



Nordiques

46 | 2024
Seul(e) dans la nature ?

Alone in the dark nature: eco melancholia in Harry Martinson's *Aniara* and its film adaptation

Giovanni Za



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/nordiques/10553>
DOI: 10.4000/12llp
ISSN: 2777-8479

Publisher:

Association Norden, Bibliothèque de Caen la mer

Electronic reference

Giovanni Za, "Alone in the dark nature: eco melancholia in Harry Martinson's *Aniara* and its film adaptation", *Nordiques* [Online], 46 | 2024, Online since 01 November 2024, connection on 05 November 2024. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/nordiques/10553> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/12llp>

This text was automatically generated on November 5, 2024.

The text and other elements (illustrations, imported files) are "All rights reserved", unless otherwise stated.

Alone in the dark nature: eco melancholia in Harry Martinson's *Aniara* and its film adaptation

Giovanni Za

Καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ
τὸ φῶς
And people preferred darkness to the light
John 3:19

Nature and human as assemblage

- 1 In the short poem *Förbindelse*, “Connection”, published in the 1958 collection *Gräsen i Thule* (“Grasses in Thule”), the Swedish poet Harry Martinson came back to the necessary bond between nature and humans again, “between the poetry which lives in your heart and the flower poppy there is a contract / written by the wind and signed by decay. / It is written with the feather of a crane / dipped in the blood of a mayfly”¹. The poppy is well established in poetic tradition, with a varying range of literary uses, spanning from Greek and Latin sources to the contemporary Western canon. The flower is a symbol of fertility and rebirth and is connected to the Ceres cult (as in Virgil, *Georgics*, I, 212, named as “Cereale papaver”, “Ceres’ poppy”). It holds indeed a reference to sleep and death, as again in Virgil’s *Aeneid*, where it is named as part of Dido’s complex suicidal ritual (*Aeneid*, IV, 486, “soporiferum papaver”, “soporific poppy”). Martinson names the flower also in *Vilskog*: “Sorgmantelfjärilen har klätt sig färdig för flyktigheten och döden. / Vallmon bär i blommans mitt, mellan flyktiga blad en begravningsurna” “The mourning cloak butterfly has dressed itself for transience and death. / The poppy carries a funeral urn in the centre of the flower, between fleeting leaves”².
- 2 To nature had Martinson turned from previous diverse inspiration, choosing the idyllic meeting with the environment as poetic drive. Man and nature are enveloped in an

association, which brings inspiration and consolation, sealed together by a “contract” that intertwines their destinies. This pledge of association, called *gyralitet*, establishes a physical balance between the elements on Earth and in space: “Relativity must therefore be complemented by a theory of *gyrality*, based on a biocentric world and its manifestations”³. This unifying driving force connects with the Universe and functions in celestial harmony: “at its deepest level, life exists exclusively through the *gyrality* with which it has been endowed, and which enables it to be, to maintain itself, to propagate and to develop within its own *gyral* world: in a *gyral* setting in which even the cradle of science stood”⁴.

- 3 Outside this agreement, the balance is lost; as noted by Pia Maria Albäck, the contract metaphor seeks to establish a sense of environmental justice between the present generation and nature: “it is about the equal right of all people to an adequate living environment, i.e. an environment that is not so degraded and polluted that it is directly detrimental to human life”⁵. The contract bonds poetry and nature in Martinson’s work and interconnects life and the universe through the cyclical nature of *gyrality*.
- 4 Michel Serres also posited that a “natural” contract, as opposed to a social one, could have been a crucial element in resolving man’s conflict with the environment⁶. As Albäck also notes, nature is not bound by any “contractual” obligation and does not engage in negotiations to address the potential exploitation of its resources. The loss of such a connection between man and nature is a loss of order and meaning: “Life is a specific and peculiar manifestation of the cosmic propensity to organise itself”⁷.
- 5 In all his literary production, Martinson aimed to reestablish the assemblage, strengthen the moral bond between man and nature, preserving “the contract” which binds poetry and environment and highlighting the importance of human-nature *nearness* and the ominous mingling between the two elements. In connection with nature, the ontological constitution of *impermanent absolute* (“*provisoriska absoluten*”), “the unconscious formulations of self-preservation and cohesion drives in life emerge”⁸.
- 6 Connection with nature is though lost in Martinson’s long epos *Aniara*, published in 1956. *Aniara* is the name of a spacecraft travelling from corrupted and poisoned Earth to Mars⁹. It eventually falls off course and journeys outside routes of civilization in the hostile and dark un-nature of silent cosmic space: alone in the dark nature passengers of *Aniara* spaceship linger of the missing contact with earthly nature and build on further connections and meanings of their bygone paradise. In 2019 *Aniara* has been adapted as film by directors Pella Kågerman and Hugo Lilja, providing appalling visualization to Martinson’s odyssey in space¹⁰.
- 7 The aim of this article is to examine the implications of the dissolution of “contract” between humanity and the natural world in both versions of *Aniara*. Martinson’s poem is concerned with the threat to nature posed by technology and the nuclear arms race in the early 1950s. Instead, Kågerman and Lilja’s adaptation insists on the consequences of the over-exploitation of nature and the fate of humanity in the context of resource depletion. Despite the divergence between the poem and the film, I seek to analyze the overarching condition of man deprived of nature, which connects both works. My reading will be informed by an ecocritical perspective, which is an interdisciplinary approach that integrates literary criticism with ecological thinking. This study also aims to examine the interconnections between the human and natural realms, with particular emphasis on the posthumanist interpretation of the selected poem in the

context of the Anthropocene. In my article, I will also employ ideas and concepts from theoretical reflection on space. Moreover, I aim to use intertextuality and intermedial criticism to reason on how different media portray the main themes in both the poem and the adaptation¹¹.

- 8 The following section will examine the condition of *Aniara*, adrift in space, where the bond and contract with nature have been severed. In light of the aforementioned content, I will proceed to reflect on the connections between *Aniara*, in-progress reasoning about the concept of Anthropocene, and the theory of *enmeshment*, which argues for un-separateness of all things¹². The third segment of this paper examines the role of technology in mediating images of nature and the central position of the Machine-God Mima. The fourth section considers the healing power of illusions, art and poetry. The final section offers a final consideration of *Aniara*'s journey, pointing towards a posthumanist reading.

