al., pp. 299-300). Fifty-one birds were translocated to the island in 1995/6. As their survival immediately after release was poor, the birds were provided with feeders (with sugar-water) and nest boxes (to ‘address the lack of natural cavities on the island’).

Those looking for articles reflecting on the social construction of nature, how other issues (other than ecological ones) were dealt with (such as cultural heritage or Māori [indigenous people of New Zealand] associations), or critically analyzing whether nature restoration is even possible, will not find them here. Thus text is focused on ecological research. Indeed, there is a strong sense of the traditional narrative of humans being destroyers of nature in the past, to now being restorers of nature. Statements like ‘[t]he island has a long history of anthropogenic degradation’ (p. 359) runs throughout the special issue.

This collection of articles, however, certainly makes a contribution to island studies. In terms of ecology, there is plenty on the plans and outcomes of an island ecological restoration program in general, and Tiritiri Matangi in particular, such as: the ecological outcomes of the restoration of Tiritiri Matangi (Mitchell, pp. 261-265); managing volunteers on the island (Galbraith, pp. 266-271); reptile (Baling et al., pp. 272-281) and avian (Parker, pp. 282-287) translocations to islands; vegetation change resulting from Tiritiri Matangi’s restoration (Cameron & Davies, pp. 307-342); the story of Tiritiri Matangi’s re-vegetation programme (Forbes & Craig, pp. 343-352); and bird population changes during the island’s restoration (Armstrong & Ewen, pp. 288-297; Graham et al., pp. 359-369).

In addition – albeit not explicitly – the special issue does bring out key ideas which would be of interest to island scholars: the idea of an island being a laboratory for scientific study, the personal attachment or sense of connection a group of people can feel towards an island, and how islands can elicit the idea of naturalness (that it is possible to truly eradicate all pests from an island landscape and restore it to a former state).

One criticism is that although the text in most articles has been updated with references post the 2008 symposium, some articles may seem a bit dated (e.g., an analysis of a survey from 2005-6, research completed in 2008, and studies into red-crowned parakeets 2004-6). A minor point, which is common for those reading a special issue in its entirety, is the repetition in nearly every article about the size, location and general background to the ecological restoration of Tiritiri Matangi. This, of course, may be required for each article to be a standalone document, but could be an irritation for one reading the special issue.

The special issue is certainly a fitting commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the ecological restoration of Tiritiri Matangi. It also brings to attention the considerable amount of work volunteers – specifically the Supporters of Tiritiri Matangi (formed 1988) – have done on the island, and certainly makes one want to visit the island.

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The island of Socotra (alternately, Soqotra), lies in the northwestern Indian Ocean. Those who do know of the place, especially those involved in island studies, know it as a type of Arabian
Galápagos: a hotspot of biodiversity and insular endemism. This mysterious archipelago, inhabited by humans since ancient times, is a place where “dragon’s blood” drips from trees that resemble spiky umbrellas and two of the three Magi gifts to the Christ child (alas, no gold) are sourced. These Yemeni islands are closer - measured both by distance and geology - to Somalia, yet their human history ties them to Arabia. Aside from geology or history, owing to an effort of pure political will and a spirit of scientific and humanitarian cooperation, Socotra is tied to Italy as well. This book tells the story of that relationship.

This fascinating account of over a decade of cooperation between the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Yemeni archipelago of Socotra begins with an endearing dedication to Professor Paolo Bono, who had apparently been personally dedicated to the effort until his recent, and unexpected, death. Socotra’s unique biodiversity and abject poverty provides the framework for this book, which gives about equal attention to Italy’s efforts toward the development of human wellbeing and environmental conservation. Too often, in myriad cases of international aid, one of these foci overshadows the other, leaving either a better-developed economy within a fragmented natural environment or a still-impoverished people, living among protected or restored natural beauty. These fears are allayed in Chapter VI, which is reassuringly titled: “Environment as the wealth of the poor,” a fitting mantra for development on Socotra and other islands around the world.

