
Autoethnography and feminist theory at the water’s edge: Unsettled islands is a series of micro-essays using a collaborative autoethnographic approach to analyze the experience of living on the island of Newfoundland. The authors draw on feminist, trans, queer, critical race, Indigenous, decolonial and posthuman theories to present a range of personal perspectives of living on an island near the water’s edge. Each essay reflects on the subject area, combining theory with personal experience to create a relatively easy to read collection, perfect for the budding or expert Island Studies scholar alike. In addition to the book, the authors designed a blog that was created to support classroom learning through activities and reflection.

In the introduction, titled ‘Introduction: Islands of the imagination’, Sonja Boon sets the stage for the theme of islandness that is weaved throughout the book. “Newfoundland, this island I have now called home for ten years, marks its presence in my every move, and islandness now seeps through all of my pores” (p. 1). As a ‘come from away’, Sonja Boon offers a point of reflection, a comparison of the process of islanding that happens when one settles on an island (in this case, Newfoundland) as opposed to when one is born on an island. She posits this against her prairie upbringing and the possibility that islandness already existed in her somewhere.

Boon’s introduction sets the stage for the rest of book, which is thematically divided into four distinct parts: ‘Origins’, ‘Geographies’, ‘Languages’, and ‘Longings’. Each part contains five short essays. Authors and scholars such as Sara Ahmed, Toni Morrison, bell hooks, and Gloria Anzaldúa, are used as a beginning point, in which the authors reflect on their island experiences. Boon compares the essays to the archipelago that makes up the place in which this book is based: Newfoundland. “What does Fogo Island mean without the jagged bulk of Newfoundland, or Change Islands without its larger cousin, Fogo?” (p. 8). In this way, we can understand these essays as both islands whole onto themselves and interconnected in their relationship with each other.

Many of the essays pack a powerful punch, describing the essence of island living and place-making using autoethnography, a process of bringing autobiographical experience and theory together in order to understand broader social processes. They help to deepen Newfoundlanders’ understanding of their colonial past and present and give settlers an opening to reflect on their own place-making on an island which is native to Mi’kmaq and Beothuk peoples. The essays touch on what it means to live on an island in the present climate change reality; ‘Futures: Unfrozen’ and ‘Erosion: Fugitivity’, each place Newfoundland into the realities of melting ice and land erosion. The memory of the cod fishery, such an important part of Newfoundland’s past, is also intertwined throughout the essays, found in ‘Myths: Fishy’, ‘Hauntings: Love’, and ‘Histories: Stitching Theory’. These essays pay homage to the settler experience in Newfoundland.
While overall the book is good, some essays are shorter and provide only a basic introduction to certain theories and how these theories relate to the authors' experience of the world. Daze Jefferies introduces us to her theory-making of her trans identity in ‘Desire: Mummeries’. She provides a strong comparison of the process of mummering in New World Island to her trans woman experience of the world. Her reflection in ‘Myths: Fishy’, using mermaids as an opening to trans histories in Newfoundland however is less developed. Similarly, ‘Memories: Mud’ by Sonja Boon gives us only a taste of the “conceptual potential of mud” (p. 95). The authors can most likely be forgiven though, as many of these theories are being explored for the first time. As Jefferies notes in ‘Myth: Fishy’, there is only a small amount of scholarly work that explores the relationship between fish and trans/gender variant embodiments and none that explore the potential for fish as a posthuman representation of trans life. For Boon, ‘Memories: Mud’ allows for an exploration of mud as a boundary between solid and liquid, and as a way of connecting with each other “in an ever-eroding, ever-shifting, constantly resurfacing world” (p. 35) and remembering a road-trip that she took a year after arriving in Newfoundland. Although both chapters are short, they still play a key role in forming the archipelago that is this book.