Pointless, rootless: *Aniara*'s journey

- 9 The poem *Aniara* is the result of a further expansion of Martinson's core project *Cikada* ("Cicada"), published in 1953. Martinson decided to expand the lyrical epos and compose more songs, which eventually were published in the 1956 edition, with the name *Aniara*. The word ἀνιαρά, *aniarà*, can be intended as plural nominative neuter of the adjective ἀνιαρός, *aniaròs*, whose meaning is "grievous" or "troublesome", if intended for people. Two of the few occurrences of the adjective can be of interest for an interpretation, given that Martinson himself did not disclose an ultimate clarification. In Fragment 10 West, 4, Tyrtaeus, ἀνιρότατον, *aniēròtaton*, the superlative degree neuter accusative form, is translatable as "the most miserable" in the line "it is a fair thing for a good man to fall and die fighting for his native land, whereas to leave his city and his rich fields and go wandering is of all things the most miserable"¹³. In Theognis, 276, ἀνιῆρᾶ, *aniērà*, recurs as "the worst of evils"¹⁴. *Aniara* wanders in the dark space and its disentanglement from nature's rich fields is for sure deemed as the most miserable condition.
- 10 The journey of the spaceship commences as a routine trip from Earth to Mars. Following maneuvers to clear the Hondo asteroid, the spaceship deviates from its intended trajectory and subsequently becomes adrift in space "in the Field of Sari-sixteen we gave up attempts to turn around"¹⁵. Martinson refers to the extreme consequences of atomic threat, suggesting Earth has "become unclean with toxic radiation" and "is accorded a time of calm, repose and quarantine"¹⁶. The film instead emphasizes the depletion of natural resources as reason for the journey: the first shots visualize natural disasters, fires, flood and a public demonstration where one of the participants holds up a sign reading "There's no planet B". The cinematic adaptation overturns the genre perspective of the poem: the male narrator in the poem becomes the female protagonist in the film. The extensive polyphony of the poem in the film is furthermore distilled to the perspective of the protagonist. This necessitates the elimination or reduction of certain passages and characters from Martinson's epic, such as the Blind Woman or the worship of Light or the many side stories, such as the one narrated in "The song of Karelia". The film's chronology is more precise than that of the source material, with the passage of time depicted through the decay of the interior of *Aniara*.

- 11 The first understanding of *Aniara*'s pointless journey is clearly existential: the ship wanders without any direction in a mute and hostile un-nature, heading towards its own end. In this sense, it is a poem on man's temporality. Onboard, refugees are deprived of a common ground. To say it with Heidegger, humanity lacks its "being-in" in the world (*Dasein*), eradicated from "the sense of familiar and heedful association with the being belonging to beings encountered in the world"¹⁷. *Aniara* is a non-place, deprived of a "structure and possibility of experience" as its *Dasein* is corrupted by emptiness¹⁸. Nature is vanished and appears, in the negative, to be part of an "extended self" of humans. Not a place where one finds restoration and recreation, but the common ground, a part of "being-in", as noted by Olof Lagercrantz in an early review where he mourned "mankind furthermore moving away from the natural and the plain, but also from the single man"¹⁹.
- 12 The sense of loss and rootlessness is enforced in the film adaptation, where the spaceship's closed spaces remind us of the deprivation of freedom to roam. As the film set designer recalls: "*Aniara* is mostly about what human would be without our Earth, which explains why we wanted to work with imitation materials. In the beginning they are reassuring, but they eventually become a reminder to passengers about what they have lost"²⁰. In the poem, Song 14 names wood as memento of the past: "Wood was a rare material. Had existed in pre-goldondic times, but later dwindled steadily through nuclear catastrophes"²¹.
- 13 Cosmic space functions as negation of an encounter between man and nature. In the first sequences, passengers are transported from shuttles to the main spacecraft, as if there is still a sense of belonging and a larger community to be part of. The removal of the spaceship from the last bastions of humanity underlines the transition to a space uprooted from territoriality and nature. This transition marks a shift away from the traditional concept of territory and nature, as, instead, humanity finds itself isolated in the vast, black expanse of the cosmos. Undifferentiated space replaces the experience of place: this is designated as "any geographical site (of any size, scale, or type) that is meaningful to someone, for whatever reason"²². As Cresswell pinpoints, "places must have some relationship to humans and the human capacity to produce and consume meaning"²³. In the film, the initial connection between Mima and Mimaroben, the operator of the god-machine, is conveyed through the visualisation of images of forests and greenery. Mimaroben aspires to traverse the forest and become one with it, a process that involves a panicky integration of auditory and sensory stimuli. This inspiration and meaning are lost in the regularly shaped alleys of *Aniara*: the dreamed forest is far away. Indeed, the word "forest" has its etymological roots in the Latin adverb "foris", meaning "outside": nature is detached and unreachably "outside" aboard *Aniara*. Furthermore, the loss of a sense of place and connection to nature also entails a diminution of subjectivity, which consequently results in the loss of one's own identity.
- 14 Refugees have lost an all-encompassing wholeness: life is deconstructed in single-piece experiences and lacks a general plan. Also Johan Wrede points to mankind's longing to be in closer connection with nature in a more recent review of the poem, "Harry Martinson's use of metaphors and metaphorical narration is related to the poet's hope for our humanity to be dependent on everything, on life, for nature to be unfolded in our conscience, alive, touching, committing"²⁴.

- 15 *Aniara* signals a transformation in Martinson's poetical goals: not to lyricize nature as sacred *other*, in contemplation from a distance, but rather celebrate the elusive, but determinant interdependence between mankind and environment when that interconnection is lost. In the conversation with Johan Wrede about the forthcoming publication of *Cikada*, Martinson hinted at a peculiar correlation between nature and mankind in ante-*Aniara* works: "Have you ever heard of the cicada, the song cricket, the song thrush? [...] The cicada is found in the hot countries, and in China it is caged as a kind of canary of the insect world"²⁵. The point of observation is reversed in *Aniara*, because, onboard the spaceship, mankind is abandoned in a glass cage open to the infinite universe and nature has vanished. Humankind is deadly doomed by its own weapon of unlimited progress, and unrelented resource depletion. Here, the "contract" between poetry and nature appears to be terminated: "there is protection from near everything, from fire and damages by storm and frost [...], but there is no protection from mankind"²⁶.
- 16 Outside *Aniara* lies the unfathomable universe. Science and knowledge always try to unfold its mysteries: from *pronomina cosmica*, the spiritual force running the laws of deep space in the harmony of gyrality, research can learn more and push forward awareness²⁷. Martinson is strongly convinced that mankind doesn't possess the absolute truth but works continuously for a never-ending process of approximation. The uncertainty principle introduced by Werner Heisenberg is the proof, according to Martinson, of the many possible interpretations of the physical-philosophical conundrum which is life²⁸. The interplay between matter and antimatter, as suggested by Paul Dirac in the theorization of the electron vacuum, also reinforces the idea of the elusive essence of physical reality: there is no complete knowledge such as that²⁹. Approximation always leaves room to further explications and additional research. This is exemplified by *Aniara*'s pilot Isagel, whose pure mathematical mind prompts her to seek further understanding. Devoted to knowledge, she tries to push forward research, to figure out a solution, but her attempts are extemporary onboard: there's nothing to win for refugees on the spaceship, fate is doomed, and knowledge is useless. For this reason, Isagel lately commits suicide³⁰: the interaction between research, poetry and science – considered by Martinson as central in human history – brings no more results³¹. There is no further explanation to seek: the ship is lost, journey is wrecked, hope is dead.
- 17 The poem's depiction of separation from nature suggests then a loss of equilibrium between the forces driving life. *Aniara*'s isolation evokes Mankind's transition from *nearness* to emptiness³². The film underscores the repercussions of the destruction of nature in the context of the debate on the Anthropocene.

