

## BOOK REVIEWS SECTION

**Xu Liqiang (2015).** *Impact of climate change and human activity on the eco-environment. An analysis of the Xisha islands.* Heidelberg, Germany: Springer Theses. 150pp, ISBN: 978-3-662-45003-1. US\$ 99.00 (ebk); ISBN 978-3-662-45002-4. US\$ 129.00 (hbk).

This book is based on the author's PhD thesis, which examines the changes in the eco-environment of the Xisha archipelago (also known as the Paracel islands) in the central South China Sea over the last 2000 years. All the islands of the archipelago are coral islands in a tropical ocean. So far, the Xisha Islands have been well preserved and they remain in a relatively pristine condition due to their distance from mainland China and restrictions on traveling to the area imposed by the Chinese government.

Changes in seawater temperature, animal migration and human activities, therefore, may bring ecological risks and may substantially impact the vulnerable ecosystem of the islands. The main objective of this study is to explain interactions between the climate system, marine environments, seabirds and coral islands. Furthermore, it aims to provide data to predict future ecological responses to climate change. DNA barcoding and elemental, isotopic, geochemical, and biochemical analyses of the ornithogenic sediments from the Xisha Islands are used to track changes in the island ecology, along with multi-proxy analyses and regional comparisons. Soils that are ornithogenic – literally, originating from birds – consist of a well-defined layer of bird excrement, or guano, resting on mineral layers.

In order to find out about environments on the Xisha archipelago, Xu's research selected various biological materials such as sediments and seabird remains (bones, guano). Seabirds inhabit these islets in large numbers and have played a central role in the development of the ecosystem. Seabird occupation leads to the accumulation of high levels of guano in the soil, which supports the development of flora: a great number of trees and shrubs flourish on guano-rich islands. The thriving vegetation, in turn, provides an ideal habitat for the seabirds. This case study shows that, besides nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), seabirds may also deliver significant quantities of contaminants and metal pollutants to a pristine and fragile island eco-environment. Regarding mercury, for instance, this happens, as Xu suggests that the dry and wet deposition of mercury from the atmosphere above the South China Sea "could be absorbed by the extremely productive oceanic phytoplankton" (p.106). Mercury is then further transferred to fish and then to birds as their predators.

Collected soil samples consisted of a sediment mixture including plant humus, seabird guano and coral sand with remains of bird and fish bones. In order to trace elements in the soil and guano, elemental and isotopic analyses were carried out. However, the main method used in this study is a multi-proxy analysis which includes determining the age of ornithogenic sediments in the coral sand. Chemical analyses and radiometric dating techniques used include lead ( $^{210}\text{Pb}$ ) and radiocarbon ( $^{14}\text{C}$ ) chronology analyses. The long half-life of radiocarbon (more than 5000 years) means it is well suited to determining the age of ancient carbon-bearing materials (such as bird and fish bones from hundreds to 50,000 years old). Several other radionuclides – or unstable, radioactive atom nuclei – were detected in ornithogenic coral sand sediment cores collected from five different islands of the Xisha archipelago, including radium ( $^{226}\text{Ra}$ ) and caesium ( $^{137}\text{Cs}$ ). Seabirds may have a significant impact on radionuclide concentrations in their immediate surroundings. However, peaks of  $^{137}\text{Cs}$  were discovered in 1963 and 1986. The former were identified as a record of the 1963 fallout

maximum – following the programs of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing conducted through 1962 – and the younger peaks might be explained by the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. The author states that geochemical evidence is a “basis for the further construction of seabird population size and plant development history, which is essential for establishing the development mode of the island ecosystems in low attitude tropical oceans” (p. 69). Using elemental geochemical analysis, seven elements have been identified as avian bio-elements which can be used to track seabird population history. This provided evidence of a sharp decrease in seabird population around 300 BC and continuing low levels over the next 100 years. The reason for this is unclear so far, but, nevertheless the author suggests a possible relation to environmental change following a disaster (e.g., typhoons). Another abrupt decrease of seabirds, probably caused by human activities (e.g., contamination, overfishing), began in 1850, which coincides with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe and North America. Xu argues that the seabirds may vanish entirely from the archipelago in the near future and therefore it “becomes urgent to assess the vulnerability and resilience of such coral island ecosystems on a scientific basis” (p. 92). Increases in levels of mercury in bird eggshells, which has been linked to human activity, pose another risk to the ecosystems of the Xisha Islands. Over the time that this increase was recorded, the seabird population has decreased rapidly.

The originality of this study lies in the provision of data on island development, evolution of species (e.g. seabirds) and environmental changes, as well as on ecological changes in the island ecosystems due to climate change and catastrophic events that have impacted flora and fauna. These findings are based on natural science research methods, which are sometimes difficult to understand if the reader is unfamiliar with the field. The text includes many repetitions. Some of these are helpful, since the text is rather difficult, but, on the other hand, many are not necessary.

Considering the long-term interaction between seabird population and plant development is a rather new approach to investigating the ecosystems of tropical islands. In order to understand the interaction, the analysis of various source materials on the islands using a range of methods is, therefore, indispensable as it is changes in these source materials that provide valuable information about the development and history of the coral island ecosystem.

The title of the book could be considered misleading, since the chapter on climate change *per se* is rather short and is the last chapter of the book. There is, therefore, less focus on the climate change debate than the reader might expect the book to offer. As the methodology and formulas used are from the natural sciences, the illustrations and figures are very helpful for general readers or those coming from other disciplines. A list of the many abbreviations used in the text would have been useful. Nevertheless, the study is very comprehensive and complete. It would be interesting to compare the Xisha archipelago results with those obtained by applying the same research methods to other tropical and non-tropical islands.

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**Scott Leckie (Ed.) (2014). *Land solutions for climate displacement*. Abingdon: Routledge. 382pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-70373-4. US\$168.00.**

As climate change and displacement debates expand with dedicated academic conferences and policy processes, publications on the topic also continue to multiply. Recent years have seen multiple dedicated journal issues and books, frequently highlighting island communities as being most affected now and potentially in the future by decisions to migrate due to climate change. *Land solutions for climate displacement* is one such contribution, adopting a practical view on what could and should be achieved for people displaced due to climate change, with a strong focus on island case studies.

Scott Leckie, an international human rights lawyer who founded and directs Displacement Solutions (a Geneva-registered non-profit), is the book's editor. He pens the book's introductory and concluding chapters, broadly framing the material based on human rights. Further background is provided by two academic chapters: one from Anthony Oliver-Smith, covering a theoretical overview of climate displacement with case studies; and one from Leslie A. Stein, discussing climate change adaptation approaches.

The rights-based approach is not accorded extensive detail or given a robust academic grounding, but its meaning is provided succinctly and clearly – exactly as should be expected for practitioners – as a human right to housing, land, and property. Existing human rights law is the foundation for the rights promoted by Leckie and the other authors. Additionally, an undertone of a climate justice ethos is evoked, highlighting that “the vast majority of climate displaced persons are not responsible for the processes driving climate change” (p. 360).

Within these ethics, the book's core consists of on-the-ground case studies. Three chapters cover Bangladesh – a country with a large number of residents, around 100 million, vulnerable to the effects of even modest rises in sea level – including the country's many deltaic islands. Four chapters are on Pacific islands: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu. One contribution is about Newtok, Alaska (population about 350), a village on the Ninglick River, which is described as becoming an island due to erosion linked to climate change. A single chapter discusses Myanmar, which is ostensibly the only non-island location; except that one of the country's most poignant climate-related incidences in recent times was Cyclone Nargis, killing over 78,000 people in 2008 when it struck a delta region, hence numerous island communities were affected.

The power and originality of these case studies is the book's strength and its useful contribution to island studies. Most of the case study authors come from the regions, and often the communities, about which they are writing. The authors are balanced by gender as well.

They have all worked directly with the people affected and represent them in articulating the climate change challenges faced, particularly the likely need and potential mechanisms for relocation. The majority consists of practitioners working in the NGO sector with a variety of professional backgrounds, but several competently straddle research, policy, and practice.