What the authors do excel at throughout the book is using the power of the water’s edge, so well-known to islanders, to create an analogy that is both about the island, and the water’s edge. Though reflecting from a cold-water island such as Newfoundland, they combine stories of other islands to reinforce their work. In ‘Proximity: Silence’, Lesley Butler combines the work of poet and essayist, M. NourbeSe Philip and her reflection of the colonial haunting of the Caribbean islands to Newfoundland. Reflecting on how water can both be an opening and closing to the world, Butler questions how silence can help to better understand the colonial past, present and future of Newfoundland.

In ‘Belongings: Stumble’ the closing chapter of the book, Boon reflects on her being from away while also feeling that she is an islander. She finishes with the following, powerful words: “My islandness is an islandness on the edges, an islandness of stumbling, misfitting, otherness where the water meets the land” (p. 130). Overall, this collection of essays should be a book of note not only for feminist scholars, but also for island studies scholars that reflect on islandness and the water's edge. The chapters perfectly intertwine the making of place through autoethnographic reflection and provide an opening for looking to the future.

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The introduction to this book begins with a quotation from Arundhati Roy counselling us to consider Covid as a ‘portal’ through which we can enter a better world, unencumbered by the adverse effects of a colonialist industrial society. It is this quote which sets the tone for COVID in the islands. Covid-19 has dominated world news since early 2020 and while most of that news coverage has been about large countries, both developed and developing, SIDS (Small Island Developing States) have generally been ignored. And yet, as this book demonstrates, SIDS have managed this global health crisis better than many developed countries. By using their unique island characteristics to good advantage, SIDS have shown resilience and a willingness to use a public health crisis as an opportunity to reassess the role they play in relation to metropolitan countries and the world economy. Tourism as an economic driver for SIDS is a thread that runs throughout this book. The lingering effects of Covid on tourism will be an economic hindrance for SIDS for several years yet. Taking a look at how SIDS dealt with the unprecedented shutdown of tourism worldwide in 2020 is both culturally enlightening and economically instructive. COVID in the Islands focuses on SIDS in the Caribbean and the Pacific but the wide range of topics covered in the book make up for any limitations in geographic scope.

Bringing together experts from academia, politics, and community organizing, Campbell and Connell have given readers a unique insight into how small communities have survived Covid through their resilience and communal spirit. While SIDS are connected to the global economy through tourism and remittances, they are nonetheless islands and this has given them a strong sense of identity, as well as the ability to effectively control their border policy. Their location which has over the centuries afforded islands protection from outside threats has also given them tourism which one elder from the Fijian village of Vatuolalai refers to as a “blessing and a curse” (p. 271). The idea that a Covid-induced halt to global travel and tourism can be a blessing is an intriguing concept that the contributors in this book pursue in various ways. How SIDS responded to the closure of such a vital economic driver, is central to understanding how Covid affected island jurisdictions.

The Jamaican Minister of Health and Wellness brings the reader’s attention to one positive effect of Covid: increased funding for public health. While the rapid decline of tourism was an economic disaster for Jamaica, Covid-19 did provide the impetus needed for an increase in public health funding. One thing which stands out in this book is the ability of islanders to find positive aspects to the economic disruptions caused by Covid-19. This is not to say that the downturn in the tourism industry was a universal positive in all SIDS. The authors of Chapter 6 recount that by the summer of 2020 the Ministry of Tourism and Employment in French Polynesia had declared Covid to be an economic emergency as the financial and social toll of jobs lost to tourism took precedence over the health risks. Many of the chapters highlight the financial inability
of SIDS to fund the necessary medical programmes needed to fight Covid, especially when dealing with the loss of tourism and, in some cases, the longer-term effects of climate change.

One interesting subject explored in many of the chapters, especially those dealing with the Pacific SIDS, are the remittances sent home by agricultural workers. There are many South Pacific islanders working in New Zealand and Australia, particularly in the agricultural sector. The willingness of these agricultural workers to continue sending remittances to their families in various SIDS, regardless of the hardships those in the diaspora had to endure, is a profoundly moving reminder of the deep sense of family and community ties felt by Pacific islanders.

