



offer much hope in the transition to low carbon mobility futures but also observe that ‘much remains to be done to achieve change in people’s values, attitudes and practices connected to mobility’ (p.149). Chapter 10 points to the global trends that indicate car use and ownership are in decline. The author puts forward the argument that smart technology devices offer an opportunity to think about how cities are organised. These chapters are followed by case studies 3 and 4. Case study 3 is focused on the emerging economy of Brazil, while case study 4 focuses on the transition of travel and tourism.

Part 3, comprising four chapters, brings together work that examines innovations for low carbon mobility. Chapter 11 employs a governance framework to consider how a transition to electric vehicles is operating in Scotland. The authors identify the constraints that governments face in their attempts to promote more sustainable transport systems in the short term but also indicate that ‘constraints may become flexible in the medium to long term due to emerging conditions’ (p.201). They suggest that governments may wish to evaluate how to alleviate the constraints and to work towards possible strategic solutions. Chapter 12 brings into focus theories from geographical and urban studies and argues that innovation in transport needs to be imagined as a “social process” that connects heterogeneous elements—‘materials, knowledge and visions etc. from many different sites across the world’ (p.215). Chapter 13 emphasises that thinking about how to achieve low carbon mobility transitions needs to take account of Internet technologies. The authors discuss how car-share schemes may work to reduce the overall demand for private car ownership but contrast this with how social media sites promote travel as a way to reinforce social status and identity alongside representations of car culture as a powerful force. Chapter 14 examines aeromobilities, and the authors suggest three possible solutions to reduce emissions from air travel: shifting from long-haul to medium-haul or short-haul trips; shifting from plane to train; and a labelling of the carbon footprint of travel products.

The book provides a useful collection of work that enables the reader to grasp the inter-connections and overlaps between disparate paradigmatic traditions. At the same time, it reinforces the point that the shift to low carbon mobilities will require some level of integration and synthesis across scales. For scholars and students of mobility, the volume is a valuable foundational resource that may

prompt further innovative methodological and theoretical advances.

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Island Geographies: Essays and Conversations

Elaine Stratford, editor, Routledge, London and New York (Routledge Studies in Human Geography Series), 2017, xiv + 198 pp, ISBN 978 1 138 92172 6 (hdbk), 978 1 315 68620 2 (ebk)

I have long been drawn to islands—both real and imagined. Offshore from my childhood wild places, the nocturnal brightness of the unstaffed light on North Solitary Island drew my dreams seawards; later, the literary islands of Randolph Stow (1958) and Ursula Le Guin (1993) spoke of different understandings of connection, sense of place, and belonging, and the ways in which relationships might be understood, governed, and emplaced. So, an invitation to review *Island Geographies* was too tempting. I only regret that university demands distracted me so long from immersing myself in this terrific collection. Ironically, time to read and review have arrived while moving around another island on a visit to Japan.

Thus, I come to this review amidst emergent re-thinking of some big categories around colonial, Indigenous, and postcolonial geographies—including efforts to re-contextualise East Asian geopolitics and a reading of Paine’s (2017) powerful rereading of Japanese grand strategy from the Meiji Restoration to 1945. Paine’s volume is relevant because she suggests Japan’s post-Meiji leadership misconceived the foundations for its imperial ambitions as continental, rather than as an island-based power. Continental thinking, she argues, led Japan’s wartime military leaders to undervalue naval resources as the foundation of food and resource security within the island territory.

In *Island Geographies*, an impressive and diverse collection of essays, and a terrific, but singular conversation, considers the contemporary implications and challenges the dominance of continental discourse. *Island Geographies* does not seek to posit a singular “island discourse” as an alternative to this dominant continental discourse. Indeed, much of the discussion is about the paradoxical natures of “the mainland,” “the continent,”

“the island,” and “the ocean”; the question of whether islands should be understood as fundamentally insular or connected; whether oceans separate or connect; the ambivalent (and of course, relatively recent nature of) tenure and resource claims in oceanic territories.

