'AGE OF LOVECRAFT'?—
ANTHROPOCENE MONSTERS IN (NEW) WEIRD NARRATIVE

Gry Ulstein (Ghent University)

Abstract: *This paper considers whether the twenty-first-century resurgence of H. P. Lovecraft and weird fiction can be read as a conceptual parallel to the Anthropocene epoch, taking Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock's* The Age of Lovecraft *as a starting-point. The assumption is that the two 'ages' are historically and thematically linked through the 'monsters' that inhabit them; monsters that include— but are not limited to—extensions, reproductions, and evolutions of Lovecraft's writings. Preoccupied with environmental issues such as global climate change, the twenty-first-century imaginary has conjured monsters that appear to have much in common with early twentieth-century cosmic horror stories. Considering the renewed interest in Lovecraft and the weird, such developments raise the question: what can (weird) monsters tell us about the Anthropocene moment? This paper maps the 'monstrous' in the discourses emerging from the Anthropocene epoch and 'The Age of Lovecraft' by considering (new) weird narratives from contemporary literature, graphic novels, film, TV, and video games. Mindful of on-going discussions within ecocriticism, philosophy, and critical theory, the paper discusses a handful of unconventional texts to investigate the potential of the weird for expressing Anthropocene anxieties and for approaching nonhuman realities from new angles.*

Keywords: *Anthropocene*; *ecology*; *cosmic horror*; *Lovecraft*; *new weird*.

Introduction—The Anthropocene's Weird Shadow

Howard Phillips [H. P.] Lovecraft's contribution to and development of weird fiction in the early twentieth century introduced a storyworld of ancient, alien monsters that dwell in the earth's depth, and whose mere existence is enough to drive Lovecraft's characters insane. During his time (1890–1937) Lovecraft was relatively unknown outside of his close circle of devoted followers. In recent years Lovecraft's work has seen a revival in popular culture and among writers and artists. The 'old' weird associated with Lovecraft and others (such as Algernon Blackwood, August Derleth, and Arthur Machen) has been given a resurgence by 'new' weird writers (like China Miéville and Jeff VanderMeer). The renewed interest in the weird can also be observed in contemporary cultural criticism and philosophy, picking up on the destabilisation of human significance and agency at the core of weird narrative. Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock argue that the weird's revival is comprehensive enough to talk about 'The Age of Lovecraft', a "cultural moment in which the themes and influence of Lovecraft's writings have bubbled up from the chthonic depths of 1930s pulp writing to assume an unexpected intellectual and cultural influence" (2016b: 3).

The weird typically confronts its audience with monstrous events or objects that appear instinctively and empirically "wrong" (Fisher 2016: 15), yet exist and persist in the weird storyworld. Inspired by the subversive quality of the weird, Timothy Morton introduces "weird ecomimesis" as a useful conceptual tool for ecological thought in the

Anthropocene (2016: 63); and refers directly to Lovecraft's most famous monster by arguing that hyperobjects such as global warming are "Cthulhulike" (2013: 64).[1] The term 'Anthropocene' was coined by Eugene F. Stoermer and Paul J. Crutzen in 2000 and refers to the geological epoch during which human influence on the earth's environment has become statistically significant in relation to other geological agents (Waters et al. 2016: 137). But in spite of its ubiquitous cross-disciplinary usage, the Anthropocene has still not been formalised as the name of our current age.[2] Accelerated by the adoption of the concept by influential scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty, Bruno Latour, and Morton, however, the Anthropocene has gained traction particularly in the humanities, although it does not sit well with everyone. Jason W. Moore argues that the concept melds together all humans ('Anthropos' is Greek for 'man') and thereby glosses over "the multi-species violence and inequality of capitalism" (Moore 2018: 239). In this paper, the Anthropocene should be understood in terms of what Timothy Clark calls a loose "pseudo-geological concept", one used to "mark a threshold in human historical self-understanding" (Clark 2019: 21).

Whether they subscribe to the Anthropocene or not, several humanities scholars retain a monstrous conceptualisation of the current times in their work—and sometimes the monsters evoked have clear ties to the weird. Haraway has suggested that 'Chthulucene' is a better name than 'Anthropocene' to describe the current age, but she explicitly distances herself from Lovecraft's Cthulhu due to the problematic regressive ideologies associated with Lovecraft (Haraway 2016: 2).[34] Nevertheless, there is something distinctly weird about how Haraway describes the Chthulucene as "symchthonic, wound with abyssal and dreadful graspings, frayings, and weavings" (Haraway 2016: 33). 'Cthulhu' (no matter how it is spelled) would most likely retain its Lovecraftian connotations anyway, because of the strong cultural presence it already possesses. 'Chthulucene' therefore, inadvertently, strengthens the conceptual link between 'The Age of Lovecraft' and the Anthropocene—but there are other monsters besides Cthulhu that tie the two 'ages' together.

In a paper discussing the emergent geological agency and conflicting individual passivity of the human species, Latour notes how nature has "unexpectedly taken on [the role] of the active subject! Such is the frightening meaning of 'global warming': through a surprising inversion of background and foreground, it is *human* history that

---

[1] 'Hyperobjects' are defined as events and objects that are massively and unfathomably distributed in time and space (Morton 2013: 1).

[2] In July 2018 the *International Commission on Stratigraphy* formally declared that, stratigraphically, we are living in the 'Meghalayan' age: approximately the last 4200 years and the third of three parts of the Holocene Epoch (Amos 2018). See also Zalasiewicz et al.'s 2017 review of on-going critiques of formalising 'Anthropocene' (205–226).

[3] The extent to which Lovecraft's misogyny, racism and xenophobia are traceable in his work (and how this ought to be dealt with by his readers and critics), has been a point of contention over the past decade. As a result of the discussion, Lovecraft was removed as the model for the *World Fantasy Convention*'s World Fantasy Award trophy from 2016 onwards (Flood 2015).

[4] According to Haraway, it is the arachnid *pimoa cthulhu* that inspired her 'Chthulucene' (2016: 173–174). She acknowledges the biologist Gustavo Hormiga, who, in number 549 of *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology*, reports that *pimoa cthulhu* is "[n]amed after H. P. Lovecraft's mythological deity Cthulhu, akin to the powers of Chaos" (Hormiga 1994: 39). However, Haraway takes "the liberty of rescuing [her] spider from Lovecraft for other stories" (174). Such conscious decapitation of Lovecraft is still a debated issue within weird scholarship—see Mackintosh (2018), Sperling (2017), Mayer (2016) and Weinstock (2016).

has become frozen and *natural* history that is taking on a frenetic pace" (Latour 2014: 13). This inversion prompts a shift in the way humans view nonhumans, argues Latour, and a move towards distributing agency "as far and in as differentiated a way as possible—until, that is, we have thoroughly lost any relation between those two concepts of object and subject" (Latour 2014: 17).[5] In 'Love Your Monsters' Latour considers the human-nature agency inversion in terms of 'Frankenstein's real sin': Just like Mary Shelley's [Victor] *Frankenstein* (2003 [1818]), we have engineered monsters, but ours are industrial, fossil-fuelled—the 'real sin' that we have forgotten to care for them, with disastrous consequences (Latour 2011). Just like *Frankenstein*'s creature, Anthropocenic crises muddle the preconceived role division between actor and acted-upon.

