban studies and planning methods (Tampere University of Technology). Research interests include city literature, urban futures, and narratives in urban planning. He is the co-editor of the Palgrave Series in Literary Urban Studies. Recent publications include Helsinki in Early Twentieth-Century Literature and the co-edited Literature and the Peripheral City (2015) and Literary Second Cities (2017).
My argument seeks to develop Axel Goodbody’s “cultural memory approach to environmental texts” (2011) by considering literature as mnemotechnics through the posthumanist approach of Bernard Stiegler (1998, 2008). This paper provides an introduction to Stiegler’s philosophy of technics, time, and memory, and argues for its relevance in the study of narrative in the Anthropocene. For Stiegler, technics is a “process of exteriorization,” a “pharmakon” through which memory and experience is stored, shared, and erased—as such, it constitutes the anthropos at multiple scales. Yet technics is also “the pursuit of life by means other than life,” a process in its current form that is undermining the very possibilities of planetary life. I argue that literature can help reverse the trend through which memory and knowledge is destroyed alongside the environments that supported them. For illustrative examples I turn to the novel, Archipelago, by Trinidadian author Monique Roffey (2012). In this novel a family struggles to cope with the trauma of losing loved ones and a house in a tropical storm on a journey that takes them through the long—colonial and anthropogenic—material history of the Caribbean. As Erll (2011) argues, literature operates as collective memory but its image is often defined by its depiction (and narration) of memory at the individual scale. By redescribing literature’s role as the creation and transmission of “tertiary retentions,” scholars and artists may discover new ways of constituting long-term horizons, as well as “new ways of collectively understanding the possible” (LeMenager and Foote).

LeMenager, Stephanie and Stephanie Foote. “The Sustainable Humanities,” PMLA 127.3.

Bio
Parker Krieg is a postdoctoral researcher in the environmental humanities with the faculty of arts at the University of Helsinki. He received his PhD in English from the University of Oregon, and holds a MA in Literary and Cultural Studies from Carnegie Mellon University. His current interests lie at the edges of cultural memory studies and narrative, exploring new materialist and pragmatist approaches to public histories of the environment in literature, media arts, and institutions of natural-cultural heritage.
Literature and Narrative Fiction in the Age of the Anthropocene

Thorunn Gullaksen Endreson (University of Oslo): “How do we move forward from the melancholy of a poisoned planet?”
Timothy Morton in The Ecological Thought (2010)

Norwegian contemporary literature is to an increasing extent engaging with climate change or global warming. One of these novels is Brit Bildøen’s Seven days in August, published in Norwegian in 2014 and in English in 2016. In this paper I will present an ecocritical reading of Bildøen’s novel, and I will question if this narrative response to global warming is adequate in the age of Anthropocene. The novel portrays a narrative of a couple in denial of a personal pain, trying to live a normal life some years after their daughter was murdered in the deadly terrorist attack of Norway’s Utøya Island. The couple’s efforts to deal with their grief and trying to face their helplessness and mortality is played out while extreme weather conditions makes rivers flood in the eastern part of Norway. The heavy rain and the television reports make a constant backdrop.

Drawing on Timothy Clark’s idea of Anthropocene disorder as well as psychoanalysis and Freud’s concept of das unheimliche, I will argue that this denial also functions as a screen for a more general social denial regarding global warming. Further, I propose that the narrative draws on the apocalyptic discourse of the flood myth, depicting nature as an enemy. As Morton argues in The Ecological Thought (2010); in order to take responsibility for global warming we have to abandon the idea of Nature. Nature functions as “an ideological barrier”. In the age of Anthropocene we need an alternative narrative, making us live with nature instead of fighting against it, in line with Deleuze and Guattari’s geophilosophy, where no distinction is made between man and nature. I will argue that Bildøen’s narrative merely mirrors mechanisms of global warming denial, leaning on established and worn-out literary motives.

