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Axel Goodbody

## Recalling the Past to Imagine the Future:

### History and Memory in Anthropocene Literature

**Abstract:** This essay considers the paradoxical presence of history and memory in climate change fiction, a genre of Anthropocene literature whose primary aim is to imagine a climate-changed future (rather than the past). Drawing on Stef Craps' account of ›anticipatory memory‹ in climate change writing (2017), it examines the role played by memory in Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene* (1980) and Emmi Itäranta's *Memory of Water* (2014). Frisch and Itäranta go beyond framing our possible collective future as a past recalled by a historian looking back from a distant future: they present landscapes and water as archives of planetary memory, and ascribe mnemonic agency to them.

In an earlier publication I attempted to think together Memory Studies and Ecocriticism by exploring the common ground which they share in the role played by *place* in both identity construction through memory and its use in the promotion of environmental consciousness.<sup>1</sup> In this essay I take a different approach, considering the presence of history and memory in climate change fiction—a paradoxical presence, given that the primary aim of this key genre of literature in the Anthropocene is to imagine a climate-changed future, rather than the past. Anthropogenic climate change is not the only troubling marker of life in the Anthropocene: loss of biodiversity and geochemical signatures of human activity such as microplastics in the soil and the radioactive nuclei left by tests from thermonuclear weapons are arguably equally serious aspects of human impact on the environment. However, it is perhaps the most noticeable, and climate change writing is certainly the most prominent strand of the ›Anthropocene literature‹ which Gabriele Dürbeck has defined as consisting of

1 Cf. Axel Goodbody: *Sense of Place and Lieu de Mémoire: A Cultural Memory Approach to Environmental Texts*. In: Ders. and Kate Rigby (eds.): *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press 2011, pp. 55–67.

literary texts that »reflect on the human condition in the face of fundamental human transformations of the planetary surface on a global scale« and record »an emergent state of consciousness«. <sup>2</sup>

Dürbeck notes in her insightful reading of Max Frisch's *Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän* (1979, translated as *Man in the Holocene*, 1980) and Ilija Trojanow's *Eis Tau* (2011, translated as *The Lamentations of Zeno*, 2016) that the Anthropocene demands of writers »new ways of thinking about the past and the future« <sup>3</sup> as well as attention to climate justice and multiple-track narratives reflecting nonhuman as well as human agency. Taking this cue to examine the uses of the past as well as the future in contemporary environmental fiction, in the first part of this essay I explain the concept of »anticipatory memory« outlined by Stef Craps in his study of a film, novel and popular science book on climate change. <sup>4</sup> Then I explore the more complex ways in which memory functions in two novels: Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene* and Emmi Itäranta's *Memory of Water* (Finnish original 2012, English translation 2014). I finish by drawing tentative conclusions about how recalling the past may serve to help readers imagine a climate-changed future and prepare for it.

### »Anticipatory memory« in climate fiction

In his article »Climate Change and the Art of Anticipatory Memory«, Stef Craps identifies, describes and considers the reasons for a narrative device which turns out to be surprisingly common in films, novels, and popular science books on climate change. Franny Armstrong's film, *The Age of Stupid*, Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway's fictional future history, *The Collapse of Western Civilisation: A View from the Future*, and Jan Zalasiewicz's non-fiction book *The Earth after Us: What Legacy will Humans Leave on the Rocks?* feature a historian, archivist, and geologist who look back on our present moment from a distant vantage point

- 2 Gabriele Dürbeck: Ambivalent Characters and Fragmented Poetics in Anthropocene Literature: Max Frisch and Ilija Trojanow. In: *Minnesota Review* 83 (2014), pp. 112–121, here p. 112 and p. 118.
- 3 Dürbeck: Ambivalent Characters and Fragmented Poetics in Anthropocene Literature, p. 113.
- 4 Stef Craps: Climate Change and the Art of Anticipatory Memory. In: *Parallax* 23.4 (2017), pp. 479–492.

in a dystopian future, which is irrevocably marked by climate change, and in which humans have all but disappeared.

The first of these may serve here to illustrate what Craps means by ›anticipatory memory‹. *The Age of Stupid* was produced in the run-up to the Copenhagen climate summit in 2009. It is a drama-animation-documentary hybrid, featuring an old man living alone in the devastated world of 2055. He asks himself why climate change was not stopped before it was too late, and watches old footage from our time, assembled in a cautionary tale about the way in which humans have destroyed the world. As Craps comments, our culture of consumerism is rather unsubtly presented as to blame. However, the fictional framing device introduces feelings of regret, sorrow and guilt, and this brings the film to life.

