ISLANDS, ISLANDERS, AND THE BIBLE

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Islands, Islanders, and the Bible

RumInations

Edited by
Jione Havea, Margaret Aymer, and Steed Vernyl Davidson

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Preface

This anthology rides on the waves of contextual, cultural, and postcolonial criticisms, containing readings of biblical texts by islanders who are rooted in Asia, America, Caribbean, Europe, and Oceania. It takes into account the fluidity and sandiness of island spaces, the complex richness of islandness, and the sways and grooves of islandhood. The contributors write from/upon different routes, and the aim of this anthology is to guide the flow of island hermeneutics and island studies into the currents of biblical criticisms.

Most of the chapters were delivered at sessions of the Society of Biblical Literature group Islands, Islanders, and Bible (since 2009), renamed in 2012 as Islands, Islanders, and Scriptures. The chapters come together in this anthology to give a taste of how islanders might ripple the sea of biblical interpretation. In island terms, there are three clusters of waves in this anthology:

- The first cluster contains ten chapters, each flowing in/to different currents, depths, and shores.
- The second cluster offers three engagements with a selection of the chapters, as if to break up the first cluster into three waves.
- The third cluster presents three more engagements, this time breaking up the first cluster into three other waves.

This islandish collection is therefore a conversation *in formation* (or in de- and reformation, if you prefer that line of thinking), noting that different clustering produces different meaning structures, and *in transition*.

In transition, this anthology is unfinished. Lacking is a foreword, which was asked from David Jobling, stern supporter of this kind of work who as General Editor of Semeia Studies asked for a volume on Islander criticism (as the Society of Biblical Literature tags the kind of readings

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offered herein). Around twenty years later, Jobling is in transition, recovering from a stroke, and this collection is looking for cover (in the eyes of readers).

On the cover is Filipino artist Emmauel Garibay's *Bagong Mundo* (*New World Disorder*, 2011). Garibay offered this reading, which ends with an invitation, by email (December 6, 2013):

> The work is a depiction of Philippine colonial history. The face looking up to the sky is the idyllic precolonial era about to be altered by the intrusion of a Spanish galleon in the sky. A subtle image of a woman holding a banana and a man holding an apple form the lips and the eyeball of the face. The man and woman are *malakas* and *maganda*, the Filipino equivalent of Adam and Eve in the creation legend.
>
> In the foreground is the resistance movements that followed. The man is Andres Bonifacio the revolutionary leader. But the roots of colonialism have been deeply embedded in our consciousness (apple in the eye) resulting in a culture of subservience (bald lady with a cross) and passive acceptance of one's sufferings (face on the lower left corner). In spite of having been politically emancipated, colonialism persists culturally and ideologically (white man's face with mustache). Thus the land is perpetually a banana republic.
>
> Feel free to add your interpretation to the image.

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Abbreviations

Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
BA	*Biblical Archeologist*
BARIS	BAR (Biblical Archaeological Reports) International Series
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
FCB	A Feminist Companion to the Bible
Geogr.	Strabo, *Geographica*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
Int	*Interpretation*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JCTR	*Journal of Christian Theological Research*
KJV	King James Version
List	*Listening: A Journal of Religion and Culture*
Nat. Hist.	Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*
NIDB	*New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009.
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	*Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTBIFAN	*Notes Africaines: Bulletin d'information et de correspondance de l'Institut Français d'Afrique Noire*
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
TNIV	Today's New International Version
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WW	*Word & World*

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RumInations

Steed Vernyl Davidson, Margaret Aymer, Jione Havea

We invite readers to wade into this collection of essays and to return to the Bible when the time comes with a two-part proposition: biblical texts are like islands, and readers are like islanders. At the underside of our invitation is a double affirmation: islands are like biblical texts, and islanders are (like) readers. Our invitation and double(-crossing) affirmation problematize the assumption that "no text is an island," which is a strong gust in the sails of intertextual (see, e.g., Fewell 1992) and contrapuntal (see, e.g., Sugirtharajah 2003) readers. We also challenge the assumption that "natives [islanders] can't read,"[1] which continues to blindfold colonial and missionary agents. Many nonislanders, and (truth be told) a few islanders, think that islands and islanders are naïve, simplistic, and disconnected. They deserve some islanding and sanding (see Davidson in this volume)!

The contributors to this anthology write from the surfs and turfs of islands in Asia, America, Caribbean, Europe, and Oceania. There are more island shores and island cultures out there whose ways, voices, lives, and faces are not channeled into and through this anthology. Our aim is not to be representative but to invite a conversation on how being islanders, and the various ruminations of islandedness, condition the way we read biblical texts. Toward this aim, the essays are organized, in island terms, as three clusters of waves. The first cluster contains ten chapters in which islander scholars address different aspects of island context, islander identity, and islandic peoplehood. Hence the three parts of this opening chapter, drawing attention to, and ruminating around, island space, islandness, and islandhood.

1. A comment made in jest, but deeply insulting, to Jione Havea after delivering presentations at two different occasions.