The plot of *Frankenstein* takes place during the latter part of the eighteenth-century, which is one of the suggestions for the start of the Anthropocene epoch (Crutzen 2002: 23). Seeing this historical and thematic link to the Anthropocene, Jed Mayer posits *Frankenstein* as the first weird novel, because it "offers us a longer and more substantial history for this seemingly marginal subgenre and further emphasises the genre's ongoing relationship with the emerging ecologies of the Anthropocene" (Mayer 2018: 239). The monstrous in *Frankenstein* is scaled down in size and cosmic deliberation compared to Lovecraft's weird. However, Mayer argues, the weird can be traced in the ways that Shelley's novel conflates "fantasies of technological progress" and imparts "a sense of humility towards the alien other" (2018: 234, 237). Consider, for instance, Dr Frankenstein's fear that his creation "might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror" (Shelley 2003 [1818]: 170–171). Compared to the opening lines of 'The Call of Cthulhu', the anxiety conveyed is comparable, but more cosmic and inevitable:

> […] [S]ome day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age (Lovecraft 2008 [1928]: 201).

Although I would hesitate to call *Frankenstein* the first weird novel, there is certainly something to be said for reading *Frankenstein* in dialogue with for instance Lovecraft in terms how horror narratives can express environmental anxieties. *Frankenstein* and 'The Call of Cthulhu' both present monsters that challenge the reader's capacity for large-scale thinking and warn against becoming passive in the encounter with the monstrous. Likewise, the monstrosity of Anthropocene issues emanates in their sudden revelation as human-caused, but larger in scale, faster-paced, and more out-of-control than humans seem adequately equipped to deal with.

Cthulhu and Frankenstein's creature are both iconic monsters in the twenty-first century. While Shelley's monster has become an over-appropriated symbol of the

---

[5] Andreas Malm is highly critical of the tendency within ecological discourse to propagate hybridity and dissolution of Cartesian dualism. According to Malm, such rhetoric paradoxically erects other binaries (for Latour the binary is '*the Moderns* against everyone else'), producing a "performative contradiction, one that seeks to ruin as much analytical equipment as possible", and ending up with "prose evacuated of meaning" (Malm 2018: 186–187). It is valuable to keep this critique in mind also when exploring weird expressions of ecological anxieties.

temptation and dangers of technology, Cthulhu is supposed to be scary because its existence marks a break with all the rules that humans have wrapped comfortingly around themselves. This is why the idea of Cthulhu works so well for, for instance, Morton's hyperobjects and Haraway's Chthulucene. However, as Stephen Shapiro points out, Cthulhu has suffered a similar fate as Frankenstein's creature, and typically "does not inspire cosmic anxiety, but fan camp admiration" (Shapiro 2016: 257). In a Google image search, 'Cthulhu' is just as likely to produce results of collectible *Pop!* dolls, cute Cthulhu plushies with large cartoon eyes, humorous comic strips and fan-made mash-ups of the Cthulhu mythos with other storyworlds, or even children's picture books such as *C is for Cthulhu: The Lovecraft Alphabet Book* (Ciaramella 2014). The appropriation or evolution of Lovecraft's storyworld thus has (at least) three directions in contemporary culture: kitschy pop culture, philosophy and ecological thought, and new weird. But is that enough to suggest that we are living in 'The Age of Lovecraft'? Bearing in mind Mayer's suggestion of *Frankenstein* as the first weird work, might it be more useful to talk about Anthropocene monsters in relation to a broader conceptualisation of the weird?

In this paper I take my cue from Anna Tsing et al. (2017), who argue that monsters "are useful figures with which to think the Anthropocene, this time of massive human transformations of multispecies life and their uneven effects" (M2). Anthropocene monsters are figures conjured by the cultural imagination to give shape to the many sources of anxiety brought on by the urgency of surfacing environmental issues such as plastic pollution, oil spill, deforestation, extreme weather, and forest fires. Cthulhu can be interpreted as one such Anthropocene monster, among other Lovecraftian creations, but as this paper will suggest, more recent evolutions of the weird express Anthropocene anxieties using new monsters in new formal representations. Sederholm and Weinstock maintain: "Although our contemporary monsters may not resemble those in Lovecraft's imagination, we nevertheless live today with the very Lovecraftian awareness of the looming spectre of sudden apocalypse" (2016b: 34). Accordingly, I wish to explore the ways in which Anthropocene issues like global warming become monsters within this spectral apocalyptic awareness; this weird reality where Cthulhu can be at once a madness-infusing alien god, a hyperobject, a collectable *Pop!* doll, a species of spider, and the potential namesake of a geological epoch. What is it about the weird monster figure that seems to fit Anthropocene discourse like a ghostly glove?

'A Relative Bleakness'—New Weird Transmediality

Haraway's Chthulucene seems like an ideal parallel to Sederholm and Weinstock's *The Age of Lovecraft*, but Haraway is adamant about her term's divestment of anything Lovecraftian. Many storytellers of the new weird generation also consciously divest themselves of Lovecraft's weird, and they often incorporate ecological themes in their narratives. Coined by M. John Harrison in 2003, the 'new' weird is largely a twenty-first century phenomenon, though it can be traced back to writers such as Clive Barker and Thomas Ligotti in the 1980s (Noys/Murphy 2016a: 119). Jeff VanderMeer and China Miéville are seen as spearhead writers in the new weird movement, and their monsters are radically different from Lovecraft's. VanderMeer marks a clear break with the traditional weird in *The Southern Reach* (2014), as observable in the trilogy's

narrative perspective, style, and characterisation.[6] VanderMeer's later novel *Borne* (2017a) and novella *The Strange Bird* (2017b) likewise challenge the traditional weird monster figure in the lab-grown, failed experiments of nonhuman creatures that roam a post-apocalyptic wasteland. VanderMeer's stories explore the strange space where empathy and defamiliarisation reinforce each other, encouraging readers to resist simplistic views of the nonhuman. Where VanderMeer's weirdscapes involve technologically or organically enhanced nonhumans, Miéville's work often has something postcolonial as well as nonhuman about its monstrosity. *The City and the City* (Miéville 2009a) for instance, presents two impossibly fused cities in which the residents of either must actively 'unsee' (avoid and ignore) the other, lest they evoke a terrible force called 'Breach'. By playing with levels of artificiality and authenticity of mental and physical borders, Miéville's weird exposes and destabilises the compulsion of the human gaze to colonise its surroundings.

