

Book reviews

Godfrey Baldacchino and contributors (2017). *Solution protocols to festering island disputes: 'win-win' solutions for the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands.* 203pp. London & New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-4724-7518-3. £105.00.

Once again, Baldacchino has managed to publish an excellent contribution to the field of island studies with *Solution Protocols to Festering Island Disputes: 'Win-win' Solutions for the Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands*. This time, Baldacchino takes on a sovereignty dispute that has stood for centuries, namely the disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku archipelago between China (and Taiwan!) and Japan. By drawing on the long history of island disputes and their resolutions, Baldacchino lays out new solutions and offers a refreshing look at this complex geopolitical issue. In the introduction, the author points to the originality of his research. Indeed, while many researchers have focused on the resolution of claim over islands between two or more sovereign states through international law mechanisms, Baldacchino argues that such judicial resolutions often turn into zero-sum games (i.e. who has the right to claim a specific territory under international law, mainly UNCLOS) and do not allow for thinking outside the box on how sovereignty over a specific territory could be creatively shared. This reviewer could not agree more with this self-analysis. Baldacchino's in-depth overview of creative governance and alternatives posits some avenues for post-zero-sum solutions. The book has a creative structure which resembles that of an edited collection. The prologue (Mari Katayanagi), epilogue I (Liu Jiangyong) and epilogue II (Akihiro Iwashita) are essays by scholars specialized in island disputes and Diaoyu/Senkaku affairs while other chapters have been written with the help of other contributors whose expertise Baldacchino has managed to neatly sew together for the overall purpose of the book.

Located in the East China Sea about 120 nautical miles east of Fuzhou in China and 90 nautical miles north of the Ryukyu Islands, Japan, the Diaoyu/Senkaku is an archipelago comprising several tiny islands and rocks whose total area covers less than 7km². In a nutshell, the dispute over the archipelago is a consequence of divergent treaty interpretations as to whether the archipelago is under Japanese or Chinese jurisdiction. *Solution Protocols* also demonstrates to what extent this dispute is a politically sensitive issue and highlights the limitations of international law to solve this. This is exactly why creative governance solutions might come into play. The most common understanding is that Japan and China have both agreed to shelve the dispute since the 1970s. Baldacchino argues that as long as both countries agree to disagree, they might be able to secure an effective agreement and benefit from, for example, the exploitation of oil and gas in the region.

Solution Protocols illustrates different avenues for creative thinking on sovereignty. Baldacchino posits that islands have often been used to promote creative governance and that this track record should not be forgotten and should even be extended to territorial dispute resolutions across the globe as a way to overcome mechanical, win-lose, and zero-sum solutions. Small islands or archipelagos such as the Diaoyu/Senkaku offer the perfect conditions to experiment with novel conceptualizations of sovereignty. Because of the very nature of islands as remarkable natural, small and manageable spaces, states are often more inclined to craft and condone a suspension of the extant law. Taking the reader through time and history, Baldacchino explores different ways and means of creative island governance

between several states. He gives a thorough overview and examples of split, shared and suspended sovereignty as well as more creative methods such as single sovereignty with shared jurisdiction (e.g. Svalbard), shelving or setting aside the dispute (e.g. Antarctica), or swapping and selling (e.g. Zanzibar/Heligoland). The book assesses the practical feasibility of the proposed solutions in each chapter and compares the effects and impacts such solutions could have on the Diaoyu/Senkaku dispute.

In their epilogues, Jiangyong and Iwashita address the issue from their distinctive national perspectives. On the one hand, Jiangyong argues that peace and friendship are at the core of Sino-Japanese relations and maritime confidence-building measures need to be implemented to avoid unnecessary conflicts over the archipelago. He posits that securing fishing rights through the renegotiation of the China-Japan Fisheries Agreement could enable an effective solution. On the other hand, Iwashita warns against the danger of historicization of the issue by China. He argues Japan should not let China frame this as a historical issue. In his conclusion, Iwashita suggests privatizing the islands and entrusting them to a foundation that would help protect and preserve the archipelago's rare flora and fauna while involving scientists from China, Japan, and Taiwan, as well as Western scientists and the Tokyo metropolitan government. Albeit being for the most part impractical, collaborations and co-managements through peace and science—an idea that some might trace to the Cold War treaties (Outer Space and the Antarctic)—are workable solutions that merit further exploration.

