

## BOOK REVIEWS

ECOLOGICAL ENTANGLEMENTS: AFFECT, EMBODIMENT AND ETHICS OF CARE, edited by Ambika Aiyadurai, Arka Chattopadhyay and Nishant Choksi, 2023. Published by Orient Black Swan, New Delhi. Size: 21.5 x 13.5 cm. Pages: 274. Paperback. Price: ₹ 940/-.  
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This is one of the most difficult of books that I have ever reviewed – difficult because some of the subjects in it are new to me; difficult because some of idiolects, idioms, and technical terms are abstruse; difficult because the book is peppered by long-winded sentences. The book addresses the importance of nature and ecology, written by experts who work mostly with human beings.

The book is divided into three distinct sections. The first, *Ecologies of Care*, has six essays, each with interesting captions (e.g., *Ethos, Pathos, Logos: Affective and Emotive Ethnographies of Human-Macaque Lifeworlds; Blindness and Canine Heroicisation: Interdependence of Kuusisto's HAVE DOG, WILL TRAVEL: A POET'S JOURNEY*). The second section, *Affective Expressions*, with four chapters by well-known domain experts, has arresting essays. The third, *Embodied Spaces*, has five chapters, each setting the high standard of the book.

A five-page Foreword, titled *Greening the Frontiers of Ecology*, by Sundar Sarukkai, Professor of Philosophy at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru and founder-director of the Manipal Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, Karnataka, is an entrancing piece. He is also the Co-Chief Editor of Springer's *HANDBOOK OF LOGICAL THOUGHT IN INDIA*, and a Series Editor for the *Science and Technology Studies* book series. He writes "Although this is a book about ecology, it is raising – through its varied content – questions about the foundations of scientific analysis and what it means to be a science." Later, he writes "Attempts to ignore the elephant in the room is truly another 'ecological' problem!"

About the subject of this book, Professor Sarukkai encapsulates beautifully "Typically in any science, what gets removed from the scientification of a discipline are the human, social, and cultural aspects of the practice and knowledge produced in that discipline. In the case of ecology, these aspects are not marginal in any sense and this book

attempts to integrate these dimensions into the mainstream practice of this discipline."

As Aiyadurai, Chattopadhyay, and Choksi, editors of this book, write in the *Introduction*, "This volume generates a set of cross-disciplinary conversations from fields as diverse as history, anthropology, ethology, linguistics, and literary studies through an overarching conception of ecology." From what I read (and learnt) from the 15 chapters, sometimes very diverse, I can say that the book succeeded in bringing all these disciplines together. I suggest that all senior conservationists and social scientists working in forests with tribals should read this book. No one will be disappointed, as every chapter, contributed by an expert, gives a new insight into the subject of ecology and human rights. Can we separate ecological restoration from tribal welfare? Can we protect nature without the support of local communities? This book forces us to think on these lines.

The cover is beautiful and complicated, and will compel you to look at the book. Illustrated by Jay Sagathia, and designed by Jyothsna PS, it shows a tribal woman (apparently from central India) on the left; a totem on the right, probably from South America; a family of rhesus monkeys in the centre, a few exotic flowers at bottom right, and strangely, an extinct thylacine (an extinct carnivorous marsupial that was native to the Australian mainland). The banana and bamboo cannot be missed. Every element on the cover has a symbolic value, which becomes clear when we read the book.

I found the following chapters most interesting: *Reading the Elephant: Towards Affectual Conceptualisations of the Wild Asian Elephant; Human and Animal: 'Destitution' and 'Divinisation' in the Discourse and Practice of Caste; How to Become with a Bird: Lessons from Salim Ali's COMMON BIRDS*; and, *Becoming Thylacine: Embodiment, Ecology and Materialism in Julia Leigh's THE HUNTER*. Read the book and you decide which chapter you enjoyed the most.

■ Asad R. Rahmani