The differences between old and new weird will be discussed in more detail below. For now, it is interesting to note the feature that ties weird stories together across history, genres, and media: they tend to undermine human subjectivity via encounters with monstrous, impossible events that violently encroach upon reality. This defining feature can be outlined transmedially across multiple established or minor genres such as science fiction, horror, and fantasy; cyber-punk and detective noir. Examples from contemporary fiction, besides Miéville and VanderMeer, include works by Laird Barron, Octavia Butler, Mark Z. Danielewski, Neil Gaiman, Thomas Ligotti, and Kelly Link, as well as films such as Joss Whedon's *Cabin in the Woods* (2012), Denis Villeneuve's *Arrival* (2016) and Susanne Bier's *Bird Box* (2018). Simon Donaldson's *Fortitude* (2015–) and the Duffer Brothers' *Stranger Things* (2016–) are TV series with clear weird heritages; others are David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* (1990), Ryan Murphy's *American Horror Story* (2011), and Baran Bo Odar and Jantje Friese's *Dark* (2017). Board and card games like *Call of Cthulhu* (2008), *Mansions of Madness* (2011), and *Pandemic: Reign of Cthulhu* (2016) ensure the continued pop-culture fame of Lovecraft's storyworld, while video games such as *Fallout* (1997), *Bioshock Infinite* (2013), and *Anatomy* (2016) explore and expand the weird in interactive game narratives.[7] This paper will, after elaborating on the influence of Lovecraft, discuss and compare several examples of weird texts in order to demonstrate this genre-hopping and the transmedial quality of the weird.

The texts mentioned above could all be analysed in terms of their explicit or implicit Lovecraftian inheritance, even though they reinvent and often diverge pointedly from traditional weird tales.[8] In sum, however, a large number of contemporary artists, philosophers, and critics—whether they wish to position their work in relation to Lovecraft or not—have embraced the weird as a way to engage with the Anthropocene.

---

[6] For example, the third book in the trilogy, *Acceptance*, switches from first- to second- to third-person narration; the style jumps from nature writing, via scientific journal entry, to impressionistic passages, and even stream of consciousness; one of the main characters is a gay vicar and another is the nonhuman doppelgänger of the main character from the first book. These are sharp contrasts to the excessively allusive style and perpetually male, first-person narrator associated with Lovecraft's stories.

[7] In *Fallout 4* there is an underground location named 'Dunwich Borers'—a reference to Lovecraft's story 'The Dunwich Horror'.

[8] For a more complete historical overview of the weird, see the two edited collections by Ann and Jeff VanderMeer: *The Weird: A Compendium* (2011) and *The New Weird* (2008).

With this paper I address the relatively new interest in the weird as an aesthetic strategy for expressing Anthropocene anxieties, and ask to what extent Lovecraft is part of this resurgence. Miéville suggests that Lovecraft's work deals with "the impossibility of being a human in deep time" (Weinstock 2016: 236). In the context of the Anthropocene, Miéville argues, this theme speaks to the "relative bleakness of the past few years, […] a sense of the impossibility of human agency" which has to do with the millennial-turn "collapse of certainties" (236–237; ellipsis added). The weird pokes and prods this relative bleakness, shaping unease into monsters that stress the difficulty— and therefore the importance—of multi-scalar, deep-temporal thinking. Miéville suggests that the old weird from the early twentieth century opened up a "proliferation of hitherto unseen monstrous figures in a startlingly short space of time"; figures better suited to "express the *total*, systemic crisis of modernity" (Noys/Murphy 2016b: 209). This proliferation of new monsters forms the basis for the resurgence of Lovecraft and the beginning of a new weird narrative mode in the twenty-first century.

Something Old, Something New…

Before Mayer's suggestion of a weird *Frankenstein*, the origins of weird fiction have (by among others Lovecraft himself) been traced back to Edgar Allan Poe in the first part of the nineteenth century, but its formation as a genre category truly started with the first issue of the pulp magazine *Weird Tales* in 1923. Lovecraft's old weird emphasises atmosphere over plot: for Lovecraft the weird must evoke a sense of cosmic dread in the reader. He defines cosmic dread in the essay 'Supernatural Horror in Literature':

> A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint […] of that most terrible conception of the human brain—a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space (Lovecraft 2011 [1927]: 1043; ellipsis added).

The passage above resonates in Miéville's observation that the weird "impregnates the present with a bleak, unthinkable novum", which Miéville reads as "an expression of upheaval and crisis" (2009b: 513). The traditional weird, Miéville notes, was at heart a reaction to the crisis of capitalist modernity at the turn of the twentieth century, a crisis which gave a sense of having "no stable status quo but a horror underlying the everyday, the global and absolute catastrophe implying poisonous totality" (2009a: 613). Miéville's novum moreover captures what traditional weird and new weird have in common: the modes express upheaval and crisis by destabilising the category of the human in relation to the monstrous and the supernatural—often via Lovecraft's favourite register of cosmic horror. Yet there are several other aesthetic registers associated with this kind of destabilisation, which warrants a brief distinction.

 The uncanny is related to the weird as a register that responds to encounters with the unknown, but more specifically negotiates the unsettling experience of recognising something unfamiliar as familiar or something familiar as unfamiliar, through for

instance repetition or doubling (Freud 1966 [1919]: 220).[9] Roger Luckhurst notes that in contrast to the uncanny, the weird "veers away to invoke a dread that is irreducible, that cannot be reductively interpreted, translated or returned" (Luckhurst 2017: 1052). Fisher accordingly emphasises the weird's intrusive, external 'wrongness' in opposition to the familiar, internal strangeness of the uncanny (2016: 10). Fisher draws yet another distinction between the weird and *the eerie*: the latter is related to more subtle, disturbing absences rather than overwhelming presences (2016: 15, 61). Although comparisons between the weird and *the sublime* can be drawn, there is a distinction in affect: where the (Kantian) sublime evokes awe and wonder, the weird mainly evokes dread and anxiety. Or as Mayer usefully phrases it: "If the Kantian sublime produces 'enjoyment with horror', the weird might be said to offer *horror with benefits*, among them a heightened awareness of, and respect for, the more-than-human world" (2018: 237; emphasis in original). Lastly, Tzvetan Todorov's *fantastic* is defined as a moment of hesitation between belief and disbelief: the "duration of [the] uncertainty" experienced when narrative encounters unfold beyond laws of nature (1975 [1970]: 25). This uncertainty also pertains to the weird, but the weird is more disruptive than the fantastic; as Fisher notes, where the fantastic tends to naturalise other (supernatural) worlds, the weird "de-naturalises all worlds" (Fisher 2016: 29).

It can be difficult to distinguish these registers from one another, and—as will become clear from the cases further down—the weird frequently dances between them. In fact, the weird is often categorised by its refusal to fit neatly into categories, it "seeks crabbed, difficult prose, transgressive or evasive content, genre slippage and elusive authors as emblems of aesthetic resistance to the market" (Luckhurst 2017: 1046). This weird hybridity has developed since (and no doubt through) Lovecraft's storyworld, but is perhaps more manifest in the new weird than in the old. However, there are certain aspects that more clearly separate old from new weird narrative. The new weird does not necessarily require cosmic horror, it involves a reaction to and movement away from traditional fantasy, and typically favours a distinctly urban or modern setting (VanderMeer/VanderMeer 2008: xvi). As both Luckhurst (2017) and Brad Tabas (2015) have noted, the emphasis on forbidden zones and threshold spaces where time and space themselves are warped and weirded, is shared by both old and new weird, but the perceived agency of the environment changes.

