

etymological definition of radical – of or belonging to roots, or rooted – and the modern environmental movement’s definition, which emphasizes its newness and departure from established norms as well as its connection to nature. By bringing together the work of recent scholars like Marlene Allen, Sylvia Mayer, and Jennifer Terry with the work of Amitav Ghosh on the Anthropocene, Gloria Anzaldua on the nepantla, and botanist Stefano Mancuso on the genius of plants, I offer an examination of Earthseed’s origin and tenets to explain the role of liminal space and breaking down of traditional binaries in survival in a post-apocalyptic America. This form of survival is uniquely radical in its ability to learn from the lessons of the past and imagine a future where mestizas thrive.

Critics of the novel have aptly noted the presence of both dystopian and utopian themes within the novel, proving Butler’s ability to both accept and privilege seemingly opposing ideologies. My work takes the exploration of dualities within the text further by examining how Earthseed upends humans’ tendency toward polarization, and instead, emerges from a liminal space. I posit that Earthseed, like its namesake of seed and plants, seeks to demonstrate the ways that liminality is critical for long-term human survival, both on Earth and any other planets we might seed. It is through Earthseed that Butler allows us to imagine an aspirational future in the face of climate change in a way that empowers those most vulnerable to its effects. Ultimately, I conclude that Earthseed. serves as an embodiment of the term “radical,” holding equally important what is new and what is rooted.

Bio: Holley Taylor is a Master’s student at Western Michigan University, where she teaches First Year Writing and is studying American Literature, specializing in Science Fiction and Environmental literature.

**11am -12.15pm Panel 2B: ‘Mass Produced World’ Hybrid**

Panel, G01, Chair: Alex Veregan

**Fazil Akin (he/him)**, University of Liverpool (in-person)

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**Material Mediators as Speculations: An intersection of Product Design and Speculative Fictions**

Product Design provides solutions for everyday problems by developing objects by considering their use, production, disposal, and economic and sociological impact. Through industrialisation, many everyday problems were solved through technological developments and through mass production; these solutions were affordable for many people. The environmental impact of these solutions, on the other hand, began to be a problem itself, as Victor Papanek (1973) states. At the

same time as Papanek's book, the term wicked problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973) appeared to address such problems that produced objects cause. As wicked problems are not as easy to solve as everyday problems, designers need to find new ways to think about them. Alternative ways of designing include fields such as critical design, design for debate, speculative design, and design fiction. One of the prominent designers and theoreticians in this field, Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby (2013), compare affirmative design with critical design, where critical design proposes 'functional fictions' instead of 'fictional functions.' The paper aims to review the alternative design practices while comparing the material outcomes from each practice to discuss the 'functional fiction' properties of these, relating them to the medium of speculative fiction books.

Fazil Akin is a lecturer in the division of Industrial Design at the University of Liverpool. He has a BA and MSc in Industrial Design, an MA in Product Design and Management, and a CAS in Interaction Design. Currently, he is a Ph.D. student at Hessen State University of Art and Design, working in the field of philosophy of technology and animism. He teaches about critical design, design for experiences, materializing and visualising design and does research on the fields of humantechology relations and future scenarios.

11am -12.15pm Panel 2B: 'Mass Produced World'  
Hybrid Panel, G01, Chair: Alex Veregan

**Pushing the Borders of Reality: Posthumanism, Disability and  
Transcorporeality in Richard Powers' The Overstory**

Lucía Bennett, uni of grenada (in-person)

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**Abstract**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution describes the new era we are currently immersed in, where the surge of new technologies is merging the biological, physical, and digital spheres, and which in turn, is affecting all levels of society, including the identity of individuals (Schwab 2016). The concern with the conceptualization of the human is taken up by critical posthumanism, recently engaged with the reconfiguration of the human in the new contexts of globalization, climate change, technoscience and