Bio

Markku Lehtimäki (University of Eastern Finland): The Realist Novel in the Age of Climate Change: Human Experientiality and Narrative Rhetoric

Although some of the most challenging environmental problems have been popular topics in science fiction, fantasy, graphic novels, movies, and documentaries, climate change and the Anthropocene have, as yet, been issues rarely grappled with in the mode of a realistic or conventional novel. We also need to consider whether other media besides the traditional novel are rhetorically more powerful in conveying to us the message about climate change and whether, actually, the mode of the conventional novel with its individual characters, middle-class world-view, and psychological realism is outmoded. Arguably the best-known cli-fi novel so far, Ian McEwan’s Solar (2010), is therefore a rare example, together with Barbara Kingsolver’s Flight Behavior (2012), of climate change fiction in the mode of the traditional novel and psychological realism. In spite of their self-reflexivity, these two contemporary novels still fall in the category of the realist novel. In my paper, I will discuss these two novels in the context of climate change and its narrativization, and I will argue that the very topic of climate change seems to pose a challenge to the writer of mainstream fiction. Obviously, climate change and its various environmental consequences are difficult to make sense of in human terms precisely because they radically exceed the human scale, but it is through narratives that complex and abstract problems like these can be made emotionally felt. Yet stories focusing on human experience—such as Flight Behavior or Solar—have a necessarily limited grasp of environmental issues’ global proportions. I will discuss the ways in which Kingsolver and McEwan employ realism and rhetoric to approach the experience of climate change. For example, both authors utilize their characters’ bodily experiences for rhetorical purposes, foregrounding human experientiality as a way of dealing with issues as big and complex as climate change.

Bio
Markku Lehtimäki, Ph.D., is Senior Lecturer in Literature at the University of Eastern Finland and Adjunct Professor (Docent) of Comparative Literature at the University of Tampere. His research focuses on narrative theory, visual culture, and environmental literary studies. He is co-editor of several books, including Narrative, Interrupted: The Plotless, the Disturbing, and the Trivial in Literature (2012), and leader of the consortium project The Changing Environment of the North: Cultural Representations and Uses of Water (2017–2021) funded by the Academy of Finland.
Mikko Mäntyniemi (University of Tampere): Histories Intertwined: Human Agency and the Post-Apocalyptic History in Claire Vaye Watkins’ *Gold Fame Citrus*

The apocalyptic vision of draught has been part of the end of the world imagery since the Biblical devastations of Egypt in the Old Testament. The scorched, lifeless Earth that has become hostile and inhabitable to humankind is still part of the apocalyptic visions in modern retellings of the end times. From J.G. Ballard’s *The Drought* to Mad Max -movies (1979-2016), the desolate land has been the metaphorical space of humanity’s exile in the post-apocalyptic world. This paper analyses Claire Vaye Watkins’s *Gold Fame Citrus*, a novel that takes place in the near-future California that has been turned into a desert wasteland due to climate change, and how the different times, or temporalities, are compressed into a single post-apocalyptic temporality. The novel questions the human understanding of different scales of distorted temporalities at inhabit post-apocalyptic narratives.

Apocalyptic narratives can be analysed as a reconstructed sacred History, where the different temporalities of human life, social changes, and ”natural” temporalities are compressed into a single anthropocentric contemporaneity, that offer explanations and sense-making through the speculated end of history (Kermode 2000). The post-apocalyptic narratives also pose questions to human understanding of Time and History by placing human agency as the singular point of different temporalities. The paper also analyses, how the surreal and phantasmagoric world of the novel relates to the overarching temporality of the apocalypse. How is the forward moving, all-encompassing temporality of the apocalypse represented in the novel? Or can the inherently anthropocentric time of the apocalypse be represented in a post-apocalyptic world?

**Bio**

Mikko Mäntyniemi, M.A, is a doctoral student at the University of Tampere. His doctoral thesis, “Poetics of the End of Time: Anticipations, Expectations, and Temporalities in Apocalyptic Narratives” analyses the dominant apocalyptic rhetoric in apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives in the 21st century. His research interests include rhetorical narrative theory, possible worlds theory, cognitive narratology, and the philosophy of time.
Narrating the More-than-Human World

Hilary Duffield (University of Trier): The Narrative of Interspecies Conflict in the Anthropocene

Whilst narratives of interspecies conflict can be found prior to the mid-twentieth century (e.g. H G Wells’s story “The Empire of the Ants” [1905]), from the 1950s onwards – i.e. at the same time as the sharp rise in human planetary activity denoting the beginning of the Anthropocene – there is a marked development in a range of new narratives which imagine humans involved in ecologically game-changing conflicts with other species. These narratives depict humans under attack or enslaved by other species and thus deposed from their position at the top of the planetary eco-hierarchy. John Wyndham’s novel The Day of the Triffids (1951) and Daphne du Maurier’s short story “The Birds” (1952) are two key examples which depict human civilization subdued by genetically manipulated plants and by the concerted actions of birds respectively. Pierre Boulle’s La Planète des Singes (1963), which depicts a future where Homo sapiens is no longer the dominant primate, subsequently gave rise to multiple film series from Planet of the Apes (1968) onwards.