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The second cluster offers three engagements with a selection of the ten chapters, as if to break the first cluster into three more waves: (1) Roland Boer engages with the chapters by Steed Vernyl Davidson, Nāsili Vaka'uta, and J. Richard Middleton; (2) Aliou C. Niang engages with the chapters by Margaret Aymer, Mosese Ma'ilo, and Althea Spencer Miller; and (3) Andrew Mein winds up this cluster by engaging with the chapters by Grant Macaskill, Hisako Kinukawa, and Jione Havea.

The third cluster presents three more engagements, this time breaking up the first cluster into three other waves: (1) Elaine M. Wainwright engages with the chapters by Aymer, Ma'ilo, and Kinukawa; (2) Daniel Smith-Christopher engages with the chapters by Davidson, Miller, and Macaskill; and (3) Randall C. Bailey engages with the chapters by Davidson, Vaka'uta, and Havea.

In the second and third clusters, the "first wave" is landed then rippled differently. This islandish collection is therefore a conversation *in formation*, noting that different clustering produces different meaning structures, and *in transition*, for this collection aims to ripple rather than to establish and settle.

RUMInations

The subtitle for this anthology performs a play upon a single word to evoke several other words and concepts required for thinking from the perspective of island space. In an ironic twist, we have designated "rumi" to serve as the placeholder for consideration of island space. From our own lived experiences we have only known islands as small spaces, hardly the roomy environments that typify continental spaces. Precisely in the rupture between our lived knowledge and our choice of words lies the opportunity for our theorizing. Imagining island spaces as small and isolated ignores the evidence of roomy islands like Iceland or Madagascar, Papua or Solomon, Aotearoa or Australia. This representation falls prey to the cultural production of the desert isle sufficient for a single person to engage her or his existential challenges and adequate in size to serve as the microcosm for anthropological research. Our theoretical task requires more than just consideration of representation of spaces. This task compels an extraterritoriality that embraces the sea as integral to island spatiality. This shift forecloses the notion of island space as restricted. The theory of island space that we wish to utilize as readers of sacred texts grounds us in the island as the space of thought. In theory, read both as aspirational and

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practical academic engagement, we see this work as more than simply reacting to, rejecting, or recasting biblical interpretations that misunderstand or mischaracterize island space. This work serves as an entry point to thinking biblically through the island.

We remain aware that we engage this project as participants and purveyors of Western academic discourses that were at the same time being formed by island space. The challenge here lies not in whether living in island space qualifies someone to participate in this conversation. Rather, the greater disqualifier comes from our intellectual formation in Western academies steeped in their constructions of island spaces. While much of early Western cultural associations were formed from an insular perspective, that is to say, from an island perspective, with greater continental expansions, islands slowly became part of the periphery of dominant Western culture.[2] When continental space dominates the intellectual and cultural landscape, islands begin to be represented as remote, unoccupied, isolated, and importantly small. This representation of island space occurs mostly in the castaway genre seen in works such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Elizabeth DeLoughrey (2007, 12) notes the dominance of what she calls the Robinsonade genre by citing the publication of "500 desert-island stories" between 1788 and 1910 and the multiple printing of *Robinson Crusoe* in its first year of publication.

The representation of island space as small, isolated, deserted, and, as David Lowenthal (2007, 206) notes, despite their shape perfect circles persists in various forms. Television and movie depictions like *Castaway*, *Survivor*, or *Lost* continue to reinforce the notion of the island as uninhabitable, remote, and small. Even though this representation begins as a construct of the Western imaginary,[3] it gains widespread acceptance among island residents who deploy the representation strategically for tourism purposes. As Lowenthal indicates, some of the most densely populated areas on earth are islands such as Malta, Barbados, Hong Kong, Kiribati, and Singapore. He believes that since only 10 percent of

2. John Gillis (2007, 281) cites the work of other scholars in his claim that European development from the Middle Ages was based upon the concept of the island. He describes a spiritual landscape of isolated churches, monasteries, pilgrimages sites, and so on linked together into a network that he labels as archipelagic.

3. DeLoughrey (2007, 12) speaks of the Western construct of island space as "islandism," a form similar to Edward Said's notion of Orientalism.

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the world's population lives on islands, this distortion of island space can easily endure (203). The "mythic geographies" (Gillis 2007, 281) and ideological landscapes (Rose 1983, 87) that construct islands differ from the actual geographical diversity that exists. Conceiving of islands as small, remote, and abandoned represents a social construction of space. Further, given that islands are also represented as easily conquered, tamable (Lowenthal 2007, 206), available (Baldacchino 2007, 166), and therefore feminized (Addison 1995, 687; Rose 1983, 57) represents a masculinist construction. Edward Soja (1989, 79) observes, "Space in itself may be primordially given, but the organization, and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience." In this regard, Soja prefers to speak of "spatiality" as a means of transcending the physicalist overtones in the use of the term "space."