In Lovecraft there is a tendency to focus on the vast, incomprehensible cosmos, ancient history, and non-Euclidean geometry as spatio-temporal background of which creatures like Cthulhu serve as maddening reminders. Even when the setting of Lovecraft's stories is more limited, like a house or a village, Lovecraft's weird spatiality "is dedicated to disrupting our normal sense of being at home in the world" (Tabas 2015: 15). In Lovecraft there is usually a sense that the monstrous has always already been there in the background, but hidden or imperceptible. Lovecraft's weird involves impossible, "terrifying vistas of reality" flashing into the foreground of his characters' perception (Lovecraft 2011 [1927]: 208). VanderMeer and Miéville also blast background into foreground and vice-versa, but in more stylistically playful and thematically intrusive ways that grant the environment and space itself unsettling

---

[9] 'Weird' and 'uncanny' are often used interchangeably. Morton, for example, describes ecological awareness as "weird: it has a twisting, looping form", but goes on to tie it to "the uncanny feeling that there are all kinds of places on all kinds of scales" in the same chapter of *Dark Ecology* (2016: 7–10).

agency. The environment inside the borders of Area X in VanderMeer's *Annihilation*, for example, becomes just as monstrous as the weird creatures it engenders in how it infects the characters and slowly colonises their bodies to become part of the weird ecosystem. Besides more explicit agentive overturns, however, the perhaps greatest difference between old and new weird has to do with the latter's movement away from nihilism.

Unaccompanied by—or completely uninterested in—strategies for how to dispel the horror and metabolise the weirdness, Lovecraft's cosmic dread is often dismissively anti-humanist. More recent forms of weird narrative attempt to rework this existential dread into something productive, even when the root of the anxiety cannot be understood. The Netflix-hype *Stranger Things*, for instance, offers a mainstream, crowd-pleasing extension of the weird with its Lovecraftianesque monsters from the ash-filled, desolate dimension called 'Upside Down', who threaten a small 1980s American town through a gash in the fabric of reality. Instead of giving in to the madness of the shadow dimension, however, the town community, led by a group of *Dungeons & Dragons*-playing kids, bravely picks up the fight in the typical vein of fantasy epics. More experimental new weird narratives reimagine the weird monster figure altogether—without relinquishing the weird atmosphere. Miéville's short story 'Covehithe' (Miéville 2011) challenges the nature of the weird monster *and* questions the nature of the Anthropocene by turning old oil rigs organic: they scuttle up on beaches to lay eggs like rusty, giant turtles. No explanation is offered as to how or why this has come about scientifically, but the story reads more like an invitation to think differently, weirdly, about Anthropocene problems such as the fossil fuel industry. And certainly, the very idea of little oil rig babies hatching is mesmerizingly bizarre. VanderMeer's novella *The Strange Bird* is written from the perspective of a genetically manipulated bird-human-squid chimera. Set in the same postapocalyptic world as the novel *Borne*, the story follows the tortured life of a lab creature who questions her painful existence and curses her creator much like Frankenstein's creature. But *The Strange Bird* does not stipulate that the world presented is necessarily worse or better than the primary world. Rather, it offers an unorthodox space for reflecting upon what it means to be human—and attempting to grasp what it means to be anything else than human—in the Anthropocene moment.

Contemporary expressions of the weird are, like older weird, fraught with unbearably entangled thresholds and gaps—recalling Haraway's "dreadful graspings, frayings, and weavings" of the Chthulucene. However, as the three examples above suggest, there is a move in the new weird towards negotiating environmental anxieties by playing with different perspectives and with surprisingly affirmative ways of communicating the Anthropocenic intrusion of the global into the local or individual, of monstrosity into normality. Noys and Murphy suggest that new weird stories can offer "a new sensibility of welcoming the alien and the monstrous as sites of affirmation and becoming" (2016a: 125). This new weird ecological ethics implies a responsibility to engage with the monstrous rather than become passively consumed with dread, as the old weird often entails. The new weird displays an interest in monsters that create space for environmental anxieties to be dissected, readjusted, and used to rethink the position of the human in the time of the Anthropocene.

Morton tries to explain Anthropocene anxieties in terms of the 'weird loop' he calls ecological awareness: "Ecological awareness is disorienting precisely because of these multiple scales. We sense that there *are* monsters even if we can't see them directly" (Morton 2016: 41–42). Morton uses the weird as a mode to come to grips with Anthropocene issues like global warming—or, as he refers to it: 'Global weirding': "In the term *weird* there flickers a dark pathway between causality and the aesthetic dimension, between doing and appearing, a pathway that dominant Western philosophy has blocked and suppressed" (2016: 5). This weird pathway might be what humanities scholars try to manœuvre as they turn to Lovecraft and the weird to find expression for the increasing awareness that humanity has become a 'hyperobject'. However, the attribution of Cthulhu-like qualities to hyperobjects like global warming might also discourage political engagement because the perceived threat, on the one hand, demands new habits and long-term thinking completely adverse to the way humans are used to thinking about and planning their existence. On the other hand, by extension, the perceived threat is so all-encompassing and inevitable that taking action can seem (is often referred to as) not only uncomfortable, but redundant. Moreover, the Anthropocene-via-Lovecraft is in danger of ascribing monstrosity to the human species as one undifferentiated whole.

Jason W. Moore's alternative to the Anthropocene, the 'Capitalocene', encourages, he argues, a more nuanced historical outlook on the current environmental crises, focusing on the ecological, social, and political implications of capitalism rather than the species-hierarchical implications of being human. According to Moore, the Anthropocene discourse reflects "a poverty of historical thinking", guided by a philosophy which still "locates human activity in one box, and the rest of nature in another", which reinforces the myth of human exceptionalism and moreover obscures issues of human "intra-species differentiations" such as "inequalities of class" (Moore 2018: 603). Perhaps it is precisely this tendency in Anthropocene discourse to gloss over structural differences that makes Lovecraft's sweeping, cosmic dread seem like a fitting aesthetic expression of Anthropocene crises. This, in addition to the weird's unproductive response to cosmic dread, should give pause when contemplating analogies between Lovecraftian monsters and anthropogenic climate change. As Miéville notes, no matter how aptly Lovecraft represents the difficulty of "being a human in deep time", it should not lead us to think of "Lovecraft *as* a philosopher" (Weinstock 2016: 239). On the other hand, perhaps Moore's gripe with intra-species differentiation is precisely the challenge that the Anthropocene poses for humans—necessarily implying *all* humans: to start practicing thinking at species level.

Something Borrowed…

How effective is cosmic dread at stirring people to action? Can Cthulhu mobilise as well as paralyse? As noted several times in this paper, Lovecraft's monstrous is typically expressed through the sanity-depriving collapse of boundaries between the human protagonist and the intensely nonhuman antagonist, which can quite easily be read in terms of early-twentieth-century overwhelming changes. Mayer, accordingly, suggests that "the weird is a genre uniquely suited to narrating climate change, offering neither hope of transcendence nor surrender to abjection" (Mayer 2018: 229). Like Cthulhu, the plights of the Anthropocene seek articulation in language and images, but emerge at the

collapse of categories, certainties and rules. Where the old weird might too easily succumb to paralysis or denial, however, the new weird more consciously and critically engages with this collapse, sometimes by reappropriating the old weird's monsters in playful ways.

