

engage with them, or they show indifference by ignoring and not understanding these practices at all. Lopes identifies this as the network theory, which “teaches that there’s no single measure of aesthetic value, but we’re accountable to the norms of our aesthetic communities” (73). Lopes thus returns the reader back to the foundational argument that aesthetic value, and aesthetic life, is inherently social and multivalent, where the cultivation of individual aesthetic value always translates into some form of community.

The key to the book’s tone arguably lies in its concluding section, “Breakout”. Where a scholarly text is preoccupied with carrying through a specific argument and reinforcing it at the end, “Breakout” is a roundtable interview-style discussion with the authors focused on raising additional questions, which regularly spur further discussion. The topics discussed include: aesthetic disagreement; the extent to which we can say aesthetic value is subjective; the Western bias in aesthetic theory; fashion, broadly conceived, as the driver of aesthetic life and the difference between fads and timelessness; and constructions of human beauty. It is this section that reiterates Lopes, Nanay, and Riggle’s commitment to writing a resource in aesthetics rather than another aesthetic theory. While some may argue that the references to modern day culture make *Aesthetic Life and Why It Matters* under threat of becoming outdated and out of touch, depending on how relevant someone like Megan Thee Stallion, who is one of the specific contemporary examples given in the text, remains in our culture, this approach should be seen as a practical manifestation of the very points made within the text and of challenging the classism that aesthetics is still bound up in.

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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES. By Jeffrey Cohen & Stephanie Foote (Eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 379 pp.

The concept of Environmental Humanities is ever emerging and growing field especially in the present scenario, wherein the queries and questions of existence have hit the world harder and deeper. This book is a collection of critical essays by researchers, academicians and authors reflecting various aspects of environmental humanities and exploring the development of the concepts that narrow down to understanding value of nature and its intrinsic relation with human body, mind and soul. It initiates the discussion with Stephanie Foote and Jeffery Jerome Cohen’s essay enlightening the scope of the field, its future and the ongoing pandemic and catastrophe as a reminder of the interconnectedness between humans and non-humans. Stephanie LeMenager in the essay “The Commons” further explores the value of sustainable approach towards nature and talks about such ownership as commons which is ‘justice-oriented’, and against predatory capitalism and prejudiced colonialism. Taking it further, Cajetan Iheka narrates views on rights entitled to environment and the urgent need to establish ethical obligation to preserve nature and animals. Kyle Powys Whyte brings up the concept of “Time as Kinship,” talking about Kinship as sense of responsibility that has been a part of indigenous cultures across the world. It is this timing that helps humans to understand their equation with climate change and evolve as empathetic species. Teena Gabrielson highlights the nature studies that should incorporate the neglected gender, class and caste who depend on nature and help to develop and understand nature-human dynamics. This essay delves deeper into Feminist Science Studies, Corporeal Feminism and Environmental Justice. Urmi Engineer Willoughby in “Race, Health and Environment,” elaborates the causes of rampant health crises, as a result of an altered environment; revealing the perspective of “...centrality of race and the racial legacies of European colonization.” (82) The availability, accessibility and prioritization of resources largely depends upon the divisions

and disparities in human society and political governance. Allison Carruth in “Narrative and Environmental Innovation,” exemplify the emerging concepts of geoengineering, terraforming that frame and effect narrative formation of crises and solutions alike.

The collection harbors essays on Climate Fiction and Apocalypse by researchers Matt Bell and David Higgins elaborating the origin, characteristics and value of cli-fi fiction in the times of environmental crises. It highlights the responsibility entitled to Environmental Humanities in uniting and comprehending the crises to find culturally appropriate and relevant solutions of the ecological crises of the present. The critical essays by Ron Broglio, Nicole Shukin, Catriona Sandilands defend the value of non-humans, their value in intertwined web of existence, the growing and altering patterns of producing food and minerals, and the world of plants that has incorporated human existence to be understood beyond the biological terminologies. Jeffery Insko’s “Extraction,” demonstrates the idea of extraction implied on natives’ land and patterns of life and the ideas of resistance and “...alternatives to extraction and extractivism...” that have always been a part of indigenous cultures and ethics.

“Ice/Water/Vapor” by Steve Mentz highlights the origination of blue humanities, comprehending the “material complexity and imaginative polyphony,” (193) of the nature of water and its various forms. Paul A. Harris in “Rocks,” develops a critical and ethical value of rocks that stand for solidarity and valuing rocks can reveal their slow death. The detailed understanding of these rocks widens the scope of Environmental Humanities, focusing on the inanimate yet vital elements of ecosphere that have a geological, anthropological and ecological significance in material and ethical realms of existence. Lowell Duckert in his essay “Coal/Oil,” talks about Petro-fiction and its value in defining various activities of geomorphology. The formation of coal from fossil fuels, is metaphorically is the similar pressure that humans place upon the natural world. (217) Tracing the examples from Ann Pancake’s *Strange as this Weather Has Been*, where an exemplification of coal industries and its consequences, magnify the destruction so that world doesn’t fall in the loop of carbon destruction again. “Coalfield Ontology- shared human-geological being, or co-existence- surfaces here as a powerful expression of resistance as well as resilience.” (Duckert 223)

In the essay ‘Waste,’ Susan Signe Morrison talks about the waste theories, the generation of waste and its influence upon human beings. She focuses on the ancient texts that can help us to understand treatment of waste in different forms and develop a positive outlook for an otherwise negative connotation. The creation and handling of waste defines the cultural approach to waste. Morrison highlights the value of slow cinema in defining the value of attention towards waste, thus, the slow cinema and slow narration in works can help readers to pay attention to their surroundings, realizing the loss of environment and generation of waste.