Yet, even as we acknowledge the social construction in the representations of island space, we cannot avoid paying attention to space. The unique geographies of island spaces require consideration of how those spaces shape the mind. Unlike continents whose landscapes have largely been subdued in order to facilitate social activities, island spaces remain, not to give any support to the standard tourism brochures, untamed and untamable in some respect. Therefore, spatiality, as used by Soja, provides only a partial window for understanding island spaces. Karen Fog Olwig's (2007, 261) sense of the island as transspatial, creating opportunities for opening to the world, adds to this discussion. Olwig offers the term "global islandscape" to pay attention to islands socioculturally. And while she focuses on the portability of the islandscape, we find the need to give consideration to the physical environments that give shape to the islandscape. Philip Conkling (2007, 199), in defining "islandness" as a mental construct, derives his point of departure from the geographies of islands: "the rhythms of tides, wind, and storms [that] determine what you do and will not do." Although we may not follow Conkling in depicting the relationship between island and resident as one of sheer determinism, his assertion that the island geography, marked by isolation, shapes "islandness" proves useful for our purpose: "We think of islandness as a metaphysical sensation that derives from the heightened experiences that accompany the physical isolation of island life" (200).

Island spaces produce different mental impacts that do not all emanate from long-term residence on islands. Island spaces also shape the minds and imaginations of those who do not reside on islands. John Gillis (2007, 274) offers the description of "islomania," a term he derives from

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Lawrence Durrell's *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, as a mental condition where people find islands enticing. The island serves as the place to encounter enchantment and mystery, to live out dreams and work through nightmares. This fascination with islands, Gillis notes, extends to several areas of modern life even in technological language of "surfing" and "navigating" (276). Another mental condition worth noting is "nesomania," which DeLoughrey (2007, 6) describes as "obsession with islands [as] a main feature of European will to empire." Operating both as "objects of desire"[4] (Garuba 2001, 61) and strategic possessions in the expansion of imperial maps, islands convey additional resources, coastlines, potential military bases, and economic assets to empires. Jon Heggulund (2012, 112) develops the thesis proposed by Halford Mackinder that Britain excels as an empire precisely because it extends its territory into maritime space, thereby being "at once bounded *and* extended by the sea." These two mental impacts account for the fantasy of the island as tourist destination, ideal for dreams as well as the hegemonic hold on certain islands such as Britain's relationship with the Falklands (Malvinas) or the United States' continued hold over American Samoa or Guam. And in the Pacific Ocean, France is not ready to let go of Tahiti and New Caledonia while, further north, China and Japan dispute over the Senkoku Islands. The fantasy and possessive impulses value island spaces in ways that make them desirable to dominant cultures with the resources to either purchase these spaces outright or to "time-share" them.

Our examination of the link between thinking and island space requires that we conduct this investigation from the perspective of islanders. The history of exploration and imperialism conveys a high value to island spaces that persist in the modern socioeconomic and military constructs. These valuations, though, largely serve exploitative interests and underlie the ideological representations of island spaces written from the continental or non-islander perspective. Harry Garuba (2001, 66) makes the case for using "the island itself as the 'site for thinking.'" Responding

4. The easy transfer of islands as birthday presents or trades at the end of war in the history of modern imperialism represents Garuba's (2001, 61) idea of "the movement from exploration to exploitation" that marks the change in the function of islands from fantasy places to possessions. Larry Ellison's purchase of the Hawaiian island of Lanai represents a more contemporary case of the combination of fantasy and possession. Julian Guthrie reports on this purchase with the headlines, "Larry Ellison's Fantasy Island" (*Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2013).

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to what he calls "the narrative of the island," he shows that "island narratives" merely theorize the conceptions of islands in dominant discourses. That is to say, discourse about islands from the perspective of islanders amounts to simply writing back and critiquing the empire (64–66). Essentially, narratives of the island only feature the island and the island experience. Rather than representing an indigenous discourse, these narratives emerge from a view outside of the island and in the process produce reactionary discourses from the island. Escaping the block to creativity and generativity imposed upon island thought by imperialist cultures requires refocusing on the spaces of islands and their unique geographies.

One possible way to think through the island spaces is by the embrace of the margins. If islands spaces are construed as those pieces of land detached from larger territories, then rather than being seen as a deficit, this reality serves as a decided strength of island spaces, what Yi-Fu Tuan (1995, 229) regards as "both fate and a source of pride." Focusing on detachment, not in exoticized, romanticized, or exploitative ways, builds on the essence of marginality as bell hooks (1984, preface) offers: "To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body." Island spaces occupy a unique position of strength through their marginality: they are both inside and outside of the continental spaces. Hooks (1990, 150) avoids thinking of the margins as a site of despair, lest "a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being." This viewpoint embraces the margins as the site of productivity rather than a space of lack. By recasting the power differentials in ways that restate the power inherent in the margins, hooks offers a way out of the dilemma of constantly writing back or responding to the center. The embrace of the margins, hooks believes, enables the creative and resurgent work to take place in a space dedicated to productivity and generativity (152).

In the geography of the modern world, islands occupy the peripheries of built-up areas.[5] Single page global maps omit most islands, thereby visually inscribing their marginal locations.[6] Godfrey Baldacchino (2007,

5. The exceptions to this rule being islands like Manhattan and Singapore Island (Pulau Ujong) that form the core of urban centers and are connected to major territories by bridges and tunnels.

