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Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran, eds. *The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Medical-Environmental Humanities* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 416 pp.

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The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Medical-Environmental Humanities by Scott Slovic, Swarnalatha Rangarajan, and Vidya Sarveswaran, the first of its kind at the intersection of the titular fields, is a timely and welcome contribution to bridge the gap between medical, environmental, and literary-cultural studies. Containing wide-ranging understandings of (un)health, this volume sophisticatedly brings together diverse medical and ecological theories and practices in this newly emerging scholarship, especially in individual chapters' provoking dialogues with one another. With its ambitious content in four parts, it provides mostly material and affective ecocritical insights into complex matters in the field of medical-environmental humanities that have gained an unprecedented impetus, especially after COVID-19.¹

In the Introduction, the editors explain the rationale for the urgency to envision further how entangled the humanities are in the post-pandemic era. This way, they expose parallelisms between human, nonhuman, and environmental health, and the collection—with thirty chapters in total—demonstrates the versatility and potency of inter/trans-disciplinary humanities, especially when dealing with the health crises of non/humans and environments all around the globe. Focusing on the vulnerability of the natural world and humans *vis-à-vis* ever-escalating techno-sciences, the editors underline the holistic perspective adopted by all the contributors in their diffractive and contextual analyses of the multispecies storytelling of natural-cultural (un)wellness. Different from conventional handbooks following a trajectory from historical and theoretical perspectives to chapters on individual works, regions,

¹ Despite the initially low number of books in the field like Jankovic's *Confronting the Climate: British Airs and the Making of Environmental Medicine* (2010), Brown et al.'s *Contested Illnesses: Citizens, Science, and Health Social Movements* (2012), and Houser's *Ecotoxicity in Contemporary U.S. Fiction: Environment and Affect* (2014), many edited collections came out after the recent pandemic: see, for example, Smith and Ram's *Transforming Global Health: Interdisciplinary Challenges, Perspectives, and Strategies* (2020), Ađın and Horzum's *Posthuman Pathogenesis: Contagion in Literature, Arts, and Media* (2022), and Braverman's *More-Than-One Health: Humans, Animals, and the Environment Post-COVID* (2023).

or cases, this collection lets us read each chapter individually, despite the four subtitles in its part division. For this reason, this review will work through three common themes in introducing some chapters: relational ontology, crisis, and cure.

The primary outstanding characteristic of many chapters is their emphasis on “relational ontologies,” how entangled non/human lives have been, and how nonhuman subjects enact their agencies in material-semiotic meaning-making processes. In the opening chapter, Eric Morel sets the handbook’s tone, unveiling the multidisciplinary dynamics between narratology and medical-environmental humanities. Broaching citizen econarratology and narrative medicine in correspondence with avian and human mortalities, Morel explicates the project of the Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team in Northwestern America and advocates the significance of local eye-witness narratives about non/human (un)health. In her alluring chapter, Maria Whiteman, through individual and communal experiences with fungi, displays the convergence of arts, sciences, and health humanities. Drawing on the “subterranean rhizome” of mycelium (55), Whiteman demonstrates the interconnectivity of species, the matter of “becoming-together-with,” and the relational architecture of life. The only comprehensive history in the handbook, by Z. Gizem Yilmaz Karahan, delves into the narrative capabilities of nonhuman materialities across a wide spatio-temporal spectrum. Like Whiteman, Yilmaz Karahan spotlights the transdisciplinary crossroads of diseases, environments, and non/humans, and contextualizes viral contagions in accounts ranging from Ancient Greek, Mesopotamian, and Mesoamerican civilizations to British, Ottoman, European, and Far-Eastern realms in new materialist perspectives. Lars Schmeink also retains this relational axiom and resorts to critical posthumanism, object-oriented ontology, and disanthropocentrism in grey ecology to dethrone the human. In this attempt to dehierarchize onto-epistemological relations, Schmeink analyzes zombie-themed fictions, movies, and videogames to expose the human’s unprivileged position.

Another distinct facet in many chapters is the reconfiguration of several local and global “crises” as crosscutting foci of medical-environmental concerns. Tathagata Som handles the climate crisis and its affective impact on mental health in his chapter on seeking ways to encounter the crisis-induced senses of apathy and despair and achieve political activism. In a similar way, Samantha Walton discusses the psychological effects of adverse experiences due to anthropocentric environmental crises and approaches literature as a method of trauma recovery. Racism is also considered in its crisis-imbued relations with the environment by Heather Leigh Ramos. Environmental injustice and systematized racist praxes are interwoven just as medical-environmental inequalities are observed in Audre Lorde’s *Cancer Journals* (1980). Robin Chen-Hsing Tsai addresses another unfairness in socio-political and medical-environmental interrelations, disclosing state indifference toward air pollution as a natural-cultural concomitant of hyper-industrialization and sprawling urbanization. Studying Taiwanese documentary texts to enkindle the matter of transcorporeality between the bodies and health of non/human beings, he proposes to

name this type of (auto)biographical works “ecopathodocumentary” because “human health is” always already “embedded in environmental health” (132). Just as the handbook reflects upon our contemporary medical-environmental conditions, Chia-ju Chang ponders on the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses what racial, socio-political, health, and environmental segregations it has triggered to submerge throughout the pandemic.

What Morel and Walton suggest as ways to “cure” medical-environmental conditions resounds in several subsequent chapters in the handbook. Françoise Besson addresses alternative, nondualistic solutions for healing while interpreting *The Plague* (1947) by Albert Camus and *The First Eagle* (1998) by Tony Hillerman. She finds those alternatives as plant-centric ceremonies practiced by North African and Native American people in both works. Complementing Besson, Animesh Roy introduces his coinage “ethnoecomedicine” while locating alternate onto-epistemologies of disease/cure in the analyses of treatment techniques in South Asian and African texts. Jorge Marcone’s contribution echoes uniquely in the volume while providing an insight into the conservation project of human microbiota in the Peruvian Amazon. Attempting to preserve the wellbeing of indigenous communities, this project is regarded as an opportunity to eliminate the medical adversities to which those communities might be exposed by intercultural contacts and inter-ecological chains. Marcone’s concentration on diversity via microbiomes is amplified within the chapters of Part IV, which individually explicate and scrutinize several indigenous eco-centric practices of alternative medicine. As Besson, Roy, and Marcone expose, local/global actors of environmental and medical thoughts converge at an intersection of becoming-together outside the binarism of hegemonic health structures. Part IV offers varying lenses from Indian, Amazonian, Chinese, Turkish, and Irish traditions to observe the probabilities of indigenous routes to take while managing regional/global medical-environmental matters.

The handbook stands as a valuable source of research and teaching when curricular shifts are reconsidered in post-pandemic times. In its successful efforts to materialize the abstractions in literature/arts/cultural studies from almost all the regions on the earth and avoid post-disciplinary liaisons in the medical-environmental humanities, the volume ends with an epilogue of the editors’ narratives about their personal and professional experiences during the pandemic. Despite presenting opportunities to contemplate our relations enmeshed with other species and nature, the book fails in its ambition to narrow the chasm between the two fields when 27 of 30 authors are academics from language and literary studies (mostly in English). The diversity of their geographical/institutional/career backgrounds gets eclipsed for the want of scholars, activists, and policymakers in health and natural sciences in the work’s interdisciplinary cooperation between fields and researchers. This absence, therefore, puts the claimed multi-/transdisciplinary interactions at stake. Albeit this risk in the collection, the medical-environmental humanities have its new reference guide for graduate students and scholars in the field.

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