

The Great Challenges of the 21st Century Demand a New Humanities Paradigm

Keynote

Prof.Dr. Steven Hartman, Mälardalen University

If the Humanities is to make a significant contribution in our local, national and international efforts to meet to the great challenges of the Anthropocene, then those of us working in humanistic disciplines need to take ourselves more seriously as a community, and perhaps somewhat less seriously as individuals.

Today's academic humanities domain faces numerous challenges and threats that are self-reinforcing, such as severe cuts in research funding, downsized faculty staffing (in many cases slashing of whole core subjects from university curricula), and challenges of public confidence. We find ourselves facing not only the perception of our diminished societal impact but arguably an underlying reality that we do not contribute as actively as other knowledge domains with real-world solutions to the—increasingly wicked—problems facing today's societies. As our world witnesses radical social-environmental changes in this century, the Humanities finds itself too often cast (even self-cast) in the role of an 'also-ran' or 'sideline sitter,' contrasting unfavorably with the humanities projects of the 20th century, whose scholarly culture continues to throw a long, anachronistic shadow over our community now almost two decades into the 21st century.

This talk is not intended to be yet another lament over the poor, misunderstood, left-behind humanities. Rather it is a challenge and a provocation to break free of this stigma and frame a new narrative that reflects the true—if as yet largely unrealized—potential that this knowledge community holds in addressing the very real challenges facing the world in the Anthropocene. If we have been left behind—or *apparently so*—then this situation is in no small measure our own fault. In part we have not done a good enough job communicating the relevance of the knowledge gains we are achieving and the significance of our various projects beyond the reaches of our own community. We have also been poor at engaging in policy-relevant discussions with those who influence and set policy. We do not regularly assess the state of knowledge in our own humanities domain, which is a practice that occurs routinely within the social sciences, economic sciences, natural sciences, engineering and medical fields within vital knowledge assessment work pertaining to the most pressing global questions (e.g. biodiversity, climate change, food and water security, public health, and numerous other present and future challenges). Finally, we are very poor at interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary engagement with other knowledge domains. These dynamic, border-crossing modes of engagement and knowledge production provide the foundations of effective and reliable knowledge assessment, and historically we have attempted only in limited contexts to engage in them.

This keynote talk will provide a brief overview of a number of humanities-driven initiatives now underway internationally that are working to change this tired narrative of the neglected humanities. These initiatives are striving to provide new models of engagement within a revitalized Humanities paradigm that is less insular, less driven by exceptional individuals. Such efforts suggest ways and contexts in which literary scholars, historians, philosophers, cultural studies scholars, art historians and academics from many other humanistic disciplines are pulling together dialogically to address our great challenges in specific vulnerable/exemplary cases.

Reframing the Anthropocene Discourse: Designing the Politics of the Earth Keynote

Patrick Degeorges, Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon

As a concept, the Anthropocene points to the change of scale in the relationship between human development and the Earth-System. Humanity has become a major geological agent, opening a new era in Earth's history, the outcome of which remains uncertain. As a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene is, paradoxically, mostly situated in the future, a subject for hard science-fiction. To prevent the irreversible and catastrophic consequences of a "hothouse earth" scenario, the epistemic community initially gathered around the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), rightly calls for a non-linear social transformation that can stabilize the Earth in a habitable state. This historical diagnosis echoes the pioneering insights provided by Vladimir Vernadsky in the 1920's : the 21st century will be the time for humanity to finally unite and rise to the challenge of consciously regulating its cumulated systemic impacts on the biosphere. Or it will drive itself into "barbarization" and extinction. As serious doubts are cast upon the capacity of the westphalian international system to keep within the "safe operating space" of a governed Earth, the strategy suggested by the techno-scientific community is based on a cybernetic approach to "geopower". Only a supranational technocratic stewardship of the Earth life-support system, insulated from democratic accountability and able to secure compliance from nation-states, could bring salvation to the human species. This post-political position is ideologically homogenous to ordoglobalism's ambition to promulgate one law for the world economy. Is depoliticization the only realistic option for the survival of humankind? We argue that, by desperately clinging on an already obsolete holocenic technological enframing (Gestell) of the Earth, these conservative "meta-narratives" do not recognize the transformative and liberating cosmobiopolitical potential of the Anthropocene. Using a semiotic square to map the implications of the official discourse of the Anthropocene, we will show that different paradigmatic stories for the Great Transition can lead to creatively design actual politics of the Earth and respond to the unprecedented existential planetary risks that distinguish our epoch from all other cultures and social forms.

