

Sami Koponen & Mari Niva: Small steps towards a sustainable food culture? "General understanding" of moderation in the food practices of environmentally minded consumers

Although many consumers are concerned about the ecological impacts of food production, the consumption of meat and dairy products has remained relatively stable. This article investigates this paradox drawing on practice theoretical sociology of consumption and the concept of general understandings. The qualitative analysis is based on data collected with an online survey conducted in 2020, focusing on consumers whose responses indicated the persistence of dietary choices despite considering the minimal climate and environmental impacts of food to be very important. The article focuses on what we call the general understanding of moderation, and describes the ways in which moderation manifests in the food practices of environmentally minded consumers. We emphasise that moderation should not be seen as an unproblematic cultural understanding when aiming

for ecological sustainability, since the cultural understanding of moderation steers (ecologically conscious) consumers towards moderation also in their sustainability acts. Therefore, we propose that research on sustainable food transition should pay more attention to the role of cultural understandings like moderation.



Anna Helle, Toni Lahtinen, Olli Löytty & Panu Pihkala: Finnish high school students read *Memory of Water* – A study of emotions and thoughts evoked via cli-fi

This article discusses a case study in the field of empirical ecocriticism in which we investigated how high school students read climate fiction and how it affects them. We invited more than a hundred high school students, mostly 16 and 17 years old, to read a novel called *Memory of Water* (2014) by Finnish author Emmi Itäranta and tell about their thoughts and feelings that reading the book evoked. The material was collected from four different high schools in

different parts of Finland. The material includes essays written by the students, questionnaire responses, and recorded group discussions.

In this article, we analyse the material using qualitative theory and data-driven content analysis. We focus on three themes that are important from the point of view of ecocriticism: identification, concretization of abstract phenomena, and effect of locality on the reading experience.

Our research shows that literature affects readers in a more complex way than has been previously assumed. The high school students did not identify very strongly with the novel's young protagonists, contrary to what could have been assumed based on previous research. This is essential, because when evaluating the effectiveness of literature, identification is often thought to play a central role. However, according to our research, reading climate literature helps to imagine climate change and its consequences in a versatile way. Climate change is often considered difficult to comprehend, but the novel concretizes the abstract phenomenon.

The results regarding the importance of locality are twofold: On one hand, the location of the novel's events in the area of present-day Northern Finland in a dystopian future made a strong impact on some Northern Finnish readers. On the other hand, it was Finland as the setting that made the novel appear as unrealistic to some, because they thought that climate change will not affect Finland that forcefully. To our surprise, in addition to the climate message of the book, the act of reading itself also evoked emotions; a considerable number of high school students found reading an entire novel difficult and burdensome.



Jenni Vauhkonen: From environmental sensitivity to interspecies alliance – Rethinking human-plant relationships on Korppoo's Barefoot Path

In this article, contemporary art is encountered on the Barefoot Path, located in the forests of Korppoo. Artworks created with living plants – in other words, plant art pieces, offer perspectives

in this article on the human-plant relationships, which have become increasingly distant during the last decades. This can be seen as a significant factor behind many climate and environmental crises. What kind of human-plant relationships does the Barefoot Path and its artworks lead to? What do they tell about the possibilities for humans to approach and ally with plants to build better futures for both?

The encountered artworks are Antti Laitinen's *Armour* (2014) and Hannah Streefkerk's *Mended Trees* (2018), which are approached with sensitivity to the environment and the materiality of art. The metallic *Armour*, assembled around a living pine tree invites contemplation of human possibilities to protect nature from the threats it faces. *Mended Trees*, which repairs damaged trees with red wooden thread, sparks discussions about care for nature and the mending of human-plant relationships.

The open-minded, world sensitive research attitude characteristic to this article, brings together theoretical approaches from posthumanism, new materialism, and phenomenology, which are

seamlessly integrated into the methodological approach: environmental sensitivity. Viewed in this way, the Barefoot Path lead to a more reciprocal and future-oriented human-plant relationship, where alliance is the key to building more sustainable futures for both humans and plants.