A theory for nature, from Anthropocene to the *enmeshment*

- 18 The theme of separation of man from nature is a well-established topic in Swedish literature. As Judith Meurer-Bondgard notes, ecocritical content can be traced back to the early 1900s, with examples including poetry by Elmer Diktonius and Henry Parland³³.

- 19 Separation is reinforced not only by severe exploitation though, but also by considering nature as *other*, as an undifferentiated space opposed to place, where, to say it with Tuan, an “an organized world of meaning” is located³⁴. Here nature undergoes a process of objectification.
- 20 Also the canonization of natural beauty as omen of divine presence is coherent to the objectification discourse. Martinson himself alluded to an experience of God while accounting on his travel to South-America and to a sense of holiness in every encounter with the environment³⁵.
- 21 A degree of separation between the two realms compels a hierarchization: from there an objectification or glorification of nature as divine *nous* follows:
 Putting something called Nature on a pedestal and admiring it from afar does for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of Woman. It is a paradoxical act of sadistic admiration. Simone de Beauvoir was one of the first to theorize this transformation of actually existing women into fetish objects³⁶.
- 22 Contemporary contributors to Anthropocene critique work against separation and towards a theory of *enmeshment*: according to scholars such as Timothy Morton, nature envelopes mankind and environment in a shared ontology, intertwined in a common fate. All forms of life are connected: “it is about freeing from representation of hierarchies and rigid categorizations and realizing that there are neither clear borders nor center”³⁷. This, to say it with Haraway, implies living “as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings”³⁸. Nature is an “expanded self”, which is impossible to detach from human experience³⁹. The transition from a condition of separateness to a consistent assemblage of intertwined ecosystems becomes necessary to think of strategies to withstand global consumption of natural resources and to contrast the escalating power of Anthropocene.
- 23 The term Anthropocene has been widely used in ecological studies since its first definition provided by Steffen, Crutzen and McNeill⁴⁰. The effect human activities have on the environment is deemed as powerful as geological forces and sets the start for an era where “largely unplanned human impacts on the planet’s basic ecological systems have passed a dangerous, if imponderable, threshold”⁴¹. Anthropocene “suggests that the Earth has now left its natural geological epoch, the present interglacial state called the Holocene. Human activities have become so pervasive and profound that they rival the great forces of nature and are pushing the Earth into planetary *terra incognita*”⁴².
- 24 The film adaptation of *Aniara* hints at an environmental apocalypse clearly. In the film nature is no longer a fetish object to be worshipped or lyricized, but a lost paradise, detached from human experience as the consequence of the “great acceleration” of Anthropocene⁴³. In the sequence onboard the shuttle to Aniara, in an opening shot of the film, one of the passengers asks her son “to wave goodbye to Earth”⁴⁴. Graphic visualizations on Aniara’s computer screens depict Earth as barren and scorched. In the final sequence, set in year 5.981.407 after the departure, the spaceship is a remnant of technological dead debris adrift in the vastity of the universe, with an Earth-like planet at the backdrop, an image that symbolizes the last broken pieces of economic-driven society (the Capitalocene) afloat after the end of civilization.
- 25 *Aniara* reflects on the lost condition of interdependence between humans and the environment; it can be read as the catastrophic journey outside the reach of nature and it imagines fate of man at the end of the era of Anthropocene. I will focus on this in the next section.

Mima, or Machine-God

- 26 The primary source of inspiration for the passengers on the fictional spaceship *Aniara* is the sentient machine Mima, which plays a pivotal role in the poem. The film visualizes Mima as a giant screen which casts fluctuating images and projects memories and sketches of nature. In the poem it is described as a visor, which is equipped with its own sensitivity, “our faithful Mima does all she can and searches searches searches”⁴⁵.
- 27 Mima is operated by a loyal technician, Mimaroben, who is also the narrator of the poem. The interrelation between Mimaroben and Mima anticipates a “new interaction between human and non-human”⁴⁶. Mimaroben officiates secular service for users and worshippers of Mima: he becomes clergy of an oracular source, who speaks in sibylline words, knows everything, and visualizes everyone’s deep memories. Mima is more than μίμησις, *mimesis*: it doesn’t imitate life, but ignites human feelings, relates images to intimate sensing. Nor is Mima a copycat of Mimir, although it shares with the Norse giant a touch of divine grace: “for a while she can relieve the strain and rout the memories from the shores of Doris. For frequently the world that Mima shows us blots out the world remembered and abandoned”⁴⁷.
- 28 The question concerning technology had long been of strong interest for Martinson. In an article published in 1955, he highlighted the many positive aspects of technology, but also showed his concerns for its pervasiveness: “our duty now is to dare to see also the dark side, and make ourselves aware also of the dark fantasy’s images of the cloud of destruction”⁴⁸. Undoubtedly, Martinson is afraid of the prison of “a one-sided cult of the intellect, of knowledge, and of certainty as truth”⁴⁹. The poet fears a world without myths or, to say it with Jürgen Habermas, deprived of moral-practical and aesthetics-expressive reasons, limited to cognitive-instrumental rationality only interested in facts and data, in effectivity, in recurrent patterns, not open to speculation or poetry⁵⁰. Technology must be human-driven, otherwise it becomes inhuman.
- 29 Mima’s power is instated by controlling evocative images of nature. In the film, Mima screens personal accounts of experience of nature, making refugees collapse into a narcotic condition, in a womb of procured self-deception. The directors stress how the power of Mima increases after refugees onboard discover that *Aniara* is not coming back to the original course. Mima works to relieve passengers of the burden of their pointless journey, it is a displacement and deferral of the ultimate destiny to which the spaceship is travelling⁵¹. In the poem, it strives to find forms of life in the mute universe, in the film it brings the passenger to happy albeit fictitious places, which take the shape of an artificial paradise⁵².
- 30 Mima uses nature as a tool to hold the position of moral entity: it doesn’t imitate, “rather paradoxically, it emerges as a symbol for an anti-mimetic aestheticism”⁵³. Mima mediates nature through its screens, objectifies environment and doubles the distance between mankind and its green milieu: Earth is lost, and its landscapes and sceneries are recoverable only through machines. Mima, “perverted into a shipboard movie studio” shows a double reference: not only is it a benign and sovereign entity to which devoted worshippers ordain themselves, but also a machine that subjectifies itself⁵⁴. Its “auto-plastic adaptation” points to a complete subjectification⁵⁵. Indeed, Mima is