The narrative of interspecies conflict thus imagines real-world life-forms as well as fictionally mutated entities in conflict with humanity. Above all, it fictionally reverses the planetary dominance of Homo sapiens that characterizes the Anthropocene. The paper will discuss key examples of this genre with a twofold focus: firstly, it will analyze the ways in which these narratives imagine transformed power relations between humans and other life-forms, particularly through the creation of new fictional ecosystems; secondly, it will discuss possible explanations for the marked rise in fictions of interspecies conflict as from the mid-twentieth century, using both text-based evidence and cognitive-cultural arguments regarding these narratives’ role and fascination within human consciousness in the Anthropocene.

Bio

Hilary Duffield is Professor of English Literature at the University of Trier in Germany. Her work on narratives of interspecies conflict is part of a research project on the invasion narrative. She presented on this project at ENN4 (Ghent 2015) and at the 2016 ISSN conference (Amsterdam), and has also published papers on invasion narratives of the Cold War. Her current overall research focus is on narratives of environmental crisis and the Anthropocene. Her book Coincidence and Counterfactuality: Plotting Time and Space in Narrative Fiction (University of Nebraska Press, 2008; published as Hilary Dannenberg) won the George and Barbara Perkins award for the most significant contribution to the study of narrative in 2010.
Elise Kraatila (University of Tampere): The Planet vs Humanity: The Strange Case of War on Life in the Fantasy World of N. K. Jemisin’s The Broken Earth

Fantasy fiction is often stereotypically seen as a genre steeped in Tolkienesque nostalgia for a more natural world of times long past, where humankind does not hold dominance over nature or the destiny of the planet, but rather exists in unproblematic harmony with natural environment. In 21st century fantasy storytelling, however, there have emerged several works that question this naïve approach to an idealized past, and instead explore themes of human exploitation of the nature in the speculative manner typical for the genre, as well as question the instrumental role environment has typically played in fantasy narratives. In my presentation, I discuss the ways in which one prominent new fantasy trilogy, N. K. Jemisin’s The Broken Earth, approach these themes.

In speculative fiction, attributes of living beings are often given to inanimate things, and vice versa, highlighting through estrangement questions of life, awareness, intelligence, and their ethical implications. In the highly strange world of The Broken Earth trilogy, this estrangement is brought about by presenting the planet itself literally as a living being with a singular awareness, and a grudge against the humanity that has sought to enslave it. By anthropomorphizing the planet, the trilogy centers on a speculative questions of: What if the planet had an opinion of the conduct of the humankind inhibiting it? What if the human disregard of the planet was reciprocated? What if the planet fought back? The novels use estrangement and speculation to offer points of view to the topical questions of the Anthropocene: what are the implications and consequences of treating the planet merely as a resource, as property. The presentation deals with questions of the potential of speculative genre fiction of representing abovementioned issues, and the questions of apocalyptic narratives and human and non-human agency in fantasy fiction.

Bio
Elise Kraatila, M.A. is a doctoral student in the University of Tampere. Her doctoral thesis, Fantasy Novel in the 21st Century and the Speculative Turn of Storytelling, explores the part increasingly ubiquitous fantasy fiction plays in the cultural and literary trends of the current century, and how the narrative practices of speculative fiction change the ways of storytelling.
Our point of departure in this paper is that confronting the narratives of the Anthropocene, as this symposium aims to do, inevitably involves confronting the epistemological limitations of narrative itself: how storytelling is bound to simplify climatological processes that philosopher Dale Jamieson characterizes as “probabilistic, multiple, indirect, often invisible, and unbounded in space and time” (2014, 61). Narrative is a human-scale practice that favors actions performed by individual characters over temporal periods commensurable with human existence. How does one narrate the Anthropocene without significant distortion?

