

BOOK REVIEWS SECTION

Rosemary G. Gillespie & David A. Clague (eds.) (2009) *Encyclopaedia of Islands*, Berkeley CA and London, University of California Press, hardcover, xxxii + 1074 pp. ISBN: 978-0-520-25649-1. US\$ 95.00, £65.00

The publishers claim that this book is “a comprehensive, complete and authoritative reference dealing with all of the physical and biological aspects of islands and island habitats.” They are probably not too far off the mark. The *Encyclopedia of Islands* is not “complete” if one takes the word to mean “containing everything there is to know about islands” and it is concerned mainly with natural as opposed to social science; but it is certainly comprehensive and it has been put together by a star-studded cast of authorities. The book contains 236 articles written by 302 people from all over the world. I have no idea what the global distribution of island scientists is. One hundred and twenty four of the contributors have an address in the USA, 28 in the UK, 16 in Australia, three in the Faroes and one in Switzerland. This probably reflects fairly the geographical spread of relevant expertise; it is certainly much more catholic than many multi-author volumes.

The *Encyclopaedia of Islands* is edited by Rosemary Gillespie, a Scot now at the University of California Berkeley, who has carried out in-depth studies of island entomology, and David Clague from the Monterey Bay Institute, a geologist whose speciality is submarine volcanoes. They define an island eclectically as “any discrete habitat isolated from other habitats by inhospitable surroundings”. This means that “it becomes clear that almost anything can serve as an island – a water-filled tree hole for many invertebrates; a human body for the parasites it contains; a crack in the sidewalk for a weed”. The editors’ aim is “to cover a range of topics in sufficient detail to give the reader a general understanding of guiding principles, and to lead them to the vast literature on island science.... [The] hope is that readers of this reference [volume] will ‘travel’ from island to island from topic to topic, and learn the myriad ways that the idea of ‘island’ has contributed to a remarkable scientific voyage whose destination will always lie just over the horizon”. An ambitious endeavour and lacking the pedantic etymology of ‘isle’ as a word derived from ‘watery’, so that an *is-land* is literally ‘water-surrounded land’. But they have hit their mark: it seems likely that the *Encyclopaedia of Islands* will remain an essential reference work for many years to come.

The *Encyclopaedia* claims to be aimed at “students and the interested general public”. It probably succeeds in this objective. All the articles I read (I confess that I have not read all the 236 – but I have dipped widely and enjoyably) are clear and informative, and devoid of jargon. One can criticize particular inclusions or (more easily) omissions, whilst recognizing that the Editors are unlikely to satisfy everyone. For example, 48 ‘important islands’ have entries. Macquarie Island is listed but South Georgia is only mentioned as an ‘Antarctic Island’. I would certainly have judged it as more important than Macquarie. There are articles on ‘land snails’ and ‘adaptive radiation’ and on the speciation of cichlid fishes, but classical studies on speciation in *Partula* snails are not mentioned. The World Heritage Site of Kinabalu does not feature, despite its remarkable collection of endemics, although the much less known Pantepui in Guyana is included. There is an apparently

excellent Index, but if it is to be trusted, there is no reference anywhere to Alexander von Humboldt despite him being a major inspiration to Darwin, Wallace and Hooker, and the effective founder of quantitative ecology through his studies of zonation on Tenerife. Charles Elton is likewise ignored, despite the fact that it was his studies on species-poor Svalbard that inspired his work in animal ecology, which underpins much modern ecology. Indeed, Elton's book *The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants* is commonly regarded as forming the basis for 'invasion ecology' in general and island colonization in particular. Even more surprising is to find only passing references to Joseph Hooker, although he was really the founding father of island biology. His 1866 lecture on "insular floras" set out the key features of island biotas (endemicity, impoverishment, dispersal abilities, and taxonomic 'dysharmony') which have stood the test of time. This work is not even listed under 'further reading'. There are a mere three mentions of Hooker – notes that he visited St Helena and Ascension, and that he helped orchestrate the joint reading of Darwin's and Wallace's findings at the Linnean Society in 1858. The article on 'founder effects' is clear; yet, its conclusions disappointed me; but then, most articles on founder effects disappoint me. I find it difficult to escape the notion that much island endemicity derives from the chance genetic constitution of the founding individuals. At least Peter Grant seems to agree with me. He has written that the founder effect is "perhaps the most novel and influential contribution of the century to ideas about how evolution of all organisms occurs on islands" (*Oikos*, Vol. 92, No. 389, 2001).

In broad terms, the *Encyclopaedia* contains articles on eleven themes: geography; island types (atolls, barrier islands, hydrothermal vents, seamounts, etc); 'important islands' (some of which I fear were new to me. For the record, 'Britain and Ireland' count as one entry – but one mustn't be chauvinistic..... And to be fair, the authors of the section record, "The islands of Great Britain and Ireland have had a rich and varied history, and the current summary only scratches the surface of the story"); geology; geological processes; biogeography; ecology and evolution; oceanography and climatology; plants and animals; human impacts; and history and pre-history. The last two sections constitute social as distinct from natural science, with 18 articles in each. Most contributions have a list of 'additional' or 'further reading'. There is a useful glossary.

My main – and totally unfair - grouse about the *Encyclopaedia* is its weight: just under four kgs. But that is a small penalty when compared to its content. The book is very well presented and illustrated; the editors and the publisher are to be congratulated on a notable tome. Any island scientist or even mere island aficionado ought to have this book. You may have to save up for it, but it should be on your shelf, alongside Baldacchino, Carlquist, Wallace, Whittaker, and Williamson.

And an outrageously prejudiced last word: if you look up the *Encyclopedia of Islands* on Amazon, you will find that, those who bought it, also bought *Islands* by R.J. Berry.

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Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling (eds.) (2008) *Transnational Archipelago: Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 298 pp + index. Softcover. US\$49.95. ISBN: 978-90-5356-994-8. Distributed in North America by University of Chicago Press.

On the cover design of *Transnational Archipelago*, two children are shown playing in front of a ramshackle high-school building in Mindelo, Cape Verde's second largest city. A piece of street art behind them, an Earth globe, wittingly provides a hint to the contents of this compelling essay collection. The naïf colour sculpture maps the islands' centrality in the Mid-Atlantic, but also suggests more than that. It insinuates a distant, yet compelling influence of the nation in the lives of many thousands of Cape Verdeans living overseas, and vice-versa. The exact number is unknown, but estimates indicate upwards of half a million in the diaspora: more than the country's current population. The importance of the diaspora to life in the islands is such that it is often referred to as "the eleventh island."

Despite the exponential increase in research on Cape Verde over the last two decades, scholarly work is still mostly available in Portuguese, making this publication both timely and valuable for the English-speaking scientific community. It is the first work to set forth a comprehensive overview of the Cape Verdean diaspora and its transnational practices and discourses. The essays span out of a trilingual conference organized in 2005 at the Centre for Studies of Social Anthropology (CEAS) in Lisbon, Portugal, congregating many of the leading scholars currently studying Cape Verdean transnationalism. Although the book is refreshingly accessible to the general public, the quality and diversity of the participants, and certainly its two editors—Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling—make this an automatic scholarly reference in the field. Batalha, a social anthropologist and professor affiliated to the Superior Institute of Social and Political Sciences (ISCSP), Technical University of Lisbon, has done substantial research on Cape Verdean communities in Portugal and the United States. Carling, a human geographer and senior researcher at the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) is among the most prolific specialist writers on Cape Verde: he has extensive field experience in the islands, the Netherlands, and Italy, as well as dozens of essays and reports published on different aspects of migration and transnationalism, transnational families, and remittance flows.

This aptly titled study is presented in two parts: Diaspora Community Portraits, and Migration and Transnationalism. The first section provides an overview of some of the most significant Cape Verdean communities on both sides of the Atlantic, notably in the United States, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden, São Tomé and Príncipe, and in Argentina. The second section is an interesting collection of articles on a diversity of transnational practices observed among the diaspora, including Sónia Melo's *Cape Verdean Transnationalism on the Internet* and the unorthodox three articles on musicology and the impact of musical transnational practices.

The first section takes a historiographic and demographic approach, with a series of very brief essays on the selected communities, which unfortunately do not include any analysis of some key nodes of the diaspora, namely Paris and Luxembourg, but most remarkably Dakar, Senegal, whose Cape Verdean community is the most significant in the African

continent. This does not, however, detract from the papers included in the book. Although Cape Verdeans in the US are among the most studied of the diaspora, Marilyn Halter's opening article is a worthwhile report of their arrival to America. Less common is Marta Maffia's exploration of the relatively small community in Argentina, where Cape Verdeans would have arrived—as in America—as deck hands on whaling ships as early as the 19th century. On the other hand, the piece on the São Tomé islands (Augusto Nascimento) describes the very different migration of thousands of Cape Verdeans after World War II to work in the cocoa plantations of Portugal's other former insular possession. The subsequent quasi-indentured work, and the indignities suffered by Cape Verdeans in São Tomé, remain a point of contention to this day, and continue to have a high political cost and emotional value in the archipelago. The quintet of essays on Cape Verdean communities in Europe includes overviews of their presence in the two most sizeable clusters on the continent: Lisbon (Batalha) and Rotterdam (Carling). The remaining pieces are studies on the more recent corridor of female migration for domestic work in Italy (Jacqueline Andall), the post-war shipyard workers' flow to Sweden (Lisa Åkesson), and the creation of migrant networks in Spain, particularly in the mining communities of León and the fishing communities of Galicia (Rocío Moldes Farelo and Luzia Oca González).

