Workshop

Literature, film, and other forms of cultural expression play today an important role in addressing the controversies and paradoxes connected to the human-nature relationships. They negotiate, invent, and transform those relationships, which is shown, for example, by the prominence of the subject of climatic change in literature.

This is an international phenomenon, yet it may be especially marked in the Nordic countries. Norway, for example, has the world’s first organization of writers committed to climate action, Forfatternes klimaaksjon.

Climatic and environmental change has become a very frequent motif in contemporary Nordic literature, with works such as Maja Lunde’s *Bienes historie* (which focuses on species extinction) and the TV-series *Okkupert* (based on a scenario of climate catastrophe) having become international successes.

In this workshop we will ask how ideas of both human and non-human nature are interrelated and changing, and how literary and cinematic texts and genres contribute to the re-negotiation of established notions of nature and the relation between humans and the environment. The focus will be both on contemporary works and on how new concepts such as the Anthropocene and the material turn in literary and cultural studies retrospectively change our understanding – even of older works.

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www.ni.hu-berlin.de/changing-nature
Global environmental and climatic change is now occurring on such a great scale that the planet can even be said to have entered a new geological epoch: the Anthropocene.

The implication that humanity has become a geological force has sparked controversial debate in both the sciences and the humanities. In literary studies, an obvious question is how literature can help us imagine and understand the Anthropocene, and perhaps even equip us to live better with its problematic consequences.

Norway is not only the first country in the world to boast an organization of environmentally committed writers: in much contemporary Norwegian literature, there is also a significant trend to address environmental issues. This lecture will discuss the various ways in which the Anthropocene enters recent texts from Norway, and ask whether attempts to imagine humanity’s geological agency also call for literary innovation.

All lectures of the workshop are public.

*Lunches, dinner and evening programme are only for invited participants of the workshop.