*The Age of Stupid* and Craps' other case studies of future chroniclers who tell the tale of the human species and its demise (or near-demise) prompt him to ask why contemporary culture has this tendency to address and understand climate change through a fictional future history of the present. He notes that it offers a way of making the elusive phenomenon of climate change tangible and morally salient. This is true, but it remains a curiously indirect way of doing what cli-fi authors normally do: that is, extrapolating from current trends and reflecting the likely consequences of climate change, exploring the attitudes and behaviours which drive developments, and speculating on humanity's ability to adapt.

Craps argues that fictional future history is a particularly apposite narrative device in the Anthropocene, because the Anthropocene concept is itself premised on the idea that there will be a time after the end of humans when, due to our profound impact on the planet, our former existence will be discernible as a geological layer. Looking back from the future is therefore an inherent part of it. Craps also argues that anticipatory memory is a characteristic of twenty-first-century culture. We have come to live the present as the object of a future memory, taking photos on our mobiles instead of living in the moment. The ›depresentification‹ of lived experience which this anticipation of retrospection entails is a feature of contemporary life.

It should not then be surprising to find anticipatory memory appearing in climate fiction. However, this is not the only way that history and memory feature in climate fiction, and looking at others might add to our understanding of the part played by memory in shaping our response to the challenge of climate change. In a number of novels, Maja Lunde's *The History of Bees* for instance

(published in 2015), stories set in the present and the future are juxtaposed with others set in the past. Lunde's aim appears to be to reveal the human values, attitudes and behaviours which have driven climate change, while evoking its potential consequences in the future. David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004) interleaves stories in past, present and future in a particularly complex and clever way. Mitchell charts the phases of societal progression, then loops back in reverse chronological order to a past now changed by what is yet to come. Memories from the yet-to-come dystopian future form the basis for visions of a more benign alternative future, and enable a reversal of decisions in the past and present.

In the following I look at two novels imagining the *loss* of memory and its consequences. In the first, the Swiss author Max Frisch's late work, *Man in the Holocene*, seemingly permanent and immutable components of the natural environment are shown to be subject to dramatic change over time. References to prolonged heavy rain, erosion, changes in the world's temperature, shifting tectonic plates, and the emergence and extinction of species are juxtaposed with passages revealing the decline of the mental and physical faculties of an elderly man. Water and memory are also the twin focuses of the second work, Emmi Itäranta's young adult novel *Memory of Water*, but this time it is a shortage of water rather than an excess. Loss of knowledge of the past and its recovery go hand in hand with crippling drought and the promise of its alleviation.

### Human and Earth Memory in Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene*

Max Frisch's story is set in the Italian-speaking area in the south of Switzerland near Locarno and Lago Maggiore, which is famous for its majestic mountains and picturesque wooded valleys. The 73-year-old Herr Geiser has been living alone here since his wife died. He has been managing so far, but his daughter is concerned about his wellbeing, and has been pressing him to move to a flat in the city of Basle where she can look after him.

The text consists of short statements about Geiser written in the third person, and excerpts which he makes from books he is reading. We have to deduce how Geiser is feeling from fears which we are told he dismisses, and to work out what is happening by filling in the gaps between the fragments of narrative. We also have to guess at why he chooses the passages which he extracts from his 12-volume encyclopaedia and books on local geology, climate and history.

Geiser starts by writing out snippets of information, but soon turns to cutting out pages from the books, which he arranges on the walls of his sitting-room, fixing them with thumb tacks and sello tape.

It is July, and after weeks of drought it has been blowing a storm and pouring rain for days. The village is cut off from the outside world by a rockfall blocking the road. Streams gush down past Geiser's house which were not there before, and he hears reports of a landslide in another part of the valley which has swept away a sawmill. »No one believes in a landslide burying the village«, we are told somewhat ominously. Geiser anxiously scans the hillsides to check for cracks appearing in the sodden soil.

The unseasonable weather undermines Geiser's mental and physical health. Already in the first few pages we learn that he is forgetting things: this is drawn to our attention by comments such as »Loss of one's memory would be awful«.<sup>5</sup> To begin with, Geiser's memory loss appears to result from his isolation: as some have experienced in COVID lockdown, he forgets what day it is. Some of his forgetfulness is touchingly comic. But he becomes increasingly anxious, and begins to think of hiking over the mountain to the next village, where he can catch a train to Basle.