The enthusiasm with which Lovecraft's contemporary devotees developed and expanded his storyworld created a devoted writer's imitation society which grew over the decades after Lovecraft's death. It is unlikely that Lovecraft had reached such fame if his work did not lend itself so well to literary imitation (Joshi 2015 [2008]: 22). This is one of the reasons that currently, in the twenty-first century, "Lovecraft not only seems to be everywhere, but his presence has seeped across generic boundaries, creating fertile new terrain for analysts of popular culture to consider" (Sederholm/Weinstock 2016b: 23). Some contemporary, new weird writers still purposefully situate their narratives in Lovecraft's storyworld, explicitly referring to Lovecraft's monsters. They experiment with ways of dispelling the Lovecraftian sense of helpless nihilism and escape into madness, while maintaining the focus on vast, monstrous bodies of impossible knowledge trying to squeeze into the limited space of the human mind.[10] Tsing et al. note that monsters "point us to forms of noticing that crosscut forms of knowledge, official and vernacular, science and storytelling. They show us co-species practices of living", which is why "following monsters are different ways to know the terrors of the Anthropocene" (2017: 176; ellipsis added). Following Lovecraft's monsters in new weird writing sometimes reveals playful experimentation that undresses cosmic horror and suggests an interest in different ways of knowing the fears and hopes of the Anthropocene.

Neil Gaiman's 'A Study in Emerald' (2011 [2003]) is a Sherlock Holmes pastiche set in a Lovecraftian version of Victorian London. Gaiman thus merges two of the most popular fictional universes for imitation and fan fiction in literary history in a witty noir detective story where the world's nobility is infiltrated by the Old Ones.[11] The humans in Gaiman's story have long since accepted and succumbed to the rule in a dark reversal of Doyle's universe where the narrator is not Holmes, but major Sebastian Moran, and his detective companion is Holmes' arch enemy, Moriarty. The plot follows the pair's investigation into the mysterious figure of 'Sherry Verne' (Gaiman's version of Holmes), who is leading a group of terrorists scheming to overthrow the Old Ones— whose monstrous rule in fact seems perfectly peaceful and orderly. The narrator in 'A Study in Emerald' is very similar to Lovecraft's favoured scholarly narrator, displaying the same reluctance to describe the mystery, but rather due to his fear of not doing it justice, as he claims that he is "not a literary man" (220). Certainly, his hesitance is not for the sake of guarding the reader against the monstrous Old Ones—they are, after all, accepted as rightful rulers.

The merging of Lovecraft and Doyle, as Jessica George argues in her discussion of Lovecraft's "literary afterlives", creates a "hybrid text" (2016: 180) in which it is suggested that "other, more advanced species of extraterrestrial beings may in fact be better than humans" (George 2016: 171). Gaiman's story suggests that humans and the Old Ones can live together, and makes the human more "arbitrary, as open to change,

---

[10] For an overview, see Sunand Tryambak [S. T.] Joshi's *The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Cthulhu Mythos* (2015 [2008]).
[11] The 'Old Ones' is a common denominator for Lovecraft's primordeal monsters.

since there is now nothing specifically human about human beings" (George 2016: 171). Gaiman experiments with the uncanny more than with cosmic horror, as can be seen in his use of Holmes's and Watson's doubles, the feeling of wrongness when these famous literary heroes appear to be happily serving the terrible Old Ones, and the mashup of styles that gives the writing itself an uncanny touch. The story is an obvious tongue-in-cheek reference to the first Sherlock Holmes novel *A Study in Scarlet*: the Old One whose murder is the focus of the plot has emerald-coloured blood. Holmes and Watson are revealed as radical 'Restorationalists', who wish to end the rule of the Old Ones and "would see the old ways restored—mankind in control of its own destiny, if you will" (233). Gaiman's pastiche contains layers of double-play, turning the tables and making Holmes and Watson the potential antagonists. Gaiman's story can thus also be read as a flippant suggestion similar to Anna Tsing's: that real-world humans might learn a thing or two from *Lovecraft*'s monsters about 'co-species practices of living'; what if realising that the Old Ones exist is not such a bad thing after all?

The examples of new weird narrative addressed in this paper show their Lovecraftian heritage in how they represent the monstrous as something essentially elusive, absurd, impossible, but at the same time desperately urgent and claustrophobically all-encompassing. Where they depart from Lovecraft's weird is in their attribution of agency to the environment itself, and their more affirmative outlook on human entanglement in nonhuman realities. But the contemporary stories discussed so far (with the exception of *Stranger Things*) are all similar to Lovecraft's in their formal expression. The final part of this paper will look closer at three formally unconventional examples of articulating Anthropocene monsters via the weird mode: the graphic novel *Nameless*, the computer game *Anatomy*, and the novel *House of Leaves*.

…and Something Grew—Leaving Humanity at the Threshold

Brad Tabas argues that Lovecraft's "extreme attention to place and setting" allows him to transgress the "boundaries of our perception, vaguely hinting to us the details of an outside or ultimate reality, while at the same time rendering us acutely aware of the finitude of our grasp on the real" (Tabas 2015: 7). In a letter from 1927 Lovecraft states that one of the goals of writing a weird tale is to "achieve the essence of real externality" (quoted in Joshi 2015 [2008]: 17). For this to happen, the writer must "forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind, have any existence at all"; when crossing "the line to the boundless and hideous unknown—the shadow-hunted *Outside*—we must remember to leave our humanity and terrestrialism at the threshold" (Joshi 2015 [2008]: 17). Old weird spatiality is riddled with such paradoxes. As Timothy Jarvis notes, the old weird is "largely concerned with the vast gulfs of time and space opened up by the new abstract sciences, and largely orientated outwards at an alienating and meaningless cosmos" (Jarvis 2017: 1145). However, this loss of individual control can come across as detached and distant, even silly, precisely *due* to the vastness of unplumbed space. Old-weird cosmic horror is trapped, argues Brian Stableford, in "a series of contrasts, incessantly stating what it is not—because what it is remains intrinsically beyond the reach of ordinary experience" (2007: 71). As noted above, new weird writers often experiment with the old weird conventions in order to facilitate communication of ecological awareness and human entanglement in

nonhuman realities. This is demonstrated in, for example, the unconventional monstrosity of the disturbingly cute oil rigs in Miéville's 'Covehithe' (2011). Other new weird tales experiment with different formal expressions of cosmic horror.