The practitioner grounding of many of the authors means that not all chapters present solid engagement with the academic literature or with scientific theories. Lack of academic rigour is not necessarily detrimental given the strength of the pragmatic discussions. Increased acknowledgement of critiquing approaches based on scientific publications and a fuller challenge of some of the assumptions would have rounded out the book.

In particular, throughout all chapters, a baseline axiom is accepted without question: that people will indeed become “climate displaced” (sometimes using the word ‘relocated’), expressed as being synonymous with people moving due to climate change. The main approaches proffered in the chapters seek pragmatic solutions based on the book’s annex of ‘The peninsula principles on climate displacement within states’. This document’s development was led by Leckie and finalized in 2013.

The ‘peninsula principles’ comprise eighteen statements with multiple sub-clauses that provide principles for dealing with internal climate displacement. Neither the principles nor the responses to displacement suggested in the case studies make it clear why climate displacement is different from other forms of environmentally related displacement or, indeed, non-environmentally related displacement occurring on similar time scales. Even in locations where climate change is really the only reason for considering moving a community, such as Newtok, it is unclear how the process might be different if the community were forced to relocate for other reasons, such as declining livelihoods, civil strife, or increasingly polluted fresh water supplies.

Consequently, the theoretical framings sandwiching the case study chapters could be strengthened, especially regarding further justification for a single-minded focus on climate displacement. The book’s introduction assumes, without investigation, that climate change will directly cause significant displacement. Yet, from academic conferences and publications on this topic – and even from the case studies in the book – it is increasingly clear that direct causality is rare, with numerous nuances alongside interrelationships with other development topics, such as post-colonialism, governance, and population density.

Certainly, amongst the case studies in this book are those with the clearest causal connection between climate change and relocation decisions, namely Newtok and the Carteret Islands, Papua New Guinea. The exceptional nature (for the moment) of those examples makes them all the more important, to explore why they are exceptions and to balance whether or not these exceptions support a specific climate-related legal or rights regime. It might, or might not; but the question is not fully discussed.

In fact, the book’s assumption that climate change can and should be separated from other topics does not match long-standing research on the placement and role of climate change within wider development subjects. Scientists who have previously challenged the book’s theoretical assumptions regarding climate displacement, such as Betsy Hartmann and Giovanni Bettini, are not cited. The editor and authors might disagree with these scholars’ perspectives, but Hartmann’s and Bettini’s arguments (amongst others) ought to be acknowledged and then deconstructed, to indicate points of disagreement and reasons for the divergence of views.

The case studies nonetheless provide notable and insightful island perspectives, from the Arctic to the tropics. The material is relevant to island studies in terms of its pragmatism. It delivers discerning views from those forced to make decisions related to moving communities through a solid empirical base from which to interpret and develop theory; and then to try to understand how best to deal with the challenges and opportunities brought by climate change.

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**Julianne Maher (2013). *The survival of people and languages: Schooners, goats, and cassava in St. Barthélemy, French West Indies*. Brill's Studies in Language, Cognition, and Culture, Volume 5. Leiden: Brill, 240pp, €109/US\$141, ISBN: 978-90-041-8326-1.**

This is an island studies book disguised as a linguistics book. Julianne Maher's text is a fascinating, multi-decade study of a small Caribbean island whose current status as a holiday haven for the rich and famous obscures its history of dire poverty, powerlessness in geopolitical trade – the residents of the island were powerless when their island was traded from France to Sweden and back again – and vulnerability to natural and human disasters. It will be of interest even to readers with little to no knowledge of, or interest in, linguistics. At its core, this book is an investigation, an example of social-scientific sleuthing at its best.

The island of St. Barthélemy is commonly called St. Barth or St. Barts; it is home to four distinct languages. Although the island is small – only 23 km<sup>2</sup> – and its native population is ethnically homogenous, being descended from the original 17<sup>th</sup> Century French settlers, these languages exist as spatially divided regional tongues. None is derived from another: each has its own social and linguistic history. Three of the St. Barth languages are derived from French and the fourth is a form of English. Even more puzzling than the mere existence of four languages on such a small island is the fact that there appears to be no one on St. Barth who speaks more than one of the local languages. Multilingual St. Barth residents generally learn standard French or North American English in addition to their mother tongue – not another of their island's languages. Maher wants to understand why this is so. Adding to the riddle is the existence of two long-established emigrant communities from distinct language regions of St. Barth who have settled on St. Thomas in the US Virgin Islands. These communities have maintained their distinct languages even in their new home. To address these and other anomalies, Maher sets out on a historical journey to St. Barth, throughout the Caribbean and beyond.

The book opens in the same way that an actual visit to St. Barth usually commences: by air. The approach to the Gustav III airport on St. Barth is notoriously difficult. Maher's description of the anticipation, the anxiety, and the over-so-quick nature of the landing serves to drop the reader right onto the island, feeling the airplane brake as the beach at the end of the runway grows closer. Once grounded, Maher takes her reader on a tour of St. Barth's twisty, mountainous road network. This is no mere joy ride! Because the language questions that are to be discussed later in the book are influenced in a large part by the geography of the island, this tour is essential to our understanding of the terrain – both topographic and linguistic. With that in mind, one point of criticism is that the map on p.5 could, and should, have been larger and more detailed. This reviewer continually flipped back to the map when a new place name was encountered, only to find that most were not, in fact, charted. It was only with the aid a foldout paper map (not included with the book) that the geographic significance of many of the author's points was fully understood.

After asking, *s'il vous plaît*, for a better map, this reviewer has only two further critiques. The first is common to many first editions and is a request for better editing, particularly in this case in the area of references. Several sources are cited in the text (by author's name and date) yet are not found in the References section. The second has to do with the book's title, or its subtitle to be exact. The reviewer recognizes the literary trend of naming three seemingly unrelated objects as an enticing preview of a book's content. We probably have *Guns, Germs, and Steel* to thank for the popularity of this motif. It occasionally works, as

it has in Diamond's case. Here, however, the subtitle lingers throughout the reading as a reference to nothing. Schooners do play a small role in the story told here: these ships were instrumental in bringing certain St. Barths to other islands, where they came in contact with other languages. But the goats and cassava hardly play a significant role throughout the text. Surely, a subtitle that is still catchy but also relevant could be developed for the second edition of this book. Speaking of a second edition, it is the hope of this reviewer that the publisher will decide to produce a full run, rather than keeping it in a "print on demand" status. The text certainly deserves it.

*The Survival of People and Languages* is divided into two major sections, though the Table of Contents belies this fact. The first section, beginning inconspicuously at "section 1.3" on p.11, tells the story of St. Barth, the Caribbean, and the broader Atlantic World from at least the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century up to the present. (Jaunts are made into the region's deeper history but the main story commences in 1681.) This is a masterfully written history. Maher's concise yet detail-attentive prose covers just over 100 pages (pp. 11-119), yet in thoroughness and readability it surpasses historical tomes of triple its length.

Maher tells of the powerlessness of the St. Barths as European nations fought one another for control of strategically located islands and of the Caribbean region as a whole. Coining the evocative term, "history's shuttlecock" (p.29), Maher details the capture and recapture of St. Barth by the French and British, back and forth over the course of more than a century. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Sweden (yes, Sweden!) made its first and only foray into the world of Caribbean colonialism when France ceded St. Barth for trading rights in Gothenburg. The Swedish colonial rulers built the island's capital, calling it Gustavia after their king, Gustaf III, opened the port to free trade, and declared the island a place of asylum for those hoping to escape debt. The influx of international traders and debt evaders that came during the near century of Swedish rule lent Gustavia a cosmopolitan feel like never before. The internationalization of St. Barth during the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century would be unparalleled until luxury tourism began to approach its current level during the 1990s. This was partly due to global factors far beyond St. Barth's shores. For example, Maher notes that for one year during the War of 1812, while American goods were embargoed by Britain, almost 20% of the total exports from the United States went to St. Barth. The English language came to dominate the urban area, while the three local, French-derived languages maintained their prominence in the countryside. Maher describes this dichotomy as "two separate worlds" (p.41), both linguistically and economically. Gustavia's heyday did not seem to impact on the livelihoods of the farmers, herders, and fishers spread throughout the rest of the island. Poverty, illiteracy, and isolation remained hallmarks of the lives of rural St. Barths throughout Gustavia's economic rise and fall. When economic activity waned, Sweden transferred the island back to France in 1878.