Our answer has to do with how narrative may work against the grain of its own anthropocentrism, through formal experimentation. We will focus on three strategies that can successfully problematize the link between narrative and the human scale: first, the foregrounding of nonhuman narrators and focalizers that distance readers from their human life world; second, the use of plotting devices that uncouple narrative progression from conventional notions of linearity and teleology, for instance by multiplying spatiotemporal frames or by placing a material object at the center of the plot; and, third, the creation of a secondary, but thematically and affectively significant, “paranarrative” (Martens and Biebuyck 2013) that blends human and nonhuman realities through metaphorical language.

Our discussion of these strategies will be accompanied by examples drawn from contemporary fiction. In the final part of the paper, we will turn to Jeff VanderMeer’s “weird” novels as a case study. By combining narratological speculation and textual analyses, the paper shows how formal devices enable narrative to capture the complexity of what Timothy Morton calls the “mesh,” or the constitutive entanglement of human societies and the nonhuman world.

About the Authors
This paper is based on the ERC-funded research project “Narrating the Mesh,” of which Marco Caracciolo is the Principal investigator and Gry Ulstein and Shannon Lambert are core members. The presentation will be delivered by Gry Ulstein.

Gry Ulstein (gryulstein@gmail.com) is a PhD researcher within Narrating the Mesh. She received a Research Master in Comparative Literary Studies from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. Her work focuses on “weird” fiction, comparing earlier (H. P. Lovecraft) and more recent forms of weird (Jeff VanderMeer).

Marco Caracciolo (marco.caracciolo@ugent.be) is Assistant Professor of English and Literary Theory at Ghent University in Belgium. He is the author of three books, including most recently Strange Narrators in Contemporary Fiction: Explorations in Readers’ Engagement with Characters (University of Nebraska Press, 2016).
Local Perspectives on Planetary Issues

Senta A. Sanders (University of Augsburg): Precarious Lives: Kivalina and the Human Face of the Arctic Climate Crisis

Western nations continue to add to the precariousness of some lives at the expense of others rather than reinforcing the ethical dependence that humans have on each other in spite of national and international borders. When considered through the scope of global climate change, it becomes clear that Judith Butler’s notion of the precariousness of life not only augments Rob Nixon’s concept of slow violence—and vice versa—but is also effectively embodied by it.

A central trope of the Anthropocene Age, Nixon’s concept of slow violence captures the delayed effects of transnational environmental injustices that occur gradually and out of sight, mainly affecting marginalized people and ecosystems. Nixon emphasizes the utter failure of those not directly affected by the ongoing affliction to acknowledge these seemingly impalpable injustices and wonders how the imperceptible environmental calamities of slow violence can be transformed into narratives that are powerful enough to incite public empathy and political intervention. While Butler, also points to the ethical necessity of social transformation for the better, she argues that some lives may not be recognized as lives at all, thus emphasizing the need for visibility.

Positioned within the intersecting spheres of postcolonial ecocriticism and environmental justice, this paper aims to show that contemporary environmental narratives such as Christine Shearer’s nonfiction book *Kivalina: A Climate Change Story* (2011) and Gina Abatemarco’s documentary film *Kivalina* (2016) are stories that need to be told, as they have not only succeeded at creating persuasive narratives of ongoing local oppression by tracing toxic carbon-based contaminants as they leave their industrial places of origin and travel to the top of the world, where they wreak havoc on the lives and lifestyles of the inhabitants of the circumpolar Arctic, but also vividly assert that time is running out for the four hundred inhabitants of Kivalina.