Solution Protocols is built on a solid understanding of the international legal framework, especially when it comes to discussing the law of the sea (UNCLOS). However, the book sometimes has a rather IR focus and engages in the kind of rhetoric that international lawyers tend to avoid or dismiss as misleading especially in the discussion about Antarctica. For example, while hailing the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) for its robustness, quoting sources saying the ATS has no teeth and that it is struggling to keep up with the pressure and demand for mineral resources might not fully reflect the actual situation within the consensus-based ATS meetings. Such a realist approach could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy. While the Madrid Protocol can indeed be subject to revisions after 2048, there is no reason to believe the ATS is not resilient enough and might not be able to stand the test of time.

At a time where the international legal order might seem more fragile than ever, *Solution Protocols* offers an interesting take on promoting peaceful resolutions of territorial disputes. Rethinking means of achieving or sharing sovereignty should not be viewed as a threat to the state-centric international law, and instead should be promoted to achieve more cooperation among the international community of states. Territories such as Svalbard (Svalbard Treaty) and the Antarctic (Antarctic Treaty System) are tangible evidence of what territorial cooperation might look like when sovereignty is put aside for the purpose of fostering international cooperation. While hoping for the resolution of the Diaoyu/Senkaku disputes, Baldacchino has truly produced a book for the ages that can be enjoyed by both newcomers to the field of island studies and specialists alike. The book's interesting format coupled with Baldacchino's style and quality research make the book enjoyable to read while managing to engage readers with such a complex issue.

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Warwick Anderson, Miranda Johnson, & Barbara Brookes (Eds.) (2018). *Pacific futures, past and present*. 314pp. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. ISBN: 978-0-8248-7445-2. US\$78.00 (Hardback).

After the publication of Epeli Hau'ofa's incisive essay 'Our Sea of Islands' in the early 1990s, scholarship on the Pacific, or Oceania as Hau'ofa prefers, quickly became invested in breaking with the idea that this vast space with its people comprises but "tiny isolated resource-less island states and territories, condemned to dependency of the largesse of powerful countries." Inspired by the legacy of this seminal text, many of the contributors to *Pacific futures, past and present* again take up Hau'ofa's call to envision a 'new Oceania' but extend the focus on Pacific space and people to Pacific time. The point of departure for this edited collection is that there have and always will be Pacific *futures*. There were futures envisioned in the past, some happened some did not. And like these past futures, the futures of the present and those yet to come are intricately connected. Layers upon layers, as Te Punga Somerville writes in a chapter on ancestors and descendants that is full of futures, are at once behind us and in front.

Pacific futures consists of four parts organised along shared themes and concerns. These parts are titled 'Genealogies of the Future,' 'Transit Futures,' 'Asian Pacifics' and 'Weedy Historicities' and contain either two or four chapters each. And while the connections between these sections could have been more clearly articulated, the collection as a whole consistently narrates different perspectives on known past visions for Pacific futures, be they colonial, postcolonial, or decolonial. It also charts different methodologies to account for alternative historical narrations. This scope is crucial in a vast area like the Pacific, where different ways of telling histories have too often been ignored in favor of imperial narrations.

One could say that, for an edited collection that is firmly situated within the disciplines of history and historical anthropology, a focus on temporality is an obvious choice. Yet many of the contributors go beyond the constraints of traditional historiography and argue for an open approach to the making of history: one that benefits from questions, gaps in knowledge, and open-endings. For those interested in Island Studies, this proves a valuable approach. Even for readers who, like myself, are not strictly located within a historical discipline this collection provides a lot of food for thought. When we write about Pacific and island futurities, who are we writing for? And moreover, who are we writing with? Chapters by Tony Ballantyne and Henry Yu resist a narrow vision of the Pacific as a binary space of white settler colonial and Indigenous/Islander peoples. Their chapters call upon various Asian Pacifics, with a focus on Indian and Cantonese communities, in order to extend these cultural dichotomies.

The strongest chapters are those that indeed go beyond binary models and classical Western modes of historical storytelling and rather entangle past futures with present futures as well as possible future futures. In the first part of *Pacific futures*, focused on genealogies and Indigenous epistemologies, Alice Te Punga Somerville urges the reader to trace Pacific histories and futures within multidirectional genealogical networks of connections. Inspired by Albert Wendt's poem 'Inside Us the Dead,' Te Punga Somerville calls for the metaphor of genealogy to inform the practice of writing histories. Wendt's poem connects past to present through the embodiment of the dead. Via Tongan poet Karlo Mila's response to this poem, Te Punga Somerville asks us to consider that by embodying genealogies, we embody the unborn and the future too. She invokes the Māori verb and noun 'whakapapa' (that in a literal sense means 'to layer') as a way to incorporate genealogical method into historiography. By layering presents, futures and pasts, Te Punga Somerville practices what she preaches. She

effectively puts the metaphor of genealogy to work and makes a case for a future of Pacific scholarship that emphasizes layers, connections and the dynamic nature of a genealogical historiography. By drawing genealogical links between different poems, her words create new spaces for future Pacific encounters.

