

~~Perhaps other features in the texts might have come to light had the authors acknowledged more recent scholarship on islands that has opened up their analysis to include senses of openness and connectivity, instead of assuming universals. So, for instance, Hartmann studies an island in a river, and inland islands have not generally been considered in island studies, so it would have been interesting to see this author consider whether inland islands are qualitatively different from the usual focus of inquiry, namely islands located in seas and oceans. Is a river or lake island different from an oceanic one? Or, given that rivers even more than oceans are well-traveled routes of pilgrimage and commerce, are river islands even more connected than oceanic ones? Mazzadi's conclusions suggest that islands might also function as between spaces, topoi of translation and transformation, rather than prisons or waiting areas. Her article also has something in common with Ogier's essay on the Isla Mujeres in that both notice a confusion between islands and promontories. This conflation is perhaps not so surprising given that classical sources frequently discuss the two side by side.~~

~~The strength of the individual studies is that they are focused, close-up, and, in the main, compact. The collection also has a great historical, generic, and geographical range with essays on islands from northern and southern Europe, Mexico and Japan, while the city essays also touch on distinct places around the globe and different moments in history.~~

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Nathalie Bernardie-Tahir (2011) *L'Usage de l'Île* [Using the Island], Paris, Pétra, pbk, 510pp. ISBN: 978-2-84743-035-6. €35.00.

Those pursuing the study of islands are often rudely reminded that theirs is an inquiry often premised on linguistic islands. The English-speaking world, itself forged from what was originally an island studded empire, does well to remind itself that there are other forms of knowledge that are captured in other tongues, and such epistemologies perhaps speak to different conceptualizations and representations of islands. Foremost amongst these, one finds the various languages of the Pacific islanders; Bahasa Indonesia, Malay, Tagalong, Okinawan and Japanese in South-East Asia; Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America; Arabic, Corsu, Croat, Sardo, Maltese, Turkish and Greek (from which comes the suffix *-nesia* – islands) in the Mediterranean. Of all the languages of empire today, however, only French challenges English in its reach. France maintains a presence in every ocean in the world. French remains an international language and, predictably, the medium of considerable scholarship.

It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that the fascination of, and with, islands is the subject of an impressive text in French. The authouress, a professor at the University of Limoges, France, is just as confident writing in English as in her native French. As a result, this volume – a staggering 500-plus pages, inclusive of a rich 36-page bibliography – presents its readers with both a comprehensive insight into the French understanding of things islanded, but also of how this valuable scholarship connects with that in English. We are invited to

connect with the more familiar Bertram, Briguglio and McElroy; but also with the likes of Doumenge *père et fils*, Huetz De Lemps and Taglioni. The focus is largely socio-geographical, engaging with islands primarily as devices that allow us to conceptualize *l'altérité*, best translated as 'Otherness'.

Bernardie-Tahir uses 'the island' and its paradoxical qualities – foremost amongst which are openness and closure - as the operative device to better understand and critically analyse the workings of the two grand dynamics of our times: the advance of globalization and the yearning for locality and identity. She argues, correctly, that both main thrusts of contemporary academic inquiry that seek to acknowledge, capture and present the voice of the Other – postcolonial studies and subaltern studies – would do well to look more often and more seriously at the leverage and insights provided by islands.

