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Joni Adamson and Kimberly Ruffin (eds.), *American Studies, Ecocriticism, and Citizenship. Thinking and Acting in the Local and Global Commons* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), xx +269 pp.



As one of the more divisive political mechanisms in U.S. history, the question of citizenship is often prominent in historically oriented American Studies projects, as well as in contemporary discourse on the global problematics of poverty, equality, and, as this volume emphasises, environment. A little more than a century ago, Frederick Douglass made note of the impossibility of social and economic improvement for freed slaves from whom citizenship was withheld. Today, issues of citizenship continue to affect most powerfully other oppressed groups, particularly immigrants without papers and indigenous peoples, as well as women and the poor. Yet as the authors in this volume show, citizenship, which typically describes a political relationship between state and individual that endows citizens with certain rights, has undergone significant transformation, especially with regard to the social and moral expectations and prerogatives that it implies. The convergence of ecocritical questions with those of citizenship reframes the discussion and stresses the urgency of both (16). The politics of exclusion inherent in the dominant model of citizenship are here critiqued in various discussions regarding the divergence of national boundaries from those of ecosystems and the people who are often integral to them.

The authors in this volume review and analyse some of the myriad ways in which those most adversely affected by the indifference of border protocols to ecology have been the poor, often indigenous, communities whose commons have been taken away from under their feet. For instance, Tracey Brynn Voyles shows how this process of environmental racism worked during the construction of the Boulder Dam in the U.S. During the planning stages of the Dam, state bodies laid blame on the Navajo peoples living in the area for the perceived environmental problems which (perhaps ironically) were already the result of clumsily drawn borders. Voyles draws on archival research that reveals not only the government's culpability for water pollution in the area and the racist campaign to displace blame onto the Diné people, but also how the Dam's construction exacerbated ecological problems in the area. Many of the contributions take up problems similarly located at the intersection of citizenship, ecology, colonialism, and environmental racism.

Karen Salt looks at the historical development of Haiti, now one of the poorest countries in its region, using the discursive treatment of the 2010 earthquake as a springboard for examining the connections between environment and citizenship, and how these have functioned in Haiti's colonial and postcolonial history. The devastation

of the earthquake exposed the precarity of life in the region, and Salt's historical contextualisation draws on Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence" to illuminate Haiti's silenced history which is in part responsible for the havoc wreaked by a seemingly natural disaster (37). Salt shows how the Haitian soil and landscape were employed as a means of manufacturing an image of nation, and as the primary selling-point for Haitian citizenship through their advertisement to freeborn and emancipated African-American labourers in the early nineteenth century. The notion of belonging was an ideological lynchpin in President Jean-Pierre Boyer's campaign to enlist new Haitian citizens who, according to Boyer, would be politically empowered as well as economically prosperous.

The previous essay by Susan Scott Parrish provides a point of comparison by describing the precarious position occupied by African American labourers in the south of the U.S. a century later. Parrish identifies the unstable biotic communities depicted in Zora Neale Hurston's work, which were subject to rapid change and fraught with risk and chance. Neale's fictionalised account of life in the South contrasts vividly with Boyer's place-branding of the Haitian landscape. In both cases, historical and fictional, the rhetoric and promise of belonging was deployed together with that of citizenship in a way that allowed political belonging to "operate as a commodity..." (47). What both Parrish and Salt reveal is the way that national citizenship has been undergirded by an ecological citizenship that links the settled and the transient to the land through their work. The implication here, developed in various ways in other sections, is that citizenship facilitates the unequal distribution of socio-economic pressures that affect most powerfully those who work on the land - namely the poor, the diasporic, and the indigenous. Yet many of the authors also reveal the extent to which the land itself and the work done on it constructs local and even transcontinental notions of ecological citizenship which allow a more full account of belonging which would encompass enforceable rights relating to place and ecology.

Sarah D. Wald contributes to this discussion of the ways in which land and work are connected to race, belonging, and citizenship in her analysis of two novels that explore the disconnect between racial and national identity. Wald argues that the underdeveloped area of ecocritical Asian American literature studies requires an expansion of what is considered nature and environment in literary texts to include "ecological belonging rooted in relationship to place," highlighting how David Mas Masumoto has identified a rural-agricultural continuum between the US and Japan (88). This analysis is part of the reflection on how relations between nations and across borders are better understood ecologically than in the dominant, discrete and exclusionary, politics of nationalism that are designed to regulate mobility and access. These discussions each point in their own way to the failure of the traditional, nationalised structure of citizenship to mature into an equitable system, and highlight how in the lives of the most vulnerable groups in society, ecological deprivation and political disenfranchisement compound one another.