The approach of the second section eschews geographic criteria and instead follows a phenomenological pattern that neatly browses over Cape Verde's recent history and current dynamics, if we except the notable absence of an article exclusively on remittances, on which Cape Verde remains highly dependent. This starts with a remarkable piece by Memory Holloway on whaling, profusely illustrated with rare snapshots of an industry that is ascribed as the genesis of Cape Verdean migration to New England. Several pieces on the intricacies of postcolonial identity formation and identity negotiation in the diaspora and at home follow (Márcia Rego, Gina Sánchez Gibau). These are intertwined with others on such challenges as the feminization of migration from Boavista, the easternmost island of the archipelago (Andréa de Souza Lobo), childcare and work balance among transnational families (Karin Wall), and transnational solutions to healthcare issues (Huub Beijers and Cláudia de Freitas, although an allusion to this theme is also made by Åkesson in the first section). The block of articles on music, however, is one of the most surprising inclusions, and one that makes perfect sense. Cape Verdean music is not only a significant element of symbolic social capital, but also one of the tools increasingly marketing the country in the international arena and contributing to its economic development. Rui Cidra's piece on *Migration, Music Recordings and Performance* explores this dimension, while Juliana Braz Dias looks at the imagery of emigration and sorrow in musical utterances, underlining departure as a core value of what is perceived internally as "Capeverdeanness." JoAnne Hoffman looks into the more recent phenomenon of Cabo-Zouk, an imported musical product originated within active diaspora-home networks.

The section is brought to a close by a solid analysis of the resilience of Cape Verdean migratory traditions by Åkesson. Carling has, however, discussed in other articles the end of Cape Verdean emigration dictated by geo-political changes, threatening to stop the constant migratory flow that has fed the diaspora for decades. The consequent increased migration pressure in the islands occurs at a moment when, ironically, Cape Verde is also becoming a transit country for continental African migrants, and even a final destination

for some of them. As much as *Transnational Archipelago* offers to the reader, migratory dynamics in the islands already invite new studies.

Still, not since Germano Almeida's historiographic travelogue *Viagem Pela História das Ilhas* [*Journey Through the History of the Islands*] and Jean-Yves Loude's similar *Cap-Vert Notes Atlantiques* [*Atlantic Notes*] has there been a major research work published on Cape Verde. In English, Basil Davidson's 1989 classic *Fortunate Isles* was possibly the last landmark scientific publication. The present work is, thus, particularly interesting in a context where print essays on Cape Verde are rare. Sadly—as the editors promptly recognize—there are no Cape Verdean scholars among the contributors. The risk of the single story might, however, be eliminated in a future re-edition, as social science scholarship is growing steadily both in Cape Verde and in the diaspora. Expect updates.

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Stevens, C., Kennan, J. & M. Meyn (2009) *The CARIFORUM and Pacific ACP Economic Partnership Agreements: Challenges Ahead*, London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 77 pp. Available from: <http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/the-cariforum-and-pacific-acp-economic-partnership-agreements-681-p.aspx>. ISBN: 978-1-84929-000-5. £20.00.

This study provides a concise analysis of the main provisions of the CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU) and the Interim Economic Partnership Agreement (IEPA) initiated by Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea. The CARIFORUM EPA covers trade in goods and services and makes provision for development cooperation, while the interim agreement with Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea is limited to liberalisation of trade in goods.

The main aim of the study is to clarify what has been agreed. Another aim is to identify the issues that are likely to be important. The authors envisage that the analysis presented will facilitate informed discussion and provide the foundation for the detailed country studies required to determine the development impact of the agreements. The study consists of four parts. Part A examines the main principles relating to trade in goods. Part B presents an overview of tariff removal commitments and analyses the cost of losing the EU preferences. The services provisions of the CARIFORUM EPA are summarised in Part C. Part D presents the conclusions.

Among the principles summarized in Part A are the duty free quota free access provided by the EU, the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) clause, infant industry protection, non-tariff barriers, technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary standards. The authors observe that the MFN clause that is common to both the CARIFORUM and Pacific agreements is a major concern since it has the potential to restrict future free trade agreements between ACP countries and non-EU countries. Under the MFN clause any

tariff preference granted in a free trade agreement to economies accounting for more than 1 percent of world merchandise exports will have to be automatically granted to any party to the EPAs. The observation that the MFN clause is likely to constrain future negotiating options is particularly pertinent in the case of the Caribbean community (CARICOM) members of CARIFORUM which began negotiation of a free trade agreement with Canada in November 2009. However, the impact of the MFN clause on CARICOM's negotiations with Canada is left to be seen.

The tariff reduction schedules presented in Part B of the book reveal significant differences in the national tariff schedules of the CARIFORUM countries. The authors note that the EPA has not helped to promote tariff harmonization within CARIFORUM and the region will not have a common external tariff (CET) on imports from the EU until 2033. A stated objective of the EPAs is closer regional integration. The European Commission views integration as necessary to promote international competitiveness and facilitate integration into the global economy. The failure of the CARIFORUM countries to implement a CET raises questions about their commitment to integration, but exploration of this issue is outside the scope of the study.

Reduction of government revenue due to removal of tariffs is likely to aggravate fiscal deficits in those countries that rely heavily on international trade taxes as sources of government revenue. The authors calculate annual estimates of revenue loss from liberalization for CARIFORUM for the period 2011-2013 (the first tranche of liberalisation) and 2011-2033 (the full liberalization period). As pointed out by the authors, the calculations are based on the unrealistic assumptions that tariff collection is 100% efficient and there are no rebates. Nevertheless, the estimates are useful in so far as they indicate the distribution of the burden of revenue loss over the period of tariff liberalisation. The calculations indicate that the countries likely to face the highest revenue loss in the short run are Antigua and Barbuda and The Bahamas. These countries will need to act speedily to introduce alternative tax measures to fill the revenue gap. In addition, a significant share of the financial assistance promised by the EU will have to be delivered to these two countries in the short term. In the cases of the Pacific countries the authors observe that Papua New Guinea experienced the full revenue loss in 2008 while the revenue loss for Fiji Islands was estimated at 7 percent.

It is possible that some countries may wish to withdraw from the EPA at some time in the future. Indeed the CARIFORUM agreement includes a review clause. The study takes account of this possibility by calculating the cost of losing preferential treatment in the EU market. The calculations for individual countries are presented in an appendix. According to the author's calculations, the highest cost of leaving would be faced by the countries that export sugar and rice. These include Barbados, Belize, Guyana and Fiji Islands. The calculations suggest that the costs of leaving would be small for Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, St. Vincent & the Grenadines and Trinidad & Tobago. The authors argue that the latter group of countries probably signed the EPA to maintain regional solidarity. This argument overlooks the importance of trade in services to the CARIFORUM countries. Poor performance of traditional goods exports has resulted in increasing dependence on tourism exports; however, excessive reliance on one export is

likely to increase economic vulnerability. Export diversification is therefore critical. Development of non-tourism services is now seen as an opportunity for diversification of exports. Consequently, access to the EU's services market and the EU's offer of technical and financial assistance to enhance the quality of services provided by CARIFORUM countries are, therefore, important incentives for CARIFORUM countries to sign the EPA. The EPA provisions on services are lengthy and complicated. Moreover, there are a total of 40 offers on services. The EU offer on services consists of 27 separate offers, while in the case of CARIFORUM there are 13 offers from the 13 countries that are liberalizing services. The book provides a summary of the services commitments by mode of supply making the information more accessible. The authors argue that multilateral liberalization of services is superior to bilateral liberalization hence CARIFORUM countries should explore the possibility of binding the offer made to the EU at the multilateral level. They also argue that this would send positive signals to all potential investors.

The study concludes that the analysis undertaken is essentially a first step towards more detailed country studies. In my view the main contributions of the study are the clarification of complex agreements and the presentation of relevant data in a user friendly format. This should prove valuable for those interested in understanding the EPAs.

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Orrin H. Pilkey & Rob Young (2009) *The Rising Sea*, Washington DC, Island Press, 203pp. ISBN: 978-1-59726-191-3. US\$25.95

As part of climate change's impacts, islands and coastal zones are expected to be particularly affected by sea-level rise. Many islanders might need to find other locations to live, including some who might pack up and move to an entirely new country and culture.

