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Adeline Johns-Putra, ed., *Climate and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 312 pp.

DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.37536/ECOZONA.2020.11.1.3624](https://doi.org/10.37536/ECOZONA.2020.11.1.3624)



Most of us check the weather at least once a day: we open our most trusted forecast website or mobile app, and then decide what clothes to wear and what plans to make. We all experience the weather—it is something we can easily understand because it is part of our personal and collective past and present. The same cannot be said of climate. Despite the increasing public debates on climate change and the worldwide "skolstrejker for klimatet," the notion of climate escapes many of us, for it is technical, mediated, and above all it requires spatial and temporal scales too large to be comprehended by our daily experience. The collection *Climate and Literature* (2019), edited by Adeline Johns-Putra, works precisely on the intersections of these two dialectic concepts, the "visible" weather and the "invisible" climate (230), and on the ways literary practices – which have always been interested in the realm of both the visible (reality) and the invisible (imagination) – have included and depicted them in different historical periods, from the classical age to the present day. "Climate, as weather documented," Johns-Putra writes in the introduction, "necessarily possesses an intimate relationship with language, and through language, to literature" (1-2). In order to explore this relationship, the volume is divided in three main sections that bring together Western debates on weather and climate with the development of different aesthetic sensibilities and literary forms.

The first section, "Origins," opens with two far-reaching contributions that reflect on the changes climate impose on the literary representation of time (Robert Markley) and space (Jesse Oak Taylor). In Tess Somervell's chapter the cycle of seasons is presented as "one of the most prevalent means by which literary texts and other artworks engage with and represent climate" (45). As the author states, traditional narratives have always been influenced by seasonal climate while at the same time contributing to the understanding of climate as cyclical and predictable. The next two chapters engage in different ways with the evident connection between weather/climate and sociopolitical practices, inaugurating a more diachronic discussion. Daryn Lehoux writes that the imperial experiences of both ancient Greece and Rome shaped the classical concepts of regional climates and their related effect on human health. P.S. Langeslag shows how, centuries later, the medieval Nordic sagas recorded the emergence of innovative survival strategies and necessary adjustments to old laws and regulations, no longer applicable to new geographical contexts with different climatic conditions. In the final chapter of this section, Lowell Duckert engages with "the climate of Shakespeare," mentioning the

reasons for re-reading early modern texts in anthropocenic times and critically re-examining “the entangled relationships between climate and culture in our current moment of . . . ‘portentous’ change along a longer climatic continuum” (97).

In its second section, “Evolution,” the volume deals with modern notions of weather and climate, together with those of nation and world. According to Jan Golinski, it is in the age of Enlightenment that “the notion of climatic alteration” (112) enters the European cultural debate, thanks mainly to the contrast between the “normalized climate of the homeland” (ibid.) and the climatic variations of the colonies. Together with the relationship between climate and civilization, this new perspective fosters the idea of climate as a global system. This is why, David Higgins argues, British Romantic authors write in response to volcanic eruptions in Iceland and Indonesia, imagining “climate as an interconnected system in which changes in one region of the world could affect other regions” (130). In the next two chapters the discussion of a global climate is complicated by the study of transatlantic exchanges about the meaning of climatic difference (Morgan Vanek) and historical traditions of climatic medicine that influenced nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial discourses (Jessica Howell). With chapter eleven, Justine Pizzo deepens into the relationship between climate and gender, from the Victorian age to the Modernist period, culminating in Virginia Woolf’s “distinctly non-masculinist concept of climate” (182). Turning to more recent and popular literary forms, Chris Pak demonstrates that twentieth-century sci-fi narratives centered on terraforming, i.e. on the transformation of a planet to make it suitable for human life, represent “an escalation of the imperialist colonial imagination to climatic scales” (197). Andrew Nestingen, whose focus is the contemporary Nordic noir, discusses climate as both a construction of locality and a real actant, the true “source of the crime” (226) in many Scandinavian texts.

The final section of the volume, “Application,” directly addresses many of the ongoing questions around the limits and potential of Anthropocene narratives. Claire Colebrook invites readers to rethink the idea of extinction, commenting on the intertwined tradition of apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic imaginaries, while Daniel Cordle works on the practice of “nuclear criticism” and its ability to “provoke a positive sense of our capacity to exercise agency in the present” (297). The two chapters written by Adeline Johns-Putra deserve special attention as they both engage in depth with the always urgent question of realism. The first one, co-authored with Axel Goodbody, follows the emergence of the climate change novel and its narratological challenges. Climate change exists in fact outside immediate experience, the authors write, is constructed by the rational discourse of science, requires large scales of space and time, and “resists the sort of resolution which comes with normal plots and their expectation of closure” (236). The traditional notion of realism does not seem to satisfy all these needs, as Johns-Putra underlines in her second chapter. Thanks to an engaging discussion of the framing of time in realist narratives through Chakrabarty, Sartre, Benjamin, Jameson, and Lukács, Johns-Putra finally suggests that a new form of realism, Anthropocene realism, should make the reader aware of “the myriad connections that constitute species history” (259), speaking to both intra- and inter-species relations and “situating the reader ecologically” (ibid.).

The richness and scope of *Climate and Literature* escape simple summary. The collection provides an informed mapping of the concepts of weather and climate over time and allows for an engaging point of view to breathe new life into urgent cultural discussions. More indigenous perspectives and less Europe-centered contributions could perhaps have enriched this stimulating journey even more. However, the dialogue between different interpretative methods and disciplines – history, philology, philosophy, literary criticism – allows readers to gather useful notions to inform their understanding of and their participation in the contemporary debate on Anthropocene narratives. The collection’s multifaceted investigation of the question of realism without a focus on a single literary genre, such as science fiction, proves to be an effective way to reconsider past and present literary debates while showing their ability to envision rich epistemological possibilities for our future.