Grant Morrison's and Chris Burnham's graphic novel *Nameless* (2015) twists the cosmic horror of old religion and occult practices to criticise human abuse of powers they do not understand. Interestingly, the authors of *Nameless* explicate in the afterword how they wanted to create a weird universe divested of Lovecraft's storyworld. The themes, motifs, and setting of the story, however, are very Lovecraftianesque in expression. *Nameless* follows a set of characters as they seek to thwart ancient, malign forces and the seemingly inevitable apocalypse. Reverberating jarringly through the narrative is the question: "What is human?" (Morrison/Burnham 2015: n. pag.). This question is explicitly repeated throughout the text, but also vividly communicated by the illustrations. The monstrous events around which the plot revolves are violent expressions of the weight and tension that the question carries. Chapter five of *Nameless* begins with a cynical attempt by the main character to respond to the question, though the remaining plot neither rejects nor endorses the statement further: "The purpose of creation is to humble and *destroy* us. Humankind is a *disease*, a malignant *mistake*. The natural world seeks to *purge* its blissful, ignorant *Eden* of our contagion" (2015: n. pag.; emphasis in original). This anti-humanism is traceable throughout Lovecraft's œuvre as well as *Nameless*, and philosophers such as Eugene Thacker (2011; 2015a; 2015b) and Graham Harman (2012) argue that weird nihilism can be productive for thinking about existence precisely because of the humility it inspires. The problem with this anti-humanist outlook is the sense of paralysis and apathetic passivity it might generate besides humility.

The frames of *Nameless* display, in gory detail, bloody mass murders and mutilated, barely alive bodies infested with alien parasites, but the perpetual implication is that the psychological horror experienced by the characters is worse than any physical atrocity that befalls them. *Nameless* complicates cosmic horror by cramming it into the limited space of the human body, which, scattered across the panels, festers and decomposes in response. In their attempt to harness powers too great for them, the characters are driven insane. The claustrophobic tension resulting from this impossible embodiment of omnipotence is reinforced by the mere fact of the graphic novel's visual power. Recalling Lovecraft's wordy style, the weirdness of *Nameless* arises in the excessive, almost exultant display of madness and physical suffering coupled with its deliberate failure to communicate the cosmic dread of the treacherously simple question: 'What is human?'

The graphic novel as a whole reiterates anxieties found in Anthropocenic discussions of human agency as it disrupts the idea of humanity as a species in charge of its own grand narratives of control, colonisation, and cultivation. It suggests that ultimately, the question 'what is human?' is at once the most important *and* the wrong question to ask because 'human' has become an unstable category in need of evolution. This is reinforced at the end of the story: "*Human* is that which comprehends the pointless horror of its own wretched condition" (Morrison/Burnham 2015: n. pag.). The medium in which *Nameless* unfolds allows the powerful illustrations to express a deep, visceral horror about being human which still fails to convey the vast scope of the plot's apocalyptic deliberations. In a way, therefore, the anti-humanism in *Nameless* risks

becoming overwhelming rather than critical, and the story loses some of the new-weird affirmative potential for deliberating the terrors of the Anthropocene. As Alexa Weik von Mossner reminds us: it can be risky to rely on emotions such as fear, sadness, regret, or anger to communicate environmental issues, because "an overload of negative emotions might either lead to debilitating pessimism or to various forms of denial" (2017: 163).

In *Nameless*, the human is belittled and ridiculed by tearing down spatial, temporal, and psychological boundaries between human and more-than-human, monstrous realities. This is also the case in the computer game *Anatomy,* an independent, first-person exploration game developed by Kitty Horrorshow (2016). The horror of the game narrative, as the title suggests, relies on a disturbing conflation of the human body and the architecture of a house. *Anatomy* takes the player through the dark hallways of an empty house collecting cassette tapes from various rooms and listening to them using a tape recorder. In the first playthrough the recordings reveal an androgynous voice that speaks of the existential and historical importance of 'the house' as a safe dwelling for humans, explicitly comparing the house to a human body. Each room has its comparable body part. The game has three levels of nearly-identical play and must be restarted three times before the final level is 'unlocked'. With each playthrough of collecting cassettes, unsettling changes are added to the structure and objects of the house and the recordings become distorted. Increasingly, the player gets the sense that the house has a kind of malevolent agency. By the second playthrough it is clear that one of the new voices on the tapes belongs to the house itself, and it speaks of 'teeth and bones and sinew' in a guttural, vicious-sounding voice. The eerie horror of the game is strengthened by the perpetual darkness, solitude, and silence. There is no music, and sound effects are limited to the creaking of floorboards and opening or closing doors, before an oppressive sort of rasping hum can be heard throughout the second and third playthrough. The game questions the stability of the human body by deconstructing it and mapping it onto the anatomy of the house, presenting a house 'body' that becomes more real than the human body.

Where *Nameless* largely operates within the registers of the weird and cosmic horror, *Anatomy* plays with tensions closer related to the uncanny and the eerie. Insisting on the similarities between human and house anatomy and psychology, the malevolent presence of the house is at odds with the absence represented by the disembodied character who performs the commands of the player. There are no hands in sight, no body parts to be located as the cassettes are inserted into the tape recorder; directing the game view on the mirrors reflects only a muted sphere of light. Whether this light comes from an intuitive source like a flashlight, a phone, or a video camera is uncertain, but hugging the walls helps guide the player through the gloomy house because the weak light reflects off objects and obstacles from up close. This hugging of the walls also adds to the choking feeling of running from a horror hiding in plain sight. The monstrous in *Anatomy* is, paradoxically, and in contrast to *Nameless*, embodied in the *absence* of familiar bodies, eerily granting the house a stronger physical and psychological presence than the player—and the human.

It is almost impossible not to compare *Anatomy* to Mark Danielewski's novel *House of Leaves* (2000), where the house can also be read as a main character around which the plot—and the narrative structure itself—revolves. The reference to Martin

Heidegger's description of the uncanny as '*das Nicht-zuhause-sein*'—translated as "not-being-at-home" (Danielewski 2000: 25), is an appropriate (and no doubt carefully selected) in-story interpretation of Freud's *unheimlich*. Just like *Anatomy*, *House of Leaves* suggests that buildings can retain memories, that walls hold grudges, and that houses can defy basic laws of geometry. The architecture, or indeed: the *anatomy* of the house changes with each chapter of the book, just as it alters with each playthrough of *Anatomy*. The uncanny monstrosity of *House of Leaves* and *Anatomy* is mired in the realisation that the house, the home, a human's essential safe dwelling, can turn against its occupants.[12] Read as Anthropocene allegory, 'the house' becomes a metaphor for Earth: another dwelling the human, scaled-up to species level, has taken for granted until nature, in the words of Latour, turned the tables and took on the role of acting subject.

House of Leaves gives the reader the similar feeling of disembodied presence as *Anatomy*, because the storyline is structured in several layers of footnotes to notes on a film manuscript. The very structure of the story, it turns out, is at the mercy of the house, which interferes on all levels of the narrative, until eventually paragraphs, sentences, and words disperse, cluster, and disintegrate across the pages in a progressively invasive manner. The feeling it provokes is claustrophobic and antagonistic in much the same way as *Anatomy*. The similarity between the two texts is particularly apparent towards the end of *House of Leaves*, when the reader follows the main character through the house in pieces of writing squeezed ever tighter together in the middle of the pages as if an impossible corridor of empty space—the body of the house itself—were closing around the narrative:

> On the other / side, we find / a narrow cor / ridor sliding / into darknes / s. […]
> Excep / t the futhe [*sic*] / r he goes, t / he smaller t / he hallway (Danielewski
> 2000: 443–445; ellipsis added; see figure 1).

