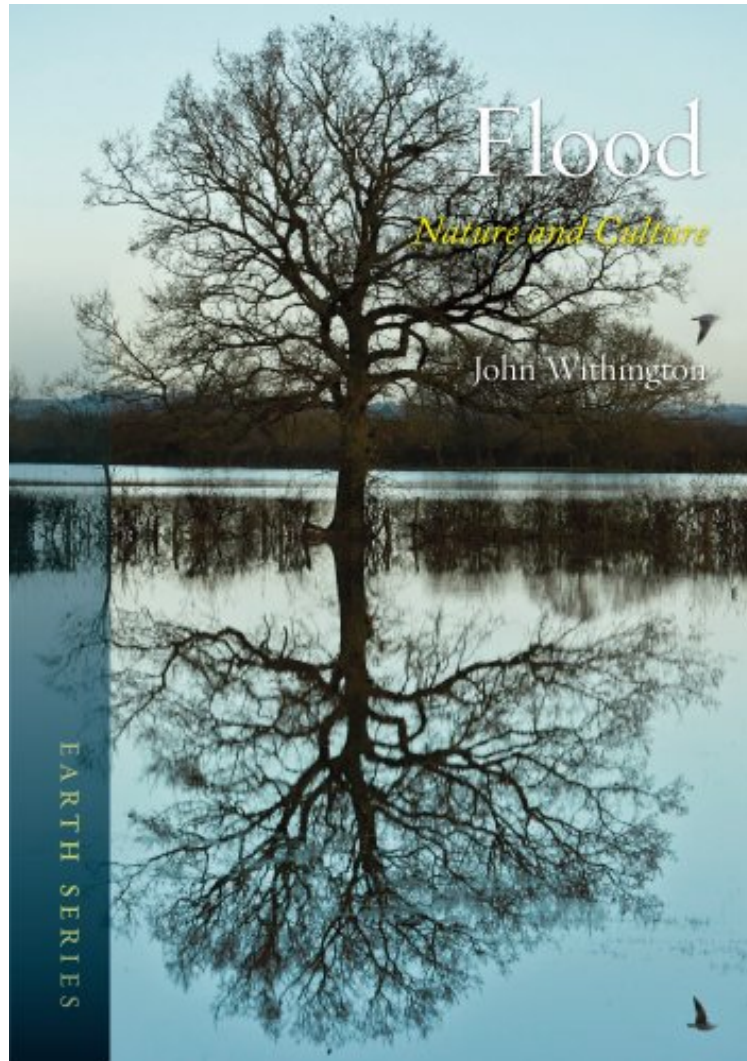


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## Flood: Nature and Culture (Earth)

*John Withington*

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**John Withington : Flood: Nature and Culture (Earth)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Flood: Nature and Culture (Earth):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Flooding as a theme in literature and artBy lyndonbrechtThis is a book in Reaktion Books "Earth" series. It is not simply a book on floods, but might best be described as a book that probes floods as an aspect of the human/ nature interface. It is excellently illustrated and rather well written. As the title implies, it is as much about human culture as it is about floods themselves.Chapter 1 looks at floods in myth--a surprisingly important aspect, often in myths or origin, something like the biblical Genesis account. Chapter 2 looks at the natural history of floods, Chapter 3 probes floods in literature and chapter 4 presents a literal depiction of floods in art and film--in which depictions are often a basic force of nature overcome by human courage. Chapter 5 is largely about "defending" from floods, and chapter 6, "Defeat" examines dams, levees and other attempts to control floods,

with a sense of the attempt to control floods as ultimately, human folly. The writing flows well and this is an interesting read. To me the most interesting part is the portrayal of floods in art, particularly painting. It's an interesting take on the relationship between humans and the raw power of nature. Note: "Tsunami" is another title in the series, and they are not covered in this book.

From Noah's Biblical deluge to the China floods of 1931 that killed more than 3 million people; and from the broken levees in New Orleans to submerged streets and homes all over Britain, floods have always been an unwelcome companion of humanity. They have many causes: rain, melting ice, storms, tsunamis and the failures of dams and dikes. They have been used as deliberate acts of war causing thousands of casualties and have often been seen as punishments visited by vengeful gods. Flooding kills more people than any other type of natural disaster. This cultural and natural history of floods tells of the deadliest floods the world has seen, while also exploring the role of the deluge in religion, mythology, literature and art. Flood describes how aspects of floods — the power of nature, human drama, altered landscapes — have fascinated artists, novelists and film-makers. It examines the ancient, catastrophic deluge that appears in many religions and cultures, and considers how the flood has become a key icon in world literatures and a favourite component of disaster movies. John Withington also relates how some of the most ambitious structures ever built by humans have been designed to protect us against these merciless encroaching waters, and discusses the increasing danger floods pose in a future beset by the effects of climate change. Filled with illustrations, Flood offers a fascinating overview of our relationship with one of humanity's oldest and deadliest foes.

As Withington demonstrates, floods have always been with us: they killed more than 3 million in China in 1931. If inundation has been feared since the time of Noah, it is scarcely going to be reduced by the greenhouse effect or building on flood plains.