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BOOK REVIEW

Elena Giacomelli and Pierluigi Musarò, *Climate Mobility Justice. Narratives and Visual Politics of the Panicocene*, Palgrave, 2025

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Not all books begin on their first page. In Elena Giacomelli and Pierluigi Musarò's *Climate Mobility Justice. Narratives and Visual Politics of the Panicocene*, the cover already works as a visual threshold. A plurality of bodies appears compressed within a shared space, caught between movement and constraint, vulnerability and relation, disorientation and possibility. Is this a scene of escape, urgency, coercion, or collective resistance? This ambiguity effectively introduces one of the book's central questions: how can mobility be represented when it is neither pure choice nor mere passivity, but also a denied right, a survival strategy, and a field of political conflict?

The volume provides a critical and nuanced analysis of the entanglement between climate change and human mobility, situating this nexus within a broader reflection on global justice and on the ways in which narratives and images shape public discourse on climate crisis and mobility. Giacomelli and Musarò do not treat climate change and human mobility as separate domains, nor as two "crises" that only occasionally overlap. Rather, they approach them as deeply co-constitutive phenomena: the climate crisis produces forms of mobility and immobility that are always mediated by relations of power, border regimes, colonial inequalities, processes of racialization, and global economic hierarchies. In this sense, *climate mobility justice* names precisely this entanglement and reveals the narrative, visual, and political dimension of the relationship between climate and mobility.

A particularly effective theoretical vocabulary strengthens this proposal. The notion of the *Panicocene* allows the authors to identify a narrative regime in which climate crisis and human mobility are bound together

through emergency, fear, and securitization. *Cosmovisional justice*, by contrast, points to a conception of justice that exceeds an anthropocentric horizon and includes the interdependence between humans, non-humans, territories, and ecosystems. Together with *climate (im)mobilities* and the pair *right to move–right to stay*, these concepts allow the authors to name complex phenomena without reducing them either to climate emergency or to migration management. In this way, the book does not merely criticize dominant representations or clarify theoretical categories; it also identifies counter-narratives and alternative practices capable of removing climate mobility from the frames of threat, victimhood, and individualized adaptation. One of the main lines of the volume concerns the relationship between images, words, and the construction of public discourse. Climate crisis and human mobility do not become public objects simply because they *occur*; they become visible, intelligible, and governable through words, images, campaigns, institutional discourses, and artistic practices. Starting from this premise, the book intertwines climate justice and mobility justice. Climate justice is not presented as a merely technical or environmental issue, but as a political and historical problem: climate change affects everyone, but not everyone in the same way. Those subjects and territories that are least responsible for the crisis are often the most exposed to its consequences. This asymmetry makes it possible to understand climate vulnerability as the result of sedimented inequalities. Similarly, mobility is never neutral: some bodies move easily across spaces, while others are blocked, surveilled, rejected, detained, or left to die within a global order that hierarchizes the very possibility of movement.

On this basis, Giacomelli and Musarò examine the dominant narratives through which climate and migration are made intelligible. Climate change is often shaped by denialist, techno-utopian, and apocalyptic imaginaries, while migration is frequently framed through securitarian, humanitarian, or utilitarian lenses. Apparently opposed narratives may thus produce convergent effects: they block or postpone political action, reduce migrants to threats, victims, or productive resources, and obscure the structural causes of mobility.

Within this framework, the shift from *climate migration* to *climate (im)mobilities* becomes especially significant. It allows the authors to show that the climate crisis produce a plurality of conditions: forced displacement, relocation, temporary and circular mobility, forced immobility, the impossibility of leaving, and also the claim to the right to remain. This perspective highlights how climate change is embedded within social relations, colonial histories, extractive economies, territorial inequalities, and border systems. Particularly relevant is the critique of the racialized figure of the *climate migrant*. In public discourse in the Global North, this figure is often imagined as poor, non-white, coming from the Global South, and potentially threatening. Rather than addressing the historical responsibilities that have produced the climate crisis, securitarian imaginaries project fears of scarcity, instability, and invasion onto migrant bodies, legitimizing border militarization, deterrence policies, and the containment of mobility.

The more empirically oriented sections of the book develop these issues through the analysis of awareness campaigns and artistic practices. Campaigns are approached as devices that construct moral geographies: they determine who is shown, who is allowed to speak, which causes are named, and which responsibilities remain implicit. In this respect, the most effective campaigns are those that move from compassion to justice, and from vulnerability to agency.

Particularly strong is the critique of *blaming nature*: many narratives attribute displacement to droughts, floods, sea-level rise, or natural disasters, as if nature itself were the agent of crisis. This obscures the fact that injustice is not produced by nature as such, but by the entanglement of environmental events with inequality, colonialism, fossil capitalism, border policies, and unequal access to resources.

The attention to visibility is further developed through the discussion of contemporary art. Artistic practices are understood as cognitive and political interventions capable of making perceptible connections that institutional discourse tends to simplify or erase. Especially convincing is the distinction between the *ethics of showing* and the *ethics of seeing*: the question is not only how suffering is represented, but also how spectators are positioned, addressed, and made responsible.

The volume closes by proposing *cosmovisional justice* as an alternative horizon to modern, anthropocentric, and colonial logics. In this perspective, *climate mobility justice* does not concern only the protection of climate migrants, but also the transformation of the imaginaries and institutions that produce vulnerability, forced immobility, and inequality. Overcoming the *Panicocene* therefore implies a double movement: criticizing the narratives that turn climate and migration into securitarian panic, and constructing counter-imaginaries grounded in care, interdependence, historical responsibility, and a plurality of worlds.

In this sense, *Climate Mobility Justice* intervenes in the urgent need to narrate, visualize, and render politically thinkable the forms of mobility caused or intensified by the climate crisis. Its most important contribution lies in showing that justice does not begin only with policies, but also with the images, words, and imaginaries through which it is decided who can move, who can stay, who is heard, and who continues to be rendered invisible. This perspective also speaks directly to the Italian context. In the Mediterranean, widely recognized as one of the main climate hotspots, Italy is not only a space of arrival, but also a territory marked by environmental vulnerabilities and internal inequalities, and potentially a destination for new, socially differentiated climate mobilities. For this reason, the volume invites us to see climate mobility not as a distant or future phenomenon, but as an issue already internal to the social, territorial, and cultural transformations of the present. It offers useful tools not only for rethinking transnational migration, but also for questioning the forms of vulnerability, immobility, and selective mobility that traverse our own territories.