Creating new climate stories: Posthuman collaborative hope and optimism

Rachel Hennessy, Alex Cothren and Amy Matthews

1

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

University of Adelaide, Flinders University

Rachel Hennessy, Alex Cothren and Amy Matthews

Creating new climate stories: Posthuman collaborative hope and optimism

Abstract:

This paper considers an evolving project about climate change that will explore using collaborative creative writing strategies to emotionally support and engage writers, primarily focusing on how narratives of hope and optimism might counter affective responses of anxiety, and the resultant solipsistic inertia or surrender. We ask: what role could collaborative fiction play in helping to create positive futures that emotionally strengthen us to manage what may come and what already is? We outline the inspiration and background to our project and begin to theorise justification for applying posthuman approaches to the question of reimagining climate fiction. We review a number of collaborative climate change projects located outside of traditional writing but still drawing on narrative storytelling, and consider how our project – which focuses on genre fictions – might add to the horizon point; one that is not delusional, but also does not lead to dystopian despair.

Biographical notes:

Dr Rachel Hennessy is the author of four novels: *The Quakers* (2008), *The Heaven I Swallowed* (2013), *River Stone* (2019) and *Mountain Arrow* (2020). She has taught creative writing at the University of Adelaide and the University of Melbourne.

Dr Alex Cothren holds a PhD in Creative Writing from Flinders University. He is a winner of the Carmel Bird, William van Dyke and Peter Carey Awards for short fiction, and he has had writing published in *Meanjin, Island, The Griffith Review, Ruminate* and *Australian Book Review.* He is co-editor of *Westerly's* South Australia Special Issue.

Dr Amy Matthews is an award-winning multi-published author who writes under the names Amy T. Matthews, Amy Barry and Tess LeSue. She is Senior Lecturer and Discipline Lead in Creative Writing at Flinders University and a committee member of the Assemblage Centre for Creative Arts.

Keywords:
Climate change, climate fiction, posthumanism, hope, collaboration

2

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

Introduction

Climate fiction is a genre of crisis, emerging from an anxious now and unspooling an imagined and endangered future. *Cli-fi* is a genre knotted with tensions and emotions, enacting possibilities that are frightening and confronting. This paper considers an evolving project to explore creative writing strategies that emotionally support and engage writers, primarily focusing on what role narratives of hope and optimism might play in countering affective responses of anxiety and despair, and the resultant solipsistic inertia or surrender. We wish to embrace the *sharedness* at the heart of climate fiction, and to explore the collective feeling that is within – and without – its pages. We ask: what role can collaborative fiction play in creating the future, and emotionally strengthening us to manage what may come and what already is? In this article, we outline the inspiration and background to our project and begin to theorise justification for applying posthuman approaches to the question of what reimagining climate fiction might offer creative writers.

The inspiration for this project was the authors' personal responses to the climate fiction genre, a body of work engaging with climate change that is now identified as *cli-fi*. Rather than feeling galvanised by novelistic narratives engaging with the issue of climate change – works such as Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behaviour* (2012), Ian McEwan's *Solar* (2011) and Margaret Atwood's *Madaddam* (2004) trilogy – our affective responses were to feel overwhelmed by the scale and enormity of the issue. Unable to deal with these feelings in a way that did not involve wilful turning away, we came together to discuss what these reactions were enabling or, indeed, preventing. Rita Felski argues that "works of art invite and enlist us; they draw us down certain perceptual paths… they have their own distinctiveness and dignity, can affect us in ways we did not imagine or anticipate" (2020, pp. 6–7). With this in mind, we began to consider what climate fiction might provide us with besides anxiety, what "perceptual paths" have not yet been utilised in this important body of work. Sue Lovell, Bridget Thomas and Olga Wickham argue that for climate fiction to be effective "as a change stimulus (conversion being too strong a term) readers must find remnants of narrated experience clinging to them as they resurface" (2019, p. 3) from the immersion of the reading experience. But what remnants do we resurface with when reading the current form of climate fiction? What emotions are evoked by negative, dystopian or satirical visions? In one of the few empirical studies of the effects of climate fiction on readers' attitudes or actions, Matthew Schneider-Mayerson finds little evidence that those who read cli-fi have a stronger engagement with environmental concerns (2018). In fact, there is a worry that the hopeless narratives most prevalent in cli-fi instigate feelings of despair which preclude activism:

> The affective responses of many readers suggest that most works of climate fiction are leading readers to associate climate change with intensely negative emotions, which could prove counter-productive to efforts at environmental engagement or persuasion. (Scheider-Mayerson, 2018, p. 243)

The fear is that the (understandable) bleakness of much cli-fi may be re-enforcing non-participation in positive solutions or feeding feelings of anxiety and non-productive solastalgia.

There is no doubt that these feelings of anxiety are real and present for many global citizens. The Australian Psychological Society (2022) website currently includes a ten-page guide to "Coping with Climate Change Distress" and a recent global survey conducted by Bath

University found that nearly 60% of young people are very worried or extremely worried about climate change (Hickman et al, 2021, p. 866). Distress is an understandable response to the existential threat of the climate crisis, but becoming frozen in that state of distress or trapped by a framework of inevitability is not helpful. As the American Psychological Association writes in their 2017 report on climate change and mental health, negative responses such as "conflict avoidance, fatalism, fear, helplessness, and resignation… are keeping us, and our nation, from properly addressing the core causes of and solutions for our changing climate, and from building and supporting psychological resiliency" (Clayton et al, 2017, p. 4). Sarah E. Wolfe and Amit Tubi agree that negative and frightening representations of a climate-changed future have the potential to stall, rather than advance, the required action: "Psychological defenses to mortality awareness, particularly the proximal defenses of denial, distractions and rationalization, could increase apathy, divert resources, or create resistance to adaptation and mitigation initiatives" (2019, p. 8). The result, as Susan Clayton and Bryan T. Karazsia succinctly put it, is that sometimes "what looks like apathy is really paralysis" (2020, p. 2). Even worse, other researchers posit that strong negative emotions can lead to skepticism and denial about climate change, and can also trigger harmful conspiracy theories (Feinberg & Willer, 2010; Haltinner & Sarathchandra 2018). Kristin Haltinner and Dilshani Sarathchandra therefore warn that "attempts to frighten people into believing in and ameliorating climate change will likely backfire" (2018, p. 6).

