

BOOK REVIEWS SECTION

Peter Rudiak-Gould (2013). *Climate change and tradition in a small island state: The rising tide*. Abingdon: Routledge. 226pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-83249-6. £80.00.

Much rhetoric these days tries to make us believe that low-lying islands in the tropics will soon be drowning due to the rising seas from climate change. We are told that the poor islanders are desperate to flee their flooding lands and have no option but to beg for help from the outside world. And yet, as we know from island studies, these images are not entirely accurate. While earlier publications often fed parts of the myths, a spate of books over the past two years have dealt more sensibly with the challenges of low-lying island communities and islanders dealing with climate change challenges. These books provide a more nuanced and balanced view, multiple perspectives, and more solid scientific analyses.

One such book is Peter Rudiak-Gould's *Climate change and tradition in a small island state: The rising tide*. The book reports the author's anthropological fieldwork in the Marshall Islands, a Pacific island country under a Compact of Free Association with the U.S. of about 60,000 people living across several dozen islands. The country might be best known for American nuclear testing — including Bikini atoll — which led to several islands being evacuated. Now, the Marshall Islands are considered to be threatened by climate change.

Rudiak-Gould investigates Marshallese perceptions, feelings, and responses to this suggested threat. He shows significant acceptance that climate change is happening, is human-caused, and needs to be dealt with; but the solutions are seen to be domestic, to be enacted within the Marshall Islands rather than blaming outsiders or moving to another location.

Following an introductory section explaining the book's purpose and case study of the Marshall Islands dealing with climate change, Chapter 1 provides anthropological background to the case study, setting the scene of the Marshall Islands and of the theoretical underpinnings of the work presented. Chapter 2 tackles how and why contemporary climate change became known to the Marshallese and the filters through which they interpret it, including attribution of impacts. Evidence is presented for "three distinct channels of information" (p. 41): statements from mainly external, formal science, often through regular media; the Marshallese observing their local environment; and, as the first two sources became accepted, interpretation through Christian beliefs, particularly the Bible.

The theme of Chapter 3 is believability: why do the Marshallese accept climate change? Rudiak-Gould explains the importance of this question. So much effort is put into research to understand why many people believe that climate change is not happening or is not important. Explanations often neglect why the case is convincing for others. The discussion for the Marshall Islands is complex but riveting, demonstrating how much of the acceptance of climate change and the need for action emerges from cultural reasons and internal domestic value systems.

With acceptance comes the need for action. This is addressed in Chapters 4 and 5 which continue the unfortunate and artificial separation of climate change mitigation and adaptation. Mitigation is Chapter 4's focus with the intriguing thread that the Marshallese view themselves, not others, as being most responsible for climate change mitigation. Chapter 5 then covers adaptation, highlighting the potential need for resettlement, and leading to fascinating discussion on the Marshallese pro-migration and anti-migration viewpoints. Other potential

adaptation measures are also considered. The Conclusion summarizes the book's principal findings, revisits some specific evidence, and extends the ideas developed.

Overall, the monograph is an engaging, important, and highly scholarly contribution to the literature. Of particular importance is the author challenging and appropriately critiquing some discourses within climate change. Most prominent are ethical issues underlying the discussions that the low-lying island states have contributed minimally to anthropogenic climate change yet are amongst the most affected by it. Rudiak-Gould in no way undermines that statement, nor does he seek to. Instead, he intelligently points out how many cultural assumptions and biases are imbued in seeking blame- and justice-related outcomes based on the statement.

In particular, according to Rudiak-Gould, the Marshellese do not accept the same blame, justice, and ethical reasoning which many external scientists and practitioners promote. Instead, a prevalent theme throughout the book is that the Marshallese look to themselves first and foremost for acting on climate change. That occurs even to the extent of evidence of the Marshallese viewpoint that the main reason why the Marshall Islands has contributed so little to human-caused climate change is because they have not had the chance to do so.