responsible for narrativization of past Earth memories in form of epic and melancholic accounts from Gaia; in its unremitting search for new stories and new forms of life to be screened to refugees, he reshapes life in a demiurgic effort to recreate a new home-away-from-home for those who lost their grounded *Dasein*: “all these emigrants are realizing that [...] the only world which we are given is this world in Mima”⁵⁶. Its nature is at the same time that of a Machine-God which through a techno-poiesis rebuilds its own world, and a sentient subject which is eventually crushed by the pervasiveness of war-like Anthropocene.

- 31 Mima is indeed its own creator: “The inventor [of Mima] was himself dumbstruck the day he found that one half of the Mima he’d invented lay beyond analysis. That the Mima had invented half herself”⁵⁷. Its auto-poiesis is evocative of the self-generating approach commonly observed in contemporary AI systems. It questions superiority for humans, as Olivia Cade notes, as it “has greater sensory capacity than that of the human passengers”⁵⁸. It is the final evolutionary stage, beyond *homo sapiens*⁵⁹.
- 32 Ultimate evidence of subjectification of Mima and therefore objectification of nature is Mima’s choice to terminate its existence. As a sentient machine, it fulfils the humanist attitude to feel pain and to act consequently to relieve the burden of despair. In Poem 26 *Mimaroben* accounts of the destruction of Dorisburg, “Mima’s blinded by a bluish bolt and I am dumbstruck at events that pour on wretched Earth”⁶⁰. This predicts Mima’s self-inflicted extinction: “A bolt-blue light flashed from Mima’s screens; across Mima’s halls a rumbling rolled like booming thunder back in Dorisworld”⁶¹. Earth and Mima’s annihilations mirror in a common cry of despair. Mima’s suicide, as concrete act of humanity, sanctions mankind’s destination to loneliness, detached from nature, and abandoned by the God-Machine, which had been more human than humans. Sheer terror spreads onboard at Mima’s death, in a sequence that resembles the ghastly instants of doomsday in *Guernica*: everything and everyone is gripped by despair. At the moment of destruction of Dorisburg, Mima is struck by stones’ anguish: “She heard them cry, their stonely cries in distant Dorisvale. She had beheld the granite’s white-hot weeping when stone and ore were vaporized to mist. She’d been much troubled by those stone’s travail”⁶².
- 33 A similar sequence occurs in *Aeneid*, when Virgil introduces a scene with Aeneas and Achates who together visit Juno’s temple in Carthage, “Sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi, sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt”⁶³. The two men from Troy bemoan the destruction of the city and comment on history that leaves only dust of past existences. Diverse interpretations have spread about the words “sunt lacrimae rerum”: as Wharton, amongst others, observes, the verse is deliberately ambiguous⁶⁴. “Rerum” can be translated rather as “everything” or “of all things”, but the interpretation as “the tears of the things” shows interesting and evocative connections with Martinson’s poem, as pain and anguish appear as universal forms of state of suffering. This comprehensive despair shows the interconnectedness of all things. The sentient Machine/God vibrates with a proper vitality “not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agent or force with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own”⁶⁵.
- 34 Mima’s suicide hints at a human nature; humans are indeed excluded from Mima’s interconnectedness: the bond is strengthened with other lively *things*, as the stone on Dorisvale, not with men. Humans are responsible for the total destruction of Doris and therefore Mima leaves them in their own posthumanist hopelessness, depriving them

of the trust and caring formerly provided by the machine. *Things* feel the touch of evil and annihilation, but, at the opposite end of Virgil, they don't touch mortals' mind. Mortals are abandoned and their mind is inaccessibly dark. In *Aniara's* journey to the end of the universe, humans are left alone with themselves. The lights of spaceship *Aniara* still blink in the last sequence of the film: machines and things survive in a posthumanist scenario where mankind is destroyed by its own deadly weapon Anthropocene.

Illusions as humanist strategy

- 35 In the dark times during *Aniara's* off course journey, many are the consolations humans create to counterbalance desperation. One is obviously Daisy Doody, as Mimaroben explains: "Chilled at such certitude, I take flight out of the Mima-hall to the ruddy light filling the dance-hall and, finding Daisy there, I seek admission to her womb of hair in her savior-arms I beg a tryst where death's cold certitude does not exist"⁶⁶. Other forms are the many religious cults and the distraction brought by arch-comic Sandon.
- 36 Literature though is the most relevant source of consolation since it is: "made to console and enrich the mortals"⁶⁷. It counterpowers the continuing process of creation and destruction which is implicated in nature, from which humans still infer a meaning: "life is short, but just because it is so short, it needs an artistically charged interpretation and a lot of thought and dream for making it meaningful"⁶⁸. Consolation and art are intertwined in a productive connection with nature and reality: "Our soul is spent on dreams, we're ever rubbing dream on dream for want of something real"⁶⁹. Together visions, literary imagery and nature fill in the book of the World: for these reasons the poetess of Rind in *Aniara* is "able to live in a world of life-sustaining myths, probably because she is blind, an outward sign of the fact that she draws her spiritual strength from the unconscious mind"⁷⁰. The ability to create, to link nature with narration, is a strategy of humanist resistance against the threatening darkness looming over refugees, hence the poetess of Rind is chosen to be minister: "A rival religion to the Cult arose which the strain and torment of the dark inspire. They worship Light as concept and as flame: the goddess of this new cult is a fire. Their chosen priestess was the maid from Rind"⁷¹.
- 37 Imageries and fantasies are illusions, but still they console and instill hope, as also Ugo Foscolo alluded in the opening verse of 1806 poem *Dei sepolcri* ("Sepulchers"): "Shaded by cypresses and within the graves consoled by affection, is the sleep of death less hard?"⁷². Extinction is no less real, answers the Italian poet, but to keep memory of the past is to comfort those who are alive, as does poetry which succeeds in providing form and meaning to the pointless accumulation of life and death which is existence. In order to generate inspiring and comforting illusions following Mima's demise, Mimaroben endeavours to install screens on the exterior of the spaceship (song 61). These screens display images from the pre-civilisation era, and the resulting illusion, in the form of these fictional images, provides effective consolation.⁷³
- 38 Poetry again, combined with knowledge, continuously pushes forward the innate thirst of experience. The loss of unity leads to perilous consequences: "When approximation in every field is threatened by tyrannical exactness in every field, then the huge war between poet and engineer has begun"⁷⁴. Approximation leaves room for

experimentation, contributes to newer illusions: the plain clarity, the absolute possession of knowledge limits space for inventions and fantasies dramatically, as Martinson writes in *Förstöraren*, included in *Gräsen i Thule*. In the poem man is *helvetande*, a pun that links *hel*, hell, and *vetande*, knowledge, in a neologism that could point to *helt-vetande*: “The man who knows everything rose from the bruning swamp, knowing-all pulled into pieces his new-found certainty. It would take him forever to transform his wanderings, to drive his ideas forever towards the fields of reality [...] Soon the clarity with which he feeds his boredom would once again prepare a death by certainty for the riddle”⁷⁵.