The island remained impoverished and divided, socially and linguistically. English was spoken in Gustavia and the three French-derived languages maintained dominance of their respective sectors of the St. Barth countryside. Despite its small size, the island's topography is hilly, travel across the island was difficult, and its culture was one that emphasized the importance of staying at home, especially for women. These factors do not lead to language shift or merger.

Were the book to end here, it would still merit glowing reviews. However, an entire major section remains. The second section (pp.121-196) looks at each language in turn, using highly technical tools of linguistic analysis. One by one, Maher examines transcripts she

herself recorded with native speakers of Gustavia English, Saline French, St. Barth Creole, and St. Barth Patois. While the second section is primarily of interest to linguists, it does contain kernels of information that will pique the curiosity of the general scholar.

This book's major contribution to the field of island studies is its realization that an island is not an internally homogenous entity. So often we speak of islands as bounded, self-contained, and isolated as though the only relevant divisions were "outside" and "inside." Maher's study of the four distinct St. Barth languages reminds us that islands are not the indivisible particles that we often make them out to be. Just like the atom at the advent of quantum physics, islands are now known to be made up of constituent parts. While politically divided islands such as St. Barth's neighbour, Saint Martin/Sint Maarten, make this point through geopolitical boundaries, St. Barth, as Maher shows us, is an archipelago of linguistic islands, existing within one geographic island. St. Barth, like all literal islands, is bounded by its coastline. The four linguistic islands within St. Barth are bounded by hills and human history.

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**Emanuel Buttigieg and Simon Phillips (Eds.) (2013). *Islands and military orders, c. 1291-c. 1798*. Farnham: Ashgate. Hbk, 302pp. ISBN: 978-1-4724-0990-4. US\$134.95.**

Christianity's first military orders emerged in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, by-products of Roman Catholic Europe's concerted efforts to wrest the Holy Lands from Muslim control. With the fall of Acre in 1291, however, even the most powerful military orders – the Knights Hospitaller, the Knights Templar, and Teutonic Order among them – were ousted from the Levantine mainland and forced to relocate elsewhere. While the Teutonic Order ultimately moved its headquarters to Prussia, the Knights Hospitaller and Knights Templar (and others) set about establishing bases on several Mediterranean islands: Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta, and others. What influence did island life have on the military orders? And what effects did military orders have on the islands that they made their homes?

In *Islands and military orders*, 21 scholars – mostly historians, but also sociologists, archaeologists, and students of architecture and literature – take up these and related questions. The contributors draw upon extensive archival research, original archaeological discoveries, and the secondary academic literature of multiple disciplines and languages. The end product is a sweeping yet scrupulously detailed account of how several military orders dealt with the challenges and opportunities presented by their military defeats to Muslim forces and their subsequent relocation to island bases. Although the bulk of the book's contributions deal with the Hospitallers (perhaps the archetypical island-dwelling military order), significant attention is paid to the Templars and Teutonics. Comparatively minor attention is given to several lesser known orders, most of them short-lived.

At its most basic level, this volume is a work of human geography: an exploration of how military orders affected their surroundings and were, in turn, influenced by the geographic constraints imposed by island spaces. The first section (chapters 1-4) provides a

theoretical foundation along these lines, arguing that islands were not epiphenomenal to military orders' historical trajectories, but rather were critical drivers of their historical development. The counterfactual implication is that the history of the military orders would have been much different had their post-Acre existence taken place in some mainland context (as, indeed, was the case with the Teutonics) instead of on islands.

Following the introductory theoretical section, the remaining 18 chapters are grouped thematically. The second section (chapters 5-7) gives the history of the military orders' (and particularly the Hospitaller's) relocation from the Levantine mainland to Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta and beyond. The third section (chapters 8-11) explores how island life became routinized and institutionalized, ultimately coming to shape the military orders' identities and practices. The fourth section (chapters 12-14) discusses how islands allowed military orders to maintain active participation in regional affairs. The fifth section (chapters 15-17) details the military and defensive benefits of island life from the perspective of the military orders, while the sixth section (chapters 18-22) concludes with economic aspects of the military orders' island existence.

Three common themes stand out. First, it is evident that the geographic facts of island life imposed structural constraints and exigencies upon military orders. The need to secure the tacit loyalty of extant island communities, the military requirement to maintain a functioning naval force and the obligation to construct island fortifications along its coast are pertinent examples. Yet, not all islands were made equal from the perspective of military orders; in particular, geographic location mattered greatly. Because the orders' longevity was highly contingent upon the continued patronage and suffrage of donors and elites in Western Europe, the military orders were perennially compelled to justify their existence by doing battle against "the infidels." The optimal island base, then, needed to be politically secure and militarily defensible; but also close enough to the edges of Christendom to attract the sponsorship of those invested in the crusading enterprise.

Second, islands were prized not for their insularity but for their connectivity. Easy access to the sea meant that islands such as Rhodes, Malta and Cyprus were bases from which military orders could maintain close ties with Roman Catholic Europe, the embattled Byzantine Empire, and also the Muslim world against which the military orders were supposedly ranged. Indeed, openness was essential to the military orders' existence, with each of them critically dependent upon the logistical ability to import human resources – especially knights, but also labourers – as well as the material resources afforded by a relatively free maritime trade regime.

Third, if islands affected the military orders in profound ways – effectively affording the orders a second chance at relevance in a post-Acre geopolitical and religious context – then, so too did military orders affect the islands that they colonized. Islands were built up, fortified, adorned with new styles of architecture and bestowed with new economic activity; they became the sites of mass inward and outward migration; and ultimately would come to play major role in the cultural development of the entire region. Indeed, the legacy of colonization by military orders persists to this day; a fact repeatedly emphasized by the contributors.

All in all, then, a truly vast amount of material is covered in this volume, and it is to the editors' enormous credit that *Islands and military orders* hangs together as a coherent body of work instead of a disparate collection of narrowly focused contributions. Only minor criticisms are warranted. For example, more could have been done to theorize the

militarization of island spaces in the context of *colonialism*, for although the themes of colonization and imperialism are implicit throughout the book, they rarely are dealt with directly (William Zammit's excellent contribution on the Order of St. John's brief control over various Caribbean Islands being a notable exception). Similarly, given the contemporary relevance of island bases – US and prospective Chinese bases in the Asia-Pacific, for example – an opportunity was perhaps missed to use the military orders' experiences in order to draw some conclusions about the future role that (militarized) islands could play in world affairs.

These are slight complaints, however. In the final analysis, *Islands and military orders* remains a thoroughly researched and well-conceived compendium. Although it will be of particular importance to scholars of military orders, of course, general audiences will surely find much to interest them.

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**Christoph Singer (2014) *Sea change: The shore from Shakespeare to Banville*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. 303pp, ISBN: 978-90-420-3904-9, US\$90.**

*Sea change* is published in Rodopi's series on 'Spatial Practices', a series which draws upon the constructivist turn in cultural geography, and which is devoted to reading geographical spaces and cultural objects as texts and tropes. The book matches the aims of the series faithfully. The shore is read throughout the book as the effect of literary discourse; as a trope of ambiguity, transformation, liminality, deconstruction, and transgression. It is a constructed space, the appearance of which in literary narratives serves to mark psychological crises or trauma. Islands, beaches, and seas are read throughout *Sea change* as metaphors for problems in human identity and knowledge.

For this reason, the book (and perhaps also the series) may seem to some *Island Studies Journal* readers oddly out of step with developments in maritime and archipelagic studies, which have emerged from the environmental humanities and are strongly marked by materialist methodologies. Indeed, in the very first issue of this journal, Pete Hay argued for the excision of literary and cultural studies which read islands as metaphorical abstractions from island studies altogether. Similarly, in a survey essay of oceanic studies published in the *PMLA* (journal of the Modern Language Association of America) in 2010, Hester Blum began emphatically by stating that 'The sea is not a metaphor', and suggested that readings of the sea as an abyss of representation contributed to the invisibility and immateriality of the sea and sea labour in landlocked national and post-national discourses. A response from a constructivist critic to this materialist emphasis in recent work on the seas and islands would certainly be stimulating. However, there is no engagement with the new maritime and island studies in Christoph Singer's book, which takes its theoretical framework instead from Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and, especially, Michel Serres.