Animals in the Empire: Zakes Mda's *The Heart of Redness*

Dr. Barış Ağır, Osmaniye Korkut Ata University

The discourse of European imperialism as a textual practice that legitimates colonial domination of the environment, nonhumans, and non-European humans, is dependent on the discourse of speciesism. Taking a long view of the history of imperialist discourse, one can see that the figure of the human and the supplementary figure of the animal play complicated but relatively consistent roles in the language of oppression. Imperialist discourse can be embodied in either material or discursive practises that both advocate and ensure the exploitation of the wild animals and the opposition between the European colonizer and the animal, which has caused devastating consequences on the ecological harmony in the colonies.

In the process of conquest and expansion, the colonizers aimed to establish not only a political and cultural empire but also a biological one. In accordance with imperial discourses, animals are usually objectified as they are deemed to have no subjectivity. By exploiting and slaughtering animals, the Western colonizers not only disavowed animals' right for freedom, depriving them of their rights to exist, but also used analogies between humans and animals to construct superior-inferior dualism. The hunting and killing of indigenous animals for pleasure, food, political domination and economic benefits has also resulted in serious ecological degradation.

In this context, this paper will explore how South African author Zakes Mda reshapes animal imagery and human-animal relationship as a response and resistance to the imperialistic practices and ecological exploitation. Set in the African landscape, Mda's novel *The Heart of Redness* consciously shows the concern about ecological issues with animals as vehicles to demonstrate a kind of resistance to the discourse of ecological imperialism. In the novel, the avenue of destabilizing and subverting such imperialism is actualized in the dialogue between postcolonialism and ecocriticism with animals as medium.

Ecologies of Representation, Representation of Ecology: Mediated Matters in *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*

Dr. Burcu Kayışçı Akkoyun, Koç University

This paper examines Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* (1990) from an ecocritical perspective within the context of what Fredric Jameson identifies as the "cultural logic of late capitalism"¹ and Jason W. Moore formulates as the "Capitalocene."² Yamashita brings together a cast of peculiar characters ranging from a three-armed American entrepreneur to a Brazilian feather guru and a Japanese immigrant with a small ball whirling around his head. This small ball is at the same time the narrative voice that tells the story which begins as a utopian capitalist tale in the Amazon basin but culminates in an apocalyptic epidemic and bacteria outbreak. Yamashita depicts the multi-layered operations of global corporate culture, and explores the intricate socioeconomic networks to reveal their detrimental effects on natural environment, humans, and non-human residents of the earth. Through the magic realist elements and combination of comedy, social satire, and apocalyptic tropes, Yamashita problematizes and reconfigures the binary logic defining the relationship between nature and culture, human and non-human, local and global, and real and imitation. This hybrid reconfiguration that permeates the subject matter of the story is also reflected unto its form which imitates a *novela*, a Brazilian soap opera, emphasizing the mediated nature of the text along with the mediatedness of nature in the text. It is in this sense, I argue, that Yamashita's novel is an innovative response both to the environmental crisis within the material world and to the representational challenges in ecologically engaged narratives. With its open-ended structure, *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest* addresses, in Fredric Jameson's words, "a fundamental antinomy of the postmodern"³ and exemplifies Serpil Oppermann's dialogical approach to "ecologically oriented postmodernism."⁴ It offers fertile grounds to consider the interconnection between socioeconomic networks, environmental realities, and discursive practices.

¹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke UP, 1992).

² Jason W. Moore, "The Capitalocene, Part I: on the nature and origins of our ecological crisis," *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (2010): 594–630, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1235036>

³ Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

⁴ Serpil Oppermann, "Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice," *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Vol 13, No. 2 (Summer 2006): 103-128.

Population Control and the Feminist/Ecological Resistance in Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army*

Selen Aktaran, PhD Candidate, Hacettepe University

This paper examines Sarah Hall's *The Carhullan Army* from a feminist ecocritical perspective, focusing specifically on the problems of population control, eco-disasters, and female subjugation. Taking place in a futuristic Britain devastated by an unspecified massive flooding event, the novel tells the story of Sister, a young woman who flees from the despotic regime of a government called the Authority to Carhullan, a farming-based, all female, commune. Through her story, the novel brings together very important issues relevant to both feminism and environmentalism, and opens a productive window for feminist ecocritical interpretations. On the one hand, it demonstrates how population control policies violently exploit women's bodies and how women characters suffer from the mandatory use of coils done in the name of so-called environmental protection. On the other hand, once women get entangled in power relations, they themselves become as ruthless and domineering as men. Although Carhullan starts out with the ideal of creating an ecologically sustainable society devoid of coercion, it later dissolves into a dystopian and terrorist group, shattering its initial vision. It constructs another type of oppression where, this time, women become coercive just like men. I have chosen this novel as an exemplary case because it not only criticizes the androcentric mindset as the major cause of environmental destruction, but also problematizes power relations and draws attention to the reversal of power from men to women. In so doing, it encourages new feminist ecocritical interpretations and invites us to reflect on whether it is possible to end all types of oppression and establish ideal and peaceful societies.