Taking the reader through an uncanny labyrinth both at the level of diegesis and at the level of form, Danielewski makes the act of reading itself weird.

This weirding of narrative form via the monstrous intrusion of trusted spatial structures can also be recognised in the violent crescendo with which *Anatomy* ends. The game ends in the basement, as white shapes soon identifiable as gigantic teeth start protruding from the floor. All the while the disembodied voice of the house drones on about its abandonment and hunger. The house turns organic; the player is absorbed into its belly, deprived of all agency. *House of Leaves* and *Anatomy* might, like *Nameless*, risk simply reinforcing the anxieties they examine.[13] The ending of *Anatomy*, in particular, does not leave much space for reflection beyond the wrath of the house; *House of Leaves* at least ends with one of the protagonists asserting (however perfunctorily): "Somehow I know it's going to be okay. It's going to be alright. It's going to be alright" (Danielewski 2000: 515). Nevertheless, Horrorshow and Danielewski bring an edge to their representation of monstrosity by way of formal

---

[12] Whedon's *Cabin in the Woods* also plays with the idea of the earth turning monstrous, but in a more pointedly satirical way. (The movie ends with the protagonists choosing the apocalypse over adhering to horror tropes.)

[13] See also Christy Tidwell's description of 'ecohorror' (2018: 115–117).

experimentation; by inviting the reader to succumb to weird ways of engaging with the narrative, as the narrative itself becomes monstrous.

On the other
side, we find
a narrow cor
ridor sliding
into darknes
s. "These w
alls are actua
lly a relief,"
Navidson co

mments after
he has been
walking for a
while. "I ne
ver thought t
his labyrinth
would be a p
leasant thin

g to return
to." Excep
t the futhe
r he goes, t
he smaller t
he hallway

gets, unti
l he has t
o remove
his pack
and crou

Figure 1. Danielewski 2000's "*On the other / side, we find / a narrow cor / ridor sliding / into darknes / s.* […] *Excep / t the futhe* [sic] */ r he goes, t / he smaller t / he hallway*". Reprint of the section's visual appearance; as printed on pages 443–445. Scanned by the author.

Nameless, *Anatomy*, and *House of Leaves* all reciprocate Lovecraft's demand to leave humanity at the threshold. The 'threshold' of the two latter is disturbingly literal. Stepping over the threshold in *Anatomy* and *House of Leaves* reveals houses that are haunted, not with the ghosts of humans, but with a terrible nonhuman fury whose monstrous agency chokes human subjectivity. Besides demonstrating the transmediality of the weird mode in the twenty-first century, they reimagine the monstrous as a deeply physical human absence which complements the overwhelming nonhuman presence.

Dancing between the registers of cosmic horror, the uncanny, and the eerie, they represent a void in which nonhuman voices express their fear and anger at having been ignored, silencing the human through the weird mode. As Latour writes: "The return of [environmental] consequences, like global warming, is taken as a contradiction, or even a monstrosity, which it is, of course, but *only according* to the modernist's narrative of emancipation [from the natural world]" (2011: 26; emphasis in original). Rupturing this false grand narrative of emancipation from nature by unwrapping and challenging its implicit human anxieties about the nonhuman, is one of the main ambitions of the new weird. Bearing Moore's critique of the Anthropocene discourse in mind, however, it can be worth questioning what narratives like *Anatomy* and *Nameless* suggest is the alternative to this grand narrative. Might their anti-humanism culminate in a disempowering, undifferentiated release of responsibility in the face of ecological crisis?

Conclusion—Weird Times Call for Weird Tales

Exporting and ridiculing the human individual or species for its cosmic insignificance remains one of the key themes of the weird. In its contemporary form the weird also introduces storyworlds in which that insignificance, and the feelings of anxiety with which it often goes hand-in-hand, may be dissected. The shared conceptual space of contemporary academic research and weird narrative suggests a need to incorporate the vast scale of the monsters of the Anthropocene into a sustainable framework, and (re)situate humanity in relation to them. New weird Anthropocene monsters may not all be as similar to Cthulhu as Morton suggests in *Hyperobjects* (2013) or as Sederholm and Weinstock argue in their *The Age of Lovecraft* (2016a), but they are perhaps *more* similar than Haraway would care to admit for her Chthulucene. Nevertheless, the twenty-first-century critical engagement with weird tropes suggests that the cosmic spectres of Lovecraft still haunt the cultural imagination in the confronting context of the Anthropocene. This paper should be read alongside Sederholm and Weinstock as a call for more academic attention towards (new) weird narrative as an aesthetic platform with potential for addressing and undressing Anthropocene issues by moulding them into monsters. In engaging with the new weird monsters, audiences are challenged to reposition themselves in relation to multiple forms of nonhuman subjectivities and to question their own degree of agency in the Anthropocene age.

Bibliography

Amos, Jonathan. 2018. "Welcome to the Meghalayan Age: A New Phase in History", *BBC News*, July 18. Available online: https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-44868527 [December 22, 2018].

Bier, Susanne (dir.). 2018. *Bird Box*. Feature film. Los Gatos: Netflix.

Braidotti, Rosi, and Maria Hlavajova (eds.). 2018. *Posthuman Glossary*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Ciaramella, Jason. 2014. *C is for Cthulhu: The Lovecraft Alphabet Book*. Illustrated by Greg Murphy. Newburyport: ComixTribe.

Clark, Timothy. 2019. *The Value of Ecocriticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crutzen, Paul J. 2002. "Geology of Mankind", *Nature* 415:3 (6867), 23. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1038/415023a.

Danielewski, Mark Z. 2000. *House of Leaves*. New York: Pantheon.

Duffer, Matt, and Ross Duffer [The Duffer Brothers] (dirs.). 2016–. *Stranger Things*. Web television series. Los Gatos: Netflix.

Fisher, Mark. 2016. *The Weird and the Eerie*. London: Repeater.

Flood, Alison. 2015. "World Fantasy Award Drops HP [H. P.] Lovecraft As Prize Image", *The Guardian*, November 9. Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/nov/09/world-fantasy-award-drops-hp-lovecraft-as-prize-image [December 22, 2018].

Freud, Sigmund. 1966 [1919]. "The Uncanny", in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: Vol. XVII*, edited and translated by James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, 217–252.

Gaiman, Neil. 2011 [2003]. "A Study in Emerald", in *New Cthulhu: The Recent Weird*, edited by Paula Guran. Gaithersburg: Prime Books, 220–237.

George, Jessica. 2016. "A Polychromic Study: Neil Gaiman's *A Study in Emerald* and Lovecraft's Literary Afterlives", in *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 166–182.

Haraway, Donna J. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble*. Durham: Duke Press. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373780.

Harman, Graham. 2012. *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy*. Winchester: Zero Books.

Hormiga, Gustavo. 1994. "A Revision and Cladistic Analysis of the Spider Family Pimoidae (Araneoidea: Araneae)", *Smithsonian Contributions to Zoology* 549, 1–104. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.5479/si.00810282.549.