*Sea change* is, in its own terms, a work of 'trialectics', and the shore is useful only in so far as it exemplifies a deconstruction of binary oppositions between land and sea, self and other, life and death, and so on. It is, for Singer, a third space that breaks down dichotomies, inviting and generating both utopian transformation and dystopian catastrophe. The choice of

literary texts which illustrate this metaphorical space is not particularly surprising: Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Milton's *Paradise lost*, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Arnold's 'Dover Beach', Conrad's *Heart of darkness*, Golding's *Lord of the flies*, Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Banville's *The sea*, and McCarthy's *The road*. A handful of other writers and texts make brief appearances, but these are the key texts, which bear the weight of analysis that the shore is a trope of ambiguity, liminality, and transgression. It is an ambitious range of widely celebrated and studied literary works, and yet it is this ambition which perhaps exposes the principal weakness of the book, and perhaps more widely of the constructivist approach. So relentlessly and repeatedly does Singer find evidence of the same tropes of the shore in each major text, one begins to wonder whether the texts were required at all.

The same criticism might be levelled at the very figure of the shore as it is deployed in the book. For, although Singer is careful to distinguish between the beach and the shore, for example, distinctions are only ever made at a typological level. There are no actual shores, and few references to actual seas or islands, and so completely does the book erase any sense of relationship to material contexts that one might be forgiven (I hope) for finding the experience of reading it somewhat claustrophobic. We appear to be trapped in the same space – that is emphatically not a place – throughout *Sea change*. Indeed, so seriously does the book adopt the solipsistic vision of a world generated by words that it offers, without qualification, statements such as this: 'Beaches and shorelines are literary spaces constructed as margins and borderlands'. At no point does it engage even with those narratives which use the shore as a place in which to question this solipsism; Stephen Dedalus's walk along Sandymount Strand in *Ulysses* does exactly this. If the book can be said to have a historical argument, ranging as it does from Shakespeare to Banville, it is that the shore figures most prominently in literary narratives at times of social upheaval. Yet, here also, the lack of specificity about precisely what historical changes – or even 'epistemic anxieties' – give rise to these literary manifestations of the shore undermines any cogency to the argument. That history is textual has long been understood in cultural studies, but here there is neither enough history nor enough textuality to make the argument meaningful. One would either need a more thoroughly grounded understanding of the historical contexts giving rise to shoreline tropes in each of the texts discussed in the book, or one would need a more data-rich account of the emergent, dominant, and recessive appearances of the shoreline in hundreds or even thousands of literary texts (and, in the manner of Franco Moretti, statistically displayed in charts and graphs).

On its own terms, *Sea change* is a wide-ranging application of structuralist poetics and post-structuralist philosophy to narratives of the shore, and it succeeds in identifying paradigmatic elements of literary treatments of the shore as a liminal space. In cultural geography perhaps these methodologies may yet be yielding new perspectives and challenging old orthodoxies. In literary studies, however, *Sea change* will seem to have missed out on a decade at least, a decade in which historicist and materialist critics such as Margaret Cohen, John Kerrigan, Hester Blum, Cesare Casarino, and Ian Baucom (to name a few who are absent from Singer's bibliography) have shaped into existence new fields of maritime and archipelagic studies.

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**Jared Mackley-Crump (2015). *The Pacific festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand: Negotiating place and identity in a new homeland*. Honolulu HI: University of Hawai'i Press. hbk, 232pp. ISBN: 978-0-8248-3871-3. US\$58.**

In his *The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand*, Jared Mackley-Crump proposes a monograph-length study of the genealogy and transformation of music and cultural festivals among Pacific diasporas in New Zealand. Grounded in ethnomusicology, the study aims to explore 'musical and cultural processes, their meanings and functions, as embedded in festival spaces'. The specific question is if festivals can be understood as a reflection of how a wider diaspora community is constructed and imagined. The main argument that emerges from the specific case study is that Pacific festivals allow diasporas as a specific type of transient communities to promote a sense of collective unity and, at the same time, to construct and maintain island-specific traditions and identities.

Chapter 1 explores the relation between migration and festivalization, specifically the role and function of festivals to create and institute a generic category of belonging and ancestry. With more accessible travel and communication facilities since World War II, an important pan-Pacific Ocean diaspora has formed in New Zealand and along the Pacific Rim. In this context, 'Pacific Ocean' becomes a category and imaginary community for the members of these diasporas. It articulates a new sense of interconnectedness in which a given geographical space is integrated into a geographical narrative of common origin and cultural belonging.

Chapters 2 and 3 investigate the specific social and political contexts in which Pacific festivals and a wider "Pacific renaissance" appear in New Zealand. Drawing on historical data and interviews, Mackley-Crump convincingly explains that the festivalization comes as a reaction to the social marginalization, high unemployment and public vilification of the diverse Pacific migrant populations in New Zealand. It is from within this specific social context that the wider idea of Pacific Ocean is instituted – and festively ceremonialised – as a meaningful social and political category. The history of the festivals is intimately linked to the mobilization of an initially diverse array of popular Pacific Ocean musicians who, through their art and performances, would progressively generate an overarching Pacific narrative. The festivals would eventually lead to what Mackley-Crump calls a "Pacific renaissance", where the formerly marginal populations source pride in the narrative of their common belonging and origin.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, Mackley-Crump further complicates the issue. He argues that the logistics and internal organization of the festivals, based on a principal of fluidity transferred into the diaspora context, do actually reflect a sense of being Pacific Islanders, not only at a rhetoric level, but in the way of doing the festival. Through performances of both contemporary and historic-traditional repertoires, music becomes a crucial agent to mobilize embodied cultural skills, create common rhythm and a non-verbal sense of shared meanings. The community of Pacific belonging is here both evocation and social grounding of the festivals. Through its overarching imploration of the Pacific as an interconnected 'sea of islands', the festive space and narrative enable social concentrations at the same time for families, church groups and particular island communities (the 'micro-level') and for the imagined Pacific community at large celebrating its unity and diversity (the 'macro-level').

In Chapter 7, Mackley-Crump articulates his specific findings with a more general theoretical discussion, in particular on the notions of place and identity in the context of

festivals. He suggests that for the diaspora Pacific populations living in New Zealand, the traditional notion of homeland (usually related to the idea of belonging to a far-off island) is progressively transformed into a wider and more generic understanding of the Pacific as a new homeland. Initial cultural difference is dissolved into a form of cultural differentiation within a common social realm, defined and dominated to a large extent by the social, economic and technological realities found in New Zealand. By taking up earlier concepts by Anae, Tupuola, and Mila-Schaaf, Mackley-Crump suggests that second and third generation immigrants become highly skilled in moving within and between multiple cultures. He argues that these forms of 'edgewalking' generate particular intertextual skills, which he considers a resource (a 'polycultural capital'). It would have been good to explain if and how such a presumed 'capital' can effectively be mobilized, for instance to help resolve unemployment or social marginalization. Also, it would have been good to understand better the agents that led to the valorization of Pacific culture, especially the role tourism plays both as a valorizing and/or a discrimination-reproducing audience.

Mackley-Crump's work confirms what other research on festivals has shown: places and identities are woven together in a multilayered and multileveled narrative. At the same time, within the frames of such narratives, the festivals bring people together and set their bodies in motion, hence articulating the corporeal and possibly a common more abstract body with a wider poesis of belonging. By articulating case-specific data and analysis with the wider theoretical framework of the emerging field of festival studies, this work makes an important contribution. It does not just speak to a specific context but to larger global processes of festivalization and new ways of producing culture, tradition and modernity across a number of contemporary humanities. It makes a good read for social scientists and students involved in, the study of festivals.