As both fiction writers and concerned societal participants, we believe that avoiding the topic of climate change in our work would be cowardice at best and denialism at worst. Stories are one of the ways in which a culture synthesises events and meanings; as Daniel Sherrell says in *Warmth: Coming of Age at the End of Our World,* fiction "always seemed to promise a meaning beyond bare knowledge" (2021, p. 72). However, if the end result is stories that freeze readers in the headlights of the crisis, what good are these narratives doing? And on a personal level, what damage might be done to our own mental health during the long periods of focus and investigation of climate change, the constant looking and relooking required of all good fiction? There is a growing body of literature documenting how a constant focus on climate change affects the mental health of environmental researchers (Clayton, 2018; Head & Harada, 2017; Hoggett & Randall, 2018; Pihkala, 2020). Paul Hoggett and Rosemary Randall (2018) describe how these researchers have a different relationship to climate change than the rest of population, as they confront "the evidence daily in their research and thus have no choice about whether or not to dwell on it" (p. 224). Panu Pihkala (2020) says this daily confrontation can have a severe impact on researchers' wellbeing:

> Environmental researchers encounter traumatic issues such as the scale of global and local environmental problems, feelings of isolation because of their knowledge and the existence of socially constructed silence, and feelings of helplessness because political engagement seems to be too slow to solve the problems. (p. 95)

While cli-fi writers may not be burdened with the same public responsibilities as a climate scientist, the research they undergo invites the issue into their daily life in a similar manner. In an interview for her novel, *The Last Migration*, Charlotte McConaghy (as cited in Brady, 2020) describes how researching the novel changed her: "The research I did made it difficult for me to un-see the truth of how bad things have become for our environment. Once you open your eyes to it, it's really hard to ignore". There has yet been no empirical research into the impact this research has on cli-fi writers but the rare instances in which

authors have openly discussed this personal impact provide a glimpse into how serious the issue is. For example, Australian writer Madeleine Watts describes the anxiety she developed while researching her debut novel, *The Inland Sea*:

> I started obsessively reading about weather events and environmental catastrophes. When I was looking at these climate change stories – because they were all climate change stories – it felt almost like I was poking a bruise. It had something to do with not quite feeling safe, not feeling secure, but also trying to grapple with the idea that there's no fix to this. The insecurity I was feeling, and still feel, will likely go on for the rest of my life. (as cited in Lucas, 2021)

The answer for a writer like Watts surely cannot be to turn away from the issue. But how might we move through these effects without causing further harm to ourselves and others?

Background

Of course, we are far from the first writers or researchers to raise questions about cli-fi. In fact, almost as soon as the spectre of climate change/global warming came into public consciousness, there was criticism over its integration in fiction. Literary fiction in particular has been accused of a failure of imagination when it comes to climate change. Of these critiques, Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2016) has perhaps been the most influential. Alongside chapters on history and politics, Ghosh dedicates a chapter to exploring the absence of climate change from what he calls "serious fiction" (2016, p. 61). It is worth noting that Ghosh's definition of what qualifies as "serious fiction" is hazy and has drawn critique (Milner & Burgmann, 2018; Ravindranathan, 2019; Taylor, 2018). Despite largely focusing on the literary realist novel, Ghosh also tries to claim works by Margaret Atwood and Ian McEwan as rare examples of "serious fiction" engaging with climate change, with Andrew Milner and J.R. Burgmann pointing out that the novels Ghosh refers to are not realist and could easily be defined as science fiction (2018, p. 2). Despite these issues, Ghosh's explanations for the absence of climate change from much contemporary literary fiction are worth exploring as they have both provoked extensive academic discussion and influenced a number of Australian fiction writers we have investigated in the outset of our project.

Firstly, Ghosh writes that the unpredictable weather effects of climate change – such as an unprecedented tornado in Delhi that Ghosh himself experienced – are deemed too improbable an occurrence for the literary novel that is devised to document "the orderly expectations of bourgeois life" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 26). Secondly, Ghosh believes that the immense spatio-temporal span of climate change does not fit within novels accustomed to focusing on a narrow setting: "Its essence consists of phenomena that were long ago expelled from the territory of the novel – forces of unthinkable magnitude that create unbearably intimate connections over vast gaps in time and space" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 63). Finally, Ghosh says that while climate change has made us more aware of non-human presence, the novel is "radically centred on the human" (2016, p. 66) and therefore ill-equipped to integrate the range of non-human voices needing to be heard in the Anthropocene. If literary fiction is unable to adapt and meet these challenges, argues Ghosh, it will be a symptom of a wider societal failure to deal with the issue of climate change: "If certain literary forms are unable to negotiate these torrents, then they will have failed – and their failures will have to be counted as an aspect of the broader imaginative and cultural failure that lies at the heart of climate change" (2016, p. 8). Sherrell (2021) notes that when

5

he was initially seeking fiction to process his reactions to "the Problem" – his euphemism for the complexities of climate change – Ghosh's book was "the next best thing" he could find, but: "After reading Ghosh my paralysis deepened. Because if it was too boring to write about the trends and too artless to write about the events, then what *were* we supposed to do?… Resign ourselves to speechlessness?" (p. 72). Thus, while Ghosh's book is only half a decade old, his challenge to literary fiction already looks dated. Many writers have felt, as Sherrell did, that paralysis is not an option for them. Ghosh may have bemoaned a dearth of literary climate change fiction back in 2016, but there has since been an enormous surge of such works. In Australia alone, we found 24 cli-fi novels published between 2016 and 2020, receiving at least one review in a major newspaper or journal (see appendix for full list). Furthermore, many of these novels have creatively found ways of incorporating the improbable, spatio-temporal and non-human elements of climate change that Ghosh warned were incompatible with serious fiction. For example, as previously mentioned, Madeleine Watts's *The Inland Sea* (2020) tells the story of a young woman's coming-of-age, a typical plot for literary fiction, yet it also incorporates once-improbable images from climate change-affected Sydney, opening with a heatwave so intense that "on the seven o'clock news there was always somebody making a show of frying an egg on the asphalt of an outer-suburbs driveway" (2020, p. 3). Watts (2019) has said that after reading Ghosh, her writing "utterly changed") and she sought a way to incorporate the bizarre daily occurrences of climate change into contemporary literary fiction: "It was important to me to write about what was happening right now, the reality of climate change as we're already experiencing it" (as cited in St. James, 2021). Molly MacVeagh writes that Watts's method of mixing quotidian and improbable events succeeds "both in challenging Ghosh's thesis about the irreconcilability of realism and climate crisis and in answering his call to create new approaches to writing the Anthropocene" (2020).

Other Australian cli-fi takes up the challenge of representing climate change's immense spatio-temporal span. For example, the ten chapters of James Bradley's *Clade* (2015) stretch across decades*,* feature multiple points of view and are set in various locales around the world. Although *Clade* was published a year before *The Great Derangement,* Bradley frequently references Ghosh when discussing the challenges of depicting climate change in a single novel: "What I was really up against was one of the fundamental problems with writing about climate change, which is the way its immensity and complexity resist the sorts of tools the novelist has at their disposal" (as cited in Brady, 2017). Bradley says that *Clade's* structure allowed him "to capture a longer view by showing change over time" (Bradley & Charnock, 2020). Mary Woodbury (2017) agrees that this solution helps the narrative grapple with climate change's immensity: "*Clade* eclipses time and grapples well with the hyperobject that is climate change".