Given this depth of analysis and willingness to challenge many tenets held dear by many climate change specialists, the main disappointment of the book is therefore rather surprising. It is that Rudiak-Gould does not always point the same intensity of a reflective lens onto the standard climate change literature. For example, within an entire chapter on migration and resettlement, why not reference Betsy Hartmann's brilliant work describing the social and political construction of much of the debate? As noted above, the separation of mitigation and adaptation is easily challenged. The book's last sentence uncritically includes the phrase "As the last island sinks" perpetuating the myth of sinking islands. Even the book's subtitle falls into this trap with the dubious suggestion that it is the cyclic tides, rather than the baseline mean sea levels, which are changing. The difficulty perhaps is that most of the climate change literature referenced and climate change perspectives provided are from those who unashamedly study only climate change and, consequently, tend to lack appropriate contextualization of and deeper (including social and cultural) perspectives on climate change topics.

While that literature is important and must be considered, broader and deeper perspectives emerge regarding islands and climate change from disaster studies and island studies. It is ironic that these perspectives are mostly absent since Rudiak-Gould self-identifies his research as "part of the anthropology of disaster" yet "it is not typical of it" because "the catastrophe has yet to occur in the Marshall Islands" (p. 14) without recognizing the copious literature about pre-disaster actions such as disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness. Much of that disaster work fully embraces, and significantly contributes to, long-term challenges including but not limited to a changing and varying climate.

Another concern is that the climate change literature referenced is biased towards the modern, heavily dominated by work from 2000 and afterwards. A slew of important work placing climate change in context exists from before 2000: work which is still surprisingly relevant today in providing insights which climate change work could and should learn from. Overall, too much contemporary climate change rhetoric is repeated without the same, brilliant reflexivity demonstrated regarding the Marshallese views.

None of this denies human-caused climate change or its potential, devastating impacts on low-lying islands. It is merely applying the same standards to our own views and work as to the views of others. It also broadens the analytical approaches to climate change social science beyond the traditional, populist literature.

Or perhaps, quite fairly, this is all fodder for another book. Because there is little doubt that we need more books along the lines of *Climate change and tradition*, not just about more “small island states” but also for other geographies: including the places where I, Rudiak-Gould, and you the reader live (if not in an island community). The author’s introspection, depth of data, and balanced analysis delve deeply into humanity’s interests in and reactions to human-caused climate change, an approach deserving of emulation.

Ilan Kelman

University College London, U.K.

islandvulnerability[at]yahoo.com

Philip Baker & Lee Pederson (2013). *Talk of St Kitts and Nevis*. London: Battlebridge. vi+192pp, ISBN: 978-190329216-7. £12.95.

Miriam Meyerhoff & James A. Walker (2013). *Bequia talk (St Vincent and the Grenadines)*. London: Battlebridge. vi+136pp. ISBN: 978-190329222-8. £12.95.

The two books under review are worthy contributions to Battlebridge Publications’s corpus of linguistic studies of island languages and island cultures. For the last two decades Battlebridge has produced diverse works within creolistics and language contact studies. The recently established ‘Islanders Series’ expands this repertoire, providing both linguists and island studies scholars a forum for perusing and disseminating linguistic and cultural knowledge about island languages and language contact. The works in this series should appeal and be accessible to both specialists and non-specialists. In addition to reviewing the two works, I here also evaluate the role of a small academic publisher like Battlebridge in its Islanders Series, producing low cost books which are both informative and of financial benefit to the island locations they present. *Talk of St Kitts and Nevis* and *Bequia talk* meld scholarship, tourism encouragement, and artistic expression of interest and appeal to academics, island tourists and island residents.

These books illustrate a template common to all books in the Islanders Series: an introduction to the islands’ locations, explanations as to why one would want to travel there, the lay of the land, and aspects of interest to tourists. This introduction whets the reader’s appetite for more in-depth yet still brief descriptions of the islands’ histories. The books are pertinent case studies in island languages, cultures, and geographies of the Caribbean and the problems and ideological and political battles such small islands face in the light of new economic challenges. For example, the change in land use on St Kitts-Nevis and Bequia (pronounced ‘Beckway’), from the colonially ruled sugar plantations and other types of agriculture to modern tourism, demonstrates how Caribbean islands are coming to terms with modernity and new nationhood.

