

Climate Trauma: Foreseeing the Future in Dystopian Film and Fiction

E. Ann Kaplan

Rutgers University Press (Dec 4, 2015)

Softcover \$27.95 (208pp)

978-0-8135-6399-2

Utilizing the concept of “pre-trauma” to describe various forms of media that anticipate disaster, this book discusses apocalyptic film and literature as manifestations of collective fears about the environment. To accomplish this, the author levies the study of Freudian psychology and a number of thinkers who deal with how people handle trauma. Despite invoking post-traumatic stress disorder as a foil to the proposed pre-trauma, *Climate Trauma* deals with the concept only as a cultural construct in the realm of entertainment. The dense treatment requires pre-knowledge of established thought in the areas of psychology, philosophy, and feminism. However, the fact that the book analyzes popular movies, such as *Children of Men*, broadens its base. In fact, most of the material with which the book deals are broad-release films that most audiences would be familiar with already.

The book occasionally stretches its premise, grouping works like *The Handmaid's Tale* into the general category of climate disasters on the basis of the fact that the climate could conceivably be a cause of, for example, species-ending fertility problems. However, the reasoning here is not as sound as the notion that media makers act out society's anxieties about the future in film and print. When it is on the mark, *Climate Trauma* treats the subject of climate-specific pre-trauma in a thorough and interesting way, particularly in the cases of the films *Take Shelter* and *The Road*.

ANNA CALL (Spring 2016)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.