The Rising Sea sets out to describe the challenges of sea-level rise, covering the science, the impacts, and the policy options. The book's purpose is clearly stated in the Preface: "We chose to write this book because we believe the public needs to have a clear guide to the critical but basic facts about sea level rise and its implications, in order to make intelligent decisions" (p. xii).

Nine well-organised chapters aim to achieve that purpose in a logical order. Chapter 1 provides the practicalities of sea-level rise, drawing on specific examples mainly from Alaskan islands, Pacific atolls, and Venice's islands. The next three chapters detail physical science dimensions—measuring sea-level rise and its causes, prediction and modelling, and the input to sea-level rise from melting ice sheets. Chapter 5 moves into interpretations of the science, covering extremes of beliefs and emphasising how to counter those who do not believe that sea-level rise is a major concern.

Chapters 6 and 7 respectively cover examples of the ecosystems and societies expected to be most affected by sea-level rise. Illustrative examples describe coastal ecologies, peoples, and places—and their interaction—that will need to deal with the encroaching sea. Chapter 8 puts all the material together in discussing what to do about the Mississippi Delta, followed by chapter 9 providing a general policy and decision summary for dealing with sea-level rise. A fine balance of black-and-white images and maps is provided throughout.

The book aims to be readable for an intelligent but generalist audience and it succeeds—at least, for a particularly American audience. International examples, information, and discussion are present throughout the book, but the dominant country is the USA. No explanation is given for the American domination. Instead, the authors just seem to take it as natural that most examples, policy discussions, details, and cultural references should be American, at times with limited meaning for others. For instance, although measurements given in feet generally have metres in brackets, giving volume in gallons only and temperature in degrees Fahrenheit only (p. 34) will not orient many readers.

Nonetheless, from an American perspective, the content is solid and relevant, providing a primer for such an important topic, while raising the awareness and generating the discussion that is needed in order to inspire appropriate action. Yet the book's credibility is marred by numerous factual errors.

Three examples are given here. First, Kiribati's population is listed as 28,000 (p. 16) whereas most sources describe over 100,000 people. Second, the Netherlands apparently has “no high ground to which to retreat” (p. 23) even though the country's highest point is more than 300 metres above sea level with much Dutch land being 20+ metres above sea level. Third, Hurricane Andrew is stated as occurring in 1995 (p. 108), rather than in 1992.

Such shoddiness is further evident in policy discussions. In moving or abandoning infrastructure, to permit the sea to take over land as part of managing sea-level rise and land subsidence, the authors claim that the UK implements “the surrender option” (p. 160). The term “managed realignment” has been used across the UK for over a decade. The wholesale condemnation of shrimp farms as being large-scale mangrove destroyers (p. 109) accurately portrays what happens in many locations while ignoring efforts (successful or otherwise) elsewhere to implement small-scale shrimp farming for local needs as a method of preserving mangroves. Contrary to the authors' belief (p. 19), New Zealand's official information does not (yet?) involve sea-level rise in permitting Tuvaluans and other Pacific islanders to migrate to New Zealand (*e.g.* see the Pacific Access Category at www.immigration.govt.nz/migrant/stream/live/pacificaccess).

The referencing is quite good, but also has disappointments. The book is not meant to be scientifically comprehensive, but failing to reference key work on islands and sea-level by James Lewis and Patrick Nunn leaves holes in the information and analysis. Similarly, it is odd to refer to “a study reported by the BBC” (p. 70), as if a BBC report gives credibility to science, rather than directly quoting the original paper which appears in the book's reference list. On the positive side, I did not notice mention of Wikipedia.

Despite these glitches, the authors provide honesty, pragmatism, and straightforwardness regarding policy discussions. While it is not stated explicitly, it is generally clear where the authors believe that their recommendations and ways forward are supported by unambiguous science and where the available science might not be good enough for policy, so other policy formulation approaches are needed. That provides a refreshing and solid starting point for debate on action, including the authors' sensible discussion regarding economic impacts, costs, and benefits of different coastal management approaches.

Again, the policy discussion is highly American. Nevertheless, enough internationally relevant comments are made to extend interest beyond U.S. institutions and institutional difficulties. More explicit input into the recommendations from social science would have balanced the obvious input into the recommendations from physical science.

The final recommendation given (p. 181) is perhaps the book's thesis: that sea-level rise poses opportunities as well as challenges. It is not inevitably a catastrophe, but it is up to us to make the right choices to avert disaster. That is a powerful statement framed by the book's continual message that working with nature to permit the sea to take over parts of coastlines is an inevitable solution deserving of more proactive attention and implementation.

Overall, *The Rising Sea* is worthwhile, important, and needed, covering a topic that might define the future of many island cultures. With a little more effort, the book would have been essential reading and a highly impressive reference.

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Victor Suthren (2009) *The Island of Canada: How Three Oceans Shaped Our Nation*, Toronto ON, Thomas Allen Publishers, 337 pp + index. ISBN: 978-0-88762-406-3. Can\$34.95.

For someone like myself studying islands from a Canadian university – itself located on an island province - I met news of this book with boundless optimism. Finally, here is somebody with enough imagination to realise what is staring at Canadians in the face all along. At last, we can return to privileging Canada's history, heritage and emerging destiny as a maritime nation. We can confidently start re-orienting our gaze from the powerful neighbour down south (and north-west) and the increasingly tense terrestrial border that divides the two countries. We can start reminding ourselves that we share marine borders, and interests, with countries like Denmark, France and Russia (and not just the US). And we can shift confidently away from necessarily seeing our economy and identity as driven by the export of terrestrial-based mineral resources, themselves the outcome of extractive, often polluting, industries.

This part of the book I enjoyed. Canada is a country surrounded by three oceans. The Atlantic, and then the Pacific, have been crucial platforms for fishing, conquest and settlement during the period of European discovery, and for the millennia of indigenous occupation that preceded it. The Arctic, home of most of Canada's indigenous people, and location of the world's largest indigenous jurisdiction, the territory of Nunavut, is creeping fast into the country's focus as a strategic frontier, as hinterland, as a steward of an increasingly ice-free lucrative north-east passage. Not to diminish the importance of trade relations with the US: but the grip of this particular relationship remains too strong and paradigmatic on the Canadian psyche. Hence, it is good to remind ourselves, as Suthren does so well: Canada has the largest coastline in the world; the largest fresh water lake system in the world; the second largest continental shelf area in the world; 7 million Canadians live on its coasts; all but two of its ten largest cities – Calgary and Edmonton – are coastal. Indeed, the latter observation, coupled by the fact that the current Prime Minister hails from Alberta, along with the bad name that Canada has now earned for itself in climate change talks, may all help to explain why this book's publication is so strategically timed. Canadians need an especial reminding of their geography and history these days. Indeed, Prime Minister Stephen Harper (in 2006), and Finance Minister John Flaherty (in 2008), have both gone on record to remind us that, after all, "Canada is not an island".

This book begs to differ. It offers a primarily marine and maritime history that has "... made Canada an island of perceptions, values and commitments, and has helped shape a unique national character", argues Suthren (p. 1), thus framing his book not just as a project for a reclaiming of forgotten history, but for the forging of a national identity. And this is where I think the project disappoints. The author falls victim to a fake romanticism which purports to engineer a 'Canadian nation' within the borders of a state whose federal constitution belies that, indeed, we are not, and perhaps should not be, a single nation. The accidents of geography have often been recruited by elites in the construction of national narratives – and islands offer various examples - and this is exactly what Suthren unashamedly tries to accomplish.

Thus, Suthren's island of Canada is not so much a geo-political one, not even a symbolic representation, but a mythic and heroic construction, much like Benedict Anderson's "imagined community": a piece of land surrounded by water that is meant to be unitary; as much as its citizens should have a strong sense of self derived from their strong sense of place. Ironically, some of the subject matter of his chapters – especially Chapter 6: *The Great Struggle for Empire 1700-1763* – witness the changing fortunes of primarily French and English powers, and the political accommodations that followed from this lies at the heart of the Canadian federal project. Indeed, Canada is perhaps best seen, and accepted, as a state of various nations, rather than a wannabe nation state, as Suthren proposes. Canada's promise of prosperity and growth (p. 337) need not be framed in suspicious nationalistic fervour.

For those who wish to read briefly and sparingly – and shorn of citations that may hinder the flow - about the expeditions sent out to seek the north-west passage; privateering exploits along the Atlantic seaboard; Anglo-American conflict over the Pacific coast; or the history of the Royal Navy in Canada, and eventually, the Royal Canadian Navy, they should enjoy this book. The running thread is the aquatic connection. Even in describing that iconic terrestrial development, the Canadian Pacific railway, the emphasis is on maritime communications, introduced by CPR both within Canada (across the Great Lakes) and within the British Empire, as in shipping lines from Vancouver to British India. The author, a former director of the Canadian War Museum, has a penchant for the history of ships: he has a special index dedicated to ships in the book.