Chris Flynn's *Mammoth* (2020) similarly deals with wide spans of time and place in his discussion of climate change, but also incorporates the non-human. The novel – described by Flynn as "about deep time, climate change and mankind's [sic] messed-up relationship with the animal kingdom" (as cited in *Books + Publishing*, 2020) – is narrated by the talking fossils of the eponymous mastodon, as well as those of a tyrannosaurus, penguin and others. Flynn's inspiration to tell this story through non-human narrators came from his time at the RSPCA: "Working with animals helps you realize the infinite variety of personalities that they have, and their ability to recognize and communicate with each other and us" (as cited in Allahyari, 2020). Reviewing the novel for *Australian Book Review*, Astrid Edwards (2020) notes the novel successfully incorporates these non-human voices into its

6

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

exploration of the long arc of climate change: "Everything about Chris Flynn's *Mammoth* – the characters, plot, and structure – should not work. But it does, and beautifully so".

These three novels represent just some of the ways in which Australian literary writers have risen to the challenges posed by Ghosh, and they are not alone. Ghosh himself has described how the acceleration of climate change and the mainstream acceptance of innovative cli-fi novels, such as Richard Power's *The Overstory* (2018)*,* have combined to create "an outpouring of work in this area" (as cited in Armitstead, 2021). What is evident, however, is that these new imaginings are still trapped in a dystopian framework (in the case of *Clade*); mired in melancholia (as in *The Inland Sea*); or propose radical and somewhat silly solutions (like re-introducing prehistoric animals to the Tundra, as suggested by *Mammoth*). As Rithika Ramamurthy (2021) writes in her review of Watts's work (as well as Jenny Offill's *Weather* [2020]), "Documenting the ordinariness of apocalypse is an exercise in helplessness in the face of horror… [and assumes] that the affective goal of climate writing is to inspire fear in the individual".

If cli-fi is now in a post-Ghosh era – that is to say, if the creative challenges posed by *The Great Derangement* have been met, or at least attempted – then what comes next? In what future directions will fiction be pulled by the accelerating realities of climate change? What failures of human imagination still haunt the medium and how can they be expelled? And how appropriate are our very creative writing processes to this era of Anthropocene? Our project views these questions as creative opportunities.

Just as *The Great Derangement* prompted writers such as Madeleine Watts and James Bradley to radically rethink their work, we seek to set problems that can engender refreshing solutions and, in this paper, we focus on one unanswered section of Ghosh's work: the lament that "the idea of the collective has been exiled from politics, economics, and literature alike" (2016, p. 80). Ghosh links this exile to the human move away from images and towards logocentrism, a move which interposes language between humans and the non-human in the act of communication. "What threatens is indeed writing", as Derrida claims, and "it is not an accidental and disorderly threat" (2016, p. 107). While Derrida is concerned with symbols and meaning, "*the science of language and writing*" (2016, p. 107, italics original), Ghosh is focused on the ways that our logocentrism causes a rupture between us and the non-human and more-than-human, with whom we do not share our written languages. Ghosh references the anthropologist Eduardo Kohn's book *How Forests Think* (2013), which considers non-linguistic patterns of communication such as dogs barking, birdcalls and the tendrils of a vine reaching for a tree. The vine reaching for the tree is "interpreting" the stimuli around it, Ghosh argues; it is "reading" the stimuli to develop an "image" of what it reaches for: "To think like a forest, then, is, as Kohn says, to think in images" (2016, p. 83). What, Ghosh wonders, "does this imply for the novel?" (2016, p. 83). The written word and the technology of print are implicated in, and have some responsibility for, "the Problem" (as Sherrell calls it), a "horizon within which every advance is achieved at the cost of 'making the world more unliveable'" (Ghosh, 2016, p. 84). Fiction is intrinsically logocentric and the print book is an industrial medium existing within a capitalist structure; the page is product, printed on the body of a tree. Our experience of fiction as a commercial complex is a cog in the machine of the human destruction of Terra, and the imagined stories and written language-based communication contribute to the systems that cause, generate and obstruct solutions to "the Problem". Perhaps, Ghosh suggests, "the last… most intransigent way the Anthropocene resists literary fiction lies ultimately in its resistance to language itself" (2016, p. 84) and that with

7

technologies such as the internet and its resultant blending of word and image (Baudrillardian in its simulation and simulacra) and hyperconnectivity, "new, hybrid forms will emerge and the act of reading itself will change once again, as it has many times before" (2016, p. 84).

Ghosh demands an ambitious and sweeping vision for the future of the novel, one which we are only taking baby steps towards. We are yet to experience a truly disruptive and innovative leap. Whilst novels such as *Clade* and *The Overstory* show multiple perspectives, helping to grasp the multitude of ways climate change is affecting human and non-human communities, they are still logocentric works drawn from the mind of a single creator. There is no strong tradition of collaborative story-making in literature (using here the problematic terminology employed by Ghosh) and there is an ongoing suspicion of textual production not firmly connected to the individual. Janelle Adsit has comprehensively argued in *Towards an Inclusive Creative Writing* that the construction of writing and writers in the academy (and beyond) is mired in the ongoing humanist assumptions of lone genius, "leaving the field bereft of robust and diverse conversation about artistic production and the relationship between aesthetics and social responsibility" (2017, p. 48). Scott Rettberg argues that our perception of fictional works as the product of a single individual – therefore ignoring the web of people involved in editing, typesetting, printing and distributing the work – is capitalistic myopia:

> The myth of the solitary author, toiling in isolation on the great work, is largely a convenience to simplify the complex collaboration involved in making and distributing books; the idea of authorship is driven more fundamentally by legal and market concerns than by artistic ones. (2011, p. 187)

If, as posthumanist Rosi Braidotti urges us to, we reconfigure the climate change "crisis" as "the coming into focus of new conditions for relational encounters, understanding and knowledge production" (2016, p. 28), then we might reconsider not only the type of narratives being written, but *how* these narratives need to be written. "To live in the Anthropocene", Sherell argues, "is to realize that your attention must be broadened far beyond the bounds of your individual circumstance – expanded to encompass people, species, objects, and eras with which you are both utterly unfamiliar and inextricably bound" (2021, p. 252). If worldwide collective action is required to combat the devastation to come, perhaps a de-privileging of individual aesthetic output is, concomitantly, also needed? Vinciane Despret asks: "How do we take back up a collective adventure that is multiple and ceaselessly reinvented, not on an individual basis, but in a way that passes the baton, that is to say, affirms new givens and new unknowns?" (as cited in Haraway, 2016, p. 7). Here we wish to consider not only the role of connection in breaking down individual silos of worry – the affective responses that spring-boarded the project in the first place – but the ways in which rethinking the givens of creativity might challenge the ongoing focus of late capitalism on production of fictional texts born from a singular author's voice, disconnected from political intent.