Several of the essays also describe and analyse resistance to the extant structure of citizenship. Hsinya Huang traces the connections between indigenous women of different nations traversing the Pacific through their commitments to climate justice.

Huang notes the global concern often displayed in the writing of trans-Pacific tribal groups; writers who are often also activists working on behalf of underprivileged peoples and for environmental justice. These writers are acutely aware of the ways in which widespread industrial practices impact on the lives of individuals, for example in Margo Tamez' "toxin-related illnesses and multiple miscarriages" (162). Claudia Sadowski-Smith writes on the way ecosystems can be affected by border controls, especially when these controls are intensified as they have been over the past decade or so. Her contribution draws attention to the misalignment of political borders with the ecosystems and communities they so often intersect and disrupt, a discussion that gels with Julia Sze's analysis of the multi-faceted metaphor of water in literature and its border-crossing flows.

Sze explores the connections between race, gender, and water, in the context of borderlines and citizenship. Sze refers not only to the concrete problems of pollution and environmental justice across borders that water presents, but also the epistemological shifts that determine how water is distributed. In Sze's analysis, water becomes the medium of a complex and veiled violence that is perpetrated on the poor through water arriving contaminated and causing skin ulcers, respiratory illness, birth defects, and so on. This forms part of the discussion on the often difficult to perceive interconnectedness of ecological systems (which includes other global systems like climate), tracing the effects borders and citizenship have at the level of communities and local politics. This ecological interconnectedness is shown by Sze and others to be at odds with the (ecologically) clumsily drawn national boundaries aimed at economic, cultural, and political demarcation and underlines notions of ecological citizenship which address ethical concerns, as well as being sensitive to and sensible for the actual physical environments they delimit and the communities they affect.

Several contributions also take up questions relating to political greenwashing and the institutions that consolidate power in the hands of the few through supposedly environmentalist concerns over issues like conservation and land-stewardship (Ivan Grabovac, Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow). Such techniques and ideological justifications have been employed both to disenfranchise indigenous peoples during colonial history, and to restrict immigration after European dominance had been achieved. Lisa Sun-Hee Park and David Naguib Pellow are especially incisive in their study of how the mainstream environmental conservation movement can be inflected with nativist political views. The authors of the study connect Aspen city's environmental initiatives to anti-immigration action. To this end, they also take note of the ignominious role played in this context by a key icon of the environmentalist left, Edward Abbey, who at the 1987 Round River Rendezvous called for a halt to immigration as part of a racist attack on Latin American and Caribbean peoples (although it is unclear why the Earth First! activist Dave Foreman is also mentioned here by the authors: the cited article by Panagiotti Evangelos Tsolkas, "Down with Borders, Up with Spring!", names Abbey but does not include any mention of Foreman in connection to the racist diatribe).

The authors assert that “[i]t is common knowledge that the planet's ecological systems are in peril and that the U.S. has contributed as much or more than any other nation to that crisis through its economic and military policies and through its consumption and production practices...” (179). Yet despite this, the nativists of Aspen and elsewhere in the U.S. produce dual claims about new immigration (and population) being the greatest threat to the environment, and about the superior nature of Anglo-American culture. Though the authors do a good job of exposing the racism that can be found in mainstream U.S. environmentalist movements, as well as providing an example of the same from the Left, it is a shame that while discussing alternatives they do not include an in-depth discussion of environmental movements from the Left that often do take up issues of racism and justice alongside or as integrated with environmentalist concerns. Likewise, the appeal to activists with socialist leanings like Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, and Alice Hamilton could have been strengthened by an appeal to the different politico-economic outlook and milieu of these activists, rather than left simply as a lamentably untaken path by the mainstream contemporary U.S. environmental movement. This would also have provided a useful point of comparison with the “green capitalism” espoused by the primary subjects of the essay, Aspen City Council member Terry Paulson and the widely known anti-immigration activist Mike McGarry, who both express a strong interest in the economic development of their locality.

Taken as a whole, the collection is a successful interdisciplinary project that signals from the outset its intention to take seriously the implications of ecological thought. The result is a significant development of the concept of ecological citizenship which relies on a dynamic between global and bioregional perspectives, and acknowledges the fundamental connection between community and place that was often neglected when borders were drawn. Through this lens, it takes up pressing questions about the ways in which structures of modernity have resulted in various forms of environmental racism, and makes these processes visible. To reframe citizenship in ecological terms is to rethink mobility to include the nonhuman elements of our planetary ecology, such as water and climate. It is to think transnationally about problems of discrimination as expressed in poverty, health, access (for example to clean water), and pollution. Perhaps a direction for future work in the field would be to take a step further in questioning the value of differentiated citizenship in a world that is increasingly interconnected, and more and more visibly so.