

Climates – Cultures – Contexts

Foreword by the series editors

The climate is changing. While, for the time being, the classification of the Anthropocene as a geological era was rejected in a formal process, the complex phenomenon of climate defies such unambiguousness. This is already evident in the multitude of terms used to describe the phenomenon, all of which carry different connotations: global warming, climate change, climate crisis, climate catastrophe, or climate collapse, to name just a few.

This diversity of concepts influences the central areas of environment, society, and economy in a multidimensional and reciprocal manner, shaping both individual and collective constructions of reality as well as possibilities for action. Such interdependencies become apparent wherever the changing climate noticeably impacts human and more-than-human life and action – both locally and globally – and where, in turn, lifestyles and behaviors contribute to changes in climate. At the same time, the perception of climate change and its associated consequences are intertwined – for example, through knowledge cultures, cultural techniques, and linguistic-cultural approaches to the world. Following this perspective, the climate-changed environment is removed from its status as a passive backdrop – to be tamed or dominated, feared or admired, in short: reduced to a resource at our disposal.

Climates – Cultures – Contexts pursues the goal of exploring and understanding the complex phenomenon of ‘climate’ in terms of its cultural and contextual conditions. This opens up three approaches that cut across disciplinary lines: How are the changing climate and its circumstances talked about, narrated, and reflected upon? Within the series, these questions and approaches are not viewed as finished, but rather as negotiations of the complex phenomenon of climate, expanded and complemented with each volume from multiple perspectives, based on diverse analytical objects, relevant theories, and methodologies.

The present volume is designated 03 *Reading Nature and Cultures. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Witi Ihimaera’s “The Whale Rider” and its Contexts* synthesizes trans-disciplinary research with a production aesthetic perspective, thereby providing a voice for the author himself. Neither his own voice nor the contributions idealize the author’s work or exoticize the Māori context. Rather, it critically reflects on the

author as a border figure between indigenous and “modern” epistemologies and as an activist of Māori identity politics. The international network established for this project facilitates the convergence of diverse academic disciplines, fostering a collaborative environment conducive to the exchange of interdisciplinary perspectives that question the commercialization of a particular novel, the coloniality of power in the book industry and translation but also inspects the text on the complex dynamics between the center and the periphery. This examination, in turn, underscores the necessity for a paradigm shift in our understanding of the climate crisis and its disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations. The sensitive handling of Māori cosmology and cultural contexts, enabled by intersectional, more-than-human approaches, facilitates the identification and location of agencies in the global crisis. This identification is rendered through texts that transcend eurocentric forms of scientific production, offering a novel visual representation of the crisis.

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