Posthumanism collaboration

In our project, we intend to curate a collaboration of professional writers from a range of backgrounds and positions and to actively frame the artistic laboratory via posthuman approaches. We are none of us alone in "the Problem", even though in this age of lockdowns and sheltering in place we have faced isolation and loneliness. We are connected to other

humans, to the non-human and the beyond-human; we share this earth and this air, we are of it. These are the principles that underpin our thinking. In this project we are choosing to set aside the notion of the auteur writer, alone in the garret. We are not working from a Romantic tradition; rather, we wish to consider connectedness, sharedness and the process, not only the product. This is a writerly project, focused on experimentation and working through, rather than a readerly project, focused on the final text and its potential readers. Eventually our aim is to work towards the readerly – to find strategies to communicate – but the early stages of this project must be writerly and self-reflexive in order to test and innovate, play and meditate.

Others have theorised connectivity and sharedness in terms of narrative and storytelling. Donna Haraway's consideration of creativity draws attention to the way in which "stories nest like Russian dolls inside ever more stories" (2019, p. 565), while Despret posits a "narrative matrix" (as cited in Haraway, 2016, p. 33) that, as Haraway observes, "enlarges, even invents, the competencies of all the players, including herself, such that the domain of ways of being and knowing dilates, expands, adds both ontological and epistemological possibilities, proposes and enacts what was not there before" (2016, pp. 126–127). These ideas of web-like structures of interconnectedness signal the ways in which we want to reconceive our creative writing. How can we break out of the linear teleology of the traditionally authored short story or novel and offer something connected, yet open? How can we take up Ghosh's challenge to find "new, hybrid forms" (2016, p. 84)? What might a writing process that enables a number of writers to tussle over their storytelling mode not only do to our representation of climate change, but also to our notions of the writing process itself? Cary Wolfe insists that in questioning whether a work of art is posthumanist or not, "the issue is not just *what* you're doing (which is usually the easy and obvious part) but *how* you're doing it… to make transparent to ourselves our deep, intractable cultural and philosophical inheritances" (2021, p. 324). Collaboration is not a word often used in the mainstream fictional context, even as the acknowledgement pages of most contemporary novels become increasingly longer, revealing the reality that writing always involves more than one. The cringe around the collective has been witnessed by us as creative writing teachers in a general dislike of group work and, as discussed elsewhere, "the neoliberal university system does not easily accommodate the idea of collaborative writing, particularly not in terms of assessable work" (Hennessy, 2022, p. 45). Very few examples of mainstream literary publishing feature fictional work authored by more than one writer and whilst collective production of artwork is certainly not new in the vast majority of artistic practices – from visual art to music to screenwriting – there remains an unproblematised commitment to individualism in literary production, which we wish to explore and counteract. This, then, moves the examination and creation of climate fiction beyond the arguments around form and content to consider *both* in the context of ways of thinking and doing. As Giovanni Aloi and Susan McHugh (2021) propose in *Posthumanism in Art and Science*:

> At the core of the ontological turn proposed by posthumanist approaches to art lies a fervent desire to re-envision the modalities of epistemology. From tools and materials to perspectives and agencies, artists and scholars engaging with posthumanist ideas strive to devise new and compelling practices in order to conceive and discover what anthropocentric perspectives among other humanist legacies have obscured. (2021, pp. 8–9)

9

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

This turn towards collaboration does not, of course, magically enable the project to become posthuman or help writers take a turn towards optimism. The challenge remains to find methods that reposition storytelling as, in Katherine McKittrick's words, "theoretical, creative, groovy, skilled, action-based, secreted, shared" (2021, p. 9) rather than the isolated outpourings of the anxious individual. This is not an easy task, as Bernie DeKoven et al write, because "we tend to think of imagination as something people experience in isolation… we have to make a concerted effort to help people experience how imagination functions as a shared faculty" (2020, p. 77). In the next section of the paper, we examine collaborative climate change projects already undertaken, considering what these projects have accomplished, before elucidating what points of difference our own project might offer.

Collaborative climate change projects

Many of the inspiring collaborative projects we have come across are not strictly within the realm of creative writing and we have generally found the most exciting projects exist outside of traditional publishing. They are connected by their use of optimistic storytelling that gives participants a sense of agency in the face of the wicked problem of climate change. For example, although *FutureCoast* is an alternative-reality video game, it relies on short fictions to power its imaginary world in which voicemails from multiple futures have begun to leak into our present. It is the player's task to record and upload these voicemails, creating what *FutureCoast* co-producer Ken Eklund describes as "a vision of climate-changed (or not) futures that isn't top-down but bottom-up, described by hundreds of different voices" (as cited in LeMenager & Eklund, 2017, p. 516). Co-producer Sara Thacher describes the voicemails as "basically these little miniature short stories, micro-stories, that give you a sense of place and story and characters" (as cited in Paulas, 2014); Eklund says this form was chosen because "it is a communication medium anyone can do" (as cited in Paulas, 2014). With no strict parameters or editorialising from the producers of the game, it is entirely up to players to decide how the future will look, and Eklund admits he had expected the majority to present depressing dystopias: "I really thought there'd be a bunch of voicemails from people who were in crisis, and a bunch of screaming and incoherent and apocalyptic visions" (as cited in Paulas, 2014). Instead, Rick Paulas (2014) observes the opposite is true: "Instead of the voicemails being this scary apocalyptic future, they were mostly people with everyday tones, almost banal". Indeed, Eklund describes some of the future visions as "utopian", offering glimpses of a future in which humanity's best traits have remained intact despite the challenges of climate change:

> There's one we got called The Wind-Gen One. It's a very simple message of a neighbor calling another neighbor and saying, 'Hey, you don't have your wind generator on, we're thinking we're maybe going to be in a brownout situation this weekend, and we need you to turn on your wind-gen.' So, that is a pretty utopian future. A neighbor is being neighborly and just calling and telling them what's going on. (as cited in Paulas, 2014)

Thacher adds that even when the voicemails are describing futures negatively affected by climate change, they often do so in thoughtful ways that eschew the violent, apocalyptic images prevalent in much cli-fi:

> They can be really subtle. We had a voicemail that's a pizzeria calling back to confirm an order, and they're ordering pineapple pizza, and it's their top shelf pizza.