Bio

Senta Sanders is currently working on her Ph.D., which will examine contemporary narratives of the Arctic through the intersecting spheres of postcolonial ecocriticism, cultural ecology and environmental justice. She received her M.A. in English and American Literature and Anglophone Cultural Studies from the University of Augsburg. She has published on climate change in the Arctic and is currently editing the forthcoming anthology *Border Stories: Narratives of Peace, Conflict and Communication in the 20th and 21st Centuries*. Her fields of interest include ecocriticism, the postcolonial Arctic and climate change narratives. She is a member of the Augsburg Cultural Ecology Research Group.
Toni Lahtinen (University of Tampere): A Bird’s Nest Lost

Environmental Activism and Terrorism in Contemporary Finnish Literature

After the turn of the millennium, environmental activists and terrorists invaded Finnish literature and popular culture. The unprecedented radicalization of environmental movement produced collective fears of the deterioration of social order and large-scale catastrophes. These new fears affected especially Finnish crime fiction – a genre that often reacts swiftly to social change. In the 1990s, ecothrillers even became a new subgenre that repeatedly dealt with the question: are modern ecoactivists heroes or terrorists?

The ecological trend in the crime fiction was intensified by the development of the late modern risk society. In Finnish literature, ecoactivists and terrorists became popular characters after a well-known series of ecotages in 1995. These historical attacks at Finnish fur farmers created a moral panic in the press and a fierce social debate where activists were seen as a symbolic threat for Finnish society and economy. In my presentation, I will approach the Finnish crime fiction as risk narratives that 1) in the 1990s tried to deconstruct the idea of ecoactivists as the dangerous Other 2) but after the 2001 riots in Genoa and the 9/11 terrorist attacks, have depicted ecoactivism as a global threat to the national security. The crime novels are part of a larger ecological trend in Finnish literature that has – once again – challenged the national myth of Bird’s Nest, Finland’s self-image as a safe and peaceful haven far from the troubles of the world.
Inna Sukhenko (University of Helsinki): The Politicised “Nuclear Narrative” within Nuclear Literary Studies: The Ukrainian Vision

The research deals with studying the transformations of “nuclear narrative” within nuclear literary studies in the aspect of distinguishing local/global dimensions of “nuclear narrative” while stressing its implementation in “provincializing” space. This aspect involves finding out the ways of ecocritical vision on “nuclear narrative” against the literary background of studying “nuclear energy” and “nuclear catastrophe”. Studying “nuclear narrative” in East-European writing practices (with further comparison with North American ones) gives an opportunity to distinguish the local/global features of the ecocritical studies in the context of researching ecological memory and ecological identity in the post-traumatic societies.

This approach involves the process of finding out the specificity of literary presentation of “a nuclear catastrophe” in East-European writing practices within the last 30 years (actually covered by the post-Chernobyl experience). Such ecocritical approach shows the techniques of shaping “nuclear narrative” under the global/national/regional needs in the traumatic societies. Reconsidering “nuclear narrative” in an ecocritical perspective reveals the importance of underlying national and transnational views on a nuclear disaster and its aftermath which gives a unique way to study how “nuclear/apocalyptic/Chevron” writings contributes to “nuclear narrative” concept.

The analysis of literary responses to the nuclear disasters within cultural and social contexts can not only distinguish the local/global levels of the transformations, but also highlight the political component of “nuclear narrative”.

My experience of studying “Chernobyl narration” in Ukrainian vision reveals that the “Chernobyl” is regarded as a place, a symbol of “Human-Nature” battle, a Nature’s domination, a protector from “peaceful atom”, a tomb of the Soviet regime, self-destroying science, a part of “private historical memory”, an unhealthy fascination (a touristic attraction), “convergent media” product (S.T.A.L.K.E.R., Chernobyl VR Project) and even as a litmus test that shows the attitude of the authorities towards their own society both in the 1980s and even in the time before Maydan 2013/2014.

This aspect of the research not only puts the ground for “nuclear environmental humanities” but also encourages the “nuclear diplomacy” within communities and the global society.

Bio
Inna Sukhenko (the University of Helsinki, Finland) is a postdoctoral researcher of “Helsinki University Humanities” Program, that includes Environmental Humanities Project among two others. Her academic interests deal with environmental humanities, nuclear literature, ecocriticism. Being originally from Ukraine (Dnipro National University), Sukhenko’s special interest lies with “Chernobyl” writing within ecocritical studies. She was a grantee of some exchange programs such as Cambridge Colleges Hospitality Scheme, Erasmus Plus, the Study of US Institutes, “Global Dialogues” (Open Society Foundations) etc. She is proud of her contribution into international research projects on ecocriticism, environmental identity, environmental humanities, nuclear environmental humanities, urban literary studies.