Horrorshow, Kitty (dev.). 2016. *Anatomy*. PC game. Available online: https://kittyhorrorshow.itch.io/anatomy [December 22, 2018].

Jarvis, Timothy. 2017. "The Weird, the Posthuman, and the Abjected World-in-Itself: Fidelity to the 'Lovecraft Event' in the Work of Caitlín R. Kiernan and Laird Barron", *Textual Practice* 6:31, 1133–1148. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2017.1358693.

Joshi, Sunand Tryambak [S. T.]. 2015 [2008]. *The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Cthulhu Mythos*. Second edition. New York: Hippocampus Press.

Latour, Bruno. 2011. "Love Your Monsters", in *Love Your Monsters: Postenvironmentalism and the Anthropocene*, edited by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus. Oakland: The Breakthrough Institute, 21–44.

——————. 2014. "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene", *New Literary History* 45, 1–18. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.2014.0003.

Lovecraft, Howard Phillips [H. P.]. 2008 [1928]. "The Call of Cthulhu", in *Necronomicon: The Best Weird Tales of H. P. Lovecraft*, edited by Stephen Jones. London: Gollancz, 201–225.

——————. 2011 [1927]. "Supernatural Horror in Literature", in *H. P. Lovecraft: The Complete Fiction*, edited by Sunand Tryambak Joshi. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1041–1098.

Luckhurst, Roger. 2017. "The Weird: A (Dis)Orientation", *Textual Practice* 31:6, 1041–1060. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1080/0950236X.2017.1358690.

Mackintosh, Paul StJohn. 2018. "Revising Lovecraft: The Mutant Mythos", *Los Angeles Review of Books*, October 17. Available online: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/revising-lovecraft-the-mutant-mythos/ [December 22, 2018].

Malm, Andreas. 2018. *The Progress of this Storm*. London: Verso.

Mayer, Jed. 2016. "Race, Species, and Others: H. P. Lovecraft and the Animal", in *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 117–132.

—————————. 2018. "The Weird Ecologies of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*", *Science Fiction Studies* 45:2, 229–243. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.5621/sciefictstud.45.2.0229.

Miéville, China. 2009a. *The City and The City*. London: MacMillan.

—————————. 2009b. "The Weird", in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, edited by Adam Roberts, Sherryl Vint, and Mark Bould. London: Routledge, 510–515.

—————————. 2011. "Covehithe", *The Guardian*, April 22. Available online: https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/apr/22/china-mieville-covehithe-short-story [December 22, 2018].

Moore, Jason W. 2018. "The Capitalocene Part II: Accumulation by Appropriation and the Centrality of Unpaid Work/Energy", *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45:2, 237–279. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1272587.

Morrison, Grant, and Chris Burnham. 2015. *Nameless*. Oregon: Image Comics.

Morton, Timothy. 2013. *Hyperobjects: Philosophy After the End of the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

—————————. 2016. *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.7312/mort17752.

Noys, Benjamin, and Timothy S. Murphy. 2016a. "Introduction: Old and New Weird", *Genre* 49:2, 117–134. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1215/00166928-3512285.

—————————. 2016b. "Morbid Symptoms: An Interview with China Miéville", *Genre* 49:2, 199–211. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1215/00166928-3512333.

Sederholm, Carl H., and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (eds.). 2016a. *The Age of Lovecraft*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

—————————. 2016b. "Introduction: Lovecraft Rising", in *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1–42.

Shapiro, Stephen. 2016. "The Weird's World-System", *Paradoxa* 28, 240–261. Digital object identifier not available: http://paradoxa.com/volumes/28 [October 31, 2019].

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. 2003 [1818]. *Frankenstein* [*or, The Modern Prometheus*]. Reprint edition. London: Penguin.

Sperling, Alison. 2017. "Acknowledgement Is Not Enough: Coming to Terms with Lovecraft's Horrors", *Los Angeles Review of Books*, March 4. Available online: https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/acknowledgment-not-enough-coming-terms-lovecrafts-horrors/ [December 22, 2018].

Stableford, Brian. 2007. "The Cosmic Horror", in *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural: An Encyclopedia of Our Worst Nightmares, Volumes 1 & 2*, edited by Sunand Tryambak Joshi. Westport: Greenwood Press, 341–374.

Tabas, Brad. 2015. "Dark Places: Ecology, Place, and the Metaphysics of Horror Fiction", *Miranda* 11, 1–17. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.4000/miranda.7012.

Thacker, Eugene. 2011. *In the Dust of this Planet*. Horror of Philosophy Volume 1. Winchester: Zero Books.

—————————. 2015a. *Starry Speculative Corpse*. Horror of Philosophy Volume 2. Winchester: Zero Books.

—————————. 2015b. *Tentacles Longer Than Night*. Horror of Philosophy Volume 3. Winchester: Zero Books.

Tidwell, Christy. 2018. "Ecohorror", in *Posthuman Glossary*, edited by Rosi Braidotti and Maria Hlavajova. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 115–117.

Todorov, Tzvetan. 1975 [1970]. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Translated by Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, Heather Anne Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt (eds.). 2017. *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

VanderMeer, Ann, and Jeff VanderMeer. 2008. "The New Weird: 'It's Alive?'", in *The New Weird*, edited by Ann VanderMeer and Jeff VanderMeer. San Francisco: Tachyon Publications 2008, ix–xvii.

——————. 2011. "Introduction", in *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories*, edited by Ann VanderMeer and Jeff VanderMeer. London: Corrus, xv–xxiv.

VanderMeer, Jeff. 2014. *The Southern Reach*. London: Fourth Estate.

——————. 2017a. *Borne.* New York: MCD Books.

——————. 2017b. *The Strange Bird*. New York: MCD Books.

Waters, Colin N., Jan Zalasiewicz, Colin Summerhayes, Anthony D. Barnosky, Clément Poirier, Agnieszka Gałuszka, and eighteen more. 2016. "The Anthropocene Is Functionally and Stratigraphically Distinct from the Holocene", *Science* 351:6269, 137. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aad2622.

Weik von Mossner, Alexa. 2017. *Affective Ecologies: Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. 2016. "Afterword: Interview with China Miéville", in *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 231–243.

Zalasiewicz, Jan, Colin N. Waters, Alexander P. Wolfe, Anthony D. Barnosky, Alejandro Cearreta, Matt Edgeworth, and twenty-one more. 2017. "Making the Case for a Formal Anthropocene Epoch: An Analysis of Ongoing Critiques", *Newsletters on Stratigraphy* 50:2, 205–226. Digital object identifier: https://doi.org/10.1127/nos/2017/0385.

Biographical Note

Gry Ulstein is a PhD candidate at Ghent University in Belgium where she is a member of the project 'Narrating the Mesh' (NARMESH), led by prof. Marco Caracciolo. NARMESH studies the representation of nonhuman realities and environmental issues such as climate change in contemporary literature and oral storytelling. Gry is particularly interested in contemporary weird literature as an expression of ecological anxieties.

Acknowledgements