Ecopsychological Readings of Sound and Image in the Anthropocene

Dr. Fatma Aykanat, Zonguldak Bülent Ecevit University

In this paper, I argue that despite the obvious interconnection between the mutual wellbeing of the habitat and the inhabitants, the recent ecological trends indicate that humans continue to practice ecologically destructive activities. According to the Pulitzer Prize winning biologist, philosopher, and the writer of *Biophilia* (2003) Edward O. Wilson, such an anthropocentric ecological negligence observed in the Anthropocene will only bring a “miserable future” (147), which Wilson calls “the *Eremocene*, the Age of Loneliness” (147). Humans, Wilson contends, will be condemned to live as the last survivors on a dead planet. Humanity’s illogical insistence on ecologically destructive habits, which will eventually lead to self-destruction, is hard-to-explain. It is, in fact, a psychological paradox. Art may help us understand it since art makes paradoxical psychological anxieties and existential crises in the Anthropocene more visible and tangible. Guided by John Berger’s opening statement in his inspirational book *Ways of Seeing* (1972), “seeing comes before words” (7), this paper will explore the audio-visual artistic imprints of humans in the Anthropocene, and delve into the psychological roots of anthropogenic ecological destructions and reconstructions. Thus, the visual focus of this paper will be on the paintings that portray the more-than-physical interconnectedness of human and the nonhuman environments, showing the parallel degradation of landscapes and mindscapes. They reflect how humans cope with ecological challenges both on the conscious and subconscious levels. Paintings of the Surrealist painters Max Ernst, Paul Delvaux, and Yves Tanguy will be my examples. I will also provide audio examples, chosen among the contemporary sound projects, which reflect the artistic contemplations on the contemporary ecological threats, such as loss of biodiversity, mass extinctions, and irreversible environmental transformations. The selected sound projects are Keith Armstrong’s *Eremocene: the Age of Loneliness Project* (2017) and David Monacchi’s *The Fragments of Extinction Project* (2013), which respectively imagine a sonic future for an ecologically lonely planet, and create a sonic heritage of ecosystems by recording the biological sound of untouched forest ecosystems all around the planet. They produce unique soundscapes composed of ecosystem sound portraits for different biological regions of the Earth, with an aim to preserve the records of acoustic biodiversity.

(Postcolonial) Environmental Humanities: History and Geography in the Context of the Anthropocene

Dr. Roberta Biasillo, KTH Royal Institute of Technology

The 2017 has been the year of the environmental humanities and indeed this field boomed in the academic discussion. The combination of environment and humanities transforms them both: on the one hand, we recognise a landscape as constituted by stories besides materiality; on the other hand, the text – which is the object of interest of the humanities par excellence – is not only a written or oral entity, but also a corporeal subject.

The current ecological crisis is crucial to reclaim an active role for the humanities and provides a window of opportunity to redefine this field of inquiry, and particularly history and geography, in themselves. If it sounds self-evident that we face current emergencies and challenges for the future, we need to reflect upon where is the past in our present and what the past can bring into our academic and non-academic discussion and action.

Since it is impossible to separate environmental analysis from discussion of Western imperialism and industrialization, I will unfold a binary-path discourse, and the concept of colonization used in its wider sense. Firstly, I will bridge these two parallel tracks: how to acknowledge the power relations in the environment and overcome them; how to overcome the power relations in the humanities and overcome them as well. Secondly, building up such de-colonial and post-colonial approach, I will propose a research methodology for investigating the environment, which I call “textual geography.” Finally, relying on the most recent publications on this emerging cluster of disciplines, I will reflect on the definition of environmental humanities.

Past Matters: Towards an Alternative Ecological Lifeway in the Anthropocene

Dr. Subarna De, Madras Christian College

Around 1878, coffee was introduced to Kodagu from Ceylon by the European colonisers. At the turn of the nineteenth century, numerous human-made forest fires and mass felling of native trees resulted in the replacement of the forested hills with coffee plantations. This has altered the topography of the region transforming Kodagu— located in the state of Karnataka in India—to one of the prominent coffee plantation destinations on the world map. The price of the establishment of the coffee plantations was the threatened ecological diversity. To counter this environmental challenge in Kodagu, in this paper, I propose an alternative ecological lifeway in the form of bioregional reinhabitation as a possible solution to the problems intensified in the age of Anthropocene. The alternative ecological lifeway is founded on the place-based indigenous knowledge system of the native Kodava coffee-planters who employ green strategies like re-growing native plants as a means of gardening and re-foresting, setting up aviaries, small animal farms, and kitchen garden of local species within the coffee plantations to restore the lost ecology of the place. Understanding that bioregional reinhabitation challenges the impending crisis of unsustainable living, I will argue how the alternative ecological lifeway forms a theoretical and practical paradigm to project bioregional reinhabitation as not mere utopian constructions but real experiences practised in the field to counter the environmental challenges in the age of Anthropocene.