Key, not-too-technical elements of the islands' (socio)linguistic situation are peppered throughout: basic island terms, expressions for events and the insider-outsider distinction, and idiosyncratic names and words for the natural environment are melded into easy to read and digestible prose. This information is suitable for the academic (linguist or islophile) at the same time as providing enough data to encourage anyone to travel to these islands to discover what they have to offer, or at least read more about these locations. The linguistic information (grammar, texts, and wordlist for *Talk of St Kitts and Nevis*; words and ways of speaking, phonetics and phonology, and grammar for *Bequia talk*) is significant because the examples are applicable to the island cultures they describe and because these sections and analyses have drawn substantially on rare and unpublished sources, for which Battlebridge's books are noted.

In both *St Kitts and Nevis* and *Bequia talk*, islands in the eastern Caribbean, the authors achieve an excellent result by fusing images with pertinent cultural and historical information followed by popular and idiosyncratic linguistic data. The results are diverse: well put together, informative, easy-to-read monographs straddling the boundary of tourist guide book, popular history, island snapshot album, phrase and vocabulary glossary, and lead-in to a deeper linguistic study of islands. This creation of an almost new genre of information presentation within academic and popular publishing by Battlebridge is to be commended; island people are presented with information about their island, history, culture, environment, and language in a digestible package; this information is out in the world, and serves almost as passive and free, yet hopefully also beneficial, advertising for (their) islands, cultures, and languages. The historical presentations are relevant and cover aspects of colonial rule, slave movement and trade, and the expansion of the sugar industries in the Caribbean. These histories also relate the higher order colonial cultural geographies of these islands to more grounded empirical linguistic findings and processes of language and cultural change.

Battlebridge's Islander Series books are suitable for anyone who wants a reliable introduction to the islands they describe. In the case of *St Kitts and Nevis* and *Bequia*, there are no publications remotely comparable. Many people like to take gifts from the (island) places they visit to people back home. For many, an attractive looking book, which they may never read in its entirety, may be more interesting than a crudely made doll, a commemorative spoon, or a tea towel with a map. A small proportion of tourists (around 5-10%) want to know more about the place where they are going for, or are in the process of, a holiday. Because as a small publishing house Battlebridge has to become financially viable in order to survive, it is trying to appeal firstly, to a large clientele and secondly, to a large readership. As a result, the net has possibly been cast too wide. These books are caught between a rock and a hard place (or perhaps an island and a mainland): because of their broad linguistic appeal (from lay linguist to hardcore lexicographer) and attractiveness to island tourists and island scholars (from Lonely Planet tourist to serious nissologist), it is possible these books may not appeal to those who are being targeted: one-off tourists to the islands, researchers, and gift-givers. I believe this weakness is rectified through the eclectic nature and aesthetic appeal of these books. Because these books are original in form, format, and content, I have no doubt they will enjoy a long shelf life and will remain for a long time in the corpus of research relating not only to the languages and cultures of St Kitts-Nevis and Bequia but also to other Caribbean islands.

Joshua Nash
University of Adelaide, Australia
joshua.nash@adelaide.edu.au

Lilian Yamamoto & Miguel Esteban (2014). *Atoll island states and international law: Climate change displacement and sovereignty*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer-Verlag. xvi+307pp. 49 illustrations; 47 in colour. eBook format. ISBN: 978-3-642-38186-7. €83.30.

Climate change concerns us all; yet, the concern is probably biggest for low-lying atolls and atoll states that stand to lose everything from climate change. There are about 500 atolls around the world, but only four sovereign island states that consist almost exclusively of atolls: Kiribati, the Maldives, Marshall Islands, and Tuvalu. These are the focus of the book under review.

The book is the result of a truly interdisciplinary collaboration: Miguel Esteban is a coastal engineer; Lilian Yamamoto is a researcher of international law. Together, they have written a thorough account of the physical, political and social impacts of climate change for atoll states and their inhabitants.