When Europeans crossed the Atlantic to settle in the New World, their destination was not just virgin territory (pardon the presence of the local inhabitants); North America was initially conceived as a material assemblage of islands, but also a symbolic archipelago of bounty and liberty. Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) was probably much inspired by Amerigo Vespucci's enthusiastic description of the New World... Suthren appears hell bent to resurrect this sense of hope and dynamism: even, ironically, as Canada's population becomes increasingly racially, linguistically and ethnically diverse; and as populations gravitate towards urban cores; as fishery industries wind down following glaring stock mismanagement. Ironically, as he seeks to deflect our land-based, continental frame of reference, Suthren attempts to hoist instead an imagining of the country that is more comfortable in the (in its own way, mythical) cultural fabric of the USA.

All in all, this is a text aimed at a popular audience; it is an enjoyable light read, driven by a refreshing and innovative perspective; but straddled with a rather uncomfortable twist.

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Louis Brigand (2009) *Besoin d'îles*, Paris, Stock, 252 pp. ISBN: 978-2-234-06024-1. €18.00.

Louis Brigand is a French academic geographer who has spent the last thirty years studying islands – mostly those around France, but also some as far away as Sakhalin and the Galapagos archipelago. In the spring of 2008 he was given permission to spend five weeks on the small and usually uninhabited island of Beniguet, off the west coast of Brittany in the Sea of Iroise, to take stock of his life and research. The result is this charming book, whose title translates as “The Need for Islands” but could more appropriately be rendered as “The Yearning for Islands.” It contains reflections on roughing it on a tiny isle (Beniguet covers 60 hectares), meditations on why some people are so attracted to small islands, a review of past research undertaken or supervised by him, as well as a few chapters on particular themes such as tourism and music.

Having always wondered why it is so much more satisfying to arrive on an island by sea than by air, I found the answer early on in the book: the sea creates a physical and sensual link with the island, while looking at an island from the air is like looking at a big map (pp. 17-18). The author tells us that after arriving on a new island, he first heads for the highest point to get an overview, then sets out to go round it: the more time this circumambulation takes, the less the island is an island (p. 21). One is reminded of D.H. Lawrence's observation in his short story *The Man Who Loved Islands* that an island "has to be really quite small before it *feels* like an island." Having become a *nissonologue*, a term coined by sociologist Abraham Moles who suggested that islands could nurture their own scholarly discipline, Brigand wryly notes (p. 36) that when colleagues learn about his specialization they often smile and express the opinion that islands are a less serious topic for research than other types of terrain. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

As a native of Brest and professor at that city's university, Brigand's main research interest has been the islands off the west coast of France, known as Iles du Ponant. The decline of traditional economic activities, depopulation, and the ambiguous benefits of tourism are some of the themes of his research. One interesting finding is that island populations are often less endogamous than isolated continental communities of similar size, the reason being that sailors get around more (p. 50).

Oddly enough, the British islands that lie so close to Brittany, such as the Channel Islands, the Isle of Wight, or even the Isles of Scilly do not seem to have attracted Brigand's attention and are never mentioned: in fact, the first non-French island he ever visited was much more distant Majorca! This is puzzling given that comparative work could throw light on the efficacy of state policies that aim at counteracting some of the natural disadvantages that island populations face. These disadvantages have led to the convening of many seminars involving local groups, academics, and state officials; but, at the end of the day, they seem to be intractable (p. 34). Tourism being in many places the factor that will determine the future of island communities, the author has made it the main axis of his research in recent years. As he sees it, the impact of tourism on islands and their inhabitants has been discussed in the literature in too theoretical terms, when what is needed to devise proper policies is precise local knowledge specific to each island. He therefore constituted research groups in which students carry out painstaking and detailed "macrostudies" on "microterritories" (pp. 154-166).

Over the years, Brigand's expertise has earned him invitations to distant places to advise locals on how to make their islands more attractive to tourists. Thus, we read lively accounts of how post-communist Russian officials have tried to develop the island of Moneron, off the coast of Sakhalin in northeast Asia (pp. 118-123); as well as Olkhon, in Lake Baikal (pp. 139-152).

In a chapter titled "Last islands", the issue of isolation is treated. Are island populations necessarily isolated? Sometimes they are: cases in point are the Lipovans, a small Russian ethnic group that lives in the delta of the River Danube on Romanian territory (pp. 188-189). But: isolation can also be creative, for people who live in relative isolation have to find solutions to problems that call for imagination and intelligence; to equate "insularity"

with “narrow-mindedness” is therefore inappropriate (p. 190). Brigand finds his thesis confirmed in Patagonia, where he visits not islanders but isolated communities in Chile’s Aysen region in the company of one of his doctoral students (pp. 194-219). In the little village of Caleta Tortel, created in the 1950s to house loggers, the only way to get around is by walking on wooden bridges or stairs, as the houses are all built on a steep mountainside which does not allow for the construction of roads. Everybody has a boat, and although not surrounded by water, “Caleta Tortel, too, is an island” (p. 203).

As befits a work by a geographer, a number of maps at the end of the book complement the written text. They range from detailed maps of Beniguet to a world map showing all the islands mentioned in the text. The map of western France is particularly detailed, except that for some unfathomable reason the Channel Islands are left out, leaving one with a visual impression of the topography of that region that does not correspond to reality – as if it would have been too onerous to mark the maritime boundary between them and France.

All in all, this is a book that both scholars of islands and those who are simply fascinated with them will enjoy reading. No serious, er, nissological library should be without it.

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Véronique Bragard (2008) *Transoceanic Dialogues: Coolitude in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Literatures*, Brussels, Peter Lang, ISBN 978-90-5201-418-0.

Transoceanic Dialogues offers a welcome engagement with the literatures of two island realms whose parallel, but also significantly varied, histories of diasporic indentured labour and flourishing postcolonial literary cultures offer vital points of comparison. Bragard’s focus in studying these creole and culturally pluralist societies and their literatures is the Indo-Caribbean and Indo-Mauritian experience. She follows the example of the Mauritian poet Khal Torabully in reclaiming the conventionally pejorative associations of the term ‘coolie’ via a concept of ‘coolitude’. Despite the conscious echoing of Négritude, ‘coolitude’ is emphatically non-essentialist in its formulation, stressing an openness of approach and explicitly resisting ‘casteist and Indo-centric conceptions of identity’. Bragard’s study further nuances the concept of coolitude with particular reference to fictional representations of the female coolie experience.

Bragard approaches a nonetheless potentially large library of understudied texts tropologically. The second chapter argues for a marine ‘chronotopology’ as a defining feature of coolie poetics, tracing the imagery of ships and oceans that defines Middle Passage writing. The third chapter finds its focus in a symbolics of relationship, in which the figures of grandparents or other substitute parents mark a shift away from traditional lines of affiliation. Bragard maps generational polarities onto the realm of the spatial, and in particular the recurrent structural and metaphoric division between the plantation or

village and dystopian urban settings. Chapter 5 continues to emphasize archetype in its analysis of a culinary and vegetal symbolics across a wide variety of texts. These chapters build up a sense of a strong collective Indo-Caribbean poetic voice, although this is not always distinguishable from a more generalized island metaphors (for instance, Bragard's analysis of banyan imagery might easily have incorporated the work of Samoan author Albert Wendt). Such image clusters can, furthermore, tend to resonate at times with long held island stereotypes rather than map specific island geographies.

While this emphasis on poetics as a structuring principle of Bragard's analysis is understandable given the breadth of material she discusses, the close reading it produces is concomitantly thin and at times repetitive. This is not simply a literary critical issue. Adapting Paul Gilroy's notion of a Black Atlantic, Bragard proposes an Indo-Black Atlantic frame of reference in response to Gilroy's call for 'intermediate concepts between the global and the local' to produce transnational and intercultural perspectives' (Gilroy 1993:6, 15). In doing so she necessarily raises the question of the relationship between the experiences of coolie indentured labour voyages, and the horrors of slavery's Middle Passage. Bragard, to be sure, addresses this issue directly:

One needs to point out, however, that, although revisions of the crossing by descendants of indentured labourers denounce colonialism and amnesia, they have not taken ... the same scope as in slavery. If these texts bear resemblance to slave narratives as they revisit the symbolic, emotional as well as mythical dimensions of the crossing, they do not evoke the same profound dismemberment and cruelty that slavery engendered and expressed.

However, her tropological analysis is not equipped to address the problem she raises: its broad focus on the archetypal blurs rather than elucidates distinctions between Middle Passage and island plantation experiences.