6. Stephen Wright reminded us that the dominant mapping system—the Mercator projection—inflates the size of land as you move further from the equator. So Europe looks larger than it actually is, while pacific islands close to the equator, by contrast, look small and unimportant. The Gall-Peters projection was developed to

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166) describes the peripherality of islands as "being on the edge, being out of sight and so out of mind." The benefit of this disconnectivity lies in what he views as the malleability of islands, even a "threatening fluidity" (Hegglund 2012, 111, with reference to Brathwaite 1983). Baldacchino formulates his thinking under the influence of Edward Kamau Brathwaite's idea of the peripheral island that occupies a disruptive space in the geographies and histories of empires. Brathwaite represents this disruption in his understanding of islands as offering alter/native discourses. He writes, "The alter/native. Not native. Note. Not simply native. Note. Natives are too easily exterminated as you know" (1983, 35). The alter/native conveys the peripheral space that islands occupy and from that space exercises a disturbing geographic presence that at once breaks up the monotony of oceans, thereby offering strategic and economic refuge to the adventurous but also disappearing off of maps, belying expectations of permanence or stability. More than simply foregrounding island spaces as ambiguous, the notion of peripherality and its correlate of alter/native present the opportunity of seeing island spaces not simply as responses or write-backs to nonislands spaces, but rather as spaces of originality and innovation.

Islands admit innovation in ways that make island spaces at once dependent and fiercely independent. Rethinking island spaces as more than simply land and paying attention to the surrounding waters enables the conception of the geography of island spaces to be what DeLoughrey (2007, 2) calls "terraqueous." And while she deploys the term to describe the globe and thereby render all landforms into islands, her understanding of the seascape as a critical part of island space presents the opportunity for decentering power. The sea enables the undoing of the negative consequences of territorial conquests and opens avenues for charting new paths. Islands, precisely because of their proximity and interaction with the sea, enable this decentering in unique ways. DeLoughrey locates the innovation of terraqueous space in the rewriting of history through the scripting of previous marine histories of islands in the face of hegemonic colonial histories (21). But we see even more innovation as islands negotiate their space in what Havea in this anthology regards as their liquid existence. Bounded and contained by the sea, islands not only make the "perfect prisons" but that same isolation grants autonomy to islands, metaphori-

give a more accurate depiction of relative land size, but it has not been adopted widely. Everyone, it seems, is used to America and Europe appearing bigger than they are.

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cally producing in Lowenthal's term the "*I*-land" (2007, 217–18). Circumscribed by the sea, the I-land avoids the self-centeredness of acquisitive territoriality, the egotism that breeds the chauvinism of race, nationality, creed, and so on. The *I*-land may assert individuality as a result of its separateness, as Tuan (1995, 229) observes, but what Conkling (2007, 200) refers to as the "obstinate individuality" that marks islandness remains also "highly communal." Precisely because geographically islands respond to their place in the sea, island spaces stand at once closed as much as they are open. John Donne only partially understands this in his poem "No Man Is an Island," which undercuts the claims to absolute individuality. But his sense that the "I" of British modernity cannot be compared with the island/*I*-land, since islands are connected to continents, misunderstands the geography. Islands exist not simply as "a piece of the continent," but as parts of the sea.

The geography of islands requires that we pay attention to spaces of land and sea. This interaction produces what Brathwaite calls tidalectics (1983, 42), a way in which islands navigate their relationship with the sea. Brathwaite's neologism places the emphasis on the sea (the tidalectics of the sea), since he understands that "the sea influences the landscape" (Brown 2004, xiii). His point lies more in the simple lessons of tide actions and even more than the bare metaphor of the tides. Brathwaite's tidalectics serve as an organizing tool for thinking of the varied histories that mark island existences in the modern world. Even as we engage histories and theories, the geographies of island spaces compel consideration.

rum-I-nations

Shifting to the "I" in rumInations, we come to "islandness" or "islandedness." What might it mean to read in an island-infused, island-informed, perhaps even "insular" (read both for its negative and positive potentials) way? This question is at the heart of these essays and informs many of the ruminations that have led to this collection. Underlying these is the fundamental question: does "place" matter for interpretation, and if it does, how does it matter? The purpose of these essays is not so much to solve this problem as to raise the question.

The ruminations that come together in this collection follow various tidal currents, sometimes slapping into one another like Havea's *talanoa* (in this volume) and sometimes speaking in dialects all their own, like the Gallic languages of the Hebrides. Several address the closest geographic

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islands to the North American mainland: the Caribbean archipelago. Here questions regarding liberation, creation, and identity commingle in the creolization of island life, bounded and, paradoxically, linked by the sea. Other essays address primarily the islands and islanders of the Pacific. These raise questions about biblical interpretation, biblical translation, and the telling of tales as these reflect Pacific Island cultures. As readers, you are invited to follow these watercourses, to venture onto these different interpretative "landings." You are invited to consider with us what, if anything, might be that "insular" perspective that characterizes these differing readings.

Among the questions that emerge, perhaps the first is "What is the characteristic of an island?" Are islands connected or separated or both? Are islands defined by their isolation and thus by what happens on the land? Do their boundaries define them, if one can think of the sea as a boundary? Or, are islands defined by that space in-between, that ring of sand that stands as a metaphor for that place of creolization, of land-meeting-sea-meeting-land, that commingling of elements that ultimately all landmasses share, but not to the same extent as islands? Is the insular quality of island sensibility governed by the relatively high ratio of boundary to place, by the unusual amount of interstitial space that must have some impact on how "place," and thus identity within place, is understood?