The first chapters introduce the reader to the geological specificities of atolls, their economic condition, and climate change impacts for atolls. Atolls are low-lying coral islands that are formed as reefs grow around the remnants of a disappeared volcano. They are thus dynamic landforms that can grow and adapt to changes, including rising sea levels. There is indeed evidence that atoll land area has remained stable or even increased over the past decades. However, to what extent reefs are able to grow fast enough to keep up with current levels of sea-level rise is unclear, particularly because reef health is in many places in danger or already severely reduced. As the authors write, the greatest risk to atolls is not sea-level rise per se, but the ability of coral reefs to keep up with sea-level rise (p. 42). While sea-level rise is a core challenge, climate change affects atolls in many other ways, too, with impacts ranging from coral bleaching and ocean acidification to cyclones and water availability. Adaptation options accordingly also range from coral transplantation to salt tolerant crops. The discussion focuses however on “hard” coastal defence structures, a logical choice given the engineering background of one author. Seawalls are popular across small island states and with donors; their effectiveness, however, is questionable. The book explains in great detail why seawalls, far from protecting the shore, may in fact lead to greater erosion and increased vulnerability. They are often made from the corals themselves, not designed for changing climatic conditions, and require constant and costly maintenance and reinforcement. In light of these problems, the authors conclude that “relying on coastal structures to adapt against climate change thus appears to be an expensive and dangerous course of action for atoll island states” (p. 98).

What can atoll island states then do? The second part of the book here turns to international law. After a chapter on the international climate change negotiations and the role of the Alliance of Small and Island States (AOSIS) in them, the authors turn to two key questions: what could happen to the statehood and sovereignty of atoll island states if their territory is no longer inhabitable? And what would the status of their (former) inhabitants be, as “climate-change displaced persons”?

On the first question, the authors review how atoll island states could retain their maritime boundaries and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They discuss nine different scenarios, from freezing current boundaries to floating islands. Most scenarios centre on keeping the atoll over the water, through a “lighthouse” as “sovereignty marker” (p. 156); through houses built on

stilts; or by elevating the entire island through a combination of sea dykes and landfill. All these solutions are expensive, and it is unclear whether such artificially reinforced atolls count indeed as islands according to the UNCLOS. The next chapter thus discusses alternative solutions for retaining statehood, such as acquisition of territory abroad or novel concepts like a “de-territorialized state” and other entities *sui generis*. Regardless of their country’s eventual legal status, atoll islanders will need to migrate abroad. Relocation is not new to islanders; they have long histories of migrating to other islands and states. When exactly does a migrant become a “climate-change displaced person”, however, is difficult to say, as the decision to migrate depends on many factors. Even if one could clearly define a migrant as a “climate-change displaced person”, international law currently does not provide for them as they are not refugees—even if described as such by many. The outlook for remedying that situation through an international agreement is rather bleak, and so the authors recommend bilateral agreements as the more viable option.

The book concludes with a summary of legal issues, particularly with regard to migration; the natural science and engineering chapters, in contrast, are not mentioned, which partly explains the surprising brevity of the conclusion. Yet, here would have been a good opportunity to not only recap the content of the book, but also provide an outlook of what scenario the authors think likely—or what steps atoll island states have already taken. Throughout the text, these steps are hinted at, for instance that Kiribati seeks to “migrate with dignity”, while Tuvaluans emphasize their fate as “climate refugees” (p. 225). It would have been pertinent to bring together these and other examples of what atoll island states have done or are thinking of doing, also with regard to engineering solutions and retaining statehood. Indeed, local voices are generally absent; the reader does not know what atoll inhabitants themselves think and consider. Would they, for instance, prefer to acquire territory elsewhere or rather elevate their islands? Is there local awareness of the potential negative consequences of seawalls and other coastal defence structures?

It is not always easy to follow the text that sometimes is full of jargon and long, complex sentences. Tables could be integrated better into the text; the many schematic pictures, for the different scenarios on keeping maritime boundaries, in contrast, are very useful. Despite some shortcomings, then, this book is a timely and comprehensive overview over the special situation—physical, economic, legal—of atoll island states and their uncertain future that appeals to coastal engineers, legal scholars, political scientists, migration researchers and policy makers alike.

Carola Betzold
University of Gothenburg, Sweden
carola.betzold@gu.se

Guiot, H. (ed.), 2013. *Vivre la mer: Expressions océaniques de l'insularité*. Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 234 pp. ISBN 978-2-7535-2809-3. €22.00.