Each chapter presents an update of Italy’s efforts in a specific area of conservation or development: water, flora, marine resources, economy, and human health, among others. Several of the chapters are co-authored by members of the Environmental Protection Authority of Soqotra. The biophysical chapters are presented first, followed by those more concerned with the human condition on the island. In ordering the chapters this way, the editor has allowed the reader to build a mental image: first of the island itself, and then of its plant, animal, and finally human inhabitants. The effect is satisfyingly organic. Readers totally unfamiliar with Socotra will develop a layered knowledge of this island, which, as the Foreword reminds us, Marco Polo described as “the most enchanted land on earth” (n.p.).

As is customary, I must point out some failings of the volume, beginning with a few stylistic remarks. The map in the Introduction is a simplistic outline, leaving this geographer yearning for better spatial displays throughout the chapters. If only this small-scale reference map had demonstrated the same artistic skill and level of precision as the cross-sectional schematics in Chapter II: hand-drawn by the book’s dedicatee, the late Professor Bono. The photography, on the other hand, is sublime: the landscape on page 50, exemplary. Reptiles, plants, people and landscapes are not shown as flat, dead specimens but in well-framed, print-worthy photographs that could stand on their own in testament to Socotra’s uniqueness. I wish the photos had been larger and displayed one per page so their magnificence could be seen to its potential. It is also understandably difficult to transliterate words from Arabic – not to mention Socotri! – into English; in this case, that difficulty is compounded by the detour through Italian that many of the words presumably made. However, it should be noted that the spelling of words of foreign origin is inconsistent. Variations on place names such as Qulansiyah/Qalansiyah or Haggier/Hagghier/Haghier appear throughout the volume, sometimes in the same chapter. In this regard, the editorial responsibility to maintain internal consistency seems lacking.

Now to some critique of substance, rather than style. The Introduction refers to “the political instability of Yemen” (p.14) as a major factor in the project’s pause in activity, which led to the publication of this book as a way to “maintain alive the strong link” (p.14) between
Italian and Socotri researchers while fieldwork was, and is, impossible. However, after this point in the book, the chaos that is the current security situation in Yemen is given scant acknowledgement. In Chapter IV and elsewhere, it is asserted that the development of eco-tourism is part of Socotra’s path out of poverty. One must ask whether this is a realistic short-to-medium-term goal, given the ongoing insurgency initiated by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and their associated terrorist networks and the hijacking of commercial ships and private yachts by Somali pirates, who are known to ply the waters around Socotra and have even been suspected of using the island as a resupply port. Personally, as intrigued as I am by the thought of witnessing the unique biodiversity of Socotra first-hand, I plan to wait this one out. Many of the island’s potential visitors may feel the same.

Another point of substance is the book’s reliance upon the so-called Decision Support System. This computerized model-generating application, explained in Chapter I, lurks like a spectre throughout the majority of the book’s chapters. References to its involvement spring up unexpectedly in discussions of conservation, human health, and the economy. Such insight into the project’s data analysis methodology seems unnecessary in the finished product. The descriptive prose of nearly every chapter is enough to stand on its own, transporting the reader, and bringing him or her in some small way to the island of Socotra. In travels of fantasy such as this, prevented as it were by distance and world politics, even the most scientifically minded reader wants to give him/herself over completely to the journey. Reminders of the computer modelling system that informs the analysis serve only to bring one back to reality, placing the reader in a windowless Roman computer lab, rather than on a windswept Socotran plain. This book transports the reader, despite the best efforts of the digital framework in which it was developed. For that, the authors deserve an extra word of praise.

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Acknowledging that the lion’s share of social and cultural histories has been recorded and penned by men, it is unsurprising to note that the input and impact of individual women in times past have often fallen by the wayside. As a result, Mary McDonald-Rissanen’s recent book offers a significant contribution to research areas as diverse as Canadian Studies, Island Studies, Language and Literature, Sociology, and Women’s Studies. Assembling a chorus of women’s voices that span nearly a century and a half, Prince Edward Island’s settlement and social development is compellingly narrated through the accounts captured in the journal intimes of these singular Island women.

Drawing from eighteen Prince Edward Island female diarists – the earliest text dating back to 1859 and the latest one completed in 1998 – McDonald-Rissanen shares with readers a collection of personal accounts of PEI’s social and cultural development as inscribed in the recorded journals of these urban and rural women. The book is organized into eight chapters, five of which focus directly on the diarists’ narratives, which are thematically structured