Like Te Punga Somerville, Warwick Anderson approaches Pacific futures as hospitable and affirmative, asking for whom past futures were written and why. In the penultimate chapter of this volume, Anderson takes us to the Marquesas via the work of historian Greg Denning and anthropologist Harry Shapiro. He explains that by situating their work in time and space and letting weedy historical sensibilities invade their work, we can see how the dominance of Western modes of history starts to dissolve and make way for Pacific and oceanic futures. The conclusion he draws is that in their reading of the Marquesans, Denning and Shapiro became inevitably involved in mixed, messy, weedy encounters, as their invasive colonial interpretations tried to make sense of the Pacific and its future. These weedy encounters can then also be thought of as genealogical networks that extended beyond kin and family lines and showed that even though the work of white academics studying Pacific others was more often than not complicit in colonial systems of appropriation and exploitation, they became part of these hybrid weedy multidirectional histories and paved the way for contemporary and future decolonization.

To conclude, *Pacific futures, past and present* is an intriguing edited collection containing excellent chapters, though some are more provocative than others. As a whole it poses interesting old and new questions for the future of Pacific time and space and thus achieves what its editors set out to do. The plural and heteroglossic nature of the collection realizes its aims, collecting different ways of thinking about Pacific futures, while leaving many questions unsolved and open for future answers and interpretations. The chapters on Asian and Indigenous/Islander Pacifics do well in setting out different ways to reconsider past Pacific futurities for future future's sake. Of particular interest would be to see further work extend white settler colonial histories to include even more of these weedy island historicities. For, as this volume has proved, there are many Pacific futures, past, present and future.

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Mike T. Carson (2018). *Archaeology of Pacific Oceania: inhabiting a sea of islands*. 386pp. Abingdon: Routledge. ISBN 978-1-138-09717-9. US\$69.99 (Paperback).

Archaeology of Pacific Oceania is a massive offering by Mike T. Carson on the context for and peopling of the numerous island groups across Oceania as well as the events and patterns underlying associated cultural development. At the risk of being overly simplistic, volume chapters may be categorized into four groups: background context and related disciplinary reviews (1-4), tracking first settlement through the medium of pottery (5-7), cultural and demographic transformations by chronological eras (8-13), and retrospective conclusions (14). Chapters incorporate individualized bibliographies while the index is cross-referenced by subject and location. There is a large number of figures (n=202) with 75% occurring in but four chapters.

Carson describes in the introduction and reiterates in following chapters that his intent is to present a “chronological narrative” for Pacific Oceania, where patterns are sought across this sea of islands as a “means to address fundamental archaeological questions.” He eschews a traditional review of archaeological research and its interpretation for “the artificially defined culture areas” of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. Rather, his intent is to treat the region as “a whole,” where migration has been constant, and where Pacific settlement “grows larger and more complicated over time.” The introduction also forewarns that “a coherently manageable narrative cannot include an exhaustive review for its own sake, but the most pertinent findings are brought into the narrative synthesis.” The “pertinent findings” are in part drawn from his own research and expertise albeit “contextualized within the body of existing literature.” In contemplation of his objective, one must query what the fundamental archaeological questions might be, especially if we are to ignore or blend together existing knowledge of culture history, phenotypic differences, ecological variability, comparative historical linguistics and the like for Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia. I read the remainder of the volume in search of an answer.

The chronological narrative begins in deep antiquity with hominin presence in Southeast Asia and adjacent areas followed by the appearance of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* in the range of “60,000 – 50,000 years ago.” The latter are identified as “Australo-Melanesian” hunter-gatherers that were replaced by or integrated into populations of “Mongoloid” agriculturalists at various times. The exceptions are the peoples of Australia and parts of New Guinea. The early prehistory of coastal and island Southeast Asia is fragmentary and complex but one where Carson identifies a pottery bearing “Neolithic horizon” that by 4000 BC had extended into Taiwan with subsequent appearances in the Philippines, the Marianas, Palau, the Bismarck Archipelago, New Guinea and as far west as Tonga and Samoa on the flank of the Polynesian triangle. Notwithstanding contemporary, often vitriolic debate over dates, the relationships of ceramic assemblages to each other, and the implications for colonization pathways, this review is one of the more informative aspects of the volume. It presents a broader scale and integrated perspective for settlement of the Pacific. It also, incidentally, reflects upon the origins and dispersal of the Austronesian language family.