Certainly this more extensive sense of interstitial space, of boundaries that define who "we" are, must have something to do with what it means to think as an island person, to interpret in an "islanded" way. Whether the island sits in the midst of an oceanic archipelago connected by liquid highways or next to a continental mass connected by bridges and tunnels, there is still the sense of "we," of insular identity, created by the presence of physical boundary in every direction that is somehow different than one might feel in the middle of a continental landmass. But then what? How does a heightened awareness of extensive boundaries, and/or of connection by human-manufactured means—whether bridge or boat—affect interpretation of world, of self, of place, and, for our purposes, of texts and contexts? How do we, who may see interstices both as constraints to intercourse and as invitations to different modalities of interaction, see the interstices of textual aporia, of canonical order and textual variant, of narrative silences and theological disagreements? And facing these boundaries, what might our insularity teach us to do at these interstitial places, places of identity and connection, of invitation to self-definition and to bridge- and boat-building? And given these insular instincts, what might

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be the benefits and costs of such activities, both for ourselves and for the (de)constructive study of biblical texts?

The essays in this volume highlight that one of the clear connections between our insular readings and other readings on landmasses are ongoing concerns about imperialism and its corollaries of (post)colonialism, the exploitation of scare resources, and the importation and/or resistance toward culture and material from "off-island." These consonant ideas are certainly used and appreciated, as are several goods imported to islands. But the presence and (perhaps uncritical) use of (primarily continental) critical theory raises a caution also, for the presence and ubiquity of this theory within our discourse points to the permeability of those interstitial spaces that define what is "island" from what is "not island." Boundaries, after all, are not only limiting, they can also be protective. And there is always a potential danger to that which comes to the island by boat—or on the currents of the air or by surfing radio waves. While creolization is, as Miller argues in this volume, an identifying feature of the insular subaltern, at what point does creolization give way to colonization? At what point does that which comes across the waves so reinvent the island after the culture of the mainland that the island itself no longer exists? And to what extent do "mainlanded" theories threaten to drown out other sorts of questions that derive from the peculiarities of insular life? Is there a theoretical response to (post)colonial, liberation, and other such theories that is particular to island readings? And if not, how might these insular readings escape being swallowed up by the larger intellectual continents surrounding them, reduced to dots on the intellectual map, barely visible? How do they escape becoming tourist destinations, full of exotic stereotypes to be seen and exploited, and then encapsulated by some native-made trinket mass-produced on a landmass, imported on the island, sold to the tourists and set on a pedestal to demonstrate the worldliness that is a soft form of conquest?

The corollary to these questions is about biblical interpretation. This volume is an attempt not only to think theoretically about islandness, about insularity made concrete as well as conceptual, but also to think and theorize about the biblical writings as insular, islanded writings. It is an attempt to read from the island back to the mainland, to follow the currents that surround the always shifting shoreline for the purpose of reading Bible and sometimes also reading scriptures.[7]

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7. Wilfred Smith (2005) makes the same distinction, namely, that scripture is a

So, these questions about insularity, about the differences between and consonances among insular and other readings of texts (postcolonial, liberation, etc.), undergird another set of questions about biblical interpretation. How can questions about the nature of insularity be used to think about biblical writings, communities, and formations? What, if anything, is insular about biblical communities, whether under imperial or parochial monarchy, in exile or illicit? In what ways are biblical writings like islands? And if they are like islands, how are these islands related and/or relatable? Are there set routes between the islands, or do we, as insular readers, have the freedom to negotiate those interstices as the tides of interpretation may take us? Are these "islands" separated or connected, by what human inventions, and in the face of what sorts of dangers? (After all, bridges collapse and boats sink). What might the connections between these insular texts negotiated through (perhaps dangerous) waters entail? What, if anything, takes place when these stories, like *talanoa*, slap together? And if the result is violence, is that violence destructive and life crushing, like a slave master appropriating Luke 12:47 to justify physical brutalization in on-island slavery? Or might that violence be both destructive and creative, like the creation of island mass from the explosion and expulsion of hot lava in volcanic eruption?

Aymer also raises in her contribution the question of the consonance of the foregoing questions with others who study islands. For we are not alone in raising these questions of what it might mean to think about insularity as a physical, geographic reality. There is an entire discourse forming among geographers, sociologists, and historians that attempts to establish the contours of geographic insularity. Among these writers, the study they are attempting is called "island studies." Geographer Pete Hay writes in the first issue of *Island Studies Journal*, "The metaphoric deployment of 'island' is, in fact, so enduring, all-pervading and commonplace that a case could reasonably be made for it as the central metaphor within western discourse" (Hay 2006, 30). However, these metaphoric descriptions strike Hay as not the subject of islander studies at all. He writes, "I do not believe that they fit within the purview of nissological investigation, which should, rather, concern itself with the *reality* of islands and how it is for islands and

human activity, that human beings and human communities designate and treat texts as scriptures, and that no writing, not even a biblical writing, is ontologically scripture.

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islanders in the times that are here and that are emerging" (Hay 2006, 30, discussed by Aymer in this volume).