In a related sense, what *Transoceanic Dialogues* seems to me to lack, in its very focus on the 'trans'— the common ground between texts— is an ability to offer any of the works under scrutiny the tribute of really sustained close analysis. This is only to some degree incompatible with the task of defining and surveying a literature and poetics. Bragard, somewhat astoundingly, makes no reference to Chris Bongie's seminal study *Islands and Exiles* (1998), which anticipates her project by a decade in applying a theoretic largely drawn from Indo-Caribbean- and also Pacific island writing to an analysis of both island and European texts. To my mind, Bongie's text, with its gifted close readings, succeeds where Bragard's synthesis of symbolic archetypes fails, in both grounding and enlivening the reader's appreciation of the writing under scrutiny. Bongie and Bragard tackle many of the same writers- Glissant and Braithwaite, Harris and Confiant, but Bragard reads glancingly rather than probingly, and cites such a plethora of authorial dicta, unsupported by specific and searching analysis, in defining her approaches, that they have the cumulative effect of slogans rather than statements of practice.

The broader question here is what role close reading plays in a politicized engagement with literature, and more specifically in this case with the politically charged task of defining an island literary canon. In a conservative sense, the role of such reading practices is clear. As both the traditional and fundamental mode of literary analysis, close reading offers, somewhat circularly, a clear signal of the depth and texture of the literature under discussion, of its place within the library of books that bear scrutiny. But in a more radical sense, close reading signals a capacity for interlocutory engagement with diasporic voices: for listening rather than classifying.

To some extent the disparate histories that are ironed out in Bragard's analysis of Indo-Black Atlantic writing are reinstated in the first and third chapters of the book, which offer, respectively, a careful survey of the history of the coolie diaspora and its literary figures, and a discussion of coolie identity as it is deconstructed and reassembled in the work of female authors. Both these chapters will be extremely useful to students and teachers of postcolonial literature, and engage with fundamental issues of identity and representation. In these sections, Bragard's work best fulfils Gilroy's brief, bringing local island responses into integral dialogue with global debate.

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Jorge Lozano (ed.) *Islas: la exuberancia del limite*, a special issue of *Revista de Occidente* 342 (November, 2009). 254 pp. Paperback. ISSN: 0034-8635. €8.00.

The publisher's literature on this volume of *Revista de Occidente* says it is an effort by historians, semiologists, and theorists of literature and art "to unravel the special magic of islands, their metaphorical and symbolic value, what it is about them that makes good settings for adventure, utopia and myth." This is a worthy goal, and the volume contains good contributions towards this end, though as often in such volumes, the quality of the essays is mixed. The scholars are all European, and mostly Spanish and Italian; there are nine essays which were either written or translated for this volume (pp. 5-195), followed by a section of seven "Clásicos," which are previously published works thought to be of particular value (pp. 196-247); this designation is also applied to a work previously published in 2006 (that of Sloterdijk); this has thus ascended to classic status very quickly.

The introduction by Jorge Lozano ("Islas: la exuberancia del limite", pp. 5-7) ends by emphasizing the obvious importance of limits as a characterizing feature of islands, and concludes that "In islands the exuberance of limits would contrast and oppose that which is unlimited, indefinite, indeterminate, infinite."

The contribution by Frank Lestringant (“Pensar por islas”, pp. 9-29) is one of the most thought-provoking in the volume. He begins by suggesting that space itself is a vehicle for thought, then discusses Freudian readings of the landscape, and proceeds to discuss the female aspect of islands in 16th and 17th century thought, as opposed to the masculine mainland. On this subject, I would also recommend Sergio Perosa’s ‘The Island as Woman’, Chapter 2 in his 2000 book *From Islands to Portraits: Four Literary Variations*.

Umberto Eco’s contribution (“Sobre los islarios”, pp. 33-35) is disappointing. It was originally published as the introduction to a facsimile edition of Benedetto Bordone’s *Isolario* or island-book. He suggests that the fascination of islands is due to the fact that before the eighteenth century it was not possible to determine the longitude of islands, so their locations were uncertain. Eco’s suggestion is trite and clearly false: islands have retained their fascination long after the discovery of methods for determining longitude.

The next essay by Tarcisio Lancioni is about Bordone’s island book (“El Islario de Benedetto Bordone y la transformación del conocimiento geográfico”, pp. 36-71). Lancioni presents an analysis of the book, first published in 1528, as illustrating a transition to a more systematic and scientific geographical knowledge than that displayed by his predecessors in the *isolario* genre. The following essay, by Predrag Matvejevic (“Islas Mediterráneas”, pp. 72-82) is uninspiring: it is vague, and too often (e.g. pp. 75, 77, 81) he seems happy to leave interesting questions unanswered.

Marcos Martínez Hernández, in his work “Las Canarias en el mar de los mitos” (pp. 83-108), considers the Canary Islands in relation to various mythical islands from antiquity to the Renaissance, including the Islands of the Blessed, the Hesperides, Atlantis, and the Islands of St. Brendan. He defines mythical islands as islands in whose history myth plays an important role, or on which a myth is said to have taken place (p. 90).

The subsequent essays are devoted to islands in modern art and literature. Valeria Burgio (“Los habitantes de la isla: la cosmología diagramática de Charles Avery”, pp. 109-126) is an analysis of islands in the work of the British artist Charles Avery, both in exhibitions titled “The Islanders” and in his book *The Islanders: An Introduction* (2008), which, though related to his exhibitions, is a distinct work. Unfortunately this essay contains no analysis of Avery’s islands *qua* islands.

The title of Andrés Sánchez Robayna’s contribution (“Breve mapa de las islas comparadas”, pp. 127-138) is somewhat obscure: in fact, it is an introduction to a section of twelve modern poems inspired by islands (pp. 139-156). Sánchez begins with an engaging albeit brief collection of thoughts about islands in literature, and then supplies a paragraph or so about each poet and the work chosen. The selection of poems is fair; for me, the most appealing are the last two, which are a poem about islands by Derek Walcott (which contains the evocative lines “But islands can only exist / If we have loved in them”), and an excellent short poem on Sicily by Adam Zagajewski.

Santos Zunzunegui Díez writes about islands in film (“Islas de celuloide”, pp. 157-178). He discusses films from *The Isle of the Dead* (dir. Mark Robson, 1945) to the television series *Lost* (created by J.J. Abrams *et al.*, 2004-), in the latter case with an interesting discussion of the island on which the series is set. Although it ends by focusing on an island, that focus is lacking in the rest of the essay, as are hints at some of the more important work already done on the subject of islands in cinema, for example Larry Langman, *Return to Paradise: A Guide to South Sea Island Films* (Lanham MD, Scarecrow Press, 1998).

José Luis E. Rivero Ceballos’s article (“Las islas en la economía y la economía de las islas”, pp. 179-195) considers Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe as the perfect *homo oeconomicus*: man (yes, often a male) conceived in relationship to the economy, as focused on surviving and prospering in life. Then he addresses the economic aspects of islands: the small size of their internal markets, the costs implicit in their distance from larger markets, indices of accessibility of islands. This discussion is rather basic.

As mentioned above the book contains seven essays characterized as “clásicos”; they all relate to islands, of course, but only three of these can be said to shed light on islands as such. Gilles Deleuze (“Causas y razones de las islas desiertas”, pp. 203-211) offers an original reflection on the nature of desert islands and their relationship with humans; Louis Marin (“Sobre la creación de la isla de Utopía,” pp. 213-219) examines the meaning of the form and history of the island that is the setting in Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia*; and Peter Sloterdijk (“Insulamientos: para una teoría de las cápsulas, islas e invernaderos”, pp. 237-243) meditates on the island as prototype of the world, among other related subject matter.

This book contains useful contributions, but unfortunately it is difficult to be enthusiastic about the book as a whole. One feels that several of the authors made less than their best effort, and did not consult and reflect on earlier works written on their subjects.

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Kevan Manwaring (2008) *Lost Islands: Inventing Avalon, Destroying Eden*, Wymeswold, Loughborough, Heart of Albion Press, 217 pp., pbk, £14.95. ISBN: 978-1-905646-07-4.

This book by professional storyteller Kevan Manwaring has some engaging and insightful passages; but it is marred both by exaggerations and by the fact that a substantial portion of it has little to do with islands.

Manwaring’s book begins promisingly. He starts by comparing the structures of different narratives about journeys to mythical islands, primarily addressing myths of the British Isles. With regard to “The Invitation” to the mythical island, he writes (p. 9):

These invitations are often in the most exquisite language, or set to the most beautiful music—this is the art of the bard, to take the listener on a healing magic journey. Arguably it is the words or sounds *in themselves* which transport the listener, albeit for a brief time, to the paradises they speak of. They provide auditory doorways, by enabling the audience to enter a different state of consciousness.

This suggestion that the song of invitation is, in some way or to some extent, the experience of the island, is valuable, and recalls the Song of the Sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*, one of the earliest and most powerful invitations to mythical island: what the beguiling Sirens offer Odysseus if he joins them is, in fact, more song.

