

Performing Environmentalisms: Expressive Culture and Ecological Change. Edited by John Holmes McDowell, Katherine Borland, Rebecca Dirksen and Sue Tuohy. Springfield, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2021. 296pp. Illus. £21.89 (pbk). ISBN 9780252086090. Also available in hbk and as an ebook ISBN 9780252052972.

The growth of environmental humanities has much to offer scholars of folklore, not least inasmuch as it gives us a way of positively contributing to the greatest social and ethical challenge humanity has ever faced.

Covering an array of topics this volume is rooted in ecological discourse, taking us through contested understandings of 'natural' spaces – forests, soundscapes, economic and migratory landscapes – to highlight avenues for future exploration within and between humanities (including folklore studies), social studies and environmental sciences. Using performance and expressive culture as an entry point, the examples detailed take us on a journey that has coherence and congruence despite its global scope. It reinforces folklore's centrality to how we make sense of the world and each other; publications like this can only strengthen the argument for much a much more vigorous interdisciplinarity that actively includes folklore studies in all its forms

The first of three parts, 'Perspectives on diverse environmentalisms' starts in the Andes, and explores the performance traditions associated sacred springs. Faced with all the challenges of late-capitalist urbanism, McDowell shows us how contemporary environmental justice protests weave in aspects of ceremonial speech-making, situating protest marches in the *longue durée* of colonial oppressions meted out in Central America. Reinforcing the importance of community-specific ecological understanding, Hufford's thoughtful and enlightening unpicking of the semiotics of 'forest' in northern Appalachia underlines some of the challenges we face in reducing the anthropogenic impacts on our environment. Without understanding the contested discourses of 'forest' – as an economic commodity, as an ecological treasure, as a vernacular forest commons – how can we hope to reconcile them, and thereby reduce the adverse impacts on all three? Chapters three and four move to more discursive ground, reminding us not to get too carried away by our own academic grandiosity and to be mindful always of the pitfalls of modernism. Turner advocates for the courage to make connections beyond relating to our research participants as the 'studied' or 'cultural' whilst Allen dissects the historiography of the 'balance of nature', and makes a pithy critique of 'sustainability' (if you read only one chapter, I'd suggest this one as it speaks to a condition broader than any of our own disciplinary boundaries).

Part Two considers 'Performing the Sacred'. Sakakibara shows us how diverse communities can find solidarity both in shared economic histories and as in facing climate change impacts in the Azores and the Arctic: there is particular power in reciprocal intellectual and cultural exchange when it is between historically marginalised communities. Chapter Six examines different facets of Haitian environmental precarity, whether at a distance through expressive performance by the Haitian diaspora, or in the lived experience in Port-au-Prince. Both of these realities show the importance of foregrounding the affective impact of place, persona, plants, music, movement and story as ways of awakening to the possibility of change. Chapter Seven opens with a useful history of ecology and prefaces its place-based poetics of climate crisis with a chillingly succinct description of the rapidity with which population pressure and environmental change can cause devastating ecological collapse.

Part Three concludes by examining 'Environmental Attachments', from Western Mongolia to Eastern Africa and the US Pacific Northwest. In Post's detailed history of the multi-layered indexicality of Khazhak *zyhr* and other song-types, she shows us how song performances distribute ecological and social responsibility. The people, places and spaces featured in these songs function as moorings, facilitating their nomadic performers' safe passage through uncertainties of climate, politics and economics. Similarly Tefera Dibaba describes how historical loss is woven into contemporary Oromo culture, and highlights how an ecopoetics of place can mobilize change. Finally, Chapter Ten examines the conflict arising from different perceptions of the auditory impact of military aeroplanes. Juxtaposing the ideas of 'sound' and 'noise' Pedelty hints that the arguments about sound commons could equally well apply to the co-option of water, air and energy commons by the military-industrial complex.

Thus the book ends with a useful reminder that our anthropogenic impacts are not limited to carbon emissions and plastic waste, but to more intangible and contestable impacts. Embedded throughout the book is an insistence that real change towards reducing all of these impacts cannot happen without a switch from anthro- to eco-centric systems in which humans are but one part of a much bigger and more complex whole. One hopes that with publications like this folklorists will start to see how their own work, showing how expressive performance encodes relationships to place, space and natural phenomena, can contribute to this change.

Dr Kate Smith, Energy and Environment Institute, University of Hull, k.smith7@hull.ac.uk