Hay's challenge raises a concern as the question of insular readings of biblical texts continues and hopefully expands. If we hold that one of the permeable, insular boundaries that are fundamental to island studies is not the metaphor but rather the reality for islands and islanders, what questions are we forced to ask and will these be questions that can—or do—intersect with biblical interpretation? Perhaps, it will invite more explorations of popular readings of biblical texts by island peoples, as is evident in the essays in this volume by Macaskill, Ma'ilo, and Vaka'uta. Perhaps it will encourage more historical consideration of the role of islands in ancient biblical life, as does Kinukawa's essay in this volume. And surely, as Middleton notes in his essay, those readings will cause other intersections, intersections not only with postcolonial and liberationist concerns but, in very specific ways, with ecological readings as the planet warms and the survival of many islands are threatened with rising seas.

A topic unaddressed in this volume is the question of the negative connotation of islands. For there are other islands not represented in this volume that may well prove fruitful discursive places for biblical interpretation in the future. We are thinking here of islands like Robben, Elba, and Alcatraz, islands of exile whose boundaries serve not as passageways but as one of several prison walls keeping their islanders trapped. Here, too, we would put islands like Angel and Ellis, islands as interstices, protecting but never part of the continent nearest to them. Here the term "barrier island" is perhaps useful; what might this mean and how might this affect biblical interpretation? To this list, we would add islands of ambivalence, whether because of a "positive" exoticization (e.g., Hawaii to the United States or the French Antilles to France) or because of a concerted effort of vilification (e.g., the relationships between Cuba and the United States or between Taiwan and China). In addition, we would add imperial islands, not the least of which might be Japan (see Kinukawa in this volume) and the British Isles. As we continue thinking together about islands and biblical interpretation, what might we learn by taking seriously these islands also? How might they contribute to a broader understanding of "island" reading?

Finally, we return to the question of theory. What might it mean to theorize about islands? How might we take Vaku'ata's critique of mainland theories of ecology and postcoloniality, Spencer's creolization, and many of the other theoretical sketches seriously? Is there such a thing as "an"

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island way, "an" insular way of theorizing about islanded interpretations? Or might it be the case that islanded interpretations themselves exist as islands, connected and creolized but separate and speaking in the kinds of diverse voices and vocabularies that island peoples often use, even those who share the same geographic region and language? And if this latter, what might it mean to bring our Bab(b)el of voices together in the spirit of *fale-'o-kāinga* (Vaka'uta in this volume) acknowledging that we islanders and former islanders theorize our biblical interpretations both individually and reciprocally, with respect for each other? How might such an island-centered way of reading together affect even mainland discourses in the future?

rumiNations

We shift again, this time to the last part of the subtitle: rumi-nations. How might we island-think about the nation thing? How might island space and islandness help us rethink nation, nationalism, and nationhood? This section involves turning (without departing) from island space and islandness (identity) on to island-thinking, bearing in mind that these strands interweave: thinking is formed and conditioned in and by space and by who we are (identity). There will therefore be some rewinding and fast-forwarding between island space, islandness, and island-thinking, as we hone in to "nation."

Insofar as "island" is not an automatic cue for "nation," nor does "nation" cue "island," we attempt in this section to island-think something that is not usually associated with islands. We hereby address a blind spot in the usual conceiving of islands, namely, that islands are not nations. Our attention shifts to the nation thing, but we are still very much in island mode. In this regard, this section engages in out-land-ish reimagining of the hermeneutics thing.

There are many connotations of the word "nation," but they intersect around the notion that a nation is made up of a group of people who come together because they share certain things. Their coming together may have been accidental in the first instance, but after some time, over several generations, they would learn to gel. What is shared varies from nation to nation, depending on the heteronormativity of each nation (Spivak 2009): it may be a combination of common ancestral roots, heritages, beliefs, cultures, languages, ethnicity, lore, government, territory, and so on. A nation is thus not much different from an island, which is also made up of people

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who share common things that distinguish one group of nationals/islanders from others.[8]

Nations come in various sizes and colors. Some are broad, tall, and heavy; some are narrow, shallow, and physically challenged; and some nations are like "periods"[9] that drift in the sea. Some nations are bright and flashy, some exude warm tones, some are dull, and some are repelling. Size and color do not explain why and how nations come into being or their power and wealth. Put another way, the weight and influence of a nation does not depend on its terrains. Many nations are islands and archipelagoes; many islands are nations. Nations they all are, no matter their color and size.

Nations are born from the adherence of a community of peoples to a combination of common things. This does not mean that all nationals understand and value those common things in the same way or have the same list of common things. They do not need to be of the same mind, but they need to feel that they belong to the common things that were vital to the birthing/berthing of their nation. A nation is not fixed to a specific place and time but, like a wave in the sea, rolls out in response to their conditions. The devotion of the community (nationalism) and the identity they take on (nationhood) contribute to defining the power of their nation. In this way, small (island) nations can and some do have a lot of influence and power. Moreover, there is a better chance for nationals of smaller (island) nations to intimately know the common things around which they are formed than members of larger nations do. In fact, the smaller the nation the more tribal its nationals tend to be, or put differently, insular, islanded.