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**Susan Reid & David Stuart Reid (2015). *Men as islands: Robinsonades from Sophocles to Margaret Atwood*. Palo Alto CA: Academica Press. 276pp, ISBN: 978-1-936320-70-7. US\$79.95.**

This scholarly journey follows a fascinating thread of self, community, and constructs of the Island through a selection of texts from Ancient Greece to the second half of the twentieth century. At times analytical and at other times conversational (even personal) in tone, *Men as islands* turns to mythology, ethnographic recounts, fiction, and correspondence so as to insightfully map out themes of, and perspectives on, isolation, transformation, and social/communal reintegration. Island spaces play an important, though somewhat abstract, role within the book, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the texts included in the study feature islands. However, as the book's title and an early reference to the well-known John Donne quotation (p. 15) suggest, Reid and Reid are also – and indeed primarily – operating within the realms of the metaphorical island. This leads to useful textual analysis with regards to self and isolation: key texts are related to one another in an original manner, and new insights are garnered accordingly. Simultaneously, however, spatiality is – with a few

exceptions arising in the later chapters – seen more as a setting than as an element to be analysed for itself, which causes the book’s island engagement to remain somewhat superficial. Whilst the discussion of metaphorical islands is an entirely valid pursuit, the book’s agenda could have been strengthened through an awareness of the interplay between physical and metaphorical island, a stronger focus on the islandness of island settings, and a more active use of contemporary island scholarship. This problematic is also present at the level of language: the term “Robinsonade” is used very loosely and is applied in non-island scenarios, thereby causing it to lose its preciseness, power, and usefulness. Reid and Reid do explain, within the opening sentences of the introduction, how they seek to apply the term (p. 1) but this clarification does not sufficiently justify their somewhat unconventional use of the word. Nevertheless, *Men as islands* does prove to be insightful reading for those wishing to explore notions of identity, isolation, man/human-as-island, and island metaphors: Reid and Reid offer a carefully mapped out and multi-faceted exploration of these related topics and their textual evolution over time. It must, finally, be noted that the authors do acknowledge their unbalanced engagement with gender (made explicit in the book title), and seek to justify this through reference to the Donne quotation.

A significant strength of the book is its choice of primary texts and the manner in which it both creates intriguing analytical links between these texts and looks to their authorial/cultural contexts so as to broaden the argument. *Men as islands* features an introduction that sets up parameters and aims, and nine chapters that examine various texts and contexts so as to identify different variations of, or approaches to, isolation. The first chapter explores the isolation rituals of the Kwakiutl people of the Canadian west coast, with a particular focus on the Winter Dance. Here, Reid and Reid refer primarily to the Kwakiutl myths as collected by Franz Boas and George Hunt in the late nineteenth century, though their own personal experiences – as non-Kwakiutl observers – are also drawn upon. This chapter, to quote the authors, “provides a framework for discussing other treatments of isolation and community” (p. 2); consequently, Reid and Reid refer back to Kwakiutl mythology on a regular basis as the book unfolds. This creates a refreshing and consistent blend of reality (in the sense that these are real practices carried out by real people) and fiction. Chapter two examines the mythical Greek figure of Philoctetes and his abandonment on the island of Lemnos, with particular attention being drawn to the version of the story composed by Sophocles. Chapter three, in turn, focuses on Daniel Defoe and his novel *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and is followed by two chapters on William Cowper (with emphasis on his published work, his letters, and his life), and Jean-Jacques Rousseau: islands feature in all of these chapters, but it is island metaphors and differences in perceptions of isolation that come to the forefront. Thus, *Robinson Crusoe* is considered the “arch story in English of man as island” (p. 86); in a similar vein, Cowper’s insular poem on Alexander Selkirk is examined for its representation of the author’s depression-induced isolation, and Rousseau and his work are primarily seen through the lens of his “Romantic ego” and his positive reframing of isolation.

A prioritization of the metaphorical treatment of islands over physical island space is made explicit in chapter six, which deals with Henry David Thoreau’s non-island text *Walden* (1854). The lack of analysis on physical island space is alleviated somewhat through insightful comparisons and links to the more stereotypical island texts, always, however, in relation to the key issue of isolation and the protagonist’s perception thereof. By contrast, the subsequent discussion of D. H. Lawrence’s short story “The Man Who Loved Islands” forges a tie between space and thematics, as the reader is taken from one island to the next in accordance

with the protagonist's shifting sense of self. This leads to an examination of Pincher Martin's "isolated ego" (p. 222) and his life after death as it plays out on his insular rock in William Golding's novel *Pincher Martin* (1956). Finally, *Men as islands* concludes with a chapter on Margaret Atwood's novel *Surfacing* (1972). Whilst this textual analysis ends on a strong note regarding treatment of the novel, the decision to conclude the entire book through such a narrow focus does have its drawbacks: the overall agenda of *Men as islands* could have been further teased out – and its position with regards to islands made more apparent – by including a summative conclusion.

Reid and Reid's *Men as islands* will thus be of particular interest to textual and ethnographic island scholars working in the realm of metaphor. Physical islands do play a role in the study, but its core purpose lies elsewhere: the concept of the island becomes, generally speaking, a tool through which notions of isolation, transformation, and community are explored. Overall, this book draws together an intriguing selection of texts – taken from mythology, ethnography, fiction, and correspondence – and analyses these in an insightful and interconnected manner.

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**Maciej Jędrusik, Executive Editor (2015). *Miscellanea Geographica: Regional Studies on Development*. 19(2), 5-49. Thematic Issue: Future of Islands. Retrieved from <http://www.degruyter.com/view/j/mgrsd.2015.19.issue-2/issue-files/mgrsd.2015.19.issue-2.xml>**

This thematic issue on the future of islands touches upon various aspects that affect islands. It is a compilation of papers that were presented at the International Geographical Union in Krakow in August 2014. The papers range from discussing island cities, to managing island destinations to geographical aspects of islands. The following will briefly summarize each paper and provide a review on its comprehensiveness and applicability to the study of islands.

The paper on "Belfast as an island city" by Stephen Royle, seeks to explain how Belfast can be categorized as an island city as identified through the 'Future of islands' document that was presented at the International Geographical Union conference. It attempts to identify that Belfast can demonstrate that its understandings of the past condition its future. The 'Future of islands' document identified that "Island peoples shape their contested futures". Belfast reflects this due to its rich history of conflict. Belfast also meets the qualification as identified by the 'Future of islands' document that "island ways of knowing, of comprehending problems and their solutions" is displayed in the city through the Shankill-Falls peace line and the divide that still exists in the city. This paper however thorough in discussing the history of Belfast fails to identify why Belfast can be considered an island city and why this is unique in the island context. The qualifications from the 'Future of islands' document to explain Belfast as an island city can be applicable in all island city contexts and does not make a strong case as to why these are applicable to Belfast and why this is important in the study of islands.

The paper on “Tourist neo-colonialism as an indication of the future of islands: The example of Borobodur (Central Java)” by Pawel Cywinski is an interesting exploratory paper on tourism as a form of colonialism. It identifies the many issues with tourism as an investment that increases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world. In the island context, this leads to the dependence on tourism and a high leakage of capital. In the context of Borobodur Temple in Java, a tourist park was created around the temple and the people in the surrounding area were forced to move out, the area leveled, a fence put up and an admission fee is now charged at the gate. Whereas Borobodur is an example of neo-colonialism in an island tourism context, it would have been insightful to provide more into the future of how to plan tourism in a sustainable way to ensure that developments such as this do not occur. The author alluded to the context of sustainable tourism; however, a more in-depth discussion of what would overcome neo-colonialist tourist developments would provide more to the discussion of the future of islands.

The paper on “Ecotourism as a means of conservation of the landscape of Rodrigues Island” by Jean-Michel Jauze discusses how this island is using an ecotourism-based policy as a means of strengthening the island’s economy and incorporating sustainability. Despite a history that has left barren land on the island, there are still practices underway that promote local agriculture. Government is attempting to protect the island’s few remaining assets and does not encourage mass tourism. The focus is on traditional agriculture with the development of guesthouse accommodation. A turtle reserve has also been set up as well as a botanical garden. This is an interesting example of a remote island that has remained isolated for a long period of time taking a forward thinking approach to the development of tourism. This paper fits the theme of the future of islands as it explores one island’s approach to developing its economy in a sustainable fashion that is beneficial to its residents and environment on the island.