Stratford’s Introduction (p.4) suggests that reading the collection as a single body of work will draw out some key themes—with wider-than-island relevance: space, place, and environment, for example, are implicated in virtually all the chapters, while scale is evoked as a shadow across the whole collection but is not explicitly developed as a framing concept anywhere (an oversight for a scale tragic such as myself). Interestingly, a range of different conceptual framings are also entangled in the collection: networks, assemblages, relations, gatherings, bridges, ruptures, boundaries, gaps, and absences.

The unspoken presence of the continental paradigm sits heavily on the discourse the volume seeks to develop. The weight of such a dominant discourse is familiar. Twenty-five years ago, when the recognition of Native Title unsettled the dominant paradigm of land rights in Australian Indigenous studies, it was opportune to challenge the notion that Aboriginal framings of Country were limited to *land* rights. Thinking about sea Country (Cordell, 1991; Yunupingu & Muller, 2009), water rights (Jackson, 2004, 2006), and relationships to living landscapes of connection rather than Cartesian spaces of possession (Howitt, 2006) all pushed one to recognise that the *land* rights that Australian governments were willing to concede were, at least for Aboriginal people, never solely about land. And so, as it emerges in *Island Geographies*, island geographies can never be simply about islands. Island geographies must also and simultaneously be about oceans, archipelagos, and even aquapelagos. That is, nissology draws us to consider the spaces between, the scales at which things become bound (or unbound). Indeed, in places, *Island Geographies* calls into question the very processes by which we imagine things to bound into an impermeable category when they are entangled in mobile, changeable, and relational settings. There is mention of wet ontologies and evocations of scales that encompass small populations in large oceanic places and peoples with cultural memories of connection across the distances that European explorers and colonisers found unimaginable. And thus, this collection draws its readers away from the dominant paradigm of continental thinking; it draws us away from thinking of islands as simplistically insular—as small

spaces of isolation. Instead, through discussion of the complexities of deep sea mining, climate change and management of environmental, cultural and heritage values and approaches to economic sustainability, waste management and literary and political representations of islandness, island geographies are revealed less categorical, more entangled, and less bounded than they might seem from the limitations of continental perspectives. *Island Geographies* invites rethinking much that is taken-for-granted—and in the process often claimed or taken by those empowered by continental discourses. Even familiar terms, which readers of *Geographical Research* might imagine they could take as given, are challenged:

... place is revealed, in both what is present and what is absent, not as a space containing objects and people that can be concretely categorised, but as a complex continual becoming or revealing that raises as many questions and avenues for further enquiry as it provides answers. (Therese Murray, p.50)

By taking islands seriously as a tool for thinking differently about significant elements of geographical thought, *Island Geographies* offers some important, if sometimes emergent, insights and openings. In my own reading, it confirms the urgent need for social sciences to become more comfortable in relational thinking rather than assuming that the world will conform to the categorical formulations of dominant theoretical discourses. The collection gives voice to some exciting new thinkers whose future contributions to geography warrant careful attention. Their willingness to work in physical and conceptual margins and edges, in spaces in-between, and in ambiguous discursive spaces of changing performances of islandness in different physical, cultural, ecological, and temporal settings opens opportunities not simply to unsettle the tired binaries of dominant paradigms. Sammler’s brilliant chapter on deep ocean mining, for example, powerfully reminds us that the relationships between territory, sovereignty, law, and resources are a work of human imagination—and often much more recent and contested than many might imagine. Recent incursions into the South China Sea by the People’s Republic of China, for example, contain echoes of previous assertions by aggressive nation states and imperial authorities to claim lands, waters, and resources of others—Sammler, for example, points to the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) in which Spain and Portugal purported to divide the known maritime world between them, and the European

assertion of *Mare Liberum* in 1608, the emergence of a 3-nautical mile territorial claim by many coastal nations in the 18th century and the United States' Truman Doctrine in 1945 which extended marine territorial claims prior to the contested development of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1982–1994).

