

NATURE AND LITERARY STUDIES

Nature and Literary Studies offers a broad and accessible overview of one of the most important and contested keywords in modern literary studies. Drawing together the work of leading scholars of a variety of critical approaches, historical periods, and cultural traditions, the book examines nature's philosophical, theological, and scientific origins in literature, as well as how literary representations of nature evolved in response to colonialism, industrialization, and new forms of scientific knowledge. Surveying nature's diverse applications in twenty-first-century literary studies and critical theory, the volume seeks to reconcile nature's ideological baggage with its fundamental role in fostering appreciation of nonhuman existence and agency. Including chapters on wilderness, pastoral, gender studies, critical race theory, and digital literature, the book is a valuable resource for students and professors seeking to understand nature's role in the environmental humanities.

PETER REMIEN is Associate Professor of English at Lewis-Clark State College in Idaho. His recent book *The Concept of Nature in Early Modern English Literature*, published by Cambridge University Press, traces a genealogy of ecology in seventeenth-century literature and natural philosophy.

SCOTT SLOVIC is University Distinguished Professor of Environmental Humanities at the University of Idaho. He was the founding president of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment and edited the journal *ISLE* for twenty-five years. His many books include *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing* and *The Routledge Handbook of Ecocriticism and Environmental Communication*.

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*Dedicated to Katherine Eggert, David Glimp, and
Barton St. Armand for their inspiration and mentorship,
and to the memory of Barry Lopez*

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The world changed dramatically as we worked with our contributors to complete this volume. Our initial outreach to potential chapter authors occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we began to receive drafts and refine manuscripts in 2020 while many of the contributing scholars were wearing face masks, maintaining “social distance,” teaching classes remotely, and enduring “lockdowns” of various kinds. Our relationships with each other and with the realm of other-than-human nature shifted accordingly.

Several of the contributors to this volume also wrote short essays considering various environmental humanities responses to the coronavirus pandemic for the Swedish website www.bifrostonline.org, exploring how this public health crisis has inspired new thinking about human vulnerability to environmental change, the messages we receive from natural phenomena, the similarities and differences between government lockdowns and unjust incarceration, how the pandemic is actually just one facet of a much more complex “syndemic,” what it means to coexist on the planet with other beings, and how we might wish to adjust our lives as scholars and teachers (traveling less, eating differently) in order to support a more just and sustainable civilization in the future.

We mention the pandemic context for the creation of this volume not as a way of “thanking” the virus for providing more time for us to write our chapters but as an “acknowledgment” of the unique circumstances in which this book germinated and developed. We would like to thank our contributors for persevering and producing learned, insightful essays despite the challenges of 2020.

The two of us came to know each other through the Ecocriticism Reading Group in Moscow, Idaho, which began in the fall of 2012, meeting monthly every academic year since then to discuss the latest ecocritical scholarship. These friendly and energizing conversations have bolstered the scholarship and teaching of all of the participants, including

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There is an ever-growing tsunami of environmental humanities scholarship, and it's easy for new publications to disappear in the rising tide. We hope readers will find this book, with its systematic historical arc and its topical breadth, to be a unique contribution to the field.

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