The paper on “Kadavu Island: adaptation and stagnation in the Fijian periphery” by Michael Sofer discusses the pattern of development of Kadavu through a study of issues which characterize the province and its rural communities as well as to trying to find out whether the conditions surrounding its peripheral status have changed over time. The outer islands are perceived to be different than the main islands culturally, economically and in terms of infrastructure and service provision. These islands were not developed and this contributed to the out migration of local people. The indigenous people on the island depend on subsidy from the state. The government is considering increasing investment to industries such as fishing and tourism and has implemented a development plan. The plan should enhance the livelihood of the island. Whereas this paper discussed an important issue about how to increase livelihoods on periphery islands, there was not much discussion of the issues that are specific to being an island itself. Whereas some of the ideas offer insight into rural change, it is not island specific and does not provide insight into how this can be applied to the future of islands.

Waste management in small island states is an extremely pressing issue. The paper on “The right place: solid waste management in the Republic of Maldives” by Stefano Malatesta et al. examines the systems in place to manage waste, including informal practices at the local level. The waste management system on the island consisted of “collective collection” which is municipal collection and sorting as well as open air burning. Once the site reached full capacity, local residents went back to traditional practices such as burning. This paper discusses the Right Place Project, a participatory action approach that focuses on local

practices and the relation between waste management and public space care. The research indicated that women can benefit from a formal role and can be viewed as drivers for sustainable waste management strategies. The paper indicated that integrating traditional practices and knowledge with local policies is key in managing waste. These findings however are not island specific and can be applied to waste management issues in various contexts.

The paper on the geo-botanic features of the Kurile Islands by Kirilli Ganzei describes the highly diverse vegetation of the island. Special traits of the archipelago are determined by volcanic activity, which leads to the formation of a unique appearance and rapid change. This paper was mostly descriptive and did not provide insight into the problems that may result due to many of these features on the islands.

The last article by Irena Tsermegas focused on anthropogenic transformation of the relief of the Aegean islands. The focus is on the changes caused directly by human activities on the Aegean Islands. These are mainly related to road infrastructure and the construction of agricultural terraces. Airports are currently an important geomorphological factor. These transformations affect the slope, fluvial and coastal processes. This paper is mostly descriptive however and does not provide context into the effects of these transformations and what can be done to alleviate these impacts in the future.

The papers in this thematic issue have one thing in common in that they are discussing particular phenomena in an island destination, however it was disappointing as several of the papers did not give insight or recommendations about the where the future of islands lie. Many of the papers were very descriptive without critical thought as to how this applies in the island context and what makes an island different than any other landmass. The studies discussed in these papers were mostly exploratory and provided very little analysis into the future of islands.

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**Ceridwen Spark, Seumas Spark and Christina Twomey (Eds.) (2014). *Australians in Papua New Guinea 1960-1975*. St Lucia QLD: University of Queensland Press. xii + 339pp. ISBN: 978-1-9219-0243-7. AUS\$38.50.**

With its fifteen chapters, each presenting a personal account of the presence of Australians in Papua New Guinea between the 1960s and the achievement of Independence in 1975, this book hardly lends itself to the Sisyphean effort to summarize each single chapter. *Australians in Papua New Guinea* is organized in three sections: 'Medicine and Science', 'Policy, Governance and Justice', and 'Education, Race and Social Change'. These macro-categories reflect some of the areas that Australian colonial government sought to implement in order to hand over the territory to an independent government. As any effort of dissecting reality into categories, parts of it are left out or uncomfortably squeezed, among which some of those that proved to be crucial for 'post-colonial' Papua New Guinea's present.

The non-Indigenous contributors to this volume were at that time academics, medical practitioners, lawyers, and public servants. Those who are Papua New Guinea citizens testify,

with their careers and engagement in public affairs, of the deep relations and opportunities that colonial Australia gave to a part of the colonized population. Most authors went to Papua New Guinea either to pursue their careers, in search for adventure, for personal reasons, or to directly contribute to the process of decolonization. Despite the variety of motives to engage initially with the country, in most cases it is evident from the accounts how deeply the experience of Papua New Guinea influenced the contributors' lives, and almost each one of them kept this relation alive through subsequent visits to the country, offering insightful comments about the post-colonial present. The views presented in the book are mostly coming from the capital, Port Moresby, or other urban centres, and only sporadically present the reader with insights on rural Papua New Guinea. This bias affects the kind of voices telling the memories we read about, leaving out other Australians whose presence in Papua New Guinea shaped, in one way or other, the outcome of contemporary nationhood (most notably missionaries and businesspersons).

*Australians in Papua New Guinea* offers a significant contribution to the thin literature on the fifteen years preceding the independence of the former Australian colony. The state of historiography dealing with Australian colonial engagement with the neighbouring island has been criticized for a lack of critical sharpness. As the editors point out in their introduction, one of the reasons was highlighted by the late historian Hank Nelson, who "... believed that people have been deterred from writing about this crucial time in PNG history because of the country's post-Independence difficulties" (p. 2). Probably these concerns brought the editors to choose to collect memories of that period, either as chapters or as interviews, a well-established tradition of memorialistic literature that keeps holding strong in Australian publishing landscape. The disaffection for criticism toward Australian colonialism in Papua New Guinea, depicted as benign and humanitarian in Australian popular historical consciousness, is captured by the Radfords, when they say: "We did not think of ourselves as colonialist, nor in the late fifties and early sixties did most of those we knew. Indeed, the term was hardly ever used until the young socialist-leaning academics came up to the Territory in the late sixties" (p. 108).

The contributors' memories bring up a snapshot of racial hierarchies mixed with a well-intended paternalism, the hallmark of Australian colonialism in both Papua and New Guinea. The tenor of some reminiscences, which might result unsettling to some for its racial overtones, is not to be blamed and harshly judged. It echoes the language used in those days, in a yet colonial situation, giving the reader useful insights about the (racialized) class relations between colonizers and colonized, opening a window into the lenses which contributed to shape the authors' experiences in Papua New Guinea. The language used is revealing of the competing views about the decolonization process. I find particularly telling that the disagreeable language for liberal sensibilities comes from some voices within the "Medicine and Science" section. The hard sciences' myth of a detached view devoid of bias, and the objectification of bodies not conceived as political sites, was prone to legitimize the gaze at certain forms of discrimination in a matter-of-fact way, just like segregation in hospitals sanctioned for 'hygienic reasons'. More sympathetic and critical views were held by doctors working in rural areas, as did most of the contributors who directly engaged in developing institutions for the soon-to-be independent country. The University of Papua New Guinea has, in this respect, the lion's share of contributions: the numerous reminiscences by authors of years spent there, either as staff members or students, point to the political and

cultural vibrancy of the national institution, from which germinated the political elite ruling the country in the post-independence period.

The book provides useful material for historians of Papua New Guinea, particularly an intimate and personal view that will help to add a human quality to those processes leading to independence. If only for this reason, the book is a welcome addendum to the existing literature. The style, either as memoir or transcribed interview, makes *Australians in Papua New Guinea* easily accessible to non-specialized readership, yet being highly informative for anyone interested in the topic. A mention of merit goes to the decision of making the book available for free on line. Papua New Guineans will welcome this choice (as the availability of Internet access is spreading throughout the country, although with the usual disparities between urban and rural settings) particularly in a situation in which access to books at an affordable price remains a serious challenge. This book will be a useful starting point to discuss a not too far-away past to be evaluated against personal experiences of Papua New Guineans from different backgrounds who lived that period. It also stimulates important reflections on the legacy of that period into the contemporary practices associated with consultancy and an 'aid-economy' as part of ongoing relations between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

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**Matthew Hiebert (2013). *Education for sustainable development in small island developing states*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat. 96pp. Pbk. ISBN 978-1-84929-090-6. £36.00 stg.**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were approved and adopted by the Heads of Government during the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit held on 25-27 September 2015. The governments replaced the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which consisted of 21 sub-targets that were agreed to in 2000 and pledged to be secured by 2015, with 17 SDGs and 169 proposed targets to be achieved by 2030. Pundits have called the expansion of SDGs too narrowly focused and devoid of honouring local variation since every lobby group has advocated for their own particular interest. Whether or not there is proof that the SDGs are well funded and allow national governments to reach pre-determined targets will come in time. It is within the context of the just-signed SDGs, the revisions of the MDGs, the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainability Development (UNDESD) 2005-2014, the United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012, and the 'Education for All' initiative that this volume seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of challenges and policy priorities of Education for Sustainability Development (ESD) in small developing states (inclusive of small island developing states [SIDS] and small and microstates). The volume does so by proposing strategies to assist young people in understanding the impact of climate change. The book aims to provide young people with the knowledge and skills that they need to mitigate the unintended consequences of the world's environmental challenges.