Manwaring's account of the psychological role of islands and their relationship with desire is also of interest (pp. 54-55):

The idea of a place 'where longing could be briefly stabilised' is critical to our understanding of lost islands and their appeal. These places provide a sanctuary for our fantasies and desires. The Welsh have a word for it, *hiraeth*, in essence, 'longing'. So these islands could be called '*hiraeth-zones*'. Everyone has one: it could be a holiday destination, a cottage, a sports car, a job, a girlfriend, a pair of trainers. We project our happiness onto them.

The author's description of the psychological effect of arriving on an island is excellent and worth citing at some length (p. 63):

It takes a while to attune. An island insists, quietly, that we slow down, sense the stillness, listen to the silence. We have to pay attention because – this is it. A peninsular limits options as it dwindles to nothing, an island even more so. People choose to live in such places to keep the world at bay. But as visitors to an island we carry our own world within us—our personal history, our job, our home, family, partner, preoccupations. What has been the alluring 'otherworld' for so long becomes real; and the 'real world', back on the mainland, now becomes the allusive 'other', which we may or may not get back to—depending on the whims of the weather and the ferryman. These two worlds jostle for importance for the first day or two, as we undertake 'reality detox', until the 'otherworld' back home diminishes in importance and this new world gains precedence, becomes more real. All the concerns of our daily lives seem so petty in such a place: the arguments and anxieties over parking spaces, taking out the trash, doing the washing up.

But the book's potential, which is suggested by these passages, remains unrealized, as the author exaggerates while straining for effects, and—perhaps to the same end—accepts almost anything as an island, thus certainly deceiving this reader who picked up the book with the quite reasonable expectation that it would be about islands.

Let me take a couple of examples of the book's exaggerations. On p. 126, we are told that "Ironically what was the site of modern man's [*sic*] 'genesis' may herald his apocalypse." The author is here referring to the Galápagos Islands, which he unaccountably holds to be both the site of the emergence of modern humanity (because the islands' finches inspired part of Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*) as well as heralds of humanity's apocalypse (because they are victim to considerable ecological problems); as if many other places around the globe do not have such problems.

Then, on p. 187, Manwaring writes:

When the ships of the Old World first appeared on the shores of America it is reported that the native inhabitants were unable to see them because the pattern recognition part of their brain did not have anything to relate to—the ships belonged to a different paradigm altogether and may as well have been space ships from another world.

No reference is provided for this startling claim because it is false. Accounts of the arrival of European ships in the New World talk about Native Americans coming out to investigate the ships, attacking them, trading with the Europeans, or fleeing from them. It is possible that in some cases the natives ignored the ships, but the idea that they could not see them is absurd.

Early in the book, the author shows that he is using a very loose definition of "island." On p. 32, he writes that "Eden is the ultimate lost island in many ways." Eden was an enclosed garden, and could certainly be seen as a metaphoric island, and in fact the terrestrial paradise is depicted as an island on some medieval maps. But Manwaring does not explore any of the "ways" in which Eden is "lost" or an "island," though surely if Eden is in many ways the ultimate lost island, such an exploration would be merited. Later, in a reference to Philip Pullman's trilogy *His Dark Materials*, he says that the story is "set initially in an alternative Oxford, his first of many multi-dimensional 'lost islands,'" and adds that "Citigazza is another, a Marie Celeste-style Mediterranean port haunted by soul-eating spectres." But how is either Oxford or Citigazza an island? A discussion of how they are islands could potentially have been interesting and valuable, as it might have shed some light on the purported nature of islands. Instead, what we have is the author accepting as an island anything that strikes his fancy.

To his credit, the author does discuss some islands. He supplies "An Incomplete Guide to British Lost Islands" (pp. 67-83); it is not clear how some of these islands, such as the Isle of Man or even the private islands listed, are "lost"; but he does provide interesting remarks about Brownsea Island, the crannogs in the lochs in Scotland and Ireland, and islands associated with priests or saints. In chapter 5 (pp. 94-107), he also offers a decent discussion of the associations between the mythic isle of Avalon and Glastonbury.

Yet, too much of the book strays too far from the purported theme. Chapter 4 (pp. 84-93) is about pilgrimage and pilgrimage sites; the author notes that Santiago de Compostela and Machu Picchu are “lost islands ... [to tourists who] travel to them, pay the admission fee, but actually fail to find them” (p. 86). This declaration is not supported by any detailed discussion. In the latter part of the book, the author turns to environmental and political themes, including global warming and sea level rise (pp. 143-159), which would threaten islands such as Tuvalu and Britain (pp. 155-157); but surprisingly little space is devoted to this aspect of the issue. He then maintains that the United States has been a “lost island” since the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks (pp. 176-193) because he does not agree with some of the nation’s political policies that have followed that eventful date. The book predictably ends with the metaphor of the ecologically fragile earth as an island (pp. 194-199); but the author’s discussion of this subject matter, alas, offers us nothing new.

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Peter Conrad (2009) *Islands: A Trip through Time and Space*. London, England, Thames & Hudson, 192 pp. ISBN: 978-0-500-51471-9. £14.95.

At first sight, this book is a treasure to behold. Its hard green cover has what the publisher calls a “tipped on colour plate” that invites touching like any good embossing does: it is a tiny Nik Wheeler oval-shaped photo of uninhabited cays in the Turks and Caicos. The book sports genuine end papers (printed in uniform lines of palm trees) that are rarely seen in books anymore, and a decorative half-title page that conjures up a wild tropical paradise of palms laced with exotic birds and monkeys. The typography is exquisite, with lots of leading between the lines; each chapter begins with an illustrated vignette that hints at the content to come; and the paper is a thick and luxurious cream. *Islands* is lovely to hold.

Indeed, reading the introductory pages led this reader almost to despair: this is the book that *I* wanted to write and publish. Conrad was taking all the binaries that students of island studies learn and was weaving them through his own islander’s lens. Island as paradise. Island as prison. Island as heaven. Island as hell. Connected or disconnected. A place to escape to, or a place to escape from. As Conrad writes, “For most people, islands are optional”: one chooses to visit, then chooses to leave. To be born on one, like he was, however, is another story. And he was born on one of the most isolated of islands, about as far away from the centre of everything as you can get: Tasmania. Because he saw the world from such a distance, he always felt exiled, disconnected, like he had been expelled from the world. Chapter titles like “Insularity,” “No man’s island,” “Castaways and Outcasts,” “There is another island,” and “There is no island,” written by an islander-in-exile-by-choice, had me intrigued because I wanted to get inside the psyche of a man who really knew islands because he’d spent his whole life researching and rationalizing why he needed to escape from one. I was annoyed that I’d missed my chance to write this book.

I soon found out I hadn't. Instead, *Islands* becomes something quite different. It is a selective reading of an exhaustive selection of island literature, from its earliest incarnations — with classic quotes from classic characters — through to contemporary references. From the islands of Homer's *Odyssey* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Yeats' "Lake Isle of Innisfree," to islands owned by Leonardo DiCaprio and Mel Gibson and the ones you can buy in the virtual world of *Second Life*, Conrad focuses on the pithiest points of islandness, taking us on an archipelagic tour through time and space (including cyberspace), stopping at island theme parks along the way — themes like insularity and castaways and outcasts, to name just a few. "To be born," J. M. Barrie helpfully explained, 'is to be wrecked on an island.'" Or, as Matthew Arnold said, we are "eniled in the sea of life." Conrad's own belief, coming from an island from which he cannot escape, one that remains his "point of orientation, the spot I look for first on any map," is that islands "narrow and concentrate the rules of selection, encouraging oddities; they are, although I did not realize it when I lived on one, breeding grounds for idiosyncrasy... Our history can be read as a long, digressive journey around a world that has been fragmented into islands."

Some people collect islands. Conrad, through his readings, collects definitions of islands. Milan Kundera calls Beethoven's music a "miracle, an island." When describing Chekov's trip to the prison island of Sakhalin, Conrad calls islands "other or nether worlds." The islands that Odysseus visits are "optional worlds, like extraneous planets that have splashed down into the sea." Sixteenth-century islands, which, as sources of "cloves, black pepper and nutmeg" became dots of land over which colonial powers fought, were valued "as unorthodox microcosms, ersatz works of art." To Byron, islands "stood for the stubbornly autonomous mind." In creation stories, islands were sensual, sexual places. But for others, like Emily Dickinson, islands were places of death; in death, she would be "An Island in dishonoured Grass — Whom none but Beetles — know." At the end of his chapter on islands as "First and Last Things," Conrad writes, "An island may, as Linnaeus suspected, be the first product of God's creation; an island is also where we discover the truth about a world that God long ago deserted."