Anthony Lioi in his essay “Eco-media” exemplifies, the importance of understanding the impact of Eco-Media studies in the ideological and ecological aspects, further, analyzing its moral and aesthetic values. (244) The modes of production and the aim of eco-cinema are both dependent upon the environment. The environments that are photographed and the same environment that is further consumed for its production plays a major role defining eco-media. He defines it from three central themes- mediation, flow and framing. In case of mediation, it talks about any technology that creates an extension of ourselves and frames the global issues such as rise of sea-water, melting of ice and rise in temperature. All these factors are politically treated and maneuvered, thus, highlighting the role of mediatization in the ‘formation of political will in democratic politics and activist cultures.’ (Lioi 254) It focuses upon the fact that eco-media researchers and scholars should use digital humanities to counter ‘surveillance capitalism’ (Lioi 255) and work towards environmental humanities.

Serpil Oppermann in her essay “New Materialism and the Non-human story,” writes, how post-modern and post-structuralism find a medium to connect the two that is nature and culture, discourse and materiality. It highlights Bennett’s idea of how nature and its elements are agents and have their own meaning other than the one imposed by humans, and these elements such as glaciers, desert exert an influence and breed consequences. It discusses the narratives and the means of it that

non-human entities shall use to emphasize the value of their memory. These stories are imprinted in these non-human elements that should be understood to know the ways of their inter-communication. In the essay “Risk,” Nicole Walker writes, “Minimizing anxiety doesn’t reduce scarcity, it merely reduces the appearances of risk.” (273) She exemplifies that human with their identity ‘I’ as a part of language and as a part of their actions has defined their behavior of extracting and accumulation. Humans have created a comfortable niche for themselves and are thus, deaf to the sufferings of the environment. They save one species to justify their actions of killing many species altogether. The moment language breaks its hierarchical pattern and the hypocrisy of ‘I,’ only then can the weird becomes acceptable and useful to people. Our language has to accept and write about what is flawed and fractured in our world, only then we can embrace the reality.

Priscilla Wald in her essay “Coda- Virus,” explores the idea of how the microbes are separated from the humans and accused as an outside attacker, wherein, they breed in the environments created by human race. Viruses are not deliberating the concept of survival, rather they breed, survive and attack because of the changing environment. Thus, accusing microbes of surviving on humans overlooks the human folly of creating inapt environmental conditions.

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WHY STORIES WORK: THE EVOLUTIONARY AND COGNITIVE ROOTS OF THE POWER OF NARRATIVE. By Somdev Chatterjee. Chennai, Notion Press, 2023. 112 pp.

Somdev Chatterjee’s book offers an insight into the art of storytelling by discussing the importance of story and story structure. He tries to answer questions like: What makes a story? Why it captures our attention? And how the experience of consuming a story relates to other life experiences? He emphasizes the power stories have on the human mind by saying, “stories are not only, or even primarily about entertainment. They have a life-and-death importance for us.” (8) Stories have the power to wield magic; thus, tracing their origin to understand their capacity to influence human minds forms the essence of this book. Chatterjee does so by taking the readers on an engaging journey through the intricate workings of storytelling. The book delves into the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that make narratives universally compelling and explores how stories shape our identities, influence our perceptions, and foster empathy. The author scrutinizes these ideas by dividing the book into four chapters. The first chapter, ‘Tell it like your life depends on it,’ traces the emergence of storytelling and argues how storytelling evolved following evolutionary pressures. The author explains the pleasures humans find in stories and storytelling and how stories have become complex over time. He does so by using Yuval Noah Harari’s understanding of “inter-subjective realities.” The belief of the people around some entities build their reality, thus shaping their ability to cooperate and collaborate in the real world. Chatterjee further explains how the social hierarchy built by human beings forms a part of their meta-reality and how dealing with these complex meta-realities becomes essential to pass it on as “critically important knowledge.” (21) Here, stories provide us with an avenue to act as “valuable guides of meta-realities that we have to negotiate in life.” (22) The author further points out that in our urge to know about the world, one primal question that instigates us is how one should live in this world? Human beings have passed on this knowledge as embodied knowledge—one that can be acted out but cannot be put into words and somewhere between articulated knowledge and embodied knowledge, stories exist. Chatterjee also explains the concepts of “memory conformity” and “memory bias” by pointing at storytelling’s function of integrating an individual into a group and the telling and retelling of the stories by the