- 39 The moral drive to knowledge and fantasy is in Martinson’s opinion a human entitlement: “Consider your origin. You were not made to live as mindless beasts, but to go in search of virtue and true knowledge”, as Dante wrote in *Inferno*, XXVI, 118-120.
⁷⁶ Instability is the reason to move forward, both with knowledge and fantasy. Aboard movement is arrested, and illusions are dead: *Aniara* proceeds slowly, “a little bubble in the glass of Godhead”⁷⁷.

Conclusions: a posthumanist exobiology

- 40 This ecocritical reading of Harry Martinson’s *Aniara* aimed to provide a new perspective on the relationship between humans and nature in the context of the Anthropocene. The disconnection between the human and natural realms postulated in the poem has been used here as an interpretation of our contemporary condition of separation, where nature is perceived as a mere provider of primary resources in a capital-driven society, the Capitalocene. The conclusions of the reasoning imply a broader understanding of the interconnections between humanity and the natural world, and demonstrate the poetic implications that intervene with the environment. Both Harry Martinson’s *Aniara* and the Kågerman-Lilja’s adaptation point at the separation of nature and mankind as “the most miserable thing”, as also a title interpretation could hint. Spaceship *Aniara* is indeed self-sufficient: although it is never mentioned in the poem where it takes its energy and how it supplies passengers with food, in the film a couple of sequences explain a complex intern system that can provide food with greenhouse-based algae. *Aniara* could continue its cruise even if it had lost its “nuclear propellant”. It is an independent body floating in Universe.
- 41 Being self-sufficient, *Aniara* restates the detachment of mankind from nature. Man doesn’t need nature anymore to feed himself. Nature is then no longer a consoling realm, but the continuing process of creation and destruction. The scaring figure of the Crow from iced tundra in Song 40 is a symbol of that never-ending consumption which is existence: according to the Crow it is “as though you listened to the last bolt shut on life’s capacity for pulling through”⁷⁸. Crow is indifferent to mankind as Wild Cock is in Giacomo Leopardi’s short prose “The song of the Wild Cock”: “Thus, in all her works, nature is intent and pointed towards death. [...] Every part of the universe hastens untiringly, with diligence and wonderful celerity, towards death”⁷⁹. Disconnected from nature, in which Martinson seemed to find consolation and faith, humans fall in meaninglessness; deprived of the meaning-productive connection poetry-knowledge-nature there is only a fatal destiny of “erosion”, “corrosion”, and “decay” (“förvittringen, förgängelsen, förruttnelse”) as it emerges in “Song of Erosion” (83).

- 42 Denied of the regenerative power of the multitude and plenitude of nature, ultimately detached from any belonging, Man is finally lost in his dark eco melancholia, in a post-environmental condition which is that depicted in *Aniara*⁸⁰. The concept of eco-melancholia, based on Renée Lertzman's findings about the emotional and unconscious bond between humans and nature, develops this link: the environment is a sought-after refuge, providing a meaningful sense of belonging, but is constantly threatened by destruction, overexploitation or occasional catastrophe⁸¹. In nature, exhilaration and a looming sense of annihilation meet, birth and death coexist.
- 43 The final condition of humankind in *Aniara* is after civilization: "posthumanism *per se* entails a dissolution of dualism and dichotomies as well as a division in a natural and cultural sphere"⁸². Dualism and dichotomies are indeed dissolved in the final stanzas of the poem: only the human dimension is left.
- 44 In an "alien, solitary universe", last step of Anthropocene is a posthumanist condition where all connections and sense of belonging are resected, being humankind, a wandering form of exobiology pushed outside the rim of nature, dis-assembled from other fellow forms of life, left alone in the nature dark, succumbing to their all too much frailty⁸³. Nothing will remain: "Likewise of the whole world and of the infinite events and catastrophes of created things, there won't be a vestige left, only naked silence and utter calm shall fill the vast space"⁸⁴.

NOTES

1. "Mellan poesien som bor i ditt hjärta och vallmon finns ett kontrakt / skrivet av vinden och undertecknat av förgängelsen / Det är skrivet med en tranas fjäder / doppad i dagsländans blod", Harry Martinson, *Gräsen i Thule*, Stockholm, Bonniers, 2016, p. 15. Translations, if not otherwise stated, are mine.
2. Harry Martinson, *Glädjens art och sorgernas sortering*, ed. Paulina Helgeson, Stockholm, Litteraturbanken, 2016, III. Apple Books).
3. "Relativitetsteorin måste därför kompletteras med en gyralitetsteori, grundad på en biocentrisk värld och dess manifestationer", Harry Martinson, "Den kosmiska frågan", *BLM*, 25, 1, 1947, p. 19-23, p. 20.
4. "Livet djupast sett existerar uteslutande genom den gyralitet det begåvats med, och som gör att det kan vara, bibehålla sig, fortplantas och utvecklas inom en egen gyrovärld: i en gyral infattning vari även vetenskapens vagga stått", Harry Martinson, "Den kosmiska frågan", p. 20.
5. "[Miljörättvisa] handlar om alla människors lika rätt till en trygg boende- och livsmiljö, det vill säga en miljö som inte är så förstörd och nedsmutsad att den blir direkt förödande för mänskligt liv", Pia Maria Ahlbäck, "Väderkontraktet: Plats, miljörättvisa och eskatologi i Astrid Lindgrens *Vi på Saltkråkan*", *Barnboken. Journal of Children's Literature Research*, 33, 2, 2010, p. 5-18, p. 15.
6. Michel Serres, *Le contrat naturel*, Paris, François Bourin, 1990.
7. "Livet är en specifik och säregen manifestation av den kosmiska benägenheten att anordna sig", Harry Martinson, "Den kosmiska frågan", p. 21.
8. "Provisoriska absoluten är självbevarelsedriftens och sammanhållningdriftens omedvetna formuleringar hos livet", *ibid.*