Originary Tsuris: Camouflage and Mimicry via Creativity in the Eco-Ecesis of a Poet-Child of the Chthlucene

Prof.Dr. Yusuf Eradam, TED University

This paper presents a partly-autobiographical mythification, a narrative, a storied matter of risk and resilience of a poet-child's survivalism by means of creative activities. It is about the epiphanies he arrives at while growing up and developing environmental consciousness, which will later lead him to the environmental *humanities* and the Anthropocene. While actually living *earth-faced* like any other organism often in harmony with nature via creative *ekphrasis*, the child plays kitkat in his Central Anatolian town, goes to a boarding school only to become yet another child, who writes poetry, short-stories, and even songs, takes photographs, makes animals out of tree-crusts. And best of all, he sings to and sometimes creatively mimics other species; he is like some other, and othered species making him the other, or maybe there is no other as he comes to realize later in life. Now, aged 65, as he is *mothering* two cats, this child wants to present this paper with samples of his *creatively-cuthlu* endeavours (*kutlu işler*) of camouflage and mimicry to prove his awakening to his own life-long path of ecological-consciousness, his attempts to believe that his kind must not be an endangered species when he is living as one with the rest of the beings in his environment, ie., ecesis. The paper is basically about the possibility of *knowing* one's true-self via knowing and acknowledging other selves one is living with, the main idea being the belief in the transcendental *oneness* with the *whole*, as we are all parts of that whole, a belief, which is a remedy for othering, and an obstacle to the traps of antagonism, greed and hubris.

Modernist Resilience through Dark Environmental Aesthetics in the Age of the Anthropocene

Dr. Gülşah Göçmen, Aksaray University

One of the most effective forms of modernist resilience during the age of the Anthropocene shows itself through disrupting the traditional aesthetics of idealized natural beauty with a special treatment of anthropogenic effects on the natural and built environments as their post-war settings vividly exhibit. With their spatial focus on altered natural landscapes, modernist works keep a critical dialogue with the inherited ideals of the pastoral, reflecting an ironical attitude towards the generic aesthetics embedded in it. Their dark urbanatural atmosphere points to an immediate perception of (then) ongoing radical anthropogenic changes on the ecological structure, predominantly caused by both World Wars on the landscape. Modernist aesthetics, rather than with a Romantic idealization of or return to the natural world, generates a complex configuration of 'nature' that questions the possibility of reaching any solid standards for defining the aesthetic ideals of 'nature' as it requires a clear distinction to be made between what is natural and what is urban in the first place. In this sense, this paper deploys dark environmental aesthetics, promulgated by Timothy Morton, Greg Garrard, and particularly Heather Sullivan as a critical frame to take stock of modernist forms of resilience in poetry engaging in an analysis of such landscapes as postwar environments of Edward Thomas, (in)famous Waste Land of T. S. Eliot, and dark pastoral settings of D. H. Lawrence. All these poets individually help create a modern, skeptical, and prototypically environmentalist view of their postwar landscapes in their literary renderings. The poets' dark modernist aesthetics not only calls into question the miscellaneous dimensions of environmental degradation caused by the war, but also evokes the idea of, what Sullivan calls, "dirty nature," which is both the physical reality and subversive aesthetics of the Anthropocene. Accordingly, this paper argues that modernist environmental aesthetics also fits to be considered as an efficient strategy to navigate and even overcome drastic environmental changes on postwar landscapes by rendering them truthfully or rather with a darker or more pessimistic approach.

**Creative Resistance Against Racial and Environmental Violence: Trickster Story-Telling in Chesnutt's
'Po' Sandy'**

Gülfer Göze, Tufts University and Koç University

In *Sharing the Earth*, an environmental justice anthology presenting the voices of the “world’s poor, the vast majority of whom are people of color, especially women and children,” Ammons and Roy emphasize the value of story-telling for the present day and the future of the world. They state that, along with providing “information, facts, and data,” “The call for Environmental Justice must reach people’s hearts, their emotions, their conscience—their spirit as well as their minds. Literature has the ability to do that.”* Following their lead, I am interested in the significance of story-telling in revealing the intertwined impacts of the Anthropocene on the human and the non-human. My paper focuses on the trickster figure in African American literature to understand the shared destiny of the bodies of slaves and trees in the face of plantation violence.

