

Call for papers  
**7<sup>th</sup> Biennial congress**  
**FEAR AND SAFETY**  
**European Network for Comparative Literary Studies (ENCLS)**

**Location:** University of Helsinki, Finland

**Dates of the congress:** 23-26 August 2017

**Deadline for proposals:** **30 September 2016**

**Proposals are welcome in:** English, French, Finnish, Swedish, Sami.

In its recent past, Europe has encountered economic depressions, climate change, military interventions, terrorist attacks and the dual rise of aggressive nationalism and the fear of the loss of national identity and autonomy. These times reveal the presence of collective fears concerning economic, political, environmental, and security issues. Simultaneously, in their everyday lives, people deal with a sense of fear that arises on a more individual level: they fear for their own financial future, perhaps for their threatened cultural, gender or sexual identities, and possibly even for their physical safety. In view of this, it is pertinent to ask whether there is a contemporary European mind-set that is obsessed with the idea of safety. By virtue of its etymology, the notion of safety has been associated with salvation and redemption. Such connotations, however, seem to have receded in secular, liberal-capitalist society and have been replaced by the far more protective and restrictive idea of *security*. How are safe – or secure – environments and societies being imagined and idealised in Europe, and have such imaginings changed over the decades and centuries?

This conference calls for contributions dealing with the issues of fear and safety in European literature. Paper topics might include contemporary realist narratives of migration, or the apocalyptic and dystopian narratives currently permeating the entire cultural landscape. Papers on transnational and multicultural issues are welcomed, as are papers focusing on the genre-specific problematics of approaching the themes of fear and safety (e.g. fantasy, thrillers, speculative fiction, children's literature, literature for young adults). Recent trends in research, such as affect and risk theory, are also pertinent. How do literary presentations create and shape the social, "public", and possibly collective emotions that frame our experience? How do such representations, usually far more accessible to the public than scientific information, influence the real-life evaluation and selection of risks? What kinds of textual strategies and ways of story-telling are being used to express the affectivities of fear and safety? How are increasingly popular adaptations and multimodal works of art connected to contemporary notions of fear and safety in their ways of (re)telling (past) stories?

In addition, we invite contributions about the representations of European territories of the Arctic: the entire world has become increasingly fascinated with the northern parts of the planet. Security in the Arctic is not threatened by the presence of armed forces or nationalistic movements; rather, the strains on the environment caused by climate change and increased human activity are raising fears on a global scale.

Notions of fear and safety therefore lend themselves to comparative exploration through different disciplines, such as Geocriticism, Diaspora Studies, Migration Studies, Myth and Folklore Criticism, (Post) Colonial Studies; Women's Studies, Gender Studies, LGBT Studies, Ecocriticism, Posthumanism, New Materialisms, Risk Theory, Adaptation Studies, Intermedial Studies, Children's Literature, Literature and Science, Literature and Psychology, Literature and Philosophy, Narratology, Ethics in/and

Literature, Affects in/and Literature, Cultural Studies, Scandinavian Studies, and Arctic Studies.

**Proposals for individual papers:** Please send your abstract in RTF or Word format, containing the following information in this order: 1) Your name, 2) Your title (e.g. Postgraduate Student, Professor) 3) Your institution or affiliation, if applicable, 4) Your contact details, including e-mail address, 5) Title of your presentation, 6) Max. 300-word abstract, 7) Short biography (max. 150 words), 8) 3 to 5 keywords describing your presentation.

**Proposals for thematic panels:** Please collect the abstracts of all the participants (formatted as above) to one RTF or Word file, under the title "Panel proposal: Name of panel". Remember to include the contact details of the main organiser of the panel (including e-mail address). A panel should have 3-4 participants (or 6-8 participants for a two-session panel).

**Conference location:** Founded in 1640, the University of Helsinki is the most versatile institution for science, education, and intellectual renewal in Finland. Helsinki is the capital city of Finland, and the university campus is located right in the heart of the city. Downtown Helsinki and the Central Campus of the university can be easily reached from the international Helsinki-Vantaa airport. There are also excellent ferry or train connections to Helsinki from Sweden, Russia and Estonia.

The conference is organised in collaboration with the Finnish Literary Research Society.

**Confirmed keynote speakers:**

Dr. Timothy Morton, Rita Shea Guffey Chair in English at Rice University, Texas. His research is multifaceted: it analyses the intersection of food and cultural studies, centers on environmental theory, and has been associated with object-oriented ontology. He is the author of *Nothing: Three Inquiries in Buddhism and Critical Theory* (Chicago, 2015), *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minnesota, 2013), *Realist Magic: Objects, Ontology, Causality* (Open Humanities, 2013), *The Ecological Thought* (Harvard UP, 2010), *Ecology without Nature* (Harvard, 2007), seven other books and one hundred and twenty essays on philosophy, ecology, literature, food and music. His blog can be found [here](#).

Dr. Anne Duprat, translator and professor in Comparative Literature at the University of Picardie Jules Verne. She specialises in the theory of fiction and European studies from the XVIth and XVIIth centuries and directs the collection Mediterranea. She contributes regularly to the work of the [Center for Research on Travel Writing](#). She is the author of *Vraisemblances. Poétiques de la fiction en France et en Italie* (Champion, 2009), and of co-director of *Fiction et Cultures* (Paris, 2010), *Récits d'Orient en Occident* (PUPS, 2008) and *Histoires et savoirs. Anecdotes scientifiques aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (2012). For her complete bibliography, click [here](#).

Dr. Johan Schimanski, professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Oslo, member of several editorial boards among which those of *Fafnir: The Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research* and *The Journal of Gender Research*. His research areas encompass borders, national identity, postcolonialism, Arctic discourses, Welsh literature, science-fiction, genre theory, literary forgeries and literary museums. He has worked in cooperation with the University of Eastern Finland and the University of Tromsø. He is the author of *Passaggiere des Eises: Polarhelden und arktische Diskurse 1874* (Boehlau, 2015), co-author of *Border Poetics De-*

*limitea* (Wehrhahn, 2007) and a contributor to *Arctic Discourses* (2010). The full array of his works can be found [here](#).

**Send your proposals and questions to:** [encls2017@gmail.com](mailto:encls2017@gmail.com)

Basic information: <https://www.facebook.com/ENCLS2017/?fref=ts>

European Network for Comparative Literary Studies: <http://encls.net/>

University of Helsinki: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en>

Finnish Literary Research Society: <http://pro.tsv.fi/skts/inenglish.html>