But what started out as a personal exploration of life as an incurable islander through the lens of island literature became more about the literature and less about the islander. Indeed, there grew to be so many references to authors and characters and islands that I was tempted to list and count them all just to see how learned Peter Conrad, a professor of English at Christ Church, Oxford, is. However, when I realized that the book had an index, I just counted up the entries: 241 in total, ranging from the Greek isle of Aeaea where Odysseus climbs to the top to see which world he is located in, to director Robert Zemeckis who brought us the movie *Cast Away* in 2000 — the film version of *Robinson Crusoe* where Friday is replaced by Wilson, a soccer ball. And, fittingly, Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*, the Robinsonade by which all other castaway narratives are judged, gets a record 22 mentions.

At first, I had wanted Conrad's *Islands* to be similar to Bill Holm's *Eccentric Islands: Travels Real and Imaginary* (Milkweed Editions, 2000) or Pete Hay's *Vandiemonian Essays* (Walleah Press, 2002), in which we are provided with an imaginative rendering of all things islands: weaving facts with their own poetic musings about their (positive and negative) fascinations and connections with islands. Instead, I was taken on an exhaustive tour of islands as defined by those (mostly) literary giants who have rendered them to paper. It's not what I expected, but that's okay: Conrad has succeeded at the task at hand, cataloguing islands in a way that is most imaginative, enlightening, and inspiring. And it makes me realize: there are still so many island books to be read, and to be written.

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Susan Y. Najita (2006) *Decolonizing Cultures in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction*, London, Routledge, 240pp, ISBN: 978-041536669-4. Pbk US\$35.95.

Pacific Island literary studies have grown exponentially in the past decade, and Susan Y. Najita's excellent *Decolonizing Cultures in the Pacific: Reading History and Trauma in Contemporary Fiction* is a wonderful addition to the field. Rather than placing the Anglophone Pacific Islands in a subservient relationship to their colonizers, Great Britain and the United States, Najita places the literature (and film) of Hawai'i, Samoa, and Aotearoa/New Zealand in a comparative dialogue, displacing colonial centers and exploring the ways in which cultural production from the Pacific reconfigures historical trauma. Although a deeply historicist text, each chapter of *Decolonizing Cultures in the Pacific* also problematizes historiography as a colonial project, highlights the ways in which indigenous authors in particular recuperate oral storytelling, cosmologies, and genealogies which are vital to addressing the violence and rupture of the colonial past. Bringing together the fields of American, Pacific, Postcolonial, and trauma studies, Najita's book weaves skillfully between texts and contexts to give us a compelling argument and frame for approaching Pacific Island literatures.

Najita's book, like most Pacific scholarship, necessarily begins by decolonizing the world maps that relegate the Pacific Islands to the geographic and historical margins and reconfigures the region as vital to world history as well as to understanding the ways in which decolonization discourse reconfigures narrative. The narratives that are privileged here as vital to decolonization are magical realist novels, genealogies, and histories of trauma. Najita's first chapter turns to Hawaiian author John Dominis Holt and his 1976 novel, *Waimea Summer*, examining the exceedingly complex ways in which Holt engaged the construction of Hawaiian identity since it was reconfigured with the late 18th-century arrival of Captain James Cook. She details how U.S. colonial law alienated Hawaiians from both land and traditional reckonings of genealogy, and traces out in exacting detail how the social and cultural implications of this dispossession are reflected in Holt's novel.

The second chapter demonstrates the same precise historical vision, turning to Albert Wendt's foundational 1979 novel, *Leaves of the Banyan Tree*, to demonstrate how Wendt reconfigures the history of Samoa, particularly the anti-colonial Mau movement which had been the topic of his MA thesis. In Najita's sharp analysis, Wendt's turn to the novel genre demonstrates how magic realism as a form allows for a more fluid engagement with oral and written histories, particularly in pressing the boundaries of realist (written) knowledge and in protecting the privacy and dignity of living descendants of the movement. After exploring how the New Zealand administration in Samoa instigated violence against its dissenting Samoan colonial subjects, Najita turns to Keri Hulme's novel *The Bone People* and explores New Zealand's own complicated bicultural national identity. In perhaps one of the best analyses I've read in the enormous body of work on Hulme's novel, Najita deconstructs the central character Kerewin's asexuality in terms of the long colonial history of the exploitation of indigenous women, and skillfully weaves the 19th-century history of British boy convicts as a vital element in interpreting the novel's enigmatic character Simon, demonstrating the ways in which early models of punishment and discipline are brought to bear on the current inscription of the violence of white settler nationalism and Maori forms of whanau, or family. Chapter four moves beyond the bicultural tensions of indigenous versus white settler identity in its turn to Gary Pak's "local" Hawaiian fiction, which broadens the engagement to other, particularly Asian (Japanese and Korean) histories in the region, exploring how forms of magic realism may reconfigure the racialization of plantation economies in this era of globalization. In her final chapter, Najita turns to Jane Campion's 1992 film *The Piano*, exploring how indigeneity is appropriated in the construction of white settler nationalism, scrutinizing, as earlier chapters do, the role of gender and sexuality in the construction of the postcolonial subject and text.

While the final two chapters might be reversed to conclude the book on this important note of how multiracial island spaces inscribe the myriad challenges of globalization, the epilogue argues forcefully for a methodology that upholds oppositional reading practices, narratives that challenge the reader, requiring us to read with a "side-glancing historical eye" and opening the mutually constitutive—and hopeful—relationship between decolonizing narrative and social realities. Overall, this is a meticulously researched and written account of contemporary Pacific Island literature in English. Although Routledge has just released a more reasonably priced paperback issue (\$35.95), this press could do more to make fine Pacific Island scholarship like this more accessible to the region's readership.

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Michael Jones & Kenneth R. Olwig (eds.) (2008) *Nordic Landscapes, Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*, Minneapolis MN and London, University of Minnesota Press, 576pp. ISBN-10: 0-81663915-9, £22.00 stg.

On a first glance, a book entitled 'Nordic Landscapes' may not appear to be of much relevance to Island Studies. The descriptor 'Nordic' evokes images of vast forests, endless wetlands, mountainous coastlines penetrated by winding fjords, primarily a northern, sub-Arctic and Arctic landscape in which the perception of thin, limited and marginal settlement blocks predominates over the more southerly vista of a more densely populated and benign landscape of cultivated farm lands. It suggests a range of magnificent environments and eco-systems, and a plurality of ethnic cultures, languages, identities and nationalities. What it does not immediately suggest is islands. Admittedly there are some uninhabited afforested islands in the myriad inland waters of Finland or Sweden, a scattering of sparsely populated or deserted islands along the coast of Norway, and a lattice of causeway linked islands long incorporated and dissolved into the physical and cultural geography of Denmark but none of them readily come to mind as registering as of even minor significance in the vastness and totality of the Nordic landscape. Even the larger Baltic islands or island groups, more readily come to mind in a specifically Baltic context, a framework that relocates the former in a very different landscape setting. Only a section on the 'North Atlantic' with individual chapters on the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, along with a one of the five Finland section chapters being devoted to a cultural perspective on the Åland Islands immediately stand out on the contents page as being self-evidently and unambiguously focused on islands.

For whether in relation to its usefulness with regards to methodological matters in terms of individual research project or advancing the theoretical underpinning, on which to take forward island studies as a valid area of discrete intellectual enquiry this is a book of considerable relevance and value. Yet never was there a case of first appearances being so deceptive. 'Norden' has always had relevance beyond its immediate confines, certainly to Europe. This collection brings out its relevance to a wider world in a globalisation context. In particular, as entirely befits a collection of essays sub-titled 'Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe' it has a special relevance in relation to the application and development of 'place theory' as being one of the most enriching and insightful ways in which to take our mutual interests forward.

The focus of these essays is on the complex inter-relationship between notions of place, region, identity and belonging as they map out in the historical, physical and cultural context of specific localities. In an informative introduction the editors, Michael Jones and Kenneth Olwig, outline the genesis of the book as having its initial inspiration in a desire to emulate Michael Conzen's 'wonderful anthology' on the making of the American landscape and the intellectual setting of the growing debate on the idea of landscape that followed the seminal 1988 collection of Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscape*. In briefly tracing the important developments in this advancing debate they make specific reference to what they see as the most significant strands in this process. They highlight the landscape, semiotics textuality of Trevor Barnes and James Duncan, the influential phenomenological perspective of Christopher Tilley, the 'counter

to the scenic' idea of landscape by Tim Ingold with his distinctive anthropological notion of landscape not as an external visual construct we consume but part of our felt experience as 'the familiar domain of our dwelling', and the political landscape approach of Barbara Bender. To this, they rightly add Olwig's own contribution as a major landscape theorist on the notion of landscape as the expression of a polity.