Remittances are important for both Caribbean SIDS and the Pacific Island communities and the various coping mechanisms used to deal with food insecurity in the Caribbean are discussed by several contributors to this book. One interesting development of the Covid crisis that several of the book’s contributors highlight, is the return to the land and the sea and the resurgence of traditional ways of farming and fishing in order to cope with food insecurity. Traditional methods of barter also enjoyed a resurgence as a mode of coping with increased isolation. These are very intriguing developments and would make a fascinating area for further study as Covid continues to limit the complete revival of the tourism industry.

The book provides comprehensive coverage of the domestic violence resulting from job losses and restrictions on mobility. Cultural and political resistance to Covid-19 restrictions are also well documented. Yonique Campbell and John Connell provide the final chapter in which they delineate the various ways in which islanders have struggled through the Covid crisis. In the end, they reflect that the Covid-19 pandemic may not have provided the portal to a better world as Arundhati Roy had hoped. Instead, many SIDS seem to have played a waiting game hoping for the return of tourism and the ‘old normal’.

COVID in the islands is a comprehensive and unique discourse on the consequences of a global pandemic on small island developing states. Each chapter contains a list of references for readers wanting to delve further into the various chapter topics. The book is recommended to anyone interested in the socio-economic diversification, political development, and cultural diversity found within small island communities. Given the continuing evolution of the Covid-19 virus this book can be a starting point for further study, rather than the final word on SIDS and the pandemic. Covid has not left us and global tourism is still recovering; an addendum to this thought-provoking volume would be most welcome.

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*Pasifika Black*, the third book by Quito Swan, is an excellent and empirically dazzling book that should be of great interest and importance to many different disciplines, including island studies. *Pasifika Black* explores the relationships between Black internationalism, Oceania, and decolonisation. It focuses on the 20th century anti-colonial movements of the 'Black Pacific', conceptualised as including Melanesia and Australia. This is an historical analysis based on archival work which moves between time periods and islands, stretching temporally from the first violent moments of European imperialism to the independence struggles of the 1960s-1980s, a fact which is also captured in the book.

The Introduction does most of the theoretical work of the book, drawing out both the colonial racialization of the region and how this process involved a gendered 'othering'. Acknowledging that 'Melanesians' have been racialized as Black, Swan is asking: 'What does Black internationalism look like if viewed from the Pacific rather than the Atlantic?' This is not to compare or measure experiences, but to ask how Blackness was conceived in the Pacific and what it enabled in terms of imperialism and also in terms of Black international solidarities. The period of time covered by the book means that there is theoretical engagement with the anti-colonial movements of Black Power, Négritude and Pan-Africanism. Swan also makes a methodological commitment to the inclusion of women, with a broad and deliberate focus on women and women's groups. As well as being an accurate representation of activism in the region, this focus on women helps to counter the feminized and sexualized discourses of islanders. The history of sexual exploitation of Oceanic women is included, but not left unanswered by the women of the region. That being said, there is a notable absence of some literature on Blackness written by Pacific scholars, such as Teresia Teaiwa, that would have further enriched this chapter.

The ten main chapters are heavily empirical. Each chapter focuses on a different context, geographically covering West Papua, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and New Caledonia but effectively demonstrating both the regional and global connections these independence movements had. *Pasifika Black* engages with a variety of archives, drawing on an impressive and fascinating amount of material. While not theoretically heavy, the empirical chapters are full of connections that are made sufficiently explicit for an exciting and inspiring read. This space also allows the records to speak, with the inclusion of many powerful quotes. For example, excerpts from Leo Hannett's speech 'Niugini Black power':

> By exchanging the White political actors with Black ones and letting them play the same game within unchanged political machinery [...] would only bring about quantitative change but no qualitative change whatsoever. A guillotine is always a guillotine no matter what color is the person who controls it (p. 101).

and Oodgeroo Noonuccal's essay 'White Racism and White Violence':

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Racism is a complex state of mind. Racists believe that schools must be segregated, not to keep Blacks separate but to preserve the ‘superior’ child […] Housing integration is not opposed because White people don’t want to live next door to ‘boongs’ but because Black people ‘lower property value’ (p. 83).