To go about this task, Bernardie-Tahir organizes her text into four sections. Part One (pp. 15-162) presents a historical account of the island as an ideal and idealized space; the convenient microcosm for experimentation; the tempting launch pad for imaginative enterprise; a little yet complete slice of humanity. This section also includes an account of the construction of the island in French scholarship, central to which is an ongoing debate between those who emphasize physical and materialist aspects (size, remoteness, population density, resource scarcity, sea level rise); and others whose analytic framework is more liquid and constructivist (with a focus on liminality, indeterminacy, inbetweenity, the subjectivities of vulnerability and peripherality). There are two underlying thematics for Part Two (pp. 163-298): the first is that of 'the island' as a performative space for the inexorable unfolding of globalization, and where two key manifestations of cross-border mobility – migration and tourism – are scrutinized. Islands, especially of the tropical kind, are amongst the most heavily penetrated and exoticized tourism locales in the world today; and island diasporas in many metropolises tend to be larger than the size of respective island residents they may have left behind. These dynamics offer clear evidence of the significant roles that trans-territorial connectivities play in island development today. The second thematic refers to what is called 'antimonde' in French: trans-territorial economic activities that are premised on escaping regulation and convention, and which have been critiqued as illegal or unfairly competitive. These include banking and finance activities that have sought island refuges that lie offshore in a legal and not just in a strict geophysical sense.

We move into the metaphorical and metaphysical in Part Three (pp. 299-453), where the text engages with the symbolic, mythical and iconic qualities of island spaces. We read of Robinson Crusoe and similar exploits; of utopia and the dreaming of possibilities; of the spectacular construction of exotica that appeal to different senses ... initiatives that geo-engineering has made tantalizingly feasible today to those who can afford them. What ties these diverse journeys of transformation together is a common search for that elusive something else, the quest to recover a fanciful authenticity and a sense of benign community that have been hopelessly lost in, even just as they have been conceived by, the throes of modernity, rationality, urbanization, and overpopulation. A pithy conclusion (pp. 455-465) reviews the main arguments of the text, reminding us of how gated communities, urban ghettos and Fortress Europe represent different versions of wishful islanded spaces. Echoing Louis Marrou, the question is posed: is not 'the island' geosymbolic of the Earth (p. 464)?

Bernardie-Tahir weaves her story with accounts from various island locales; but foremost amongst these are the two islands that she knows best: Zanzibar (Tanzania, Africa and Indian Ocean) and Malta (Europe and the Mediterranean Sea). Her insights, experiences and photographs from these two very different places help her ground her narrative, enabling her to switch from the abstract to the specific as required.

All in all, here is a *tour de force* of the usage of the island; and a text that is quite *de rigueur* for a more holistic appreciation of island studies. (I hope I can be excused two French phrases in one sentence: they seem quite *à propos*.)

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~~Peter Rudiak-Gould (2009) *Surviving Paradise: One Year on a Disappearing Island*, New York / London, Union Square Press, 244pp. ISBN: 978-1-4027-6664-0. US\$21.95.~~

~~As a long-term resident of the Marshall Islands, I was interested in reading Ilan Kelman's review of Peter Rudiak-Gould's book "Surviving Paradise: One Year on a Disappearing Island" (in *Island Studies Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 2011). However, I found the review to lack an appropriate contextualization and necessary critical lens with which to read the book's subject matter, and would like to offer an alternate perspective on Rudiak-Gould's travelogue.~~

~~I do not know the reviewer, nor am I familiar with his experience with the Marshall Islands or Marshallese culture. To be clear, I also do not know the author, Peter Rudiak-Gould, personally; what I know of him I gleaned from reading his book. What I found troubling about the review, however, is Dr. Kelman's assertion that the book "is a wonderfully readable, intensely educational, detailed glimpse into the perpetual dream of banishment to a tropical atoll." However, Ujae atoll in the Marshall Islands, where the book is set, is not empty, and it is this erasure of the inhabitants of Ujae in both the review and the book, whom I doubt share such a "dream of banishment on a tropical atoll," that speaks to the reviewer's failure to contextualize not only the people who are being written about (and, I would argue, written upon) as well as the author who is writing about (and upon) them.~~

~~That being said, my issues with the review pale in comparison to my issues with the book, which, upon an even cursory reading, demonstrates the style of conventional, early 20th century anthropological writing, replete with stereotypes, racist asides, and otherwise offensive characterizations. The fact that the author presents himself in other contexts as an anthropologist is of little comfort.~~