In *Conjure Woman* (1899), Charles Chesnutt’s trickster Uncle Julius is a former slave who tells stories to his new white employers after Emancipation. As Julius’ stories manipulate the white couple’s decisions about how they use their land and plantation, Chesnutt’s book influences the attitudes of his readers to the country’s past of racial violence. In the story “Po Sandy,” racial and environmental violence become one as Julius narrates how a fugitive slave was turned into a tree by a conjure woman to escape the fate of a slave in the hands of a slave owner, but ended up sharing the tragic fate of a tree in the hands of the local sawmill.

Building on the similarities of the colonial perspective on landscape and on slaves, I examine the meaning and significance of nature in African American narratives and offer trickster story-telling as a creative strategy to resist and survive the violent ecosystem of the plantation.

* Elizabeth Ammons and Modhumita Roy. *Sharing the Earth: An International Environmental Justice Reader*. 2015.

Dialogical Ecofeminist Perspectives in 'The Moths' by Helena María Viramontes and 'Women Hollering Creek' by Sandra Cisneros

Assoc.Prof.Dr. Imelda Martín Junquera, Universidad de León

This paper intends to analyse two very well-known stories by two prominent Chicana writers such as Viramontes and Cisneros from an ecofeminist perspective. It is my aim to approach both texts having in mind previous analysis that have been published, as well as to introduce an innovative theoretical frame that contemplates literary texts, women and nature as being in constant conversational relationships.

These dialogical relationships subvert the traditional domination of nature promoted by patriarchal cultures, which set the human being, especially the male representative, as superior to other living entities and as the only one with "agency" thus rendering the rest as passive. Women, traditionally associated with nature because of their reproductive and nurturing qualities, have been discriminated and identified with that passive and submissive attitude attributed to nature as well as other ethnic and sexual minorities.

Chicana writers from the 1980 and 1990s have been attempting to provide agency to Chicana women and the natural elements they portray in their narratives and poetry. A very clear example is represented by Viramontes' "The Moths," where even the title states the importance of the little insects in the story as well as that of the three generations of women whose lives intersect in the narrative. Cisneros' "Woman Hollering Creek" deals with a parallel story of submission and resistance in which a dialogical relationship with the river and the surrounding nature serves to provide agency to the protagonist.

Why Deleuze and Guattari Do Not Like Cats or Dogs?

Dr. Emre Koyuncu, Kadir Has University

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari distance themselves from an anthropocentric image of thought through a machinic ontology that they put forward in *Anti-Oedipus* and develop in *A Thousand Plateaus*. As a matter of fact, *A Thousand Plateaus* is brimming with animals. Bees, mice, whales, horses, wolves, birds, lice, and ticks appear repeatedly in the “plateaus” and they do so in a rather unusual way: as a party in a process that Deleuze and Guattari call “becoming.” Their concept of “becoming-animal” has made them into one of the most cited philosophers on the animal question. The aim of this paper is to discuss a rather controversial statement in *A Thousand Plateaus*, which seems to be widely overlooked in the animal studies scholarship, namely that “anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool” (240). I argue that this statement precludes reading the concept of becoming-animal as a relationship of affection between a loving human being and his or her lovely animals. For a more rigorous interpretation of the concept of becoming-animal, we have to confront the fact that it cannot be easily mobilized in the service of a moral agenda that seeks to undo the human-animal distinction on grounds of animal rights of welfare.

Toxic Within Us: Post-Natural Reflections in Contemporary Memoirs and Fiction

Dr. Pelin Kümbet, Kocaeli University

The ubiquity of toxicity prevailing our lives, marked by techno-scientific risks, waste, dislocation, disruption, and commodification, has proven how humans have come to mesh with toxic incursion more tightly than ever in the age of the Anthropocene. This trans-corporeal dissemination of toxicity as a part of our post-natural society finds itself in toxic food, toxic environment and communities, toxic minds and bodies, as well as toxic relationships and politics. Thus, acting as what Timothy Morton calls “hyperobjects,” toxins can no longer be thought as disjunct and invisible artefacts, but as vibrant matters, pervasively shaping the way we think of ourselves and the non-human world. Within ecocritical and posthumanist context, toxins as emerging agencies have brought to our attention the cruciality of what Lawrence Buell defines as “toxic discourse,” a narrative of toxicology, which helps us re-contemplate our kinship with the vitality of toxic substances. Building on Ulrich Beck’s “risk society,” toxic discourse is suited to exploring how toxic matter is storied within us through the complex display of compromised lives, violated bodies, polluted minds, and tainted landscapes. To this end, my consideration for this paper is to address the distinctive role of toxic discourse to delineate the complexity of modern toxic war as reflected by contemporary memoirs and fiction. Toxic memoirs, namely, Sandra Steingraber’s *Living Downstream*, Susanne Antonetta’s *Body Toxic*, and Nancy Langston’s *Toxic Bodies* embodying scientific precision and political observation; and toxic narratives, specifically, Theodore L. Thomas and Kate Wilhelm’s *The Clone*, Indra Sinha’s *Animal’s People*, and Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* evoking increasing toxic risk. These texts help us recognize the large-scale toxic infringement, which compellingly displays responses to how our landscapes, bodyscapes, and mindscapes are tainted by contamination and pollution.