One morning he sets off, with raincoat, umbrella and rucksack. He trips over roots, gets his feet wet crossing streams in flood, and loses his way descending into the next valley. Hours pass, and he is wet, cold and tired. When he has almost reached the village of Aurigeno and can hear the church bell ringing below, he turns around and starts the long steep climb back up to the pass. We are not told why he changes his mind: it may be because leaving for Basle would have meant acknowledging he is no longer capable of living alone. Or he may simply have forgotten why he set out. In any case, Geiser is completely exhausted by the time he makes it home around midnight. The morning after this futile hike, he wakes up to find himself lying on the floor. He has had a stroke. His behaviour now becomes increasingly bizarre: he doesn't answer the phone and refuses to open the door when neighbours come by to see if he is alright. He roasts his cat (which has been pestering him for food) in the fire and tries to eat it. At the end of the story, his daughter arrives from Basle, sees the state of affairs and takes charge.

5 Max Frisch: *Man in the Holocene*. Translated by G. Skelton. New York: Harcourt Brace 1980, p. 13.

*Man in the Holocene*, which was hailed in the *New York Times* as the most important publication of the year in 1980, and filmed in 1992, was initially read as a study of ageing: Frisch's nuanced use of the third person narrator, at times relaying Geiser's thoughts, and at others commenting on them from outside, was seen to convey the process of his mental decline particularly effectively. The decline in Geiser's grasp of reality was also recognised as reflecting the precariousness of human control over the natural environment. Geiser is especially interested in dinosaurs, and Frisch associates him with them, implying humans too may one day become extinct.

The prominence of geology and Frisch's location of human existence in the context of deep time attracted the attention of Georg Braungart in 2007,<sup>6</sup> and the novel has since been revisited by a series of scholars in the context of debates on the Anthropocene.<sup>7</sup> In their readings, Geiser stands for a humanity which is beginning to recognise that it is undermining the foundations of its future existence through pollution and the consumption of natural resources. *Man in the Holocene* predated broad public concern about anthropogenic climate change. Geiser reflects that the glaciers in the Alps are retreating and New York will one day be flooded by rising sea levels from melting ice in the Arctic, and imagines the valleys around him becoming flooded, with only the peaks of the Alps remaining above the water. However, Frisch does not mention carbon emissions or reflect on the part human actions play in global warming and extreme weather. His message is rather that nature is constantly changing, and cannot be relied on.

- 6 Cf. Georg Braungart: »Katastrophen kennt allein der Mensch, sofern er sie überlebt«. Max Frisch, Peter Handke und die Geologie. In: Carsten Dutt and Roman Luckscheiter (eds.): *Figurationen der literarischen Moderne*. Helmuth Kiesel zum 60. Geburtstag. Heidelberg: Winter 2007, pp. 23–41.
- 7 Cf. Dürbeck: *Ambivalent Characters and Fragmented Poetics in Anthropocene Literature*; Oliver Völker: »Che tempo, che tempo«: Geology and Environment in Max Frisch's »Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän«. In: *On\_Culture* 2 (2016); Bernhard Malkmus: *Man in the Anthropocene. Max Frisch's Environmental History*. In: *PMLA* 132.1 (2017), pp. 71–85; Thomas H. Ford: Max Frisch's »Man in the Holocene« (1980). In: Axel Goodbody and Adeline Johns-Putra (eds.): *Cli-Fi: A Companion*. Oxford: Peter Lang 2019, pp. 27–33; Matthias Preuss: *How to Disappear Completely: Poetics of Extinction in Max Frisch's »Man in the Holocene«*. In: Frederike Middelhoff, Sebastian Schönbeck, Roland Borgards and Catrin Gersdorf (eds.): *Texts, Animals, Environments: Zoopoetics and Ecopoetics*. Freiburg: Rombach 2019, pp. 253–268; Kiley M. Kost: *Narrating a Valley in Max Frisch's »Der Mensch erscheint im Holozän«*. *Material Agency, Rain, and the Geologic Past*. In: *Humanities* 10.43 (2021), pp. 1–13.