Oceanic activists are shown to have travelled widely to raise awareness of their own struggles, and learn from the Black movements in the US, UK, and newly independent states in Africa. These organized visits, correspondences and conferences enabled the formation of reciprocal solidarities.

Pasifika Black is of huge importance for island studies scholars who are interested in decolonizing the discipline. Firstly, it serves as a reminder that whilst decolonizing island studies is a relatively new development, there is a huge body of decolonial island literature that exists to be drawn on, beyond the work that is currently cited in the discipline. Secondly, this book shows that solidarity in the Pacific is not just oceanic, regional or global; it is also Black and anti-colonial. In other words, solidarity forms not only through islandness. Finally, this book is important in showing that environmental justice has long been sought in Oceania as part of a decolonial framework. It is not a separate issue, or a new issue, but the same issue of fighting for full control and sovereignty of land which has been stolen twice over, through colonial claiming and capitalist exploitation. Together these insights work to push back against narratives of island isolation or insularity, and the objectification of islanders as passive and weak. The real depth and breadth of research and evidence available in this book will be invaluable in seeking to address how these myths continue to circulate and challenging them where they appear.

Pasifika Black provides rich historical evidence for internationalizing and thereby demystifying Oceania through a decolonial framework. The solidarities and specificities of island anti-colonialism outlined in this book historicize the ongoing justification of neo-colonialism as reliant on the specific racialization of Oceanic people. The chapter where this comes through clearest is perhaps Chapter 8, ‘1878: Black liberation in Kanaky’ which focuses on French colonialism in so-called ‘New Caledonia’ and Kanak resistance. As in many places in the book, the detailing of the violence is a tough read. It is an explicitly racist violence, where the Black features of ‘Melanesians’ and the racist interpretation of them as ‘savage’ and ‘devil worshipping’ leads to a justification in the minds of the French for a genocide, working to ‘disappear’ an entire people in order to access the nickel and copper of their islands. The 1917 offer of “fifty francs for a dead Kanak and twenty-five for a live prisoner” (p. 197) is evidence that islanders whose lands were stolen were ‘worth more’ to the colonisers dead than alive. Swan dedicates his book to “the freedom struggles of Oceania”; the book is a call for solidarity as well as a history of one.

Whilst fascinating, sometimes the pace of the information becomes a bit difficult to absorb. Lists of names, affiliations, conferences and acronyms, in paragraphs that move from one person to another without any signposting, can seem quite disjointed.
Additionally, following the Introduction, Swan’s voice is largely absent, which feels like a missed opportunity at times. One of the only insertions of Swan into the text is a photograph on the final page, which is also the most contemporary piece of text: a photograph of activists taken in Vanuatu by Swan in 2014. With no conclusion to the book, a reflection on this photograph as a final section could have been interesting, drawing the contemporary moment into all the histories told in the book.

Overall, Pasifika Black has a lot to bring to island studies, such as turning scholars’ attention to Black geographies. Concurrently, it will hopefully bring renewed global attention to ongoing colonialism in Oceania. This history is not a happy one; reading in 2022, many of the independence movements that are discussed have not yet been successful, hence Swan’s dedication. The violence described is viciously racist, and the echoes in present-day discourses are disturbing. However, this makes it an even more important book, because to understand Oceania means understanding anti-colonialism in the region. It means understanding it as regional and Oceanic, yes, but also as Black internationalist.

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International organizations and small states: Participation, legitimacy and vulnerability is a practical and timely text written for students, practitioners and causal learners alike. It will adequately serve anyone who wishes to understand both the inner workings of International Organizations (IOs) and how small island developing states (SIDS) operate within them. In alignment with its title, the text is comprehensive in its coverage of IOs and their respective mandates. It covers the specialized agencies that lead international efforts in maritime transport, public health, food security, as well as those promoting international trade and global economic growth and financial stability. Likewise, the text is immersive in its coverage of the efforts of SIDS – used interchangeably with small states – to increase their participation in, and influence the work programs of, these IOs.