In Gayatri Spivak's (2010, 13, 21) estimation, agreeing with Eric Hobsbawm, "there is no nation before nationalism" and "imagination feeds nationalism." There is public-private crossover here insofar as nation is a public entity while imagination kindles in the private realm. Nationalism is a condition for the birth of a nation, and a nation grows

8. Several nations may have the same structures and set up, but differ in confederation. An example of this is in 1 Sam 8. The people asked for a king to govern them "like all other nations" (8:5), but at the same time they wish to remain separate from those other nations. The kingship will make them both *like* and *different* in relation to other nations.

9. This is a popular image among islanders in Oceania, referring to their islands as periods or dots (like full stops on paper) in the sea. The image is pregnant with meanings.

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and matures when its borders are drawn and secured. There is no nation without borders, which nationalists protect as lines for exclusion. Like religions, nations are born in response to zeal and yearnings that draw people together. Religiosity and nationalism are sources of legitimacy (see Spivak 2009, 78), seasoned with the smugness of tribalism, and they help people belong across borders (see also Havea, Neville, and Wainwright 2014).

The 1947 partition of Pakistan from India involved establishing borders between the two republics. Pakistan became a nation when borders were drawn between it and India,[10] similar to the Demilitarized Zone that separates North Korea from South Korea (recognized in 1948 and one of the points of conflict in the 1950–1953 Korean War) and the fence that divides the United States from Mexico. Nations are more than their borders, but the establishment of borders is necessary. This stance raises questions about the two-state solution proposed for Israel and Palestine, according to which Palestine is to be like periods or islands within the borders of Israel. Dotted in various places in Israel, Palestine is to be like an archipelagic island nation. The late Edward Said (1999) rejected the two-state solution on the grounds that it would foster apartheid. As a nation dispersed within another nation, Palestine is to be a network of communities, like a sea of ghettoes, rather than a sovereign body. The communities of Palestine can still share certain things in common, but their borders will not be connected. What nation will Palestine be if it, though driven by religious and nationalist motivations, does not have its own borders? In the end, the two-state solution will raise a "security fence" for some and a "separation wall" for the rest (Chomsky 2007, 29–34, 63–66).

Borders exist because of what lie outside of them. There is no border if there is no outside; there is no nation if there is no other group/nation(s). If there is no outside, there is no inside and no borders either. Can there be nationalism without borders? We accordingly propose to supplement Spivak's assertion: there is no nationalism without borders and outside(r)s, real and imagined. We make this proposal as islanders, because borders and outside(r)s are constant in the minds of islanders. Because island space is limited, islanders can see, hear, and smell island borders every day and gaze "outside" on to the horizon and yonder. Islanders are border peoples, similar to Rahab who lived at the outer wall of Jericho (Josh 2:15;

10. A different process was involved in the 1971 partition of Bangladesh from Pakistan, because India was already in between those two republics.

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see Vaka'uta in this volume), and similar also to the Midianites, Amalekites, Moabites, and other wilderness peoples whose homes are in the Bible's hinterland. Border peoples are alert to those who cross inside and outside. For them, borders are not lines of separation or partition but places of dwelling and places for engagement. Borders are not barriers but places of intersection and of negotiation, of going and coming, of transiting and emigrating. With this perspective, a simple equation is drawn: as islands are nations so are borders "borderlands" (borrowing from Anzaldúa 1987).[11] Whereas Anzaldúa's Chicanas/Chicanos and mestizos experience borders as barriers, islanders relate to the border (ocean) as their home.[12]

The borderness of islands and islanders invites an alter/native way of imagining nationhood. We thus propose another shift, from seeing nations as entities surrounded and defined by borders to seeing nations as borders. Nations are borders not in the exclusionary way experienced by Chicanas/Chicanos and mestizos at the United States border, but in the homing way that the ocean is to islanders.

> The skin of the earth is seamless.
> The sea cannot be fenced,
> *El mar* does not stop at borders. (Anzaldúa 1987, 3)

Nations are not permanent destinations but places for crossing and intersecting, for transiting and negotiating. Nations, no matter their size and color, are stepping-stones that point and lead away from themselves. Nations are born because of peoples and their spirits of nationalism (tribalism), and as borders they exist because of and for outside nations. As borders, nations exist because there are other nations outside themselves. Without outside nations, they cease to be nations and borders lose their borderlines.

The borderness of islands invites revision of our understanding of nations. Nations are not bodies that are distinguishable and separate from

11. Borders push the Chicanas/Chicanos and mestizos back. They are not to cross over, as gringos freely do. Chicanas/Chicanos and mestizos are condemned to the borders, which has become the home for many, hence the notion of borderlands. This is why *polleros* (coyotes) are critical to help people across the borders into the United States so that they might find work (see Smith-Christopher 2007, xvii–xxi).

12. Relevant for this rumination is how Anzaldúa (1987, 1–3) began by talking about the ocean, which she distinguishes from the fences that divide landlocked nations.