For Dürbeck and others, this novel is nevertheless a work of Anthropocene literature *avant la lettre*. Frisch uses erosion as a leitmotif linking Geiser's personal catastrophe of dementia with a geologically unstable natural world which threatens human civilisation: Geiser's vulnerability as an individual makes him sensitive to the destruction of nature. As Dürbeck comments, the text, a collage of material circling around key topics and thereby mirroring through its structure Geiser's scattered notes and fragmented memory, exemplifies a »fragmented poetics that depicts the disintegrating lifeworld of the inhabitant of the modern world and the dissolution of the anthropocentric order of knowledge«. <sup>8</sup> A »cautionary counterstory to the Promethean feasibility and dominion over the Earth«, it can be read in retrospect as »a critical vision of the Anthropocene discourse in which the managerialist perspective still stresses human control«. <sup>9</sup>

Geiser is fascinated by the idea of a world without humanity. However, he reflects more on the period before, than after human existence. This makes the novel interesting in the context of debates on the role of memory in addressing climate change. *Man in the Holocene* invites interpretation as a critique of modern man facing his demise through over-reliance on technical rationality and neglect of memory, resulting in short-sighted exploitation of the natural environment.

Geiser learns from his reading that the area was subject to frequent flooding in the past. He notes that historical disasters in the region (floods, landslides and avalanches causing destruction and loss of life) have soon been forgotten, and the memory of them has been suppressed in a rush to rebuild: <sup>10</sup> »There is no knowledge without memory«, we are told. <sup>11</sup> Our failure to remember both human experiences of disaster and that the Earth existed before us stands in the way of appreciating the precariousness of our position in the world.

The memory needed for perception of changes in the environment and the dangers they present is preserved in geography and history books. But it is also inscribed in the landscape, which can be read as a geological and archaeological record of the past with vital implications for the future. Both forms of memory again play a part in Emmi Itäranta's *Memory of Water*.

8 Emmi Itäranta: *Memory of Water*. London: Harper 2014, p. 119.

9 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 115.

10 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 23.

11 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 14.



## Remembering Past Water and Water's Memory in Emmi Itäranta's *Memory of Water*

As a coming-of-age story of a teenage girl, set in a dystopic future world suffering the consequences of climate change, this book resembles young adult novels such as Saci Lloyd's *Carbon Diaries*. But it is distinguished from them by its poetic imagination, its sensuous evocation of the sight, sounds, smell and taste of water, and its presentation of water as a repository, medium and agent of memory.

The story is set in a village in rural Finland. Pollution and global warming have resulted in an acute shortage of fresh water. The military government is using water rationing as a way of intimidating the population and keeping them under control. In their desperation, people suffering from drought and water-related illnesses build illegal water pipes: if caught by the water guards, they are isolated and subsequently executed. Noria, the narrator, has been trained by her father as a Tea Master. Because their profession demands access to pure water, tea masters are traditionally guardians of springs and »watchers of water«. It is only a matter of time before the authorities discover the secret of the spring in the hillside above Noria's home.

In Itäranta's novel, water is more than just an element essential for human life: it is a living force exemplifying the autonomy of nature. Water will never be bound by man-made chains, we are told: it belongs to everyone and no one. As such it is a source of emancipatory inspiration. This is the story of a female voice raised against oppressive patriarchal forces, and one of how traditions and forms of art celebrating water (exemplified by the tea ceremony) can stand up to corrupt power-holders. But it is also a tale about the importance of preserving collective memory. Noria dies in the end, but her sacrifice is not in vain: she gathers information about potential water reserves which the authorities are suppressing knowledge of, and enables this knowledge to be passed on to dissident groups who may be able to use it to overthrow the military government.

The title of the book, »memory of water«, is worded in such a way as to refer simultaneously to this remembering of forgotten water resources, and to water's (and the planet's) ability to remember things. Itäranta endows the Earth with memory in two ways. First, there are the »plastic graves«, rubbish dumps which the pre-disaster »past-world« has left behind. The villagers scavenge for reusable objects and material in these repositories of broken and discarded twentieth and twenty-first-century consumer products. The rubbish heaps constitute a *mate-*

*rial memory*, an archive which includes potentially valuable clues about past events. It is here that Noria finds audio tape cassettes and CDs from which she first learns about a secret, illegal scientific expedition (the Jansson expedition) back in the Twilight Century which separated the past-world from the present.

The second way in which the Earth remembers involves water. Water might seem a strange medium to present as preserving the past, because it changes its shape ceaselessly. It can, however, reveal the traces of past pollution in chemical tests, or their absence. Itäranta alludes to this literal ability of water to archive the past in a passage where Noria's mother says there may still be islets of ice floating in the Northern Ocean carrying memories of the past-world locked within them.<sup>12</sup> It is this presence of unpolluted water which is important in the novel. The Jansson expedition discovered that in the Lost Lands of northern Scandinavia, which have supposedly been irredeemably contaminated by the oil wars of the past, huge quantities of water were becoming drinkable again through spontaneous biological recovery. In Itäranta's novel these memories and imaginations of forgotten water resources find confirmation in a further set of CDs which have been hidden in a sealed box at the bottom of the tea masters' secret spring. Concealed here by Jansson and his fellow scientists before they were caught by the authorities, the box is discovered by Noria when the water in the spring drops below its usual level. The waters of the spring thus literally preserve memory of the past.

