

*To Dream Again: Island Environmentalism through Music – by Priya Parrotta*

*Anonymous Peer Reviews*

“This is a well-conceived and urgent book. It is brilliant and should be contracted once the requested edits are made. It is in a state to be published as soon as the author is ready to do so.

Priya Parrotta is an exquisite musician and scholar. I have viewed her music videos and listened to her mesmeric music. It is absolutely enchanting. Parrotta’s music, like her book - merges forests and oceans, walking and singing, in a therapeutic search for climate action through music.

This manuscript emerges at the junctures of what this series is really calling for: creativity, advocacy, climate action, climate theory, visionary imaginings if possible in such an age of climate depression, and an applied inspirational approach to climate thought. Parrotta is simply inspiring, while writing from one of the most horrific scenarios of climate disaster, Puerto Rico during Hurricane María.

The chapters and sections are beautifully conceived. Parrotta writes with the authority of a practitioner who had produced music professionally, been an activist and advocate for climate action, and is deeply immersed in forging bridges between the worlds of music theory and world music.”

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“I really enjoyed reading this short but beautifully written manuscript. For a book that has music at its core, there’s a lyrical quality to the style and writing. The words flow from one page to another and seamlessly bring together wide-ranging themes like the silences of plants and mountains and the geopolitical manoeuvres in the glass high-rises. The volume begins with a quote from Shakespeare’s *Tempest*, to make a forceful argument about colonialism and its extractive ethos that continues to this day in the form of ‘Tourism’. It neatly brings together the development vs environment debate and asserts the centrality of sound in this discourse. It seeks to create a cultural dialogue on environment through ‘listening, singing, arranging, and composing’. The author goes on to say, ‘Music can reveal a great deal about the connection between humanity and the environment— including the political and social changes that need to occur in the world for environmental justice and sustainability’ and seeks to create a space in the public imagination for this. It makes a compelling case for rethinking the ‘centers’ and the ‘peripheries’ in the geopolitical discussions on climate change.

The next section begins with a listening diary as Hurricane María passed through San Juan, and moves on to its shocking aftermath of apathy. The author very poignantly writes: “The island was plunged into darkness, and for a time we accessed information not through the Internet, but rather through the voices of our neighbors and of a couple of dedicated radio broadcasters. During that time, it became apparent to me that while advertising might lead us to believe that we are connected by the clothes we wear, or the flags we fly, in fact we are connected by the environmental and political phenomena that both threaten our lives, and hold the keys to our survival.” It becomes an anchor as it were, in an ocean of floating narratives, to understand how island ecologies ‘grapple with both the joys and challenges of their environments’, their rich musical traditions inspiring and uplifting the world.

The section on the practice of musical fusion was quite intriguing and engaging. Its highlight was how it makes the process of music-making more accessible to a more general reader, and, at the same time, making the reader aware how music environment and geographies intersect. I found the author’s choice of the term ‘World Music’ intriguing in this aspect. The author also turns to their own work that centralizes the ‘ocean’, and how they link the global climate change as a crisis of ‘voice and voicelessness’.

The main appeal of this work is [its] accessibility to the general reader. It will make them think and reflect on everyday voices and sounds that are often ignored until it is too late.”