The notion of a “pottery trail” to track first settlement in Oceania has long been established, incorporating no less than a half century of focused archaeological study. The distinguishing ceramic complex is referred to as Lapita, where a suite of vessel types is decorated with intricate dentate stamped designs that are easily tracked in space and time. The Lapita trail begins in the Bismarck Archipelago in the interval 1500–1350 BC and, between 1250 and 900 BC, it expands east and south into the Reef/Santa Cruz islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Fiji and Tonga. The title for Chapter 7 describes this as a “siege of ecological imperialism” where heretofore uninhabited islands were colonized and transformed. The Lapita era ends across Oceania by 500 BC, when the last vestiges of the decorated ceramic type disappear. To Carson, the period 500 BC to 100 AD is of fundamental importance. Sea level drawdown from a mid-Holocene high stand altered coastal ecologies and, combined with previous Lapita impacts on faunal resources, “people were forced to adapt.” Sea levels produced a “region-wide driving factor,” pushing movement to island interiors, a reliance on agricultural production for subsistence and resulting in various other changes in material culture and society. The level of asserted generality in Carson’s narrative, a failure to present convincing evidence for parallels in societal changes across Oceania beyond loss of dentate

stamp ceramics, and a reductionist interpretive model rooted in sea level change, leave me sceptical and unconvinced. Falling sea levels, nevertheless, did have a substantial impact on Oceanic geography *per se*. By 100 AD it had exposed a myriad of atoll formations across northern Oceania, opening up new island landscapes for settlement and infilling the map of Micronesia as we know it today.

The period 500-1000 AD in Oceania is marked in the chronological narrative as a period without long distance voyaging, where cultural identities were forged and where ancestral Polynesia became distinguished from Melanesian and Micronesian neighbors. This narrative abruptly changed by 1000 AD, where population growth, inequality, monumental architecture, formalized village patterns and intensified agricultural production are present. The long pause in migration also is over, with the settlement of East Polynesian archipelagoes being the result. The author (tentatively) labels this the “AD 1000 Event” where “numerous island societies developed a similar set of solutions to their mutually shared conditions at the same time.” One of the shared conditions was the Little Climatic Optimum where warmer and wetter conditions provided the “supporting context.” This “time of plenty” was quickly transformed into a “time of less” with climatic instability of the Little Ice Age between 1300 and 1850 AD. The chronological narrative thus ends with resource stress, competition for land, ever-increasing efforts to intensify economic production, the making and reconfiguration of chiefdoms, internecine warfare and hegemonic expansion. Case studies for all of this become selective with almost a total emphasis on Polynesia and Micronesia.

I started this review with a search for the fundamental archaeological questions that a chronological narrative approach might resolve, as stated in the introduction. My apologies to the author if I am wrong, but I am not sure there are questions to be addressed in any of this. At best, the volume presents a set of highly generalized patterns across a sea of islands that are attributed alternatively to sea level fall or environmental change. I had hoped for more.

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Tatiana Flores & Michelle A. Stephens (Eds.) (2017). *Relational undercurrents: contemporary art of the Caribbean archipelago*. 352pp. Durham: Duke University Press. ISBN: 978-1-934491-58-4. US\$50.00 (Paperback).

Tatiana Flores’s and Michelle A. Stephens’s *Relational undercurrents: contemporary art of the Caribbean archipelago* is the result of a 2017 art exhibition produced in partnership between MOLAA (Museum of Latin American Art) and the Getty-funded *LA/LA: Pacific Standard Time* cultural program. Like the exhibition, the book asks what it would mean to envisage the Caribbean as an archipelagic reality: “how might we reimagine an America shaped by the smallest of its territorial units, the Antillean islands of the Caribbean Sea.” In framing the production of eighty artists from more than ten countries in relation to the archipelago, the book challenges limiting tropes of insularism that conceive of islands as isolated, empty territories available for colonization and touristic enjoyment. Proposing the archipelago as a counter-visual alternative spanning across the Americas and therefore challenging the rationality that fragments and categorizes the continent, *Relational Undercurrents* delves into

hidden stories of coastal creative subversion and emancipative cultural exchange linking territories beyond linguistic and geopolitical boundaries.