Reconsidering Medieval Genres in the Anthropocene Age

Dr. Oya Bayıltılmış Öğütçü, Adıyaman University

Medieval English literature is a compendium of literary works reflecting the narrative agency of nonhuman beings. Ranging from bestiaries to fables and debate poems, medieval literature has a number of works suggesting the potential and necessity for a non-anthropocentric understanding and literary analysis. In bestiaries, nonfictional representations of nonhuman beings, which are based on the observation and imagination of human animals, are combined with moral messages for human animals. Fables represent nonhuman animals as characters with human traits and again have been attributed a moral agenda for human beings. Debate poems also have nonhuman personas, either nonhuman animals or objects, arguing for a specific idea. Unlike traditional anthropocentric analyses which have instrumentalized the nonhuman beings in these works and disregarded their narrative agency for the sake of conveying certain moral messages for human animals, posthumanist readings of these works call for a non-anthropocentric approach, drawing attention to “humanity” represented by the merge of the human and the nonhuman. Hence, for instance, bestiaries should be regarded as a means to assert the “narrative agency” (Iovino and Oppermann) of nonhuman animals. Fables are not just moral stories told by human animals, but the reminders of the humanity of both human animals and nonhuman animals. Debate poems are not just poems that instrumentalize nonhuman animals for conveying discussions about conflicting ideas symbolized by the nonhuman animals represented in the poems, but also show how nonhuman animals were companion species of human animals. With such richness displaying the world of nonhuman beings, these medieval works, incorporating a nonhuman stance, remind us what is lacking in the Anthropocene age. The nonhuman beings are now more “silent” in literary works compared to their medieval counterparts. Hence, rather than conducting traditional anthropocentric analysis of medieval works such as bestiaries, fables and debate poems, this paper aims at asserting the necessity for posthumanist readings of medieval works in the Anthropocene age through selected examples from each stated genre.

Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* and Environmental Injustice in Shakespeare's *Warwick*

Dr. Murat Öğütçü, Munzur University

Poly-Olbion (1612, 1622) is a nearly 15,000 lines long unfinished poem in which Michael Drayton aimed at presenting a geographical history of England, Wales and Scotland, but only managed to do this for the first two parts of the British Isle. Consisting of two parts and 30 songs (cantos), the composition of the poem first started around 1598 and it is a product of a long process of partial observation and overall source-reading of the British Isle's natural and human history. While there is an anthropocentric approach towards the representation of nature both in verse and through cartography that precedes the verse and is marked by anthropomorphic depictions of rivers, hills, or forests, the poem raises awareness on human's destructive effects on nature. During the long time-span of the poem's production, the changes in humans, fauna and flora are observed and underlined by Drayton. For instance, in Song 13, which focuses on Warwick and its surroundings, the effects of the rise of urbanisation on the fauna and flora of the region are especially emphasised. Being a native of the region and fellow countryman of his friend William Shakespeare, Drayton both laments and celebrates the condition of the then present ecosystem around Warwick. While taking notice of the deforestation in the Forest of Arden and describing the hunting of deer in detail, Drayton celebrates indigenous fowl and flora through his detailed portrayal of the natural beauties of Warwick. Drayton takes into account the socio-cultural dimensions of environmental transformations and the effects of environmental injustice. Therefore, this paper will analyse Drayton's depiction of Warwick in his *Poly-Olbion* as a historical record of environmental injustice in Early Modern England in order to contribute to present discussions in the environmental humanities in the Anthropocene age.

The Binary of Nature and Society in New Turkish Cinema

Dr. Ekin Gündüz Özdemirci

Environmental issues began to appear in Turkish films in the 1950's, and in the period after the 1990's, some films emerged employing an "intuitive approach" to nature in their narratives that are not necessarily focused on environmental themes. This paper examines the shifting ecological understandings in Turkish film history and focuses on realist art house films in the New Turkish Cinema. I claim that these films build up a cinematographic eco-awareness, while at the same time create a binary between nature and society, opposite to the ecological discourse that calls for a relational approach. Within a less outspoken everyday reality, instead of an open socio-political context, these films transform social realism into a cosmic realism, and follow personal stories based on a search for belonging. They portray an external nature in rural contexts, mainly from an outsider perspective of urbanite directors and characters. I will give examples from the films of internationally acclaimed directors such as Reha Erdem, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Semih Kaplanoğlu, and discuss the idea of nature that these films promote around the current socio-environmental debates in relation to urban-rural dichotomy in contemporary Turkey.