There are two central themes in the text that help the reader gain a fuller understanding of the relationship between IOs and SIDS. The first is that they are mutually dependent. Despite SIDS’ relative lack of capacity to influence international relations in the manner of larger, industrialized nations, IOs are dependent on them for the legitimacy and fulfilment of inclusivity that their collective engagements provide. Conversely, SIDS depend on IOs as the principal avenue by which to advance their development objectives. They do this by using their votes to maintain a liberal international political-economic order. The other central theme is the text’s elaboration of the disadvantages accruing to both as a result of this mutual dependence.
It outlines the high cost of participation for SIDS, and, for IOs, the perception of a lack of effectiveness due to too many actors participating in their often-cumbersome negotiation processes. This is the famous enduring trade-off between legitimacy and efficiency that features in much analysis on the role of global governance and debates about how to achieve greater inclusion within it.

The text is divided into two parts. Part I examines SIDS as a group and IOs as institutions. Its main output is to explain the ‘why’ of their interaction: why do IOs facilitate the participation of SIDS, and why do SIDS, despite various challenges, seek to participate? Part II deals with the ‘how’. The text is compact (201 pages), yet comprehensive in its presentation. It lays out its methodological approach, assumptions, and theoretical and conceptual underpinnings clearly and convincingly. The reader is thus left convinced of the appropriateness of the research design and methods. These include semi-structured interviews with diplomats, international civil servants and agents of Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). The authors also acted as observers in international negotiations. These interrogated and answered the text’s major questions. Indeed, it is impressive that the authors were able to cover such a wide range of SIDS and agencies across large geographic dispersions without sacrificing methodological rigor and research quality.

While remaining an academic undertaking, the text is written in a dynamic manner and unfolds dramatically through the use of multiple real-life scenarios and direct quotes from interviewees and key informants. To illustrate, the book begins by taking us into the negotiating room of the United Nations Security Council, providing a glimpse into the standoff between SIDS and larger members of the Group of 77 (G77) countries. This type of scenario continues throughout the text and serves to not only engage the reader but enriches the overall analysis of the text’s central arguments. It also provides a wide breadth of perspectives from various SIDS, IOs and the multitude of NGOs that support them. The authors also used a large number of citations from other notable scholars dealing with the topics of IOs as well as small states in the international political economy. This allows readers access to a wider knowledge pool within the subject area.

Additionally, the text makes generous use of statistical tables where relevant and applicable in order to enhance analytical clarity. Endnotes are used sparingly for each of the seven chapters. The text however features a huge index and an equally large, but necessary list of abbreviations to cover multiple country groupings and IOs. These, along with creative signposting within the text, make it easy to navigate. The text is written by three academics who have published prolifically on the topics of small states and territories and international organizations. They bring to the book a wealth of theoretical knowledge on the topic, as well as practical insights gained through their interactions with policymakers and practitioners during the course of their careers.

The text’s major strength is that it illustrates dramatically to the reader what it means to be a SIDS diplomat or representative within an IO; and what it means to be a civil servant of an IO working with SIDS. Rightly flouting the implicit academic writing rule to use direct quotes sparingly, multiple interviewees were given their own voice.
This not only enlivens the text, as some interviewees spoke in an animated manner, it gives the reader the distinct feeling of being a ‘fly on the wall’ in international negotiations. The text also liberally documents several real-life experiences of key informants, as well as the authors’ own observations. These are perfectly balanced with the authors’ own ideas and analysis, making for a grounded and well-balanced text that demonstrates rigor, originality and scholarship.

In sum, this text is a relevant and timely undertaking. It serves as a compass for SIDS given the current global environmental context they must navigate. In the context of climate change SIDS are uniquely and disproportionately affected. To ensure their survival they must make the case within IOs for a global reduction in greenhouse gases and for special and differential treatment to adapt to the effects of a warming planet. This is the only means by which they will continue on the path to achieving the sustainable development goals; this text is an essential tool in their kit.

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