10

> They're making a commentary on what foods are going to be available, and the relative exclusivity and price of the foods of the future. But all in this very, very simple little voicemail. (as cited in Paulas, 2014)

Apart from the surprisingly optimistic tone of many of the voicemails, Eklund believes a crucial element of the game's premise – that these voicemails are leaking not from one predestined future but a variety of possible futures – gives participants a sense of optimism and agency: "By design, the game underscores that the future is not yet determined but that it is being determined by how we act" (LeMenager & Eklund, 2017). As a result, Stephanie LeMenager believes that *FutureCoast*, along with other similar participant-driven games created by Eklund, offers an opportunity for optimistic collaboration: "His games respect the ability and desire of their audiences to shape virtually materialized possible worlds that reflect their experiences and their hopes" (LeMenager and Eklund 2017).

While *FutureCoast* fosters collaboration via an open-ended platform, the participatory art project *BWK-BCN* uses game rules to challenge participants to "design a fictional new town as an adaptive response to the challenges of climate change" (Mellor, 2021, p. 3). At the heart of the project is the titular town, an invented amalgamation of Berwick-Upon-Tweed and Barcelona that project creator Alexei Mellor says "establishes a framework for understanding climate change as spatially experienced within situated contexts, while confronting the local–global binary by exploring place as a fluid, social construct" (2021, p. 3). In working sessions, participants engage with this imaginary place via a toolkit available on the *BWK-BCN* website (https://www.bwk-bcn.systems/bwk-bcn/cards/). The toolkit contains 44 cards divided between objectives: cards that present a climate change related problem to be solved, and cards describing various systems and fields (such as transport, water systems and mental health) that narrow the participants' search for a solution to a particular problem. In each session, teams of participants select one objective card and two other cards and are challenged to "create a narrative" (*BWK-BCN*, n.d.) linking the three cards together. As this instruction to "create a narrative" suggests, storytelling and imaginative play are at the heart of the project. Borrowing a term from Johan Huizinga, Mellor describes the working sessions as a "Magic Circle" in which "disbeliefs are suspended" in a manner that facilitates "imagining new possibilities for new worlds" (2021, p. 3). At the start of a working session held at the Newcastle University Institute for Sustainability, Mellor describes how she went so far as to provide a fictitious backstory to her invented town, fleshing out both its history and the needs of its citizens "in an effort to help participants feel as though they had fully entered the Magic Circle" (2021, p. 5).

By becoming invested in this imaginary place, and challenged to help it overcome the effects of climate change, participants of *BWK-BCN* become protagonists in their own cli-fi story, one in which they have agency to make a difference:

> *BWK-BCN* participants become de facto stakeholders in the fate of the new town and join forces by collaboratively disassembling and reassembling various existing elements of Berwick and Barcelona, while inventing new, and often times fantastical, elements as a starting point for interrogating how we might to respond to the evolving challenges climate change presents. (Mellor, 2021, p. 4)

As a result, the project helps participants deal with their anxiety about climate change by both helping them "give voice to their fears about the climate crisis" and assisting them "in discovering their own agency to shape climate change discourse" (Mellor, 2021, p. 4).

11

Aside from the benefit *BWK-BCN* provides individual participants, Mellor also hopes that it can contribute to the wider challenge of climate change by facilitating people from different fields to "share their subjective knowledge to re-solve this pressing issue" (2021, p. 4). Above all, however, it is the space of play and imagination created by the project that is its greatest contribution and which suggests elements of *BWK-BCN* could be transferred successfully to collaborative creative writing: "The speculative aspect of *BWK-BCN* supports building new worlds and the imaginative and innovative thinking that is required to consider what a 'new normal' might look like in the context of wicked problems like climate change" (Mellor, 2021, pp. 7–8).

While *FutureCoast* and *BWK-BCN* focus on setting – either temporal or geographic – Andrew Morrison and Alittea Chisin (2017) describe two collaborative design fiction projects in which teams created fantastical characters to speak to and for those affected by climate change. In his essay on the field, Bleecker (2009) describes design fiction as "a conflation of design, science fact, and science fiction" (p. 6). Moving beyond the form of literature but making use of its speculative powers, Derek Hales (2013) says that "design fictions exploit the power of media design to craft and deploy compelling visions of the future" (p. 2). Futurist Scott Smith describes how design fiction, despite the various forms it can take, is foremost a storytelling tool: "I think design fiction as a communication and social object creates interactions and dialogues around futures that were missing before. It helps make it real enough for people that you can have a meaningful conversation" (as cited in Hary, 2016).

The two design fiction projects Morrison and Chisin investigate both focus on how a designed character, or *persona*, can "be employed to motivate collaborative and aesthetically framed meaning making about climate change" (2017, p. 147). In the first project, design teachers and students at Cape Peninsula University of Technology in South Africa collaborated to create Fiscilla, a fish character with "a fierce fighting spirit" (Morrison & Chisin, 2017, p. 152). The collaborators constructed a two-metre physical manifestation of Fiscilla out of steel and wood, and then took this creation on a trip across the country to Namibia. Along the way, Fiscilla acted as a focal point for further collaboration and consultation, particularly as students met with fishing communities "to discuss how their livelihoods had changed as water diminished" (Morrison & Chisin, 2017, p. 150). By the time Fiscilla arrived at her destination for a research exhibition, Morrison and Chisin describe how she was covered by the narratives she had collected: "People transposed and projected their identities and marks. Children covered her with hand painted mud, various stakeholders stuck post-it notes onto her frame as narrative scales" (2017, p. 152).

In contrast to Fiscilla's "embodied artifact" (Morrison & Chisin, 2017, p. 151), the second project described by Morrison and Chisin was centred around Narrata, a character existing only as a "lively online presence" (2017, p. 151). Narrata is a nuclear-powered Narwhal, "a post-humanistic entity" (Morrison, 2018, p. 133) who posts on a blog run by a group of researchers based in and around the Arctic. Morrison describes how Narrata's evolving voice is a representation of the team's own evolving experiences and knowledge:

> Her stances and interests have been devised through discussion, but also through the dynamics of our work and as part of shaping online drafts and posts through a blog tool in a mode of discourse and social action… her voice is one that develops over

time, as our group has found its own experiential and interpretative voice. (2018, p. 119)

As with Fiscilla, creating narratives for Narrata to explore also involved community consultation on the experiences of, as well as solutions to, the effects of climate change:

> Participative story gathering has involved local experts, fishermen, elderly storytellers and business people… in discussing their locative history and their current attempts to provide alternatives to the demise of a once flourishing fishing industry and the projected development of oil and gas reserves offshore. (Morrison, 2018, p. 121)

These collected stories, alongside the experiences of the research team, are then filtered through a fictive voice that makes use of "satire, irony, pastiche and humour" (Morrison, 2018, p. 125) to entertain and help readers "to think further about our own voices and views in the undeniable face of climate change" (p. 129). Therefore, like *FutureCoast*, Morrison and Chisin describe the aims of the Fiscilla and Narrata projects as two-pronged, in that they are both "a way to encapsulate and share emotional and psychological responses to climate change and community distress" as well as a tactic to "tease out wicked problems in the preparation, analysis, design and delivery of design-orientated futures" (Morrison & Chisin, 2017, pp. 155–156).