Consisting of twelve texts bringing together archaeological, ethnological, historical, artistic, and anthropological approaches, this book studies the representations South Pacific Oceanic peoples make of their maritime environment. In contrast to continental conceptions that usually hold the sea to be a hostile and dangerous boundary to land, this book offers a shift of

perception by demonstrating the centrality of the ocean to Oceanic societies' cosmologies. From this new angle, the islands and archipelagos dotting the South Pacific are not isolated and marginalized places, but to the contrary, spaces of great cultural and social wealth whose societies maintain an integral connection with the ocean that borders on the ontological. From these bits of land emerging from the water, island people have conceived a unique way of seeing the world and thinking about Elsewhere, all saturated by their intimate relationship with the sea. Fed by constant inter-island travel where the pirogue (dugout canoe) is a key element, it manifests itself variously in the myths and beliefs, art, and fishing and navigational techniques that are presented through the book's pages, from Polynesia to Melanesia, the Carolines to Tonga, the Marquesas to the Marshalls, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and the Society Islands. The book is an extension of the exhibition "La promesse d'une île" (An Island's Promise) at the Corderie Royale in Rochefort (France), and presents various Oceanic expressions of insularity and the sea. It is organized into four sections that occasionally intersect with one another.

The first section brings together four texts on the history of the peopling of the Pacific Ocean and the role of navigation in the emergence and social organization of island societies. Geoffrey Irwin presents the first Oceanic inhabitants' routes, way stations, and dates in the prehistoric period, and demonstrates the importance of knowledge of the maritime environment and the navigation techniques used in these migrations. Next, Anne Di Piazza offers a fascinating analysis of Oceanic cartography using the example of the map of Tupaia. Based on the knowledge of both Captain Cook and Tupaia, a high priest from Raiatea (French Polynesia), it is the fruit of an intercultural encounter that synthesizes the divergence of western and Oceanic approaches to cartography and the sources of geographical knowledge of places. The next two articles focus on navigation, in terms of maritime know-how in Paul d'Arcy's study based in the Caroline Islands, and by considering navigation to be a religious act laying claim to an identity in Vaimu'a Muliava's contribution. Each in turn demonstrates the extent to which navigation requires specific technical and cultural skills in order to develop in a known or unknown maritime space, as well as how fundamental it is to Oceanic culture and identity.

The second part is devoted to the pirogue, a complex and highly symbolic object in the Oceanic universe of South Pacific island areas. Its four texts offer intersecting and complementary views on this boat whose role in Oceanic societies goes well beyond simple transportation. Using the example of societies in the southern Vanuatu archipelago, Bergmans Iati offers a fascinating study of the pirogue's social dimension, structuring the whole society, its clans, tribes, rituals, climatic cycles, and historical periods. H el ene Guiot produces a similar analysis in a Polynesian variation, by developing the metaphor of the island and the pirogue (the island is a pirogue, the pirogue is an island) and showing the dual quality of the pirogue, as something mobile and as a container. Tara Hiquily's and Isabelle Leblic's articles, respectively addressing the Society Islands and southern New Caledonia, present more material visions of the pirogue by bringing museological insight to the nature of Polynesian pirogue sails and by describing the depth of technical knowledge and familiarity with the ocean associated with Kanak pirogues.

The third section, which is shorter, considers representations of insularity. In the first text, Claude Stéfani uses the travelogues of a pair of mid-19th century Russian explorers in the Marshall Islands to show how greatly perceptions of insularity may differ from one individual to the next, as each described the atolls they discovered together in a different way. In another register, Teiki Huukena demonstrates the particularity of Marquesan tattooing, as both a marker of social status and (even more so) as a way of representing knowledge and men's relationships to their marine and island environment.

In the final section two anthropologists recount their experiences of Oceanic insularity with sensitivity. The first, Pierre Maranda, recounts his arrival on the isolated island of Malaïta in the Solomons in the 1960s, where he came to discover the society of the Lau, with whom he would live in immersion for several months. Starting with the tale of a voyage in the islands of the Tongan archipelago in 1974, Marie-Claire Bataille-Benguigui describes with great finesse the experience of discovery and joy upon reaching an island by boat. Her two-week trip was a genuine revelation, bringing her to reverse her view of the ocean, from something that isolates to something that connects island societies together.