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one another only, but collectives that are in relation to one another. No nation *is* on its own. Ubuntu! In other words, to borrow from the Vietnamese Buddhist activist Thich Nhat Hanh, nations "inter-are":

> You are me, and I am you.
> Isn't it obvious that we "inter-are"?
> You cultivate the flower in yourself,
> so that I will be beautiful.
> I transform the garbage in myself,
> so that you will not have to suffer.
> (Hanh, "Interrelationship")[13]

The ocean links *I*-lands up. While there are wide distances between island nations, spread out like periods in the sea, islanders do not grieve over our separation as something that impoverishes island living. We do not deny that many islands float in isolation, but we argue that isolation is not a threat to islanders as much as it is for nonislanders. What is isolation to people who are isolated? As people who live in water do not know what it means to be wet, islanders who are isolated from everybody else do not see isolation as a problem. There is another explanation for this untroubled mind-set: Island worldviews are not landlocked,[14] so distance and separation do not automatically add up to isolation. This paradoxical position is evident in the Tongan saying *'auhia kae kisu atu pē* ("drifting away, but reaching to you"). It is possible in the island worldview to be distanced (in space) and at the same time be connected (in relations). In other words, islanders are relational people, and isolation has to do with relations rather than with distance.

Relations are woven in the interaction between people, obliging one to another, and people are attached to some places because of the relations that those places call to mind and represent. Islanders attach to island roots and island homes, because the islands "contain" our ancestors, heritages, and customs. We might drift away over the seas to faraway lands, but we can maintain our relations and thus continue to "be in touch." Ones who move away are not in isolation, nor are the ones who remain at home

13. For the complete poem, see http://allspirit.co.uk/interrelationship/.

14. The fence is menacing to Anzaldúa's Chicanas/Chicanos and mestizos, but the ocean is inviting to islanders.

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islands. So we define our relations not only by where we are (place and distance) but the connections (ties and relations) that we maintain.

In the eyes of many nonislanders, islands are outside their national borders so islanders are therefore outsiders. The borderness of islands, to the contrary, imagine nations in relation to one another. As border peoples, islanders are relational peoples. The interweaving of borderness and relationality conditions the worldviews of islanders in ways that are different from peoples in landlocked nations, who are separated from those on the other side of the border.

Landlockedness is difficult for islanders to comprehend. When a border divides an island up, the border was introduced and is maintained by some colonial force. The odd instance of France and Holland dividing up the thirty-four square mile island of Saint Martin/Sint Maarten is a case in point. In the case of Papua New Guinea and West Papua, the colonial force is Indonesia. Colonialism has thus introduced landlocked borders to island settings. We put Spivak's argument to the lines of island-thinking: there is no nation before nationalism, and nationalism often falls at the feet of colonialism. Colonialism continues to boil the sea of islands in Oceania, with France, the United States, and Indonesia holding fast to some island groups. Colonialism erects borders and extinguishes the spirit of nationalism, experienced most severely by smaller island states.

This section applied island-thinking to the complex relation between nation, nationhood, and nationalism, with scriptural interpretation lurking on the shoreline. How might this island-think on the nation thing help form the island hermeneutics thing? There are several pathways.

First, insofar as scriptures contribute toward sparking nationalism within and in front of texts, it is vital to check the temperature of both nationalist texts and readers. Whose imaginations and interests do they manifest? What kind of borders do they erect? Against and/or for which colonial force do they stand?

Second, insofar as scriptures have been used to blow wind on the sails of colonialism and continue to be used in that way in the modern period, then island hermeneutics joins arms with other hermeneutics of suspicion and of resistance in advocating minority (islandish) and minoritized subjects and interests (Bailey, Liew, and Segovia 2009). The nation thing infers that texts and readings are driven and so, by transference, no reader should be a bystander. This has to do with the relational island thing, whereby one may drift away yet reaching out (*'auhia kae kisu atu pē*). Relations begin between individuals and then extend toward families

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and communities. Along this line, extended family, rather than nuclear family, is the island thing.

Third, insofar as the leanings of border and relational peoples are stronger toward cooperating than toward conquering, dividing, and dispossessing, collectivity is an apt goal for islandish readers. The nation thing of bringing peoples together is also an island thing. The island thing is not just in response to the call for regionalism (see Spivak 2009, 88) in order to break through the borders of nationalism but in favor of islandedness. In this way, islands and islanders from different regions and oceans may form a collective. Herein is a chance to propose "equivalence":[15] texts and readings from different textual regions may be drawn into a collection. This is one of the reasons behind this collection of essays and of the new name of the Society of Biblical Literature group—Islands, Islanders, and Scriptures—that b(i)erthed this volume.

iSlands and iSlanders

On the tongues of creolization (see Miller in this volume), we close by putting the markers of our landings of who we are, islands and islanders, as it were, upon the twangs of rumination. There are particular but not unique slants ("slands" in islands), skews of islands and islanders—around the intersection of island space, islandness, islandhood, and Bible—presented in the leaves of this anthology. Some islanders will be nauseous because of those, and we imagine that some nonislanders might want to go down those slants. Whether to opt out or to be hooked up, we will not be put out, for after all, exit and entry, arrival and departure (see Davidson in this volume), are island slants also.

The slanders, by islanders and nonislanders both, against the island things and island-thinking do trouble us. This anthology hopes to bring those islanders into the course of biblical hermeneutics. For the sake of kindling some relief, we rewind to our opening proposition: biblical texts are like islands, and readers are like islanders.

15. The appeal here is to Spivak's (2009, 81) claim that equivalence is the stuff of orality (an island thing also): "If the main thing about narrative is sequence, the main thing about the oral-formulaic is equivalence."

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