Anthropocene An-Aesthetics in Paintings of Paris's Environs around 1880

Dr. Daniel Finch-Race, University of Bristol

Fumes from a factory rarely inspire a positive emotion. Apprehension tends to accompany the sight of an unnatural presence in the oxygen-filled air that sustains our existence. The prospect of a toxified atmosphere gives pause for thought about the processes leading to such airborne pollution. We quickly end up reflecting on the extent to which fellow humans are responsible for creating the fumes while pursuing short-term gains in manufactured items and energy production. Less visible forms of environmental degradation also come to mind, such as contaminating chemicals in watercourses or our blood. In ways stretching from the personal to the global, such thoughts about our environment can spur pessimistic withdrawal, an urge to improve the situation, or something in-between. All things considered, the spectacle of industrial smoke provokes a visceral reaction that shakes us out of our everyday concerns, at least for a little while. On that basis, do images of active smokestacks hold a key to making climate change matter to people whose attentions are drawn elsewhere? Akin to the pervasive imagery of fuming factories in today's news, numerous paintings of Paris's environs around 1880 contain active smokestacks. My paper will explore the significance of these features across four dimensions – height, width, depth, time – in works by Armand Guillaumin, Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, and Vincent Van Gogh. Informed by Nicholas Mirzoeff's 'Visualizing the Anthropocene' (2014), as well as Alan Braddock and Christoph Irmscher's *A Keener Perception* (2009), I will explore the sense of an Anthropocene-determined aesthetic that muffles and/or glorifies the impact of heavy industry. My aim is to show that Impressionist paintings, produced just five generations ago, allow non-specialists to grapple more effectively with the macroscale science of climate change in terms of the emotional and medical stakes of industrialisation.

Octavia Butler: An Early Ecofeminist of the Anthropocene

Dr. Hatice Övgü Tüzün, Bahçeşehir University

Emerging as an intellectual and social movement in the 1970s as an offshoot of cultural feminism, ecofeminism seeks to expose connections between the gender problem and ecological degradation in order to address contemporary problems. A multiple recipient of the prestigious Hugo and Nebula awards, the African-American writer Octavia Estelle Butler successfully employs the science fiction genre as a platform upon which she discusses contemporary issues such as climate change, gender and racial discrimination and class conflict in a futuristic setting. In her critically acclaimed speculative science fiction novels *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998), Butler employs an ecofeminist perspective to examine the conditions that cause and perpetuate the subordination of both women and nature in a post-apocalyptic setting. Both *Earthseed* novels reflect Butler's perception of humanity as deeply flawed by a strong tendency for hierarchical thinking which leads to intolerance and violence and is manifest in sexism, racism as well as ethnocentrism. In the words of Sears: "Butler exposes a myriad of feminist concerns in her Parable novels; however, she champions the concerns of Ecofeminists unlike any dystopian novelist before her" (2015, 28). Like ecofeminists, Butler strongly opposes the exploitation of the weak by the strong and offers a powerful critique of patriarchal society and its structures of domination. I would thus argue that the *Earthseed* novels are classic ecofeminist texts in their exploration of intersections of oppression and their visceral portrayal of connections between harmful practices that exploit the environment and social structures that oppress women among other groups. Given the increasing critical and popular interest in Butler's fiction as well as the uncanny prescience of her future visions, it is possible to argue that her work is more relevant than ever. Most important relative to my purposes here is her advocacy of an ecofeminist future defined by Glynis Carr as "a world free of oppressions based on sex, race, class, and nation that is also environmentally sustainable and sound" (2011, xvii). This paper centers around the theoretical debates in the field of ecofeminism while critically examining Butler's above mentioned two novels.

An Inquiry into the Anthropocene Aesthetics after Nature

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This paper focuses on the anthropocene art that re-presents the so-called “natural” places, animals, plants, and green ecologies in ways that highlight the planetary scale environmental deterioration. This has generated an “Anthropocene aesthetics” that challenges the rigid binaries of nature versus culture and human versus nonhuman. Contemporary ecoart projects, such as the “Anthropocene Project,” visualize planetary environmental degradation resulting from industrial practices, thus creating a new form of ecoaesthetics. For instance, the “Anthropocene Project” art show and documentary directed by Jennifer Baichwal, Edward Burtynsky and Nicholas de Pencier dramatize postnatural transformations of “natural” landscapes, such as lithium evaporation ponds in Chile’s Atacama Desert. The visual power of the documentary draws our attention to not the Earth’s beauty but planetary conquest. Postnatural landscapes as such exemplify the very permeable boundaries between beauty and ugliness, and nature and culture. Deconstructing and reconstructing such boundaries, contemporary ecological artworks perpetuate an environmental understanding of humanity’s embeddedness in more-than-human ecologies. I will argue that the contemporary preoccupation with the story of the Anthropocene through an ecoaesthetics, in this regard, can envisage an ecological future for every being.