9. The term *Aniara*, presented in normal font, denotes the name of the spaceship. Conversely, *Aniara*, presented in italics, is employed with reference to the poem or film.
10. The film premiered at Toronto film festival in September 2018 and was released in Sweden in February 2019. I will use the latter as release date for the film.
11. See Arne Engelstad, *Fra bok til film. Om adaptasjoner av litterære tekster*, Oslo, Cappelen Damm, 2013, chap. 4. My main interest being the aforementioned discussion on the connection man – nature, I will not elaborate in the framework of adaptation theories, but resonate on the creative potential that connects both works (cf. Regina Schober, “Adaptation as Connection – Transmediality Reconsidered”, in *Adaptation Studies. New Challenges, New Directions*, ed. Jørgen Bruhn, Anne Gjelsvik, and Eirik Frisvold Hanssen, London and New York, Bloomsbury, 2013, p. 89-112, p. 91).
12. Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature. Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*, Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 3.
13. “τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα ἄνδρ’ ἀγαθὸν περὶ ἧ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον· τὴν δ’ αὐτοῦ προλιπόντα πόλιν καὶ πίονας ἀγροὺς πτωχεύειν πάντων ἔστ’ ἀνηρότατον”, Martin Lichtfield West, ed., *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, Oxford, Oxford University press, 1971, Vol. II, p. 174.
14. “χρήματα δ’ ἐγκαταθήϊς πόλλ’ ἀνηρὰ παθῶν”, West, *Iambi et Elegi Graeci ante Alexandrum cantati*, Vol. I, p. 187.
15. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 35; “Vid fältet Sari-sexton uppgav vi försöken att vända om”, Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 3. Apple Books.
16. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, trans. Stephen Klass and Leif Sjöberg, New York, Story Line Press, 1999, p. 1. “Hon för strålförgiftnings skull beredes en tid av vila, ro och karantän”, Harry Martinson, *Aniara. En revy om människan i tid och rum*, Stockholm, Litteraturbanken, 2020, song 1. Apple Books.
17. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, New York, State University of New York Press, 1996, p. 97.
18. Jeff E. Malpas, *Place and Experience. A Philosophical Topography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 32.
19. “Mänskligheten alltmera avlägsnande sig från det naturliga och det enkla, men också den enskilda människan”, Olof Lagercrantz, “Harry Martinsons rymdepos”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 oktober 1956, p. 4.
20. “*Aniara* handlar till stor del om vad människan skulle vara utan vår jord. Därför ville vi arbeta med fejkade naturmaterial. De är betryggande till en början men blir sedan en påminnelse för passagerarna om vad de förlorat”, Linnea Pettersson, “En mix av Finlandsfärja och galleria”, *Filter*, March 2019, p. 40.
21. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 49; “Trä var ett sällsynt ämne. Hade funnits i förgoldondisk tid men sedan minskat alltmer på grund av strålningskatastrofer”, Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, song 14. Apple Books. Goldonder is the word used to name shuttle-spaceships as *Aniara*.
22. Eric Prieto, *Literature, Geography and the Postmodern Poetics of Place*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 13.
23. Tim Cresswell, *Place. A Short Introduction*, Malden, Blackwell, 2008, p. 7.
24. “Harry Martinsons bruk av metaforer och metaforiska berättelser [...] har samband med diktarens förhoppning att, i sin metaforiska skildring av verkligheten, låta vårt mänskliga varas beroende av allt, livet, naturen uppenbaras i vårt medvetande, levande, berörande och engagerande”, Johan Wrede, “Om metaforer och metafysik i *Aniara*”, in *Efter femtio år: Aniara 1956-2006: Föredrag vid ett symposium i Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien 12 Oktober 2006*, ed. Bengt Landgren, Stockholm, Kungl. Vitterhets historie och antikvitets akademien, 2007, p. 12-21, p. 19.

25. "Har ni hört talas om cikadan, sångsyrsan, sångstriten? [...] Cikadan finns i de varma länderna, och i Kina hålls den i bur som en sorts insektsvärldens kanariefågel", Johan Wrede, *Sången om Aniara. Studier i Harry Martinsons tankevärld*, Stockholm, Bonniers, 1965, p. 21.
26. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 59; "Det finnes skydd mot nästan allt som är / mot eld och skador genom storm och köld [...] Men det finns inget skydd mot människan", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 26. Apple Books.
27. Harry Martinson, "Vi måste äntligen lyssna", *Vi*, 1949, 1, p. 3-4, p. 3.
28. Gunnar Tideström, *Ombord på Aniara*, Stockholm, Aldus, 1975, p. 41.
29. Dirac postulated the existence of an infinite sea of electrons with negative energy, in which indeterminacy and uncertainty remain as constants in a condition of "randomness".
30. In the film, Isagel initiates a long-lasting relationship with Mimaroben, which culminates in the birth of a child. Isagel's suicide in the film is of particular significance. His decision to end his life not only deprives *Aniara*'s crew of a rational mathematical mind, but also a very young child of his mother. The child's abandonment is emotionally charged in the adaptation.
31. Harry Martinson, "Vi måste äntligen lyssna", p. 4.
32. The concept of *nearness* is employed in this context in reference to Heidegger's thought and relates to the spatiality of *Dasein*: "The things at hand of everyday association have the character of *nearness*. To be exact, this nearness of useful things is already hinted at in the term which expresses their being in "handiness" (*Zuhandenheit*)", in Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 95.
33. Judith Meurer-Bondgardt, "Den finlandssvenska Modernismen - en tidig litteratur i Antropocenens tecken?", *Historiska och litteraturhistoriska studier*, 97, 2022, p. 127-154.
34. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p. 179.
35. Harry Martinson, "Självförsvar", *Fronten*, 8, 1932, p. 301.
36. Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, p. 5.
37. "Det handlar om att lösgöra sig från föreställningar om hierarkier och rigida kategorier, och inse att det inte finns några tydliga gränser och inte heller något centrum, in Sofia Wijkmark, "Naturen och det kusliga. Nedslag i samtida svensk skönlitteratur", *Tidskrift för Litteraturvetenskap*, 1, 2012, p. 6.
38. Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, Durham; London, Duke University Press, 2016, p. 2.
39. Arne Næss, *Økologi, samfunn og livsstil: utkast til en økosofi*, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1976, p. 296.
40. Will Steffen; Paul J. Crutzen; John R. McNeill, "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?", *Ambio*, 36, 2007, p. 614-21.
41. Timothy Clark, *Ecocriticism on the Edge. The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*, London; New York, Bloomsbury, 2015, p. VIII.
42. Will Steffen; Paul J. Crutzen; John McNeill, 'The Anthropocene', p. 614-21, p. 614. Other scholars would rather use the word Capitalocene (Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'The Climate of History: Four Theses', *Critical Inquiry*, n°. 35, 2009, p. 197-222) or propose Technocene (Andreas Malm; Alf Hornborg, "The Geology of Mankind? A Critique of the Anthropocene Narrative", *The Anthropocene Review* 1, 2014, p. 62-69). Haraway finds the use of the term Capitalocene more centred: "The systemic stories of the linked metabolisms, articulations, or coproductions (pick your metaphor) of economies and ecologies, of histories and human and nonhuman critters, must be relentlessly opportunistic and contingent. They must also be relentlessly relational, sympoietic, and consequential. They are terran, not cosmic or blisped or cursed into outer space. The Capitalocene is terran; it does not have to be the last biodiverse geological epoch that includes our species too", Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, p. 49.
43. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, Minneapolis; London, University of Minnesota Press, 2013, p. 5.