As in *The Age of Stupid*, Itäranta approaches our efforts to understand the future by telling a story about someone in the future trying to reconstruct the past. However, she places greater emphasises on the role of imagination and identification with others in this quest. Noria recognises that books are a source of valuable information, but she treasures especially those that help her imagine the sensation of coldness and the sight of snow. And she tries to understand why people in the past-world behaved as they did, recklessly consuming resources, ignoring climate change, and throwing things away rather than recycling them. »I have tried not to think about them, but their past-world bleeds into our present-world, into its sky, into its dust. Did the present-world, the world that is, ever bleed into theirs, the world that was?«,<sup>13</sup> she asks herself. In her mind's eye she sees a figure from the past standing on the bank of a river and

12 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 41.

13 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 26.

imagining it drying up: »I would like to think she turns around and goes home and does one thing differently that day because of what she has imagined, and again the day after, and the day after that.«<sup>14</sup> This passage sums up the author's aim to trigger imagination of the climate-changed future, and thereby facilitate behavioural change in society.

Serving and drinking tea is presented as a way of attuning oneself to the life force in nature: savouring it and letting it course through the body connects one to earth and sky.<sup>15</sup> But in the novel the tea ceremony also stands for the cultivation of memory. The ›memory of water‹ in Itäranta's novel is an extended metaphor. Things that happen are imprinted on the memory of the world, we are told,<sup>16</sup> and Noria's father recounts a story written down by old tea masters which tells that »water has a consciousness, that it carries in its memory everything that's ever happened in this world, from the time before humans until this moment, which draws itself in its memory, even as it passes«.<sup>17</sup>

### Conclusion: Environmental Memory in Anthropocene Literature

Friedrich Nietzsche famously attacked the fact-obsessed historical practice of his day in *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (1874), writing of the need to develop a different form of memory, one that served the needs of life in the present and the future. He called for a selective remembering, a combination of ›monumental‹ history (motivating through life models), ›antiquarian‹ history (fostering a positive sense of collective identity) and ›critical‹ history (enabling us to recognise mistakes made in the past and learn how to avoid them).<sup>18</sup> By recalling the past to imagine the future, Frisch and Itäranta can be said to contribute to the kind of remembering advocated by Nietzsche. In Frisch's case this involved calling to mind a pre-human past. At the same time as demonstrating the subjection of humans to the natural processes of ageing and decay, Geiser can be viewed as »a pioneer of a new

14 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 26.

15 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 32.

16 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 94.

17 Itäranta: *Memory of Water*, p. 90.

18 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche: *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*. In: Ders.: *Untimely Meditations*. Ed. by Daniel Breazeale, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997, pp. 57–124.

climate change sensibility, a potential model for the cognitive negotiation of a changing geological order«. <sup>19</sup>

For her part, Itäranta uses the device of anticipatory memory (inventing a fictional past which is recalled from a more distant future), but in a non-realistic way. The memory of water in Itäranta's novel is a symbolic extension of the real planetary »memory« of climatic changes which has been preserved in the air bubbles in ice cores over hundreds of thousands of years, and in the other biological, physical and chemical proxies by means of which scientists calculate the Earth's temperature in the past. The environmental sociologist Bron Szerszynski has argued that our understanding of memory should be expanded to embrace such Earth processes: memory can be reconceived so as not to presuppose a subject which possesses consciousness. In a paper presented in 2014, and again in greater detail in the book chapter, »How the Earth Remembers and Forgets« (2019), Szerszynski discusses the forms and systems of memory which the Earth possesses, how its memory is stored in energy, matter and space, and the different kinds of remembering and forgetting found in solids, liquids and gases.

While the idea of the Earth possessing memory is therefore less fanciful than might first appear, it would be wrong-headed to evaluate Itäranta's novel by the yardstick of literary realism. In comparison with the futures remembered in *The Age of Stupid*, *The Collapse of Western Civilisation*, and *The Earth after Us*, that in *Memory of Water* is highly implausible: it is unlikely that Scandinavia will one day be a province of the Chinese empire, and it is among the fortunate parts of the world more likely to benefit from global warming than to suffer from crippling drought. The relocation of the Far Eastern tea ceremony to Finland and Itäranta's spurious attribution of a series of epigraphs to an ancient Chinese philosopher whose name turns out to be a kind of tea (oolong) are clear markers that the story is a fable, not to be taken literally.