Our own project: the possibilities of genre fiction

These are examples of how the creative arts can facilitate collaborative climate change storytelling, challenging the narrative forms that rose in the 19th century along with industrialisation. They show a commitment to multiple voices – including breaking down the barriers between the human and the non-human – as well as a growing tendency to counter negativity with possibility. However, these projects are driven by non-professional creative writers and produce texts that circulate outside traditional publishing and its global commercial marketplace. In contrast, we seek to engage professional writers and to challenge them to produce cli-fi texts that can entertain wide audiences. In this respect, we join a growing trend of Australian collaborative creative writing projects seeking to respond to the major issues of our day. Other examples include Chloe Cannell et al's "collective biography" project that describes the experience of being precariously employed women in academia (2020), and the *We See Each Other* collaborative writing project that positions refugee narratives as more than just migration experiences (Wright-Brough, 2020). In the area of climate, *100 Atmospheres: Studies in Scale and Wonder* by The Meco Network, The Dark Mountain Project and many projects involving children (Doyle, 2020; Rousell et al, 2017; Rudd et al, 2020) signal an ongoing and burgeoning interest in collaboration and the collective production of texts.

The unique twist of this project is our wish to move creative climate change collaboration into narrative forms that might reach a less specialised audience, most specifically via popular genres such as young adult, romance and speculative fiction. While it may be argued that commercial popular genres are fixed in the current capitalist models, calcified in a system which co-creates "the Problem", we also consider story to be the slippery ghost in the machine. In taking new forms that are collaborative and anti-capitalist, people are already harnessing the internet to work on collective storytelling. For instance, fan fiction, platforms such as Wattpad and the expansive shared worlds of franchise stories (such as

Marvel superheroes and the ever-iterative worlds and characters of *Star Trek* and *Star Wars*) already speak to Ghosh's hopes for new hybridity and new ways of reading. Can we harness existing technologies and story-worlds to think through our own project with professional writers? Jean Bedford argues that genre fictions affirm, disseminate and manage social myths; explain and reconcile events in real life to the ideal (on individual and collective levels); and transform tensions and frustrations into something pleasurable (2002, p. 86). We are drawn to genre precisely because of this often-maligned quality of pleasure. In working through anxieties and social disruptions in emotionally safe ways, structured by the formulas of entertainment fiction, these fictions may give us the opportunity to offer a narrative balm to solastalgia while still "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016). Michael Chabon notes:

> The original sense of the word 'entertainment' is a lovely one of mutual support through intertwining, like a pair of trees grown together, interwoven, each sustaining and bearing up the other… a kind of midair transfer of strength, contact across a void, like the tangling of cable and steel between two lovely bridgeheads. (2008, p. 3)

The task will be to retain the familiar elements that power entertainment fiction's ability to gather a wide audience while simultaneously tweaking them to emphasise optimistic approaches to climate change.

We note here that our project does not advocate for delusion or false hope; rather, we posit the importance of unfixing the future, of tethering our current imagination to outcomes that do not lead to dystopian or despairing end points. As Haltinner and Sarathchandra write:

> Effective communication needs to focus on a narrative of hope, empowerment, and personal responsibility. Reframing climate science in terms of benefits of making change – as opposed to the dangers of continuing with the status quo – might be one method of shifting the emotions evoked by this discourse. (2018, p. 7)

Thus, in Despret's words, we are interested in seeding "the idea of a world that could be habitable" (as cited in Haraway, 2016, p. 130). In curating a cohort of authors from a range of genres, as a collective we will work through the problematics of fictionalising climate change and consider what methods might move us towards optimism. Will collaboration itself lead to a more positive vision, or will the excavation and exploration of scientific and technological solutions to climate change enable a different narrative to be told? How does setting the parameters of a story limit the writer's imagination and is this necessarily a negative thing? What can be told beyond the individual's story? Ramamurthy proposes that polyvocal perspectives gesture "at the political insight that humans are fundamentally cooperative" (2021) while, in a recent article, Schneider-Mayerson et al argue:

> Research shows that persuasive messages about threats like climate change should not just focus on the threat, but also promote self-efficacy (perception that one is capable of performing the recommended solution) and response efficacy (perception that the recommended solution will be effective). (2020, p. 7)

How do these objectives align with narrative-focused storytelling? How can a climate change story be engaging, entertaining and energising? In documenting the steps taken to find potential stories, we will value the creative process as highly as the final product and

consider how posthuman methodologies that focus on interconnection could challenge traditional notions of individual artistic production of writing.

"Why do works of art matter?" Felski asks, and answers: "Because they create, or cocreate, enduring ties" (2020, p. 1). In seeking to engage with the collaborative possibilities of Australian cli-fi, we undertake to alleviate what Ghosh describes as "the isolation in which humanity was entrapped in the time of its great derangement" (2016, p. 162), to fight off this isolation via created community, and to avoid the dystopian visions that lead to paralysis rather than action.

References

Adsit, J. (2017). Toward an inclusive creative writing: Threshold concepts to guide the literary curriculum. Bloomsbury Academic.

Allahyari, K. (2020, 28 April). Back to the future in "Mammoth". *Chicago Review of Books.* https://chireviewofbooks.com/2020/04/28/back-to-the-future-in-mammoth/

Aloi, G. & McHugh, S. (2021). Envisioning Posthumanism. In G. Aloi & S. McHugh (Eds.), *Posthumanism in art and science: A reader* (pp. 1-21). Columbia University Press.

Armitstead, C. (2021, 26 June). Stories to save the world: The new wave of climate fiction. *The Guardian.* https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jun/26/stories-to-save-the-world-the-new-wave-of-climate-fiction

Atwood, M. (2004). *The MaddAddam trilogy*. Anchor Books.

Australian Psychological Society. (n.d). *Coping with climate change distress.* Retrieved 14 January 2022 from https://psychology.org.au/for-the-public/psychology-topics/climate-change-psychology/coping-with-climate-change-distress

Bedford, J. (2002). Writing genre. In B. Walker (Eds.), *The writer's reader: A guide to writing fiction and poetry* (pp. 83-93). Halstead Press.

Berlant, L.G. (2011). *Cruel optimism.* Duke University Press.

Bleecker, J. (2009). Design fiction: a short essay on design, science, fact and fiction. *Near Future Laboratory*. https://drbfw5wfjlxon.cloudfront.net/writing/DesignFiction_WebEdition.pdf

Books + Publishing. (2020, 28 February). The elephant in the room: Chris Flynn on "mammoth". *Books + Publishing.* https://www.booksandpublishing.com.au/articles/2020/02/28/146589/the-elephant-in-the-room-chris-flynn-on-mammoth/

Bradley, J. (2015). *Clade*. Hamish Hamilton.

