

Introduction

The theme of Issue 2024 is the weather.

Weather, as we know it, is a geoscientific term that refers to atmospheric elements to which planetary inhabitants residing on Earth are subjected. Weather is an integral and integrative system that places humans and animals within the ecology of their habitat. Daily, we glance at the skies as we go about our ritualised chores or plan our activities around the everyday temperateness of the weather. Changing weather defines our everyday sense of being, and over long periods of predictability, it aggregates into the climate of our existence. Moreover, as a geoscientific condition, the weather has a significant existential impact on the environment as the Anthropocene besets the human condition -heightened by environmental shifts and crises.

Climatic conditions and weathering themes pervade everyday life. From art and poetry to linguistic metaphors to cloud computing, fecund thematic variations remain essential for describing the human condition. In art, the weather remains a source of idyllic and lurid engagement: the outdoors is observed; colours and light are gazed at; wind, rain and fire are stilled. The weather remains a source of observational training in reaching a realism that parallels an emotional epiphany, romance, melancholy or fear. As artists become deft conquerors of the morphing weather, art history etches a tamed environment subdued by ocular desires.

In contemporary culture, weather becomes a timely indicator of decisions and social practices. In politics, be it 'fair-weather friends' or the 'tide in the affairs of men' or war 'hails', the invocations and incantations remain potent and poignant. While concerns around climate change are at the forefront of contemporary discourse, scholars acknowledge how "profoundly this omnipotent force shapes culture".¹ For example, time is situated closer to the rapidity of weather forecasts than the long durational planetary orbit. In recent times, climate anthropologists have advanced significant theories around the social and embodied dimension of the weathered human body, where "climate change has to be related to global inequality."²

¹Strauss and Orlove, 2021.

²Eriksen, 2021.

In scoping the vast weathered landscape, the concept of weather remains notoriously current, providing metaphoric and atmospheric propensities to reimagine the human condition. Given this backdrop,

weather's thematic richness offers endless avenues for exploration and expression. This volume aims to delve into these multiple dimensions, examining how weather shapes, disrupts, and enriches the human condition. By engaging with this theme, we hope to foster a deeper understanding of how atmospheric phenomena influence not just the physical world but also the landscape of human thought and culture. In doing so, we aim to enrich our readers' perceptions of weather, not just as a series of meteorological events but as a continuous, dynamic dialogue between humanity and nature.

References

- Strauss, Sarah and Orlove, Benjamin S. *Weather, Climate, Culture*. Routledge, 2021.
- Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. "Climate change." *The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, edited by Felix Stein, 2021. <http://doi.org/10.29164/21climatechange>