Relational Undercurrents engages with the curatorial genealogy of mega-exhibitions dealing with contemporary Caribbean art. Starting in the 1990s, several projects explored the common elements shared by Caribbean territories. Curatorial projects such as *Carib Art*, *Caribe Insular: Exclusión, Fragmentación y Paraiso*, *Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions* and *Caribbean: Crossroads of the World* sought to demarcate the defining element gluing together Caribbean visual creativity. At the same time, those initiatives asked the question of whether Caribbean art should be defined as such at all. If those artists have joined a transnational creative scenario, borrowing from and contributing to a global visual repertoire, is it meaningful to frame their visual production with a Caribbean geographical lens?

The last question reverberates throughout *Relational Undercurrents*, yet this recurrent concern in Caribbean studies is formulated here less as a metaphysical quandary on the archipelagic condition of the Caribbean than as a practice-driven search into the multiple ways in which visual art can illuminate the not-so-evident connections existing within and beyond the Caribbean. One of the most original aspects of the book has to do with understanding the archipelago as a valuable model in exploring the active capacity for place-making of Caribbean individuals and communities. The book recognizes visual production as an active agent that relocates and repurposes the cognitive mapping of the entire Caribbean. The archipelagic framework displayed in *Relational Undercurrents*, then, reveals the extent to which Caribbean creators have invested in creating a space of their own while also redefining the role of art as a socially meaningful practice.

By identifying Caribbean visual artists as a driving force actively concerned with the production of a counter-visual mapping of the Americas, the book offers valuable examples to anyone interested in understanding the relevance of cultural production in proposing alternative archipelagic entanglements and in challenging what Nelson Maldonado-Torres identifies as “continental reason.” In his essay in *Relational Undercurrents*, Maldonado-Torres explores the central role that the Caribbean played in early imaginings of the modernist rationality grounding and naturalizing European colonization. At the same time, however, he also emphasizes the “impressive reservoir of knowledge about ... resistance” existing in the Caribbean. Echoing Maldonado-Torres’ view, *Relational Undercurrents* frames contemporary Caribbean visual creativity as an active force delving into and further developing that resistive reservoir. This becomes evident when one looks at the artistic projects included in the four sections that comprised the original exhibition, which also feature at length in the critical essays gathered in the book. If the first two sections focus on recurring tropes in Caribbean visual practice such as the importance of mapping and the elusive condition of the horizon, which ambivalently suggest both insular confinement and relationality, the last two explore less analyzed approaches: the entanglement of human and non-human interrelations in the shaping of Caribbean archipelagic ecosystems and the possibility of understanding representation as an active way of configuring and negotiating public identities.

Besides the active role of art in shaping “relational undercurrents,” the book’s second main concern has to do with recognizing how those bonds reach the spaces of the Caribbean diaspora. Out of the nine essays included in the book, four (those by Jerry Philogene, Laura Roulet, Antonio Eligio “Tonel” and Rocío Aranda Alvarado) directly address the visual production of the Haitian, Dominican, Cuban and Puerto Rican diasporas in the United

States. Although the focus on diasporic visibility is more than desirable as a way of countering nation-based and insular approaches to the Caribbean, the excessive prominence that the United States acquire in the book as the place where Caribbean art is produced but also exhibited and commoditized raises some important questions: in which ways is the identification of the Caribbean with archipelagic models dependent on the unbalanced power relations between the US and the region? How is that focus on the US overshadowing alternative historical *and contemporary* archipelagic relations, such as those linking the Caribbean and African anticolonial horizons? In which ways could the book's visual relational undercurrents link Caribbean territories with other archipelagos within and beyond the Atlantic? To be sure, answers to those questions could be found in Flores' previous curatorial experience. In *Wrestling with the Image: Caribbean Interventions*, the 2011 landmark exhibition she co-curated with the Trinidadian artist Christopher Cozier, both curators unsettled the inherited colonial geography of the Caribbean by paying attention to the heterogenous iterations of Caribbean creators across the globe. Although a clear linearity connects *Wrestling* and *Relational Undercurrents*, the reader of the latter wonders whether the complex visual itineraries of the former have been somehow limited in the edition following the last 2017 exhibition. That focus, in any case, is not necessarily negative and is somehow countered and complemented by the rich catalogue of artworks exhibited and the contextualizing essays by the curators of the exhibition and editors of the volume.

On the whole, *Relational Undercurrents* expands the traditional scope of Caribbean art mega-exhibitions by introducing a concern on art's active role in processes of social and geographic imagination. More than this, the book goes beyond the original exhibition by framing visual production as part of an archipelagic epistemology that is extremely useful for readers with an expertise in Caribbean studies and for those approaching the debates on the region for the first time.

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