Bradley, J. & Charncok, A. (2020, 11 April). Writing fiction in the age of climate catastrophe: a conversation between Anne Charnock and James Bradley. *Los Angeles Review of Books.* https://www.lareviewofbooks.org/article/writing-fiction-in-the-age-of-climate-catastrophe-a-conversation-between-anne-charnock-and-james-bradley/

Brady, A. (2017, 24 October). How will climate change affect your grandchildren? *Chicago Review of Books*. https://chireviewofbooks.com/2017/10/24/burning-worlds-james-bradley-clade-interview/

Brady, A. (2020, 18 August). Hope is the thing with feathers in "Migration". *Chicago Review of Books*. https://chireviewofbooks.com/2020/08/18/hope-is-the-thing-with-feathers-in-migrations/

Braidotti, R. (2016). Posthuman critical theory. In D. Banerji, & M. R. Paranjape (Eds.), *Critical Posthumanism and planetary futures* (pp. 13–32). Springer.

BWK-BCN. (n.d.). Cards. *BWK-BCN.* https://www.bwk-bcn.systems/bwk-bcn/cards/.

Cannell, C., Spasovska, E., Gou,Y., Nilsson, A., Clarkson, R., Di Niro, C., Levy, N. & Walker, A. (2020). Doing collective biography differently by incorporating methods of narrative inquiry, poetic inquiry and performance studies into the analysis of writings-as-data. In A. Philp, E. Jeffery, & L. McGowan (Eds.), Creating communities: Collaboration in creative writing and research, *TEXT Special Issue Number 59, TEXT: Journal of writing and writing courses*, 24(2). http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue59/Cannell_et_al.pdf

Chabon, M. (2008). Maps and legends: reading and writing along the borderlands. McSweeney's Books.

Clayton, S. (2018). Mental health risk and resilience among climate scientists. *Nature Climate Change*, 8(4), 260–61. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0123-z

Clayton, S. & Karazsia, B.T. (2020). Development and validation of a measure of climate change anxiety. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 69(June). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2020.101434

Clayton, S., Manning, C.M., Krygsman, K. & Speiser, M. (2017). *Mental health and our changing climate: impacts, implications, and guidance*. American Psychological Association.

DeKoven, B., Gramazio, H., Pearce, C. & Zimmerman, E. (2020). *The infinite playground: a player's guide to imagination*. The MIT Press.

Derrida, J. (2016). *Of grammatology* (G. Chakravorty Spivak, Trans.). Johns Hopkins University Press. (Original work published 1974)

Disco. (n.d.). Learn live with Margaret Atwood – practical utopias: An exploration of the possible. *Disco*. Retrieved 5 January 2022 from https://studio.disco.co/learn-live-with-margaret-atwood-course

Doyle, J. (2020). Creative communication approaches to youth climate engagement: using speculative fiction and participatory play to facilitate young people's multidimensional engagement with climate change. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 2749–2772.

Edwards, A. (2020, May). Mammoth by Chris Flynn. *Australian Book Review*, 421. https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/abr-online/current-issue/789-fiction/6448-astrid-edwards-reviews-mammoth-by-chris-flynn

Feinberg, M. & Willer, R. (2011). Apocalypse soon?: Dire messages reduce belief in global warming by contradicting just-world beliefs. *Psychological Science*, 22(1), 34–38.

Felski, R. (2020). *Hooked: Art and attachment*. The University of Chicago Press.

16

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

Flynn, C. (2020). *Mammoth*. University of Queensland Press.

Ghosh, A. (2016). The great derangement: climate change and the unthinkable. University of Chicago Press.

Hales, D. (2013). Design fictions an introduction and provisional taxonomy. *Digital Creativity*, 24(1), 1–10.

Haltinner, K. & Sarathchandra, D. (2018). Climate change skepticism as a psychological coping strategy. *Sociology Compass*, 12(6), e12586. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12586.

Haraway, D. (2016). Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the chthulucene. Duke University Press.

Haraway, D. (2019). It matters what stories tell stories; it matters whose stories tell stories. *A/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, 34(3), 565–575.

Hary, E. (2016, 7 July). Insights: Scott Smith. *Medium*. https://medium.com/design-friction/insights-scott-smith-354d1b6cffd6#.jvxa0vu8c

Head, L. & Harada, T. (2017, August). Keeping the heart a long way from the brain: The emotional labour of climate scientists. *Emotion, Space and Society*, 24, 34–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2017.07.005

Hennessy, R. (2022). Encouraging "children of the compost": In search of a posthuman theory of character. *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 19(1), 38–49.

Hickman, C., Marks, E., Pihkala, P., Clayton, S., Lewandowski, R.E., Mayall, E.E., Wray, B., Mellor, C. & Susteren, L. V. (2021). Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: A global survey. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), e863–e873.

Hoggett, P. & Randall, R. (2018). Engaging with climate change: Comparing the cultures of science and activism. *Environmental Values*, 27(3), 223–243. https://doi.org/10.3197/096327118X15217309300813

Kingsolver, B. (2012). *Flight Behavior*. Harper.

Kohn, E. (2013). How forests think: Toward an anthropology beyond the human. University of California Press.

LeMenager, S. & Eklund, K. (2017). Site-specific forecasting games and serious play: An interview with Ken Eklund. *ASAP/Journal*, 2(3), 509–520.

Lovell, S., Thomas, B. & Wickham, O. (2019). Neither fish nor fowl: Travelling across genres and disciplines through 21st century Australian cli-fi. *TEXT: Journal of writing and writing courses*, 23(56), 1-14, https://doi.org/10.52086/001c.25412.

Lucas, M. (2021, 21 April). Vulnerability never ends: Madeleine Watts on coming-of-age amidst climate catastrophe. *Literary Hub*. Retrieved 10 November 2021 from

17

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

https://lithub.com/vulnerability-never-ends-madeleine-watts-on-coming-of-age-amidst-climate-catastrophe/

MacVeagh, M. (2020, 13 July). Cringe and catastrophe: Madeleine Watts's climate fiction. *Los Angeles Review of Books*. Retrieved 21 December 2021 from https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/cringe-and-catastrophe-madeleine-wattss-climate-fiction/

McEwan, I. (2011). *Solar*. Vintage, London.

McKittrick, K. (2021). *Dear science and other stories*. Duke University Press.

Mellor, A. (2021). Berwick-Barcelona: A case study in creative collaborative approaches to climate change research. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 14(April), 1–13.

Milner, A. & Burgmann, J. R. (2018). A short pre-history of climate fiction. *Extrapolation*, 59(1), 1–23.