The slim volume seeks to distinguish itself from others by focusing on how small developing nations can better integrate ESD into their educational policies and strategies to address environmental changes while promoting sustainable lifestyles and development. The book, comprising of seven chapters, uses a comprehensive analysis of ESD implementation in 10 countries across three regions – the Caribbean; Africa, Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS); and the Pacific Ocean. Such an approach, according to the volume, is done through the promotion of “practical and realistic recommendations” (p. 2) based on sound practices. The book focuses on the three dimensions of ESD: “the availability of ESD opportunities (access); the quality of ESD initiatives; [and] the management and co-ordination of implementation” (p. 2). These themes emerged from the qualitative methodology based on the compilation of reports, questionnaires, and interviews from the focus regions. The book is written in an accessible and practical manual style, and therefore each sub-theme within the three broader themes follows an outline that: (a) identifies the sub-theme; (b) provides a general overview of the “good practices” of that sub-theme by drawing on examples from the focus regions; (c) discusses “extending the good work” by using good practices and illustrations from the focus regions or other sources; and (d) concludes with a section called “bridging the gap” which provides suggestions and recommendations drawn from countries doing well in this area, that can be relevant to analogous contexts facing similar challenges.

Since the book was written before the global commitment to the SDGs, it provides an excellent overview of the internationally agreed goals (IAGs) and regional agreements in education that are the building blocks for the SDGs. As such, the book discusses the ambiguities around ESD and what it means in practice. It highlights that such ambiguities in the four focus regions lead to competing priorities and fragmented implementation strategies that create gaps. The book makes several proclamations about ESD that suggest that, although ESD has been adopted similarly across the contexts of the focus regions, disparities exist because of how the ESD’s rhetoric is incorporated into national frameworks, policies, and strategies. It highlights that, often, ESD lacks an integrated or comprehensive approach since it is treated and viewed as an ‘add-on’ to existing academic programs. In some instances, governments have solid ESD frameworks on paper, but these often get overlooked since parents and governments place pressures on teachers to prepare students for national or regional examinations.

One of the salient points that the book makes is that much ambiguity still exists around what is ESD, how it gets taught and practised, and its purpose. While ESD has stemmed from a global agenda and IAGs and is viewed as a comprehensive term, the book shows that it means different things to different regions and thus each region tends to emphasize certain attributes of ESD as against others. On the one hand, there is buy-in by national governments for regional and international priorities that support ESD. On the other hand, several barriers to implementation or fragmented implementation are prevalent in the focus regions. People are often unaware of what they are doing – even in instances where governments have invested heavily in training programs – and institutional support is often lacking. Thus, it is not surprising that the volume suggests that, while there is strong reference to ESD at the national levels, this does not translate into the adoption and implementation of proper and clear standards about, or support for, such initiatives. In essence, the book advocates that ESD should “go beyond teaching ‘about’ these sustainability or related issues, to teaching ‘for’

sustainability and immersing students in a context that supports deep learning and directed experiences in working with related issues” (p. 11).

In light of some of the various virtues extolled, the reader is still left without understanding why ESD is seen as paramount in pushing the ecological limits of societies and has been implemented poorly and with mixed results. At times, the book reads like a collection of isolated cases that have been successful in promoting aspects of ESD that have worked in these contexts for a myriad of reasons, but would have trouble being transplanted into other contexts. As such, different regions often emphasize various elements of ESD without recognizing that ESD “... is distinctive in its holistic and interdisciplinary nature, as well as its emphasis on leading to social change towards sustainability, and hence its emphasis on helping students to adopt sustainable behaviours and perspectives rather than simply learning about relevant issues” (p. 9). While the authors highlight that most of the findings are generalizations, they are quick to warn that “the studies are not to be taken to be generalizable” (p. 19). In this vein, the book is geared ideally to both students and practitioners who are interested in getting a general overview of ESD in SIDS. Thus, the book is a good starting point for people in SIDS who are looking for a comprehensive overview of some of the successes and challenges that similar countries have faced in developing and implementing ESD.

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**Tim F. Liao, Kimie Hara & Krista Wiegand (Eds.). (2015). *The China-Japan border dispute: Islands of contention in multidisciplinary perspective*. Farnham: Ashgate. Hbk. xii+197pp+index. ISBN: 978-1-4724-4299-4. £60 stg. Website price: £54 stg.**

**Shicun Wu & Keyuan Zou (Eds.). (2014). *Non-traditional security issues and the South China Sea: Shaping a new framework for cooperation*. Farnham: Ashgate. Hbk. xiv+255pp+index. ISBN: 978-1-4094-6193-7. £95 stg. Website price: £85.50stg.**

Historically, many small islands have often been coveted not so much for whatever meagre natural resources they may possess, but as strategic locations to powers aspiring to become regional hegemony. Such ambitions have taken on an added dimension since the coming into force of the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1994, whereby islands can now also command a territorial zone extending 12 miles beyond their shore; and – if deemed to be naturally formed and capable of sustaining economic life – even a 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone, securing the rights to fish and scour for under-sea resources.

The world continues to watch nervously, even incredulously, as reefs and shoals, as well as small rocks and islands, become strategic pawns in regional power plays. Two such regional hot spots are the East and South China Seas, where China’s flexing of its rediscovered clout extends to manoeuvres and initiatives that have kept various neighbouring countries on edge, and even restored a semblance of a US-led coalition united in its uncertainty of the motives of Beijing. The focus in the East China Sea lies squarely on an

archipelago called Diaoyu Dao by China, Diaoyutai by Taiwan and Senkaku by Japan. Occupied by Japan in 1895 after having been declared *terra nullius* by Tokyo, Beijing has argued that these islands were actually part of the spoils of the Sino-Japanese war that also ended in 1895; as such, they should have been returned to China as part of the agreements signed at the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, these islands continue to be notionally administered by Japan via Ishigaki City, in Okinawa prefecture. A tense cat-and-mouse game continues in the waters around the islands involving coastguard vessels from both sides, as well as airplanes: Japan scrambled fighter jets to prevent Chinese incursions 117 times between July and September 2015, up from 103 times in the same period in 2014. Human error or accident in such a tense atmosphere can easily see the current stalemate escalate out of hand.

The situation is more complex in the South China Sea. There, China is staking title to a large body of water that is critical to international commerce and navigation. It is boosting its claims by actively building up a series of islets by pumping sand to extend land areas and then constructing lighthouses, ports and airfields on their reclaimed land; it is also sending out naval patrols as well as drilling platforms to undertake oil and gas deposit explorations. At least six neighbouring countries – Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam – are not amused. In October 2015, the *USS Lassen*, a guided-missile destroyer, sailed closer than 12 miles of one of the islands that are being artificially augmented by China. The US Secretary of Defence asserted that this US mission was an expression of the right to freedom of navigation. Beijing protested and stated that it is “not frightened to fight a war” in the region.

