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Specht, D. and Harper, E.T. (Eds.) (2022). **Imagining Apocalyptic Politics in the Anthropocene**. Routledge.

Sanna Melin Schyllert¹

Faced with an ongoing climate crisis, the disconnect between environmental science and contemporary politics and policies is potentially the most worthwhile area of study of our age. To do so using the framework of apocalypse imaginaries is an excellent point of entry for the humanities. *Imagining Apocalyptic Politics in the Anthropocene*, edited by Doug Specht and Earl T. Harper, is a volume that aims to explore the intersection of apocalyptic themes, politics, and the Anthropocene within the field of literary geography. While the book raises concerns regarding its coherence and conceptual framework, it also offers valuable contributions through individual chapters. As a whole, it highlights the challenges inherent in conducting interdisciplinary research and raises important questions about disciplinary boundaries and the use of various methodologies within the field of literary geography. By exemplifying these issues, the volume brings attention to the need for a solid foundation in multiple disciplines to successfully navigate the complexities of the Anthropocene. Recognizing both the threats and the opportunities that arise from interdisciplinary endeavours is vital for scholars seeking to navigate this evolving field successfully.

The main strength of the volume lies in the quality of several individual chapters, and despite the lack of clarity in explaining the unifying idea, the editors have done a good job of including chapters that stand out for their insightful analysis and thought-provoking perspectives. As befits a volume about the apocalypse, I will begin at the end with chapter 13, authored by Tristan Sturm and Nicholas Lustig, which emerges as the most interesting chapter, presenting six “principles” (p.230) for a radical, post-political, apocalyptic discourse. While identical-sounding conclusions ring through most chapters of the book – that we, the human race, are in deep trouble – Sturm and Lustig take an approach that looks for solutions, or at the very least a roadmap to what’s next. This chapter thereby injects vitality into the volume by offering fresh perspectives, original insights, and some enthusiasm to the reader.

Chapter 1 by Edward H. Huijbens and Martin G. Gren provides an overview that reads more like a second introduction to the volume. However, just like in the actual introduction, it is difficult to discern a specific disciplinary focus. This first chapter raises questions pertaining to politics, sociology, and rhetoric without providing many answers. While it presents thought-provoking inquiries, the conclusion is elementary, emphasising the urgency of taking action against climate change.

In Chapter 2, Carlos Tornel and Aapo Lunden take the film “Interstellar” as a departure point for their investigation. They argue that “post-political” apocalyptic narratives do not inspire

¹ Sanna Melin Schyllert, Nantes Université, France. E-mail: sannamelinschyllert@gmail.com



forceful climate action “but rather micro and routine practices of risk management,” (p.35) which is an important observation. Their chapter sheds light on the reasons behind the inadequacy of climate action policies, which often fall short of creating real change.

Chapter 3, authored by Mariana Reyes-Carranza, makes a significant contribution by exploring indigenous cosmologies in relation to apocalyptic events. This perspective adds depth to the understanding of apocalyptic narratives by incorporating the indigenous worldview, which brings unique insights and challenges the dominant narratives surrounding the Anthropocene.

Chapters 4, 6, and 7, written by Charlotte Lancaster, Philip Jones, and James Tyner respectively, provide solid contributions from the fields of literary and film studies. These chapters demonstrate thorough research and analysis, and seem to work independently from the volume. Chapter 5 by Charles Travis also engages in extracting insights from literary works that could be pertinent to our age, but uses two well-worn works (*The Tempest* and *Frankenstein*) and does not conclude anything new about them, lending the chapter an air of notes for an undergraduate class on apocalyptic literary geographies.

Some chapters could have benefited from engaging more with sociological theory, such as Hans-Georg Müller's ideas on proficity. Sociological perspectives could have deepened some of the analyses of apocalyptic politics, particularly where these relate to the use of social media as in chapter 9 by Doug Specht and Cat Snyder, and expanded the theoretical framework guiding the writers' exploration.

A text that engages with sociological concerns from a political angle is chapter 8, authored by Lucas Pohl and Samo Tomšič, which focuses on the inherent asociality within apocalyptic narratives, depicting a survivalist mentality of every person for themselves. The chapter raises intriguing points about greed and enjoyment, which could be exemplified in the influence of traditional North American (male) hero-focused stories, where individual freedom is prioritised over the collective good. This cultural context may contribute to the prevalent theme of self-preservation in white/Western/eurocentric apocalyptic narratives, which stand in stark contrast to the narratives discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter 10 by Stephanie Wakefield offers an intriguing case study focusing on Miami as a site of “coastal adaptation” (p.184) and delves into its implications for the city's inhabitants. This chapter provides valuable insights into the complexities and challenges faced by communities undergoing significant environmental changes and adaptation processes.

In Chapters 11 and 12, Maria Soledad Castro Vargas and Diana Barquero Perez, and Carl Christian Olsson respectively, present artful explorations of apocalyptic themes. While Castro Vargas and Barquero Perez explore microplastics through photography, providing a unique lens to examine environmental concerns, Olsson delves into the concept of memories of the future through writing, offering a creative and thought-provoking approach to apocalyptic narratives.

Imagining Apocalyptic Politics in the Anthropocene welcomes new possibilities for literary studies to grapple with pressing societal and environmental concerns. The book serves as a platform for exploring the complex relationship between apocalyptic narratives, politics, and human-induced environmental changes. By encompassing a range of perspectives, the volume offers interdisciplinary opportunities for scholars interested in the intersections of literature, geography, and politics. While the book may lack a clear organising principle and could benefit

from a stronger editorial hand, it opens up possibilities for future studies by shedding light on the interdisciplinary nature of literary geography and the ways in which it can contribute to understanding contemporary socio-environmental challenges. Like the comprehensive and accessible *Cambridge Companion to Literature and the Anthropocene* (2021), the volume encourages scholars to consider new perspectives and methodologies, fostering a critical and innovative approach to the study of apocalyptic imaginaries. *Imagining Apocalyptic Politics in the Anthropocene* presents a mixed picture, with individual chapters providing valuable contributions to the field of literary geography. Despite the overall lack of coherence and a clear theoretical framework, the book showcases the potential for interdisciplinary research and its capacity to navigate contemporary issues. By addressing the challenges and opportunities inherent in studying apocalyptic politics in the Anthropocene, the volume paves the way for future scholarship to successfully explore the intricate relationship between literature, geography, and politics in the face of urgent global challenges.

References

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