Morrison, A. & Chisin, A. (2017). Design fiction, culture and climate change: Weaving together personas, collaboration and fabulous futures. *The Design Journal*, 20(1), s146–s159.

Morrison, A. (2018). Future north, nurture forth: Design fiction, anticipation and arctic futures. In J. K. Larsen & P. Hemmersam (Eds.), *Future north: The changing arctic landscapes* (pp. 119-141). Routledge.

Okri, B. (2021, 12 November). Artists must confront the climate crisis – we must write as if these are the last days. *The Guardian.* Retrieved 13 November 2021 from https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/nov/12/artists-climate-crisis-write-creativity-imagination

Paulas, R. (2014, April). Voicemails from the terrifying future. *The Awl.* Retrieved 10 December 2021 from https://www.theawl.com/2014/04/voicemails-from-the-terrifying-future/

Pihkala, P. (2020). The cost of bearing witness to the environmental crisis: Vicarious traumatization and dealing with secondary traumatic stress among environmental researchers. *Social Epistemology*, 34(1), 86–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2019.1681560

Powers, R. (2018). *The Overstory*. W. W. Norton & Company.

Ramamurthy, R. (2021, 6 May). Personal hell: The climate anxiety novel. *The Drift*. Retrieved 3 January 2022 from https://www.thedriftmag.com/climate-anxiety/

Ravindranathan, T. (2019). The rise of the sea and the novel. *Differences*, 30(3), 1–33.

Rettberg, S. (2011). All together now: Collective knowledge, collective narratives, and architectures of participation. In R. Page & B. Thomas (Eds.), *New narratives: Stories and storytelling in the digital age* (pp. 187–204). Nebraska University Press.

Rousell, D., Cutter-Mackenzie, A. & Foster, J. (2017). Children of an Earth to come: Speculative fiction, geophilosophy and climate change education research. *Educational Studies*, 53(6), 654–669.

Rudd, J. A., Horry, R. & Skains, R. L. (2020). You and CO2: A public engagement study to engage secondary school students with the issue of climate change. *Journal of Science Education and Technology*, 29(2), 230–241.

18

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

Schneider-Mayerson, M. (2018). The influence of climate fiction. *Environmental Humanities*, 10(2), 473–500.

Schneider-Mayerson, M., Gustafson, A., Leiserowitz, A., Goldberg, M.H., Rosenthal, S.A. & Ballew, M. (2020). Environmental literature as persuasion: an experimental test of the effects of reading climate fiction. *Environmental Communication*, 15 September, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/17524032.2020.1814377

Sherrell, D. (2021). Warmth: Coming of age at the end of our world. Penguin Books.

St. James, L. (2021, 22 January). Ever-present emergency: Madeleine Watts interviewed by Liza St. James. *Bomb*. Retrieved 22 September 2021 from https://bombmagazine.org/articles/madeleine-watts-interviewed-3/

Taylor, J.O. (2018). The novel after nature, nature after the novel: Richard Jefferies's anthropocene romance. *Studies in the Novel*, 50(1), 108–133.

Watts, M. (2020). *The Inland Sea*. Catapult.

Watts, M. (2019, 13 October). When I read Amitav Ghosh's "The Great Derangement" the way I write, and think about writing, utterly changed. I am so delighted that with this book I might have answered his call. Twitter. Retrieved 14 January 2022 from https://twitter.com/madeleine_watts/status/1183102800085078020

Wolfe, C. (2021). Reflections on art and posthumanism. In G. Aloi & S. McHugh (Eds.), *Posthumanism in art and science: A reader* (pp. 323-327). Columbia University Press.

Wolfe, S.E. & Tubi, A. (2019). Terror management theory and mortality awareness: A missing link in climate response studies? *WIREs Climate Change*, 10(2), e566. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.566.

Woodbury, M. (2017, 1 September). Interview with James Bradley, author of Clade and The Silent Invasion. *Dragonfly.Eco*. Retrieved 14 January 2022 from https://dragonfly.eco/interview-james-bradley-clade-silent-invasion/

Wright-Brough, F. (2020). Productive discomfort: Negotiating totality in collaborative digital narrative practice. In A. Philp, E. Jeffery & L. McGowan (Eds.), *Creating communities: Collaboration in creative writing and research*, TEXT Special Issue Number 59, *TEXT: Journal of writing and writing courses*, 24(2). http://www.textjournal.com.au/speciss/issue59/WrightBrough.pdf

Appendix: Australian Climate Fiction Novels (2016-2020)

Abbott, Jane. 2016. *Watershed*. North Sydney, NSW: Vintage Books.

Abbott, Sally. 2017. *Closing Down.* Sydney, NSW: Hachette Australia.

Bishop, Alice. 2019. *A Constant Hum*. Melbourne: Text Publishing.

Bobis, Merlinda. 2016. *Locust Girl.* North Melbourne, Victoria: Spinifex Press.

Bradley, James. 2017. *Clade*. London: Titan Books.

19

TEXT Vol 26 No 1 April 2022
Managing editors: Nigel Krauth & Julienne van Loon. Editors: Ross Watkins and Shady Cosgrove

———. 2020. *Ghost Species*. Hawthorn: Penguin Books Australia.

Doyle, Briohny. 2016. *The Island Will Sink*. Melbourne: The Lifted Brow.

Ensor, Craig. 2019. *The Warming*. NSW: Impact Press.

Findlay, Daniel. 2017. *Year of the Orphan*. Sydney: Bantam.

Flanagan, Richard. 2020. *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams*. Victoria: Penguin Random House Australia.

Flynn, Chris. 2020. *Mammoth*. Queensland: University of Queensland Press.

Juchau, Mireille. 2017. *The World without Us*. London: Bloomsbury.

Lobb, Joshua. 2019. *The Flight of Birds: A Novel in Twelve Stories*. Sydney, NSW: Sydney University Press.

McConaghy, Charlotte. 2020. *Migrations*. New York: Flatiron Books.

McKinnon, Catherine. 2017. *Storyland*. Sydney, NSW: Fourth Estate.

Mildenhall, Kate. 2020. *The Mother Fault*. Cammeray, NSW: Simon & Schuster Australia.

Mills, Jennifer. 2018. *Dyschronia*. Sydney, NSW: Picador.

Mundell, Meg. 2019. *The Trespassers*. Queensland: University of Queensland Press.

Rawson, Jane. 2017. *From the Wreck*. Melbourne, Victoria: Transit Lounge.

Robinson, Alice. 2020. *The Glad Shout*. Victoria: Affirm Press.

Treloar, Lucy. 2019. *Wolfe Island*. Sydney, NSW: Pan Macmillan

Watts, Madeleine. 2020. *The Inland Sea*. London: Pushkin Press.

Wilson, Rohan. 2019. *Daughter of Bad Times*. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.