Hélène Guiot has given us a beautiful book that diversifies perspectives and island places by combining multiple approaches and scales, offering a beautiful exposition of the maritime identity of Oceanic peoples.

Nathalie Bernardie-Tahir
University of Limoges, France
nathalie.bernardie-tahir@unilim.fr

Godfrey Baldacchino & Eric Clark (eds.) (2013). Special issue: islanding cultural geographies, *Cultural Geographies*, Vol. 20, No. 2. London: Sage. Pp. 129-242; 257-265. ISSN: 1474-4740, print; 1477-0881, online.

This is not a book review; rather, it reviews a 'special issue' of the journal *Cultural Geographies*. Or to be precise, it reviews pages 129-242 (papers) and 257-265 (book reviews), there being sandwiched between two 'cultural geographies in practice' articles which have nothing explicitly to do with island studies but which are fascinating nonetheless. Why then should you read any further? The six papers, fore-grounded by a short introduction by the editors, were first presented at the second international conference of the International Geographical Union Commission on Islands held on the Swedish island of Ven in August 2010. Together they represent an attempt to think through islands in social theory. As editors Baldacchino and Clark put it, islands are 'good to think *with*', thus the point of the special issue is not to say interesting things about islands *per se*, but instead to 'island' cultural geographies, to ask what conceptual work islands do. The inspiration here is poet and academic Teresia Teaiwa's plea to make island a verb: to island, 'a way of living that could save our lives' (quoted p.129). Here then, 'islanding' is a way of being in the world, not a bounded examination of place, but a set of relations, projections and programmes, an assemblage, a coming together of things, ideas, energy and affect in the making of the island moment. Some readers might, not unreasonably, at this juncture counter 'but islands actually exist'. But this is not the point. It is the point of departure. Without getting drawn into an analysis of island ontologies – besides, Mark Jackson does this admirably in his paper – this perspective does not

deny that islands have material form (or rather, culturally, what we understand to be islands have stable materially-grounded signifiers), but instead seeks to think about the doings of islands. Islands then, as Baldacchino and Clark assert, are 'caught in this vortex of being [and] becoming'. The papers are explorations of this understanding and the collection a 'point of departure for further discussion' (p.130). This claim is sensible – the pragmatic admission that six papers alone cannot constitute a new way of thinking – but perhaps acts to undersell the important individual contributions made by the papers to 'islanding' social thought.

The papers are written by a combination of anthropologists, ethnologists, English scholars, sociologists, ethnographers and geographers: truly a diverse bunch. This diversity is also reflected in the subject matter of the papers, though I shall leave it up to readers to decide how the disciplinary backgrounds and papers conjoin. John Edward Terrell's paper considers the uncritical scientific acceptance of the idea that the inhabitants of the 'Polynesian' islands collectively represent a distinctive biological and cultural entity. This idea that people 'come in kinds' (p.136) and that such kinds are placed (and trapped in place) permeates both scientific and popular discourses of the Pacific today against the more useful acceptance emerging from work in archaeology and human genetics that there never was any single Polynesian race or place of origin. Owe Ronstöm's short article takes a very different perspective: the differences between understanding islands as lived realities ('focus') and as metaphor ('locus'). This reworking of the 'locus-focus' debate is channelled through a review of the study of ethnology in Sweden and concludes, not too surprisingly, that both perspectives are useful in understanding that there are both many ideas of islands and an 'immense diversity' of material islands (p.161).

Elizabeth DeLoughrey's analysis also explores the effects of the coming together of island as idea – here as isolated, controllable laboratory – and lived reality in relation to American nuclear testing in the 1940s and 1950s in Micronesia and the emergence of ecosystem ecology. The idea of the closed system though was both given the lie by both the wider effects of radiation ('we all carry a small piece of that island in our bones', p.179) and the transoceanic culture of Pacific islanders. Mimi Sheller also examines the effects of US policies in making islandness. Here, the context is the spatial plays of humanitarian logistics in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti. The effects were, so Sheller argues, to limit the mobilities (and thus circumscribe subjectivities) of most Haitians (and their capital), the creation of new militarised ground and air systems acting to limit their 'mobility rights' (p.199) while hypermobile elites hovered (literally) over their suffering.