Itäranta's ascription of mnemonic agency to water is a poetic fiction not found in most climate change novels, but she is not the only author to imaginatively extend the idea of Earth memory. The essays in the volume *Planetary Memory in Contemporary American Fiction* argue that a series of American authors have striven similarly to imagine modes of planetary »memory« which give form to the complex interrelations in the Anthropocene between the hu-

19 Ford: Max Frisch's »Man in the Holocene« (1980), p. 28.

man and non-human worlds and between historical and geological pasts, presents and futures, and show how they have inscribed in cultural memory texts the widespread anxious anticipation on an increasingly fragile planet.<sup>20</sup>

Richard Crownshaw, who has devoted a series of publications to the question how the study of cultural memory might be reconceptualised and recalibrated in the era of the Anthropocene, wrote in a position paper presented at a roundtable discussion on »Memory Studies and the Anthropocene« that the unfolding geological record of humanity's inscriptions on the Earth that is being left by our collective geophysical agency »can be thought of as an archive by which the past and future history of the Anthropocene might be remembered«. <sup>21</sup> The work of cultural memory might consist of apprehending and curating these inscriptions as the materialisation of a forgotten past, knowledge of which has been suppressed until recently. By »stag[ing] cultural memories of the Anthropocene«, <sup>22</sup> fictions of anticipatory environmental memory render it culturally meaningful. Studying such texts reveals the ways in which remembrance of the Anthropocene is mediated, and its subjects are interpellated. Crownshaw, who has written elsewhere of »materialis[ing] ecological memory« <sup>23</sup> as a key function of climate change fiction, pleads for a memory studies for the Anthropocene focused on »the terrestrialised significance of the (historicised) forms of remembrance«, »the positionality of who is remembering and, ultimately, which ›Anthropocene‹ is remembered«. <sup>24</sup>

*Man in the Holocene* and *Memory of Water* deploy different literary strategies, but they both do what Lawrence Buell called »environmental memory work« in his 2007 lecture, »Environmental Memory and Planetary Survival«. <sup>25</sup>

- 20 Lucy Bond, Ben De Bruyn and Jessica Rapson (eds): *Planetary Memory in Contemporary American Fiction*. Abingdon: Routledge 2018.
- 21 Stef Craps, Rick Crownshaw, Jennifer Wenzel, Rosanne Kennedy, Claire Colebrook and Vin Nardizzi: *Memory Studies and the Anthropocene: A Roundtable*. In: *Memory Studies* 11.4 (2018), pp. 498–515, here p. 500.
- 22 Craps/Crownshaw/Wenzel/Kennedy/Colebrook/Nardizzi: *Memory Studies and the Anthropocene*, p. 501.
- 23 Richard Crownshaw: *Speculative Memory, the Planetary and Genre Fiction*. In: *Textual Practice* 31.5 (2017), pp. 887–910, here p. 902.
- 24 Craps/Crownshaw/Wenzel/Kennedy/Colebrook/Nardizzi: *Memory Studies and the Anthropocene*, p. 502.
- 25 Cf. Lawrence Buell: *Environmental Memory and Planetary Survival*. Public lecture at the University of California, Santa Barbara, 15 November 2007. Available at: <<http://www.ucv.tv/shows/Environmental-Memory-and-Planetary-Survival-15032>> (31.12.2021).

Examining a range of texts which perform »artistic acts of simulated recollection that thereby inevitably reinterpret and in some sense enhance and / or critique empirical findings«, Buell discussed the interplay of memory, imagination and creative shaping, and their role in promoting awareness of environments. Reading environmental literature as »an art of memory-making or evocation«, Buell spoke of »flexibility to frame alternative scenarios of environmental memory« as one of art's strongest suits. He suggested that nature writing and environmental fiction constitute »a critical discourse of re-enchantment«, with authors positioning themselves against the environmental amnesia which is stronger than ever in today's age dominated by technological culture. And he concluded that environmental memory with its correction of the »hallucination of human autonomy« is important for world citizenship, because of the part it plays in »fuelling active desire to keep the planet habitable«. Recalling the past so as to imagine the future contributes to this vital literary project