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Annika Arnold, *Climate Change and Storytelling: Narratives and Cultural Meaning in Environmental Communication* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 136 pp.

Drawing on narrative theory and cultural sociology, Annika Arnold's *Climate Change and Storytelling: Narratives and Cultural Meaning in Environmental Communication* aims to develop an appropriate analytical model for stories about climate change. That is, a cultural narrative framework that both is suitable to such stories *before* they are adapted for (mass) media and does not focus on the receiving audiences. Despite being a relatively short read, Arnold's book offers a comprehensive look into the theoretical side of climate communication. Considering the ecocritical field's recent increased interest in reader-response criticism and empirical literary studies, *Climate Change and Storytelling* offers insight into environmental communication that is relevant to fictional narratives as well.

In the introduction, Arnold briefly lays out the importance of narrative and storytelling when it comes to climate change communication. After all, the human is, as Arnold cites, a "storytelling animal" and uses narrative structures to make sense of the world. Stories are especially relevant with climate change, which, following scholarship in e.g., sociology and policy studies, Arnold defines as a "super wicked problem." That is, a problem so intricate and dependent on multiple factors and stakeholders it seems to defy any feasible solution. Stories, then, provide a cognitive structure for people to communicate—and understand—the multi-layered and difficult phenomenon that is climate change. Rather than risking becoming a communication handbook and making a series of recommendations to its readers, *Climate Change and Storytelling* zooms in on the storyteller, or rather, the climate advocate, whose task is to turn the physical reality of climate change into a socio-culturally meaningful story.

The second chapter, 'Climate Change Communication Studies: Inquiries into Beliefs, Information and Stories,' offers a succinct overview of the cultural and social scholarship relevant to the book's later analyses (chapters four and five). As climate change is a multi-layered phenomenon—and a super wicked problem—Arnold's conceptual model includes several theoretical perspectives on and approaches to climate change stories: risk perception and communication, media research, science communication and cultural studies. The chapter's first part on risk perception, specifically, is suited to an ecocritical audience that wants to learn more about cultural sociology. While apocalyptic global warming narratives are abundant in the field, as it

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turns out, such stories can also have the opposite effect on people. Having argued for the importance and culturally situatedness of storytelling when it comes to climate change, the last part of the second chapter covers the individual components of narratives: content, form, and structure. Considering the fourth chapter (which includes Arnold's analysis), the book's inclusion of narrative elements, structure in particular, appears to be rather limited and could be adapted to better reflect the complexity of narratives.

In the fifth chapter, 'Telling the Stories of Climate Change: Structure and Content,' Arnold, building forth on what she developed in the previous chapter, analyses interviews with climate advocates in Germany and the USA. Doing so, Arnold identifies four climate advocates' narratives—which are, depending on the context, not mutually exclusive: economic rationale (with both positive and negative consequences); political arena (as a partisan and national issue); environmental concerns, and global responsibility and solidarity (including historical responsibility).

Arnold explicitly states that the different case studies (that is, her interviews in Germany and the USA) are not meant for a comparative analysis but rather designed to avoid "national bias" and narrow reading. At times, it does feel as if some of the conclusions drawn from both case studies could use a more nuanced reading that pays careful attention to the social-political contexts of the interviewees' stories. In the second chapter, Arnold does argue for the importance of storytelling's cultural and social situatedness. However, sometimes it feels as if her analyses fall short on this. Still, the book does provide a comparative (and with that, contextually appropriate) approach to an extent. For example, the narrative of the political arena as partisan distinction explicitly looks at the USA for analytical context. At the same time, this narrative is less likely to be relevant for any other country and, as such, can be considered biased. Furthermore, Arnold's analysis of these narratives' structure is centred around (one could say limited to) a variety of actors/characters presented in the interviews: hero, villain, and victim. This limitation has its merits—the main being a thorough analysis of the aforementioned components. Especially considering the qualitative nature of the interviews, Arnold could have pushed the analysis a little further and considered additional structural elements.

In the final chapter and short conclusion, 'Pitfalls and the Power of Narratives', Arnold briefly looks at the patterns and even contradictions of her findings. Rather than making several suggestions when it comes to climate communication, Arnold urges the reader to always take social and cultural narratives seriously and continue to work on an adequate analytical tool to analyse them. Herein also lies the power of Arnold's book. Stories are, after all, one way in which the human animal makes sense of their life. Understanding the stories created around global warming helps us "further our understanding of how societies make sense of the world and how this translates into actions and decision making" (131). Despite unity of subject, Arnold's book can read like a series of related journal articles and the different chapters could be read on their own as well. For example, the third chapter, 'How to Understand the Role of Narratives in Environmental Communication,' could be separately read as a careful introduction to cultural narrative analysis, including an in-depth overview of its origins and a suggested

analytic framework suitable for climate change narratives. For those new to this particular field of research, *Climate Change and Storytelling* provides a solid outline of narrative theory and cultural sociology. Especially considering so much of the literature on communication focuses on readers, Arnold's book is a timely contribution to the analysis of climate change storytelling.