44. The sequence is readable in two ways: the mother utters this sentence to calm her child; the viewer infers a deeper meaning: passengers will never come back to Earth.
45. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*; p. 37-38; "Vår trogna Mima gör allt hon kan och söker, söker, söker", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 6. Apple Books.
46. Sophie Wenerscheid, "Things Don't Cry, Do They? Emotional Attachment between Humans, Technology and Nature in Harry Martinson's Epic Space Poem *Aniara* and the Science Fiction Film *Aniara*", *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 11, March 2021, p. 31-48, p. 33.
47. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*; Harry Martinson, p. 40; "Och för en tid kan miman lösa trycket och skingra minnena från Doris stränder / ty ofta kan den värld som Mima visar / slå ut den värld vi minns och som vi lämnat", *Aniara*, Song 7. Apple Books. In the work of Martinson, the term "Dorisvale", also recurring as "Doris", is used to refer to Earth. Conversely, "Dorisburg" indicates the fictional metropolis situated on the planet.
48. "Vår plikt just nu är att våga se också det mörka, att göra oss förtrogna också med mörka fantasins bilder av undergångens moln", in Harry Martinson, "Tekniken och själen", *Daedalus*, 1, 1955, p. 55-59, p. 59.
49. Eric O. Johannesson, "Aniara: Poetry and the Poet in the Modern World", *Scandinavian Studies*, 32, 1960, p. 185-202, p. 195.
50. Habermas encompasses in moral-cognitive reason governmental policies and questions about "how to live", while aesthetic-expressive reason is obviously linked with art and Literature. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1. Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, Boston, Beacon Press, 1984, p. 1-3. *Aniara*'s chief officer is an example of character living only within a moral-cognitive reason. He shows indeed no connection or affinity with fellow passengers, being the "bullet-headed breaker of mankind, who represents a parody of impenetrable facts", see Stephen Klass, "Introduction", in Harry Martinson, *Aniara. A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 19.
51. Linda Haverty Rugg, "Displacing Crimes against Nature: Scandinavian Ecocrime Fiction", *Scandinavian Studies*, 89, 2017, p. 597-615, p. 614.
52. Sophie Wenerscheid, "Things Don't Cry, Do They?", p. 37. The spaceship also serves as artificial paradise: time onboard is only devoted to entertainment. *Aniara* hosts amusements with which everyday routine can be enlivened: when Mimaroben arrives at the ship after the shuttle transportation, the lift lists the delights available onboard: champagne-bar, the amusement palace, the foodcourt and stardeck.
53. Johan Lundberg, "Döden, drömmen och dikten. En linje i Harry Martinsons epik - Från Nässlorna blomma till *Aniara*", in *Efter femtio år: Aniara 1956-2006. Föredrag vid ett symposium i Kungl. Vitterhetsakademien 12 Oktober 2006*, ed. Bengt Landgren, Stockholm, Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 2007, p. 47-59, p. 56.
54. Stephen Klass, "Introduction", in Harry Martinson, *Aniara. A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 17.
55. Jan Stensson, "Aniara, Mimicry and Aspect-Seeing", *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 16, 2006, p. 157-61, p. 159.
56. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 39; "emigranter har börjat lära sig att [...] enda världen som gives oss är denna värld hos Mima", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 6. Apple Books.
57. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 43; "Uppfinnaren var själv fullständigt slagen den dag han fann att hälften av den mima han funnit upp låg bortom analysen. Att hälften funnits upp av miman själv", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 9. Apple Books. Referring to Mima with the female pronoun is a choice made by the translators.
58. Octavia J. Cade, "'I Close the Mima': The Role of Narrative in Harry Martinson's *Aniara*", *Scandinavica*, 54, 2015, p. 91-114, p. 100.

59. Manuela Rossini, "Figurations of Posthumanity in Contemporary Science/Fiction – All Too Human(ist)?", *Revista Canaria de estudios ingleses*, 50, 2005, p. 21-35, p. 26.
60. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 59; "Då bländas miman av ett blixtblått sken och jag blir stum för det som övergår den arma Jorden", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 26. Apple Books.
61. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 63; "Ett blixtblått sken slog fram ur mimans skärmar, ett muller rullade i Mimas salar likt åskans dån en gång i Doris dalar", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 29. Apple Books.
62. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 62; "Hon hade hört dem ropa på stenars vis i Doris fjärran dal. Hon hade sett granitens vita gråtnär sten och malm förgasas till ett dis. Hon hade rörts av dessa stenars kval", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 28. Apple Books.
63. "Even here are the rewards of praise, here are the tears of things as they touch mortals' mind".
64. David Wharton, "Sunt Lacrimae Rerum: An Exploration in Meaning", *The Classical Journal*, 103, 2008, p. 259-279, p. 260.
65. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter. A Political Ecology of Things*, Durham; London, Duke University Press, 2010, p. VIII.
66. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*; p. 47: "Förskrämd av denna klarhet flyr jag frusen från mimahallen till de röda ljusen till danssalongen, finner Daisy där. Jag tigger hennes räddningsfamn om möte, jag ber om ingång i ett hårigt sköte där dödens kalla klarhet inte är", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 13. Apple Books.
67. "Dikten är till för att trösta och berika de dödliga individerna", Harry Martinson, 'Biologien och konsten', in Kring *Aniara*, ed. Stefan Sandelin, Södra Sandby, Vekerum, 1989, p. 22-29, p. 23.
68. "Livet är kort, men just därför att så är, kräver det en konstrikt arbetad tydning och mycken tanke, mycken dröm för att bli meningsfullt", *ibid*.
69. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 41; "Vår själ förnöts av drömmar, ständigt gnider vi dröm mot dröm av brist på verklighet", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 8. Apple Books.
70. Eric O. Johannesson, "Aniara: Poetry and the Poet in the Modern World", p. 199.
71. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*; p. 102: "En religion som tävlar starkt med Kulten har vuxit fram av mörkrets tryck och plåga. De dyrkar Ljuset som idé och flamma och deras kultgudinna är en låga. Till tjänsten valdes flickan ifrån Rind", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 58. Apple Books.
72. "All'ombra de' cipressi e dentro l'urne confortate di pianto è forse il sonno della morte men duro?", Ugo Foscolo, *Poesie*, Milano, BUR, 2011. Apple Books.
73. Tord Hall, *Vår tids stjärnsång: en naturvetenskaplig studie omkring Harry Martinsons Aniara*, Stockholm, Bonniers, 1961, p. 34.
74. "När ungefärligheten på alla områden hotas till livet av den tyranniska exaktheten på alla områden, då har det stora kriget mellan poet och ingenjör börjat", Harry Martinson, *Verklighet till döds*, Stockholm: Bonniers, 2016, chap 3. Apple Books.
75. "Helvetande mannen steg upp ur det brinnande träsket. Helvetande mannen bröt han i stycken sin nyvunna visshet. Det för honom evigt in att förvandlade vandra att evigt idéerna driva mot fälten för verkligheter. [...] Snart skulle den klarhet med vilken han livnär sin leda ånyo en död genom visshet åt gåtan bereda", Harry Martinson, *Gräsen i Thule*, Stockholm, Bonniers, 2016, p. 31.
76. "Considerate la vostra semenza: fatti non foste a viver come bruti, ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza", Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. Tommaso di Salvo, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1985, p. 445-446.
77. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*, p. 47; "en liten blåsa i Guds andes glas", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 8. Apple Books. In the next verses, *Mimaroben*

