

**Ksenia Shmydkaya**  
**Tallinn University**  
**Posthumanist approaches to the historical novel**

**Abstract:** Unlike some other genres, historical fiction has not gained much popularity among the scholars who identify themselves as posthumanist. Often seen as a nostalgic and reactionary, historical novel is still haunted by an image of “the white, middle-class, European male,” Sir Walter Scott, whose works are taken to be the ultimate model for the genre.

Considering the posthumanist scholarship's ambition to trouble existing hierarchies and decentre “the Man” of Humanism, it seems appropriate to apply its methodologies in order to explore the ways in which the historical novel can be read and written. In my presentation I will propose a case study of a contemporary piece of fiction, *The Essex Serpent* by Sarah Perry, and subsequently consider the idea of a posthuman(ist) historical novel: what could it be like, whether it exists at the moment, and how can this image contribute to redefining the genre.