The result is impressive. In *Nordic Landscapes*, Jones, Olwig and colleagues provide a volume that is not only "the product of a cooperative effort by prominent Nordic scholars of landscape, region, and place" (p. xxvi) but also a rich and skilfully interwoven essay collection that is densely informative and highly readable in the process. As a collection it has much of interest to the two principal strands in the broad church of current island studies. There are contributions that specifically focus on the ecological issues arising in specific environments, not a few of which are of international significance in biodiversity and highly valued in aesthetic terms. From the other wing of the spectrum, there are a cluster of studies that probe the theoretical underpinning that relates to both landscape and regions as social constructions. And the chapters that focus on regional identity do so from both a natural science and a social and cultural perspective.

In content, the book comprises two essays on Denmark; five each on Norway, Sweden and Finland; three on the North Atlantic; and two that outline the principal geographic features of 'Norden'. Although rather oddly appearing by way of a conclusion, the reader less familiar with this vast and diverse region may find it useful to read these first by way of familiarization. The chapters that deal specifically and directly with island locations are: a case study by Anders Lundberg on Sandhåland, a community on the Norwegian island of Karmøy; an essay on the Åland Islands in Finland; and the three North Atlantic studies on the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland, respectively. From an island studies perspective those whose particular interests are in environmental and ecological matters the useful insights and comparisons will be found indirectly through the various relevant chapters on the coastal and interior environmental landscape of Sweden, Norway and Finland. Those whose interests are primarily in the social and cultural, the comparisons and insights come directly through the specific island focused studies. At the same time they will find much stimulating food for thought in several of the non-island specific studies. Kenneth Olwig's chapter on the contested landscape of Jutland; Michael Jones' penetrating and stimulating on the 'Two Landscapes' of North Norway and the 'Cultural Landscape' of the South; and Venke Åsheim Olsen's fascinating survey of the 'Landscape in the Sign': a stimulating study of North Norwegian Regional Identity (including some island regions) through a survey of local and regional heraldic arms from an ethnological perspective, all merit specific mention in this regard.

Of the five island-based chapters, some are likely to be of more universal appeal than others. Given the global reach, multi-disciplinary interests, cultural backgrounds and endless permutations of size, scale and status (in terms of polity or governance), this is inevitable. It in no way detracts from the quality of the essays to acknowledge the inescapable consequence of necessarily monofocal and meticulous studies. Anders Lundberg examination of changing land use and its relationship to the shifting and evolving regional identity of Western Norway through a detailed case study of Sandhåland,

a community on the Norwegian island of Karmøy, is of much interest to those of us who also live in the sparsely populated and peripheral island communities of North West Europe areas. In similar vein and from a specifically Scottish island perspective, Arne Thorsteinsson's account of 'Land Divisions, Land Rights, and Land Ownership in the Faroe Islands' has deep resonance for anyone pursuing similar historical enquiry in the islands of Shetland, Orkney or the Hebrides. Beyond North Atlantic Europe, however, interest may be more limited to those pursuing specialised material culture or land tenure areas of research, notwithstanding the worthiness of the contributions.

The opposite is the case with the three other island-focused studies, on the Åland Islands, Iceland and Greenland, respectively. The broader range of social, cultural, and identity issues they deal with, combined with their wider multi-disciplinary and theoretical relevance, only serves to reinforce their pertinence to many other global island communities, cultures and locations. Nils Storå's chapter on landscape, political autonomy and regional identity in relation to the Åland Islands is the contribution that is most implicitly involved in a discussion of 'islandness', through its cultural perspective. Given the nature of these island communities — an archipelago of Swedish-speaking islands exercising a degree of autonomy within a larger Finnish state at a strategic, historic and geo-political interface between Sweden and Finland — Storå traces how environment, landscape, socio-economic relations, local traditions and history came together in the mental archipelago landscape of the Åland Islands to create a distinctive 'island culture' and regional identitarian notions of 'Ålandishness' (pp. 450-1). It is simultaneously a local sense of identity based on the actual and the perceived relationship to natural resources that is subsumed into the deeper and wider context of identity that has not only a cultural and linguistic but even a 'national' dimension (pp. 453-6).

Given its subject, Kirsten Hastrup's chapter on 'Icelandic Topography and the Sense of Identity' may initially suggest itself as being primarily of relevance to island studies scholars whose research interests lie in small island states, of which Iceland is undoubtedly an intriguing example. Noting the authorship, however, those from an anthropological, ethnological, or cultural studies background, or indeed anyone familiar with the fluid interdisciplinary theoretical debates within and between those dissolving practices, will anticipate a contribution of a much deeper, wider and more applicable nature. In that they will not be disappointed. Hastrup's chapter traces how memory, or rather selective memory, in which forgetting is no less significant than remembering, takes place in a world of material objects and physical place no less than one of words. Drawing on Tilley's (1994) observation that "time and space are components of action rather than containers for it", she argues that: "The landscape is a total social fact. By its power of condensation, space is distinctly poetic" (p. 63). For Icelanders there is a palpably close sense of identity bonding to landscape and topography, so that far from the past being a foreign country — *after* David Lowenthal — "the landscape is a well-known history". The result is that, "Icelandic topography may *look* historically empty, but it certainly *feels* packed with meaning and memory'. There is in effect a seamless garment whereby 'memory and landscape, history and nature, or, even more generally, time and space are mutually implicated in this vision of the world' (p. 73). One result of the peculiarity of Iceland's history and location is a distinctive stress upon the landscape as the locus of

history, 'a stress upon unspoiled antiquity and purity in a world that is increasingly marred by modernity and noise of all kinds'.

This notion of an identity, a sense of Icelandicness that is 'an image of a timeless and therefore a pure history' sustained by topography that is a felt experience of a sense of self has echoes that reverberate around the many diverse cultural settings of global island studies. Explicit and acknowledged are the apparent parallels to the notion of the Dreaming in indigenous Australian landscapes. Unacknowledged but implicit in romantic notions of purity and 'pure history' are, of course, singularly unromantic notions of purity in a world being ensured by pure people living in uncontaminated ethnic purity, the dark side of essentialism with all its communal tensions and worse. This is the context in which Bo Wagner Sørensen provides a fascinating reflexive account of the conflicting perceptions of place, identity and belonging in an absorbing chapter on 'Perceiving Landscapes in Greenland'.

The tensions he reveals are introduced in an opening sentence that has an immediate and troubling global resonance, not least across our world of islands. "Landscape seems to be routinely invoked in ethno political and nationalist discourse in the sense that a particular territory is identified with a particular people, emphasizing rootedness and distinctiveness as well as epitomizing the very soul of the people" (p. 106). Sørensen develops his examination of these issues through an illuminating survey of the social and intellectual history of the Danish colonisation of Greenland and the steady emergence, or rather the making, of indigenous Greenlandic national consciousness, each of them a process of mutually incompatible inscription on the context terrain of a singularly awesome Arctic environment. This provides the backdrop for a close focus on the tensions relating to identity, belonging, sense of place and Greenlandic 'authenticity' in the built environment of Nuuk, the expanding modern capital of an emergent semi-autonomous Home Rule Greenland. In terms of surveying Nordic landscapes from the specific perspective of island studies within which debates over the definition and the relevance of the notion of 'small islands' is a perennial issue, there is a certain wry irony in the aptness of this chapter on what is indisputably the world's biggest small island for comparable enquiry into so many of our irrefutably smallest of small islands in virtually every cultural and geographical zone of global island studies from one corner of the planet to the other.

In putting together this richly rewarding collection of essays on *Nordic Landscapes*, Kenneth Olwig and Michael Jones are emphatic that, 'it was not our goal to create a holistic vision of landscape, but to show how different discourses meet and can speak to one another in the understanding of particular places.' In this they have assuredly succeeded. The expressed hope is that the book should be useful in a number of contexts:

Its many-faceted approach to the complexity of landscape and region provides a series of theoretically grounded case studies that should be of use to those concerned with region and landscape within fields such as geography, planning, landscape ecology and landscape architecture. It is also intended to be of more general interest to those with the role of landscape, region, and place in the environmental and cultural history of Western society. (p. xxvii)

For what it has to offer both directly and indirectly, in terms of applied research and theoretical engagement, this unduly modest list can assuredly be expanded to include the emergent field of island studies. With regard to the content and practice of the latter two final observations might be made. Firstly, in relation to content and application, it is to useful observe the extent to which this multiplicity of chapters comprehensively situated within contemporary social and scientific theory are also firmly grounded in historical enquiry and a felt need to locate the Nordic experience within the wider historical context of European and Western society and thought. Secondly, it is salutary to note that this handsomely produced and well-integrated anthology had its origins in a modest series of seminars and conferences that drew together a relatively small interdisciplinary group of researchers with a common interest in landscape. From this crystallized the idea of collaborating on publishing a series of essays exploring different conceptions of landscape and their relevance for understanding regional identity from within the Nordic countries. Through a series of further meetings, exchange of ideas and the presentations of drafts for mutual criticism, the collection finally evolved. It is a model of how collaboration and application to a common research agenda can have long lasting and rewarding benefit.

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