Shamanic Past Toward Healing the Future in Buket Uzuner's *Water, Earth, Air* Trilogy

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At the core of Buket Uzuner's *Water, Earth, Air* Trilogy lies the urge to underscore the embeddedness and interdependence of life across species, gender, as well as geographical and temporal boundaries. As Uzuner displays, with reference to various disciplines such as anthropology, archeology, history, law, literature, and health sciences, this view was central to Siberian Turkish shamanic existence, whose slightly or significantly modified forms were manifest in ancient Anatolian civilizations, before they were replaced by the anthropo-/androcentric worldview, as patriarchy and capitalism joined forces to dominate over nature and women. My paper focuses on the ways in which shamanic lore, as treated in the novels, can provide possibilities for healing the resulting physical, psychological, and social ills, accompanied by environmental degradation, particularly deforestation, species extinction, pollution, and climate change. All of these constitute issues of great concern for journalist Defne Kaman, as well as her grandmother, pharmacist Umay, who passes on her shamanic traits and knowledge to Defne, and her great granddaughter Ayperi in the Trilogy.

Among Umay's shamanic abilities to solve problems are healing with herbs, divination through communication with animals, trees, as well as spirits of the Upper, Middle, and Lower worlds, namely the three levels of shaman cosmology, mostly in dreams, and storytelling, in which she displays her immense knowledge of ancient myths and narratives, as well as their underpinnings concerning current issues. Umay's interweaving of the body and the mind, the material and the spiritual, the rational and the emotional, in a way that also negotiates gender and species boundaries, is unsettling for those who are accustomed to living within the hierarchical categories of patriarchy. However, they also gain her a substantial community from different generations and backgrounds with an environmental and democratic consciousness, who are ready to work for an ethical and sustainable future.

Artworks in the Anthropocene: Ecophobia as the Gaze

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When human beings lose control over nature, they tend to equate nature with horror, terror, and disgust even though, paradoxically, when they celebrate “nature,” they generally tend to equate it with peace, harmony, and refuge. Art emancipates these feelings, and turns them into spectacles. In this framework, art challenges the concept of nature as the epitome of enmity, yet art is still processed through a human institution that characterizes control over the unruly nature. This shows that there is a tension between the sometimes subversive tendencies of artworks and performance arts and the conservative interests of the institutions that house them, and ecophobia mainly shapes the way this tension plays out. Although some artworks, such as Rebecca Kelly’s ballet troupe and Kazım Karakaya’s sculptures from factory waste, urge people to overcome their loathing towards the abject, some others, such as Chris Trueman’s and Fabian Peña’s paintings with corpses of nonhuman animals, perpetuate such loathing by making the Other more separate from the self. These artworks shed light on the contrasting environmental perceptions in the Anthropocene. Moreover, they simultaneously imply that the subject, at any point, might become the other, the object, or the abject, and that is why the subject fears and hates the other, which is the gist of Simon Estok’s critique of ecophobia. The aim of my paper is, thus, to illustrate how ecophobic fear that stimulates disgust, indifference, and loathing becomes innocuous through the production of such art forms, which present ecophobia as entertainment.

Shifting the Ethical Paradigms in the Face of the Anthropocene

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Marked by the unprecedented human impact on the planet's ecosystems and the geomorphological processes, the Anthropocene is a new geological epoch (Crutzen and Stoermer 2000) that ends the Holocene. In the field of the environmental humanities, the Anthropocene has gathered interest especially in terms of its ethical, socio-cultural, and political ramifications. In this respect, the Anthropocene is more than a geological epoch that necessitates an inquiry into and a reconfiguration of the existing ethical paradigms so as to accommodate or put into perspective the irreversible violence committed against the ecosystems on a planetary scale to the point of collapse. However, given that we are embodied (Merleau-Ponty) and embedded (Braidotti 2013) beings-in-the-world (Heidegger), it is not facile to move from, what Ursula Heise (2008) calls, "a sense of place" to "a sense of planet" and hence take account of something that has such a big scale as the Anthropocene. In this paper, therefore, by giving references to D.H. Lawrence's "Snake," George Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant," and William Golding's *The Lord of the Flies*, I argue that if we can develop a sense of ethics embedded in an ethics of alterity (Levinas) and otherness and that is mindful of our concrete and particular encounters with nonhuman others, we might muster the potential to derivatively, or rather deductively, grasp the bigger picture of the Anthropocene, thereby keeping the violence and scars we inflict on the Earth at minimum.