This is the very tense situation that has sparked a considerable literature over the past few years. The tenet of such texts is either to propose legitimacy to one party or another over its claims to the waters and/or islands in the disputed regions; or else to seek to come up with a mono or multi-disciplinary perspective towards a better understanding of the origins of these conflicts, possibly hinting at solutions, often in the context of the need to re-examine the place and role of a rising China (and a declining USA and Japan?) in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This is not “much ado about nothing”, as many western observers may be led to think. The volume edited by Liao, Hara and Weigand does an excellent job at pitching the Diaoyu Dao / Senkaku dispute in the context of a deeply-rooted historical rivalry and animosity and ‘collective memory’ between China and Japan, while also including fair treatment to such matters as Okinawa and Taiwan, to muddy the waters and acknowledge the complexity of the case. *The China-Japan border dispute* is neatly organized into three sections, looking at historical, legal and socio-political considerations respectively. Some of the authors in this text continue to propose a constructive role for international law in providing a mechanism for mediation and possible resolution to the impasse; but China is unlikely to accept any such ‘interference’ to what it considers to be a matter of national pride. My favourite paper in this collection is the concluding one by Paul Midford. From his base in Trondheim, Norway, Midford is aware of Svalbard, an archipelago that is governed by one country (Norway) but which allows free access to citizens that are signatory to its international treaty: it is indeed the only territory in western Europe where non-Europeans do not need a visa to enter and work (though these may nevertheless still require a visa to enter Norway before flying to Longyearbyen). The China Sea affair can benefit from a wider range of examples of islands that, like Svalbard, have avoided the ‘zero-sum’ game approach to conflict resolution that will surely rattle China and the various other parties.

While the search for ‘win-win’ scenarios and solutions goes on, there are various initiatives that seek to foster confidence and security building measures (CSBMs) to lower tensions, reduce fear of attack by both (or more) parties, and build relationships of trust and cooperation. A scurry of initiatives are taking place, fostering cooperation amongst scientists at a civil society level but encouraging further embedding in and integration of (mainly) China into multi-lateral international affairs, including policing against piracy in the Western Indian Ocean. This builds social capital, developing inter-cultural understanding and promotes joint visions and operations in the South China Sea, which, apart from being the channel of \$5 trillion of seaborne trade per annum, is also vulnerable to natural hazards (including risk of tsunami) and environmental degradation. It is such “non-traditional security issues” that form the focus of this interesting book. The co-editors and contributing authors of *Non-traditional security issues and the South China Sea* spy an opportunity for de-escalation via regional cooperation in these ‘soft’ areas of diplomacy and international relations. A case in point is ASEAN, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, where Indonesia is the informal lead nation, and which holds regular ‘+ China’ summits. Such CSBMs should hopefully lead – as the book’s co-editors opine – to regional security and order (p. 13). In fact, energy-related development cooperation has long been suggested as a possible way forward even for the East China Sea confrontation. The trouble here is the chicken-and-egg conundrum: yes, cooperation can build trust and good faith; but: trust and good faith are also needed to launch and develop cooperation, particularly at official levels; and such assets may be in very short supply as long as governments peddle and fan nationalism to solicit public approval for their policies.

These two books, both published by Ashgate, proffer important and timely information about the past and recommendations about the possible futures of a tense and sensitive region that has been catapulted to world attention. I recommend both volumes to scholars of international relations, East Asian studies and peace and conflict studies.

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**John Urry (2014). *Offshoring*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Hbk (ISBN: 978-0-7456-6485-9; €62.50); pbk (ISBN: 978-0-7456-6486-6; €18.80) and e-book (ISBN: 978-0-7456-8462-8; €14.99).**

What have Manchester United Football Club, Trafigura, the island of St Barts, pirates, hedge funds, Radio Caroline, the only seven star hotel in the world, The Waste Makers, Enron and extraordinary rendition have in common? They all find a place in this well-documented and impressive work, which unveils the networks of concealment, wealth, evasion, excess and power which lie at the root of the concept of offshoring. Indeed, Urry reserves some harsh words to his subject: “Offshoring erodes ‘democracy’ and, more generally, notions of fairness within and between societies” (p. 10). He also describes it as “an account that emphasizes avoidance, rule-breaking, irresponsibility, and secrets as the ‘rich class’ remade the world in its interests” (p. 14). Offshoring is about how the rich are allowed and encouraged to steal a couple of marches over the rest, which, at little cost, enable them to become even richer. The

writer also refers to the “dark side” of the new class warfare which is being waged, “enabling the rise and rise of the rich class”. (p. 1)

The book is divided into ten chapters each covering a different subject. It seeks to tackle the issue of offshoring in a broader fashion than is usually the case by extending its investigation into such unlikely and challenging areas as leisure, energy and waste. This is a bold approach which seeks to find a common thread that runs through all the various sectors reviewed: namely, the construction of a sophisticated, well planned and coordinated framework directed at enabling an elite to avoid and thwart normal regulatory and financial requirements and standards. In this exclusive, murky and opaque world, wealth, excess and tax dodging are promoted and protected by extensive layers of official complicity, manipulation, and an uncanny ability to remain out of sight.

It is impossible to critique each chapter individually since, in any event, the book merits being reviewed as a whole and not on the qualities of its individual chapters. The author investigates the development of new types of offshore, today no longer restricted to lighter corporate regulation, discretion, confidentiality and tax, along with financial advantages.

One intriguing chapter deals with ‘Leisure offshored’. This cleverly juxtaposes the pleasant sounds of Radio Caroline (a 1960s British pirate radio station) with the gated pleasure domes of Dubai and luxury cruise liners navigating in a world where the super-rich can and do avoid contact with the “merely rich” (p. 84). Here, the writer wryly observes that the “the little people” with their “little money” are still paying their taxes (p. 62), a clear indictment of the “offshore rich class” and its “upper class segregation” whose members are able to live practically everywhere and nowhere without paying anything close to an equitable amount of tax.

Chapter 2 deals with ‘Secrets’ and all the secrecy that money can buy. This topic is of vital significance as it sets the scene for the vital need of offshore beneficiaries and operators being capable of moving themselves or their assets easily and of transacting free from the prying eyes of authorities. The latter are themselves often complicit in creating the conditions whereby profitable offshoring can flourish. Concealment is indeed one of the major themes that run through all the pages of this study. The ability to hide assets and gains through legal and semi-legal nominee arrangements remains a key factor for the popularity of many financial, corporate and tax havens. In this environment, professionals and other practitioners risk being viewed as the agents of a rich elite, physically detached and mentally alienated from the concerns of humdrum, ordinary people. The last chapter enjoys the Dylanesque title ‘Bringing it all back home’ and deals with the difficult proposition of reining in and bringing offshore activities back onshore.

No reference is made to states which are pursuing aggressive, controversial and lucrative initiatives to sell passports to the super-rich, assuring them full secrecy, recently (in Malta) further defended even on supposed grounds of privacy and data protection. In a future edition, this subject could possibly merit a couple of pages seeing that offshoring seems to be on the rise in the selling of passports and spurious forms of citizenship, nationality and residency and visa arrangements. These would usually consist of government-sponsored schemes which make it easy for the ultra-rich to buy passports of foreign countries with which they may have the flimsiest of connections, or none at all. This allows them to shift from one location to another on the strength of multiple passports. These novel and often amazing offers warrant greater scrutiny. Malta has also been aggressively seeking to establish itself as a leading jurisdiction for the setting up of hedge funds, a subject briefly referred to on p. 178.

*Book Reviews Section*

*Offshoring* is an impressively original and intelligent work which, in its 200 pages, offers truly disturbing insights and warnings. The case for the democratic dangers of offshoring seems well made. The chapters are easily readable despite the daunting subject-matter. This book contains many useful references to further published material for the reader who may wish to know more on any particular topic covered in the different chapters. It takes into account a number of very recent important events such as the operation to assassinate Osama Bin Laden.

The book benefits from clarity of style and credibility of content and is well organized. It is recommended to all persons who are interested in better understanding the multifarious dimensions and threats of offshoring, in its various shapes and guises and in its massive scale. The style and layout are very reader-friendly, and are accompanied by extensive and useful footnotes. The work also appears to be well indexed. Scholarly and detailed, the book documents the rise and rise of offshore activities and is undoubtedly an important addition to studies on this subject. The paperback price is hugely attractive and puts it well within the pockets of many, including students.

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