Mark Jackson's paper takes a radically different perspective, contrasting islands of 'humus' and islands of plastic. Thinking through islands as throwing together of the human and non-human in temporary assemblages in time allows us, Jackson asserts, to remember that we are but processes rooted in (almost) timeless systems of decay, the idea of islands of plastic thus serve as evidence of the collapse in our ethical capabilities to recognise our connection to 'humus'. The final article, by Phillip Vannini and Jonathan Taggart, takes a different inspiration from post-structuralist thinkers, the perspective here being how islands are practiced through everyday life. Their paper offers an ethnography of dwelling in Vancouver Island and, more broadly, the Canadian west coast, and concludes that we need to see islandness as 'a type of situated affect or feeling... a way of being in touch with your island' (p.236). To live as islander is to create the island, it is both fleeting (the moment) and sustained (through repetition and shared experience).

And what of pages 257-265? The book reviews do not fit the theme of islanding, their connection only being that they draw together a series of books on and of islands. And to review reviews would be unfair on either sets of authors. So, what are the conclusions? What unites these markedly different papers with their disparate languages, literatures and approaches? In some senses it is obvious for they all force us to confront the political and cultural *affects* of the coming together of islands of matter and metaphor, of place and process. The material mediates the imaginary, the imagined creates new ways of being in the world and hence new worlds. In other ways the most important conclusion is by focusing on the becoming of islands (or in the case of Jackson's paper, the what might become) we are forced to acknowledge that islands are mutable matter and islandness a set of ideas that circulate beyond reference to any idea material reality. Islands are a process: they come both before and after human practice. And here comes my only major complaint: an 'afterword' would have usefully teased out these implications in a way an introduction written by joint editors never can. Otherwise, this set of papers should be compulsory reading for all scholars interested in what islands do.

Carl J. Griffin

University of Sussex, Brighton, U.K.

Carl.Griffin@sussex.ac.uk

Joshua John Green (2013) *Music-making in the Faroes: The experience of music-making in the Faroes and making Metal Faroese*. Torshavn, Faroe Islands: Sprotin. 332pp, ISBN: 978-99918-76-55-9. 188DKK / Can\$35.

There is very little scholarly work in English on the music of the Faroes. There is even less written on the heavy metal music of this group of isolated islands situated between Scotland, Iceland and Norway. In this context, Green's book is a much welcomed contribution to academic literature in this field of music research, and particularly in this island context where the reader learns about music making in a small island setting. In writing this book, Green locates Faroese metal music within the context of broader music making in this island setting, and shows how aspects of traditional music and culture feature in some styles of contemporary metal music. Such features offer a sense of nationalism and help link Faroese metal music with a sense of Faroese island identity and nationalism.

The Faroes occupy a distinct place in the north Atlantic. As part of the Kingdom of Denmark, the archipelago is semi-autonomous and not a part of the European Union. Islanders have their own language, and many also speak Danish and English. Its unique political and cultural identity, which is strengthened by its archipelagic dislocation from not only its sovereign mainland, but also any other mainland, has allowed its near 50,000 population to assert a large degree of political independence. There is also a very strong secessionist movement with increasing calls for independence from Denmark. Such a setting has helped nurture a unique island culture.

Green draws on three months of fieldwork experience mostly undertaken in and around the Faroese capital of Tórshavn. He has structured his book around eight unnumbered chapters, and offers a logical flowing argument through different spheres of the metal scene. The first chapter is an introduction to the book and locates the Faroes geographically and politically. A

particular approach to the research for the book is noted early on with mention of file-sharing and the author becoming acquainted with metal music of the Faroes without actually travelling there. As the author notes, the purpose of the research, which started out as a postgraduate thesis, asked the question: “How are Faroese musicians and industry professionals projecting a sense of place as well as creating, expressing, and marketing an emergent Faroese identity in the global market” (p. 15). After beginning his fieldwork in the Faroes, Green realized that his study needed to think more broadly by looking at “the experience of music, music-making, and being a musician in the Faroe Islands” (p. 18). The author offers an excellent case study of music ethnography in popular music studies that unravels much about not only the metal scene, but also broader Faroese culture.