For my reading, the parallels between island geographies and Indigenous geographies are both clear and significant. Here, we see the imposition of *aqua incognita* and *aqua nullius*; the assertion of the non-existence of rights, responsibilities, and interests in the particular places (particularly marine territories of island cultures) and the superiority of colonisers' knowledge in places they did not know and could not understand. The risk of Eurocentric readings which relegate islanders to lacking in capacity to conform to Eurocentric international standards enforced by Eurocentric international agencies is well demonstrated in the powerful chapter from Dean, Green, and Nunn, which points to massive "institutional capacity deficits" (Howitt *et al.*, 2013) in the World Bank and other international donors of so-called financial aid to assist in responses to climate change. Such capacity deficits are commonplace in Indigenous settings and equally pernicious in their effects on local autonomy, sustainability, and response-ability. As Dean notes in the authors' conversation in Chapter 9:

Continental discourses are often taken-for-granted and they render islanders constantly as deficient, and islands as ... spaces for intervention. (Dean, p.147)

Sammler goes further, almost formulating the task of island geographies (at least for her own work) as being to:

disrupt the privileging of static, stable, lands-based Cartesian thinking ... (and) to up-end the binaries of land and water, to reorient geographic thinking about social ocean spaces/ (Sammler, p.146)

Yet while this is a strong collection that promises to stimulate much debate and discussion, it has some weaknesses. There is a thread of reflection on the place of island voices in island studies, but most of the discourse presented here remains in the domain of expert social scientists, often from Australian, European, and American institutions. There is, inevitably, some ambiguity in these categories, of course, with Tasmania's islandness, Hawaii's relationship to the American coloniser and the presence of islandness in Ireland and Greece all addressed to some extent in the

collection. Similarly, the paradoxical nature of islands, oceans, and island geographies is reflected upon deeply in this collection. David Bade notes that we might usefully reframe our thinking about islands as spaces of disconnection, and instead:

see the sea as a source of connection, and the journey to an island over water as distinctive ... (but not) deterministic. (Bade, p.157)

This pushes us towards thinking in terms of time and space, of mobilities, connections, and presences as well as the continental discursive assumptions of smallness, isolation, remoteness, and insignificance.

In 2007, the International Geographical Union Commissions on Islands and Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights held a joint meeting in Taipei. Ten years on, there seems to be a lot of scope for bringing these conceptual threads back together—to challenge some of the emergent binaries, undo some of the categorical boundedness of thinking that constrain our thinking into the existing limitations of language, theory, and fashion. There is an important tension to be explored between what David Crew (pers. comm.) has articulated as "Indigenous singular" and "Indigenous plural" and the representations of island geographies "on their own terms"—while recognising that many of the terms on which such representations might be made are already the product of colonial and postcolonial domination. Jonathan Pugh, in his contribution to the collection, quotes Lazarus (from *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, CUP 2011) to suggest that:

new words need to be minted and old words and frameworks of understanding stretched and revised, (Pugh, p.137)

The collection has been skilfully woven into a single work not solely by Elaine Stratford's thoughtful editorial work, but by the way in which the accidental compass of a conference session has been drawn into a longer conversation, some of which is captured in chapter 9, where the transcription of a teleconference draws the contributors into as many open questions as their essays seek to resolve. This gesture towards a more dialogical engagement is all too rare in the expert-centric world of continental academic discourse. It is ironic that this chapter will confound research excellence reviewers and citation measurers much more than the catastrophically failing reports (and academic publications derived from them) commissioned from experts by the World Bank and reported by Dean *et al.* in this volume. Yet it is in such "nourishing conversations" (Macquarie

Human Geography Group *et al.*, 2001) that the future of worthwhile discourse is to be found.

As in any such conversation, there is much left unsaid, much yet to be said—indeed, much yet to be thought—in such a setting. Stratford has corralled a rare academic beast in this impressive volume—a collection that is at once both greater than its parts, and a set of parts that each amplifies and clarifies the whole. It captures not just a moment in the development of island geographies as a sub-discipline but invites a wider and continuing conversation with other subfields, other disciplines, and other others. It is not just to be read: it is to be engaged with.

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