explains that small air bubbles move infinitely slowly inside the glass, if kept untouched for a sufficient period.

78. Harry Martinson, *Aniara: A Review of Man in Time and Space*; p. 76: "Då är som hörde man det sista låset för livets möjlighet att överleva", Harry Martinson, *Aniara*, Song 40. Apple Books.

79. "Tanto in ogni opera sua la natura è intenta e indirizzata alla morte [...]. Ogni parte dell'universo si affretta infaticabilmente alla morte, con sollecitudine e celerità mirabile", Giacomo Leopardi, *Operette morali*, ed. Giorgio Ficara, Milano, Mondadori, 1988, p. 204.

80. For a review on postenvironmentalism, Erle Ellis, "The Planet of No Return", in *Love Your Monsters. Postenvironmentalism and the Anthropocene.*, ed. Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus, Berkeley, The Breakthrough Institute, 2011, chap. 5. Apple Books.

81. Renee Lertzman, *Environmental Melancholia. Psychoanalytic Dimensions of Engagement*, London and New York, Routledge, 2015.

82. "Posthumanismen per definition innebär ett upplösande av dualism och dikotomier såsom indelningen av världen i en natur- och en kultursfär", in Marie Öhman, "Från Humanism till Posthumanism", *Litteratur och språk*, 5, 2009, p. 74-92, p. 88.

83. Jacques Rancière et al., "You Can't Anticipate Explosions: Jacques Rancière in Conversation with Chto Delat", *Rethinking Marxism* 20, 3, p. 402-412, p. 412.

84. "Parimente del mondo intero, e delle infinite vicende e calamità delle cose create, non rimarrà pure un vestigio; ma un silenzio nudo, e una quiete altissima, empiranno lo spazio immenso", Giacomo Leopardi, *Operette morali*, p. 205.

ABSTRACTS

Epic poem *Aniara* was published in 1956 by Harry Martinson. Its 2018 film adaptation by Pella Kågerman and Hugo Lilja contributed to a rediscovery of the original work and ignited further interpretations. *Aniara* depicts the long ill-fated trip of the eponymous spaceship, which supposedly should have carried thousands of people away from Earth during "a time of calm, repose and quarantine". A malfunction knocks *Aniara* off course and leaves the spacecraft wander towards the limits of both nature's empty space and humans' experience. While the epic poem, written in the tension-stricken time of Cold War, pointed at "toxic radiation" as reason for the exile from Earth, the film version focuses on the consequences of climate change. Alone and directionless in a hostile un-nature, humans lack ground. Ghostly images of the environment return in the much alluring pictures broadcasted by Mima – the spaceship controlling machine which offers consolation and an ephemeral nostalgia of lost unity.

The aim of this article is to further investigate the consequence of the broken bond between humans and nature in *Aniara* and provide an ecocritical and posthumanist reading of Martinson's and Kågerman/Lilja's works as a representation of mankind as a peculiar form of lone exobiology adrift in the mute (techno)sphere.

Le poème épique *Aniara* a été publié en 1956 par Harry Martinson. Son adaptation cinématographique en 2018 par Pella Kågerman et Hugo Lilja a contribué à la redécouverte de l'œuvre originale et a permis de nouvelles interprétations. *Aniara* raconte le long et pénible voyage du vaisseau spatial éponyme, qui aurait dû emporter des milliers de personnes loin de la Terre pendant « un temps calme, de repos et de quarantaine ». Un dysfonctionnement fait dévier *Aniara* de sa trajectoire et laisse le vaisseau spatial errer vers les limites de l'espace vide de la

nature et de l'expérience humaine. Alors que le poème épique, écrit à l'époque de tension de la Guerre froide, invoquait les « radiations toxiques » comme raison de l'exil de la Terre, la version cinématographique se concentre sur les conséquences du changement climatique. Seuls et privés de direction, dans le vide d'une hostile contre nature, les humains errent sans racines. Spectrales images de l'environnement revient dans les représentations séduisantes diffusées par Mima – la machine de contrôle du vaisseau spatial, qui offre une consolation et une éphémère nostalgie d'une unité perdue.

Le but de cet article est d'étudier plus en profondeur les conséquences du lien rompu entre les humains et la nature à *Aniara* et de proposer une lecture écocritique et posthumaniste des œuvres de Martinson et Kågerman/Lilja comme une représentation de l'humanité comme forme particulière d'exobiologie solitaire à la dérive dans la muette (techno)sphère.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Martinson (Harry), post-humanisme, Anthropocène, écocritique, *Aniara*

Keywords: Martinson (Harry), posthumanism, Anthropocene, ecocriticism, *Aniara*

AUTHOR

GIOVANNI ZA

Giovanni Za is a PhD candidate at the University of Naples - L'Orientale. He is currently developing a project in the field of Spatial Literary Studies which explores the representation of space in contemporary Nordic Literature from a geocritical perspective. He has also published a number of academic contributions on autobiography and autofiction in the Nordic context, as well as on the literary representations of Stockholm and the work of Mikael Niemi.