The second chapter focuses on theory and methodology, which divides the chapter into two parts. The theoretical orientation is based on humanistic anthropology and the interpretation of culture, with a close affinity to the work of Clifford Geertz. With this particular research, there is a natural association with the ethnographic work on music of Anthony Seeger and Thomas Turino, and the popular music studies of Harris Berger amongst others. In terms of methodology, as well as interviewing numerous key informants (musicians and other significant people in the metal scene), Green immersed himself in the language and culture, and studied these aspects as a matter of urgency in the early stages of his fieldwork. Notably, while Green was based in the capital, he aimed to approach his research broadly and include musicians from other parts of the Faroes. Participant observation underpinned his research method, and crossed over with the use of social networking as a way of making contacts and furthering his knowledge of music making in this island context.

Faroese music history is outlined in the third chapter, which introduces a range of different styles across time. Including pre-history, heroic ballads and religious singing, the author offers a succinct background to many styles of music and modes of performance. The discussion moves logically into the next chapter, which looks at the role of traditional music in contemporary Faroese society. While noting the limitations of the chapter, Green does comment on “national symbols” (p. 90) that have remained in contemporary culture for islanders. The role of nationalism and its place in school classrooms was made clear to the author during his first interview, and it was a topic that featured throughout much of his research.

The subject of (heavy) metal music is the focus of chapter five. This is the main chapter that reflects the title of the book. As well as outlining the characteristics of metal music and the metal scene, Green locates the genre, with its many subgenres, on the Faroes. The author worked with seven Faroese metal bands, and during his fieldwork he asked the bands about the constitution of meaning in Faroese metal, especially how it relates to traditional music on the islands. One band, Týr, connects very closely with Faroese history, which acts as an emblem of its locality and permeates much of the band’s music. Detailing some of the many metal subgenres, Green notes the importance of folk metal in this context, along with the often interchangeable genre of pagan metal. Indeed, “in Týr’s music, their incorporation of a variety of local (Faroese) elements into their music is often interpreted as a marker of their ‘authenticity’” (p. 135).

As a way of contextualizing the subject matter within broader cultural flows, the next chapter explores the idea of popular music within and beyond the islands. Green was acutely aware that he should not base his entire research around the capital of the Faroes. This chapter is of special interest to the field of Island Studies in that it draws on pertinent literature and offers examples where the notion of island is at the core of the study. Of special note is the following observation: “As I did more interviews, the two related recurring themes of the desirability or perceived necessity of moving away from the Faroes, and of the importance of reaching out internationally from the islands became increasingly glaring” (p. 197).

The last main analytical chapter deals with the topics of sociality, scene, language and religion. Each of these themes is of importance in understanding the context of metal performance more closely, and while Green condenses the discussion of these important concepts into one chapter, he does observe how metal music connects with each. One section that is especially interesting is on language choices in music composition. As Green notes, just about everyone in the Faroes speaks fluent Faroese, Danish and English, and this is played out in the metal scene in terms of the suitability of which language to use for song lyrics. The author notes the perceived difficulty of writing lyrics in Faroese, and that English is often used as a global language that helps locate the islands in a much broader context. However, bands such as Týr often use Faroese, which helps contradict the internationalization argument. As Green notes, “many people elaborated upon their language choice stances by explaining that it depends on the type of music (the genre, or in most cases, the metal sub-genre) that one plays to determine which language would be most suitable” (p. 274).

Green’s conclusion asks the question: “Why is there so much music in the Faroes?” When noting that music on the Faroes seems to play a bigger part in everyday life than in the author’s experiences of living in New Brunswick, he reflects on the theoretical work of Turino and comments that “I am certain that the significance of music in the Faroes can scarcely be overstated” (p. 291). Of particular importance is the reiteration that metal music on the Faroes is especially active in “referencing and re-framing elements of their nation’s traditional music” (p. 306), which links metal to the nationalist movement, and in this particular context the island and political setting.

To support the text the author has included several black and white illustrations of metal performers, and a useful list of references. While the book doesn’t include a CD, there is an appendix that lists several albums of metal music from the Faroes. Some web links would have been useful to include, but, as the author noted early on, it was through the internet that he became aware of Faroese metal in the first place. Unfortunately, the book does not include an index.

Henry Johnson
University of Otago, New Zealand
henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz
