Touching Base:
Isolation and Community on Maine’s Islands

Ruth E. Weschler

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Prerequisite for Honors
in Anthropology
Under the advisement of Justin Armstrong

April 2017

© 2017 Ruth E. Weschler
Table of Contents

Figures....................................................................................................................4
Acknowledgments...................................................................................................5
Introduction.............................................................................................................6
1. No Person is an Island: Individualism in a Small Island Community..................15
2. Home Away From Home: Navigating Tourism and Place.....................................30
3. Life on a Shared Rock: Community and Organizations.......................................45
4. Pillars of Community: Interactions with the Physical.........................................61
5. Staying Afloat: Population Sustainability on Remote Islands..............................76
Conclusion.............................................................................................................90
References.............................................................................................................94
Figures

Monhegan Boat Landing, Port Clyde, Maine.................................................6
The cabin of the Laura B., Maine.................................................................9
Abandoned lobsterman’s gloves.................................................................15
Monhegan Lobsterman and sternmen rowing towards Manana..................19
Gathering in the fish house.........................................................................20
Matinicus School visiting the farm..............................................................22
From the highest point on Monhegan..........................................................25
Lobster fight..................................................................................................27
Summer at the Island Inn.............................................................................30
Rockwell Kent, (1907)..................................................................................34
Rainbow Lobster............................................................................................36
Reminders on the trail leading to Cathedral Woods....................................39
Lobstermen gathering gear from the fish house..........................................41
Hauling lumber off the Laura B.................................................................45
Unloading the boat.......................................................................................50
Farm Chores..................................................................................................52
Pulling up traps and banding lobsters.........................................................54
L. Brackett and Sons....................................................................................56
Crashing Waves.............................................................................................61
The Red House..............................................................................................63
Summer Cottage............................................................................................66
At a Crossroad..............................................................................................68
Lobster Cove, Monhegan..............................................................................70
School fieldtrip and Ferry day.................................................................76
The rope shed, summer, Monhegan.............................................................87
Monhegan in the distance..........................................................................90
Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible if it were not for the support and influence of several individuals. First and foremost, I want to thank Justin Armstrong for advising and inspiring me throughout this process, for seeing a project worth pursuing, and for encouraging me to persevere through the unsure moments.

In addition I would like to thank my research laboratory adviser, Yui Suzuki, for showing me that science and humanities are not exclusive worlds and for consistently fostering a consideration of the world view.

I also want to thank Alison Hill, Lisa Brackett, Bill Hoadley, Eva Murray, and any and all of the people who made my research experience on Monhegan and Matinicus possible. I would not have experienced the lure of the islands if it were not for the open arms that Lucia and Harry Miller extended to my family over a decade ago. For that, I will be forever grateful.

My thanks also go to all members of the Anthropology Department and Biology Department for providing me with countless opportunities, instructing me in exciting, inspiring topics, and supporting me throughout my time at Wellesley. In addition, I want to thank The Office of the Provost for believing in the value of my research and granting me the Student Research Grant to assist in funding my work.

Finally, this project would have been entirely impossible if not for the unwavering support of my family. Thank you for believing in me through all my endeavors.
For the first time in two days there was complete silence on the dock; the wind had settled from its howling gusts that fought their way across the water and had now subdued into a light breeze. Finally, I could see a glimmer of hope that the ferry would make its journey to Monhegan. Having spent the night in the car waiting for the ferry, I climbed out of my sleeping bag and opened the side door to the fresh winter air, catching the last pastels of the sunrise. Normally there would be a dozen other cars surrounding mine on the dock. However, in the dead of winter there are few comings and goings, few visitors making their way to the island. I was entering a world I was not familiar with. Despite visiting the island every year since my childhood I was not accustomed to the character it took in the winter. I was and always will be a “summer person”; someone who visits the island for an extended period during the peak season, when the weather is nice, the restaurants are open, and the water is swimmable. Although I will never be an islander, as I do not live nor was I born on the island, my familiarity of the place
ranges a bit beyond the ‘day-tripper’, one who arrives on the first summer ferry in the morning and departs on the last one in the afternoon. As there are only three boats per week during the winter, weather permitting, the existence of the day-tripper during the winter months is nearly impossible, but the appearance of a summer person, such as myself, is equally as unexpected.

After waiting on the dock of Port Clyde, Maine for two days I was about to make my first winter trip to Monhegan Island, to be followed by a first-time visit to Matinicus, an island further removed and further isolated than the summer-getaway that many have come to know as Monhegan. These two islands, despite retaining fishing culture at the heart of their infrastructures, are comparatively different in their approach to daily life, including economy, ecology, and social values. While Monhegan has become known for its artist colony and tourist destination, Matinicus remains an all-encompassing fishing village with the occasional summer person. While I was familiar with the artist colony of Monhegan, the fishing territory of Matinicus remained a mystery until my arrival. 21 miles out to sea, as the most isolated of the Maine islands, Matinicus has gained the reputation as the most ‘rugged’ of the main islands, suitable only for the most independent. As opposed to the previous visits I had made to Monhegan, I was now leaving the mainland as a student ethnographer to observe the island culture beyond how I’ve known it during my brief summer visits.

As soon as I had my sleeping bag rolled up I went to the low-roof building that usually holds the ticket counter for the boat line in addition to a small gift shop full of postcards, t-shirts, and the never-absent Maine red lobster souvenirs, only to find the door to be locked with a sign posted that read “For tickets, please go to office (up the hill)”. Suddenly, I felt like an outsider in a place I had previously been familiar with; navigating the space no longer came naturally. I wandered up the hill and found the door that lead into a scarcely furnished office occupied by a bearded man holding a cup of coffee. My presence seemed to bemuse him as much as the setting confused me. “Can I get a name for the ticket?” He wasn’t familiar with my name. I wasn’t one of the regulars and my name told him I was not a relative of anyone on the island. After we
exchanged pleasantries I made my way to the dock with a ticket in hand, leaving him behind to ask the next regular traveler to come in who I was and why I was there. I found this to be the norm for those I met on the islands; the entire winter population would know who I was by the time I left, even though I had only spoken to a handful of them.

During the winter, the population of Monhegan decreases significantly, maintaining less than a third of the summer inhabitants. Recently it has diminished even further due to the shift in lobstering season; in 2007, trap day, or the first allowed lobstering day of the season, was moved from January 1st to October 1st to take advantage of the fall fishery. Now, because the earlier start day allows for substantial catch by January, many of the young lobstermen and employed sternmen who would have previously stayed on the island through the winter are taking leave to the southern hemisphere for a break in the cold and potential monotony of winter on the island. This decrease in population made every coming and going more obvious, more worth discussing, and, in my case, all the more curious.

Shortly after walking onto the dock I was standing in what seemed to me like a new boat; the rows of benches that usually stood in the stern cabin of the Laura B had been replaced with a large wood-burning stove that produced enough heat for the seven passengers onboard. Some of the more experienced travelers stood by the stove while the rest of us took our seats along the wall, reaching out to the stove to warm our hands. I immediately recognized one of the women who I had met the previous summer on a tour of the lighthouse, said my hellos, introduced myself to her dog, and then listened to the conversational atmosphere for the remainder of the journey. The seven passengers onboard discussed the current goings-on of the island such as where people were coming from, and how they have been getting along; “so-and-so’s son was on break”, “the grocery store wasn’t carrying their normal soda”, “the concert was incredible”, “Christmas was spent with the family”, “the weather was bad”, “work is waiting on the island”. The 75-minute ferry ride allowed and encouraged conversation, but not all participated. For another gentlemen the ride was simply transportation; he had his head leaned back, sunglasses on, and sweatshirt
hood pulled up, and wasn’t bothered by anybody. For some, I would discover, this contrast of social interactions contributes to the attraction of the island; the individual decides how interactive they want to be. For some, the small island community allows for close connections with those they interact with on a daily basis, while others seek refuge in the geography as a way of inner reflection and self-focus. In the following weeks I would be able to address this dichotomy, exploring the interactions of the individual with the community at large.

For my senior thesis I wanted to investigate the workings of these small island communities, specifically how they maintain a thriving community and encourage growth while sustaining their preferred level of personal independence. This ethnographic study examines interpersonal interactions as well as anthropological engagements with space and place in these isolated environments to better understand how they maintain a vibrant and viable community. Monhegan and Matiniclus, two remote, unbridged islands operate in different cultural modes despite their similar geographic locations and I hope through their comparisons I will be better
able to understand the importance of their reliance, or lack thereof, on one another and surrounding resources. In this study, given my many summers of experience on Monhegan in addition to the research in January and my limited experience on Matinicus I will utilize my research of the latter for cross-cultural comparison, using Monhegan as the focal point of the study.

Since childhood I have had a fascination with island life, dreaming about living on Monhegan beyond the summer months and getting to know the space beyond the lushness of June. During my research on the islands I would come to address that fascination and confront the potentially problematic assumptions that come along with it. There is a peculiar draw to islands, particularly is western civilization. Dating back to such ancient Greek epics as Homer’s Odyssey, reemerging in Western Europe’s voyages of ‘discovery’, perpetuated by painters such as Paul Gauguin, and pioneer anthropologists such as Margaret Mead. According to Baum, there is an overwhelming urge for people visiting an island to circumnavigate, circumambulate, or climb to its highest point and “take it all in” (Baum, 1993). For most people from “away”, neither born nor living on the island, it is tempting to put an island into a specific category, to assume more about the culture than is presented to them. To know the island completely as an outsider is impossible; they may be able to count how many houses there are or point out the main roads, but there is no way of knowing the entire island; no way of knowing the inner workings with a fleeting glimpse.

It is perhaps the same compelling motives that promote the assumptions and assertions of what islands stand for and who islanders are, or how they are meant to behave. Often times, the summer tourist can assume a lot about the islands, and even more about the people. One island resident often grows tired of the tourist’s gaze, idolizing his use of a wheelbarrow to move dirt, “just like anyone else would do”. It seems as if the geography is simply too gripping, the island image too powerful to discard.
It is my goal to avoid these assumptions, to recognize my position as an outsider and address the inconsistencies of my own recollections and insights when compared to those of the islanders. Grant McCall defined *nissology* as the study of islands on their own terms (McCall, 1994). The concluding phrase “on their own terms” suggests a process of empowerment, a reclaiming of the island culture. And yet, the opening phrase of that same definition, “the study of islands”, marks an unusual relationship, implying the process of inquiry is still directed from outside forces, however well-meaning they may be. Too often, the islands are narrated by an outsider, someone who goes to conduct a study of the island instead of with the island. It seems the smaller or less populated an island is, the more likely it is that its rich cultural community is dictated and penned by “others”; the island becomes the object to be studied instead of the home and history of the islanders. Therefore, I must be clear in saying I make no claim to the island or its people; I am not an islander in any sense of the word and cannot report fully on their daily lives. However, I hope to provide some understanding to the cultural implications that islands and islanders have on one another. My perspective will be my own; having grown up in a suburb of Chicago, spending summer days on Monhegan was an honor and a privilege, but not my everyday life. I hope my research does the islanders justice and if it hasn’t I offer my deepest apologies.

In January of 2017 I was able to visit Monhegan and Matinicus Island as a student ethnographer and “summer person” when the tourists were gone and only a handful of the islanders remained. The first two weeks were spent living with Alison, an artist on Monhegan, followed by a week living on Matinicus with the oldest islander and implant to the island, Bill Hoadley. Bill, although not born on Matinicus, grew up on Nantucket in the days before tourism, offering a comparison of the past and present patterns of tourism and islands. While on both islands I met with and discussed island life with anyone who was willing; I met to discuss the initiation of new projects, reflect on island history, and talk about the current affairs and social hilarities. On Monhegan I spent most of my days in the general store, talking over coffee or tea.
and enjoying one or two homemade cookies baked by the shop owner, Lisa. On Matinicu I found myself most days in the schoolhouse or the town office where I interacted with the only two students, the teacher, and the three people in charge of island policies. Although I wasn’t able to spend too much time on the islands, I have been able to expand my project through the use of hybrid and virtual ethnography. With the growth of technology in recent years, even the most distant places are becoming more accessible and daily communications rely less and less on the daily forecast. Today, “people live increasingly hybrid lives where the physical and the digital, the real the virtual, interact” (Jordan, 2009). As Kathleen Donlan points out, this is particularly compelling within the field of anthropology as it blurs the lines between field site and “other” and expands the realm of participant observation beyond the physical space (Donlan, 2016). Through email and Facebook groups, I have been able to maintain a source of information from the islanders. Additionally, I have been able to reach out to other “summer people” to talk about their experience with the island and how they perceive the space and community within their own context. Finally, with the help of islanders and summer people past and present I have been able to obtain essays and letters written about the many encounters with Monhegan. Most referenced is a collection of letters from Alta Ashley, a former pediatrician from Wellesley, Massachusetts who became a family physician, historian, and newspaper correspondent on Monhegan in 1951 after spending summer weeks there as a child. Through my review of these resources and numerous hours of conversation with the residents and personally experiencing the islands I hope to provide a deeper understanding of how the island communities operate within themselves and in relation to the spaces around them.

In Chapter 1, No Person is an Island: Individualism in a Small Island Community, I explore the role of islandness in people’s perception of life on Monhegan and Matinicu and the adjustments that are made while incorporating outsiders into the often-romanticized culture of islandness. Using Ruth Benedict (1934) and Margaret Mead’s (1928) theory of culture and
personality I explore the individual’s role in island culture and the islander’s ownership of their self-defined ‘islandness’.

In Chapter 2, *Home Away From Home: Navigating the Tourist and Place*, I address the juxtaposition of islanders and the different categories of summer people, from the day-trippers to summer residents. I address the economic benefit of tourism and individual approaches to the topic. In addition, I integrate the anthropological work done on ecotourism, including the appeal and potential dangers to both the individual and the community. I also take the opportunity to address the role of the shoreline within island life as a powerful draw, source of psychological malaise, and often a keenly contested terrain.

In Chapter 3, *Life on a Shared Rock: Community and Organizations* I examine the growth of community organizations and responses to changing needs amongst community members. Here I also address the outside sources that many of the islanders have come to enjoy and in some cases rely on. Relying on anthropologists Malinowski (1960) and Radcliffe-Brown’s (1952) theory of functionalism, I attempt to explain the necessity of the local institutions and organizations in maintaining a thriving year-round community.

In Chapter 4, *Pillars of Community: Interactions with the Physical*, I explore the shared and individual spaces of the islands and how people, both tourist and local, navigate within them. Here, I implement the use of design anthropology to address how the communities build their environments as well as how the local geography influences the way they operate. Using aspects of Julian Steward’s theory of cultural ecology (1955), I address the influences of the natural environment on the values and traditions held by most islanders.

In Chapter 5, *Staying Afloat: Population Sustainability on Remote Islands*, I address the growing concern surrounding the increase in summer ownership and decline in year-round homeowners. Using Arjun Appadurai’s social imaginary (1990) and Foucault’s study of power (1982), I explore the shifting social landscape with the influx of temporary tourists and the ultimate effects it will have on the community. Within this discussion I include the school system
and employment as well as the affordable housing movement that has been implemented on some of the islands. There are a number of reasons that have lead to the decline in population on remote North American islands, and although I attempt to go in depth on a number of them, I cannot begin to scratch the surface, as my focus is solely on Matinicus and Monhegan.

I conclude with an overview of the interactions of individuals within isolated communities beyond the geographical island, using Margaret Mead as a reference for the extension of “islandness”. Finally, I address the future of islands and their role in modern western culture. There is a peculiar duality within an island; it confronts us as juxtaposition of the understanding of both local and global entities, of interior and exterior understandings, and of having roots within and routes away from the home (Clifford, 1997). It is here where I hope to make clear the separation of the two; the difference between the view from within and the view from away.

The islands are within themselves a miniature universe; a bauble of community, society, ecology, economy, interacting at a distance with the others around them. It imposes a sense of identity on its inhabitants and highlights the stark difference when compared to the summer tourists or odd student ethnographer. It protects and preserves its members in an individual-driven regimen of obligation, reciprocity, family, familiarity, gossip, assumed knowledge, tradition, social capital, and networks. There are levels to the island communities that will never be reached by an ethnographer such as myself, yet I strive to unearth even the most elemental of patterns.
Chapter 1: No Person is an Island: Individualism in a Small Island Community

Abandoned lobsterman’s gloves, Matinicus, Maine

In John Donne’s famous prose, ‘No man is an island’, he debunks the notion of humanity as a collection of intrinsically autonomous, independent beings, reminding us that nobody can work in isolation and that we are interdependent, social creatures. This aspect of human existence may explain why, in recent years, there has been a significant decline in small-island populations of the North Atlantic, specifically along the coast of Maine. According to Charles B. McLane, there were once as many as three hundred year-round island communities on the coast of Maine, most of which had disappeared by the end of the nineteenth century (McLane 1982, 1992, 1989, 1994, 1997). Now, only fifteen are inhabited. Somewhere in the history of Maine, islanders abandoned their islands for a presumably simpler life on the mainland. Naturally, we are left to question what has maintained the populations on the few inhabited islands; what draws people to islands and then entices them to stay in spite of the daunting economic pressures to abandon them? John Fowles argues that it is the islander’s sense of “islandness”, a metaphysical sensation
that derives from the heightened experience that accompanies physical isolation, which continuously draws them back (Fowles and Godwin, 1978). There is an allure of isolation, a complex emotional and psychological attraction that becomes intertwined with geography of the place. As David Weale explains, “the most radical and deeply rooted concern of many islanders has to do with what we might describe as “islandness” of their identity, both as individuals and as a community...(for) there are polar people, coastal people, and people of the forests. In each case the nature of the community—its mythology, imagination, its very soul—has been sculpted by its geographical circumstances” (Weale, 1991). There is a commanding element to the geography of the island; the rigid boundaries of the shores dictate the types of economic activities that are possible, when islanders or visitors can move between the mainland and the island, and in some cases how people will spend their day. This connectedness may be explained as a culture of islandness, a culture in which the individuals themselves relate their own persons to the geography of the island. As islanders are interacting with the ocean daily, much of their identity is linked with the changing tides; the water is what dictates their isolation. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict may suggest that, in the case of Monhegan, this common pattern of connectedness encourages specific personality types to flourish (Benedict, 1934). Island communities, including Monhegan, are unique in that they create a microcosm of personality, made up of people drawn to the tranquility and isolation.

The people who have spent their entire lives on Monhegan, may not be aware of the “islandness” that draws people there. As David Platt of the *Island Journal* explains,

“‘Islandness’ is a construct of the mind, a singular way of looking at the world. Articulating this perspective is perhaps more important to outsiders who for some reason associate themselves with islands than it is to islanders themselves, who understand the concept of islandness instinctively but may never feel called-upon to express it in words, except for distinguishing between ‘on island’ or ‘off island’” (Platt, 2004).

To the native islander, Monhegan is home; familiar and ordinary. For the tourist, the island’s everyday occurrences become romanticized, removed from what they consider “normal life”. For
example, during the summer, weekend tourists come in from the city, leaving their business suits behind, in order to seek refuge from their urban lives. To them, islandness is only temporary and purely meant for rejuvenation. During their few days on the island, especially if they’ve walked the small map of trials, it becomes tempting to assume knowledge or possession of the place. However, they eventually leave without knowledge of island life beyond the hotels and ferry trips; they know nothing further than the restaurants, inns, and lustrous views that attract so many.

As a “summer person” I understand the enchantment of “islandness”. During my childhood I often thought of Monhegan as being from another world, removed from the monotony of the mainland. In my naivety I likened islanders to characters from fairytales and the spruce and pine groves to their mystical woodlands. Now, I’ve come to realize that islands such as Monhegan and Matiniclus are not far removed from the rural towns I’ve been familiar with growing up in the Midwest; there is beauty in the isolation, but arduous work and concern that comes along with it. To the islanders, “islandness”, however magnificent, also contains hardships. Thus, until they have been apart from the daily life that embodies their islandness, it may go unnoticed. For some, this departure never occurs. However, as it becomes more customary for children to leave the island for higher education, departures from islandness become more common, and in some cases permanent. This removal of self from the island society challenges what Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict refer to as culture and personality; in their approach, they assume that the social arena one is born into will shape our personalities. However, as will be discussed, those born onto the island will not necessarily find a need to stay. Instead, the culture of the island simply selects those who want to claim islandness as their identity, thus perpetuating the culture of islandness by attracting those who embrace it.

Of those born into island families, a decision must be made in young adulthood as to whether they want to stay on the island or move to the mainland. Although both Monhegan and Matiniclus children have access to education through middle school, they must leave the island in order to attend high school. If they decide to attend college they must spend an additional four
years off-island and then decide whether or not they want to return. For Mia and Claire, sisters who grew up on Monhegan, the decision was split. They both went to boarding school while their parents stayed on the island, a common decision among islanders. Afterwards, Claire decided she wanted to live off-island, while Mia returns home in between world travels to earn a steady income and visit family. Traveling during the winter or early spring is common for many islanders on Monhegan; because the majority of economic activity occurs during the peak tourist and fishing seasons through the summer, fall, and early winter, there are windows of uninterrupted time where islanders can leave. In this way, Monhegan becomes a jumping off point for some who grow up here. Rebecca Martusewicz describes this type of connectedness to a place as “a pause in the nomadic process, the leaving and arriving that make up our lives” (Martusewics, 2001). Amongst their comings and goings they are drawn back to the island, perhaps in search of the described “islandness” that is so instinctual to those who grew up there.

For those who decide to stay, they often take jobs that they’ve been familiar with their entire lives, including becoming carpenters, shop owners, maintenance workers, artists, and, of course, lobstermen. As most Maine islands, Monhegan and Matinicus are primarily centered around fishing. It could be argued that the increase in tourism in the past century on Monhegan has diminished the hardiness that comes with lobstering territory, but there are still lobstermen and their sternmen, hired for the season to haul traps and furl ropes, who remain to carry on the lobstering legacy. However, their numbers are dwindling. Although there are a handful of stalwart lobstermen remaining, there aren’t many people from the younger generation filling spaces as they retire. This is in part due to the reputation of island lobstering as being insular and close-knit. In an interview with Eva Murray, an implant to Matinicus, she spoke of her son wanting to become a lobstermen on the island, “Even if he had all the training…it just wouldn’t have been worth it. You’re bound to lose traps. Even people who are related to the other lobstermen lose traps. It’s a type of initiation, I guess, but anyone who goes into it fresh is bound to lose money”. Lobstering has forever been a territorial occupation on the islands, and anyone
who wants to take a part in it has to pay their dues. However, as the lobstering culture has been shrouded by the tourism industry, the patriarchal heritage of the lobstering community is fading. In the past, the younger lobstermen would give heed to the most experienced lobstermen in the territory, but it has recently become a more individualistic culture.

Traditionally, lobstering has been subdivided into family units, as budding lobstermen would take on an apprenticeship with their own relatives and remain in the same waters once they had their independent licensing. However, as members of the lobstering families began to leave the island to pursue other work, spaces were left for outsiders or naive islanders to come in. These newcomers, as they hadn’t embraced the old traditions of lobstering, felt more entitled to the spaces both on land and water than in the past, and this lead to some discord between the lobstermen of older and younger generations. Now, there are some who fish in Monhegan waters who don’t live in the community, something that would never have been tolerated in the past. This relatively small shift in the microcosm of the island perpetuates itself within the larger community of Monhegan. As a retired sternman describes, “(The fish house) used to be the place
to catch up; people were over there all the time. (Recently) the action over there has been
dwindling...people just aren’t as chatty as they used to be”. During my time on the island we
enjoyed a few football games and shared a few drinks with some of the islanders including Lisa,
the shop owner, but there was only one lobstermen and his crew; all the rest had headed to the
mainland or didn’t want to be bothered. This may be, in some form, a shift in the culture of
islandness. For those in the older generation, islandness would most likely include the traditions
or respect that came with the unspoken rules of the lobstering society, while those of the newer
generation may consider their own islandness as isolation and independence. This shift in culture
thus contradicts Mead’s and Benedict’s assumption that the culture will shape the personality.
Alternatively, it seems the personalities are shaping the culture.

For those not born on the island, the journey to Monhegan is not as straightforward. For
some, there is an active search for a position within the community. Shermy, one of the last
remaining fishermen on the island, suggests “you’ve got to have a mission if you’re coming out
here now”. For the average person, there is no stumbling upon the island and settling into it. Aside from summer jobs, there are very few work positions available on the island. Monhegan is removed from the world of coffee shops and movie theaters; every year-round position must serve the community in some way. Although islanders themselves fill most positions, the island schoolteacher is in constant rotation and brings new residents to the island every other year.

According to Maine state law, teachers must be given tenure after two years at an institution (Maine Gov, 2007). However, as there is only one teacher needed for the one room schoolhouse, committing to a singular teaching style is daunting. On Monhegan, they solved the issue by hiring teachers for a couple years at a time. As some of the community members described, there are advantages in that if one teacher doesn’t mesh well with a student they are given the opportunity of another teacher down the line. However, there is also an inconsistency for the students and an incredibly short adjustment period for the teacher. As a parent and member of the school board, one islander described the first couple of teachers as being “energetic”, but they “had to leave as soon as they got their feet under them”. Now, both Matiniclus and Monhegan have teachers who seem to have a grasp of island life and work well with the students. Although they are not natives to the island, they understand the ‘islandness’ of living in an isolated community. Unlike the typical mainland school, where teaching is often removed from the everyday life of the community, the island schools incorporate the larger community of the island. For example, during my research on Monhegan, I attended a community bingo game hosted by the school children and teacher in which all community members who wanted to participate were incorporated and welcomed with tea and popcorn. Further, during the school days on Matiniclus, the school teacher was sure to incorporate skills that are necessary and accessible through life on the island, including visits to the island farm and daily cooking lessons in addition to their regular itinerary of math, history, and writing. Island teachers have to be able to adapt to not only the children they have in the classroom, but also to the wider community in which they become totally embedded.
For these positions, there is often a necessary adjustment period. In an interview done by Karen Roberts Jackson, an island resident described her own adjustment to the island; “My definition of friendship and community has changed a lot over the last four years. I feel sometimes as if my place is at the back of the line, behind a long list of people who have come before us. I am not a native Mainer, although two of my children were born in Maine. I am not a native islander even though I all but sleep in my mud boots. Even on our small island, made up of a handful of families, we are neither the first to come nor the longest to endure. Sometimes there seems to be no end to the dues that must be paid before the initiation into simply belonging” (Jackson, 1994). However, according to Putz, an island implant himself, people can ultimately adjust and meld into the community by “adopting as one’s own, whatever myths of the adopted place one can discover. This does not mean myths in the sense of stories or what is not true, but rather those motifs, images and values that are traditional to a community, and which can persist in spite of history and gross social changes” (Putz, 1984). In this way, Putz suggests that people
can be “converts” to islandness, and he observes that he, “like all converts, burns with a harder flame of island institutions and values than does the natal experience” (Putz, 1984). For the people coming to the island, there is a period of adjustment, but with time they become incorporated into the daily life and adopt their own sense of islandness.

Along with the teaching positions, there are those who find work for themselves through art, working as a sternman, or, most recently, telecommuting. As high-speed internet is becoming more accessible, people who may not have had the opportunity to move to the island are able to have a livelihood and live where they want. For example, a woman who recently moved to Monhegan uses her webcam to teach an art class in addition to working on her own art, thus allowing her to live year-round on the island. It seems the people who find their way to the islands for these jobs are the ones most seeking solitude; they are primarily drawn to the geographic isolation and fill positions to remain on the island. It is in this group that we may be tempted to reject Donne’s argument of human dependence; it is within this group that independence is at its most fierce. Fowles takes up this argument, suggesting,

“every individual human is an island, in spite of Donne's famous preaching to the contrary. It is the boundedness of the smaller island, encompassable in a glance, walkable in one day that relates it to the human body closer than any other geographical conformation of land. It is also the contrast between what can be seen at once and what remains, beyond the shore, hidden. Even to ourselves we are the same, half superficial and obvious, and half concealed, labyrinthine, fascinating to explore. ... There is the marked individuality of islands which, we should like to think, corresponds with our own; their obstinate separateness of character, even when they lie in archipelagoes” (Fowles 1978).

For one sternmen in particular, the path to Monhegan was specifically for the exploration of self. Just as Fowles describes, he finds more complexity in his self-isolation than when comparing himself to others. Despite his search for isolation, however, he’s been encouraged to join the community, breaking every expectation he had. Just as there was more to him than meets the eye, there was, and is, more than meets the eye on Monhegan. Even those seeking isolation will find themselves involved with the community, even if only by a nod from a neighbor. This subtle inclusion may be in part explained by the unspoken social standard that anthropologists Ruth
Benedict and Margaret Mead suggest that the individual. Although this sternman didn’t expect to become involved in the community, there are underlying rules dictating how the community members interact, and these norms eventually shape the person, if they are willing, into what is expected from the culture they are in. This is not to say every person on the island is the same, but there are similar ways in which individuals navigate their environment and interact with the people around them. On Monhegan, although it is isolated, there are no singularly isolated people. As long as there are people present to make up the community, there will always be an acknowledgement of the other community members.

Although Donne may have a point in saying that no person can be completely independent, contrasting the reliance of people to an island creates a false dichotomy. Both Monhegan and Matinicus prove that although the islands are geographically isolated they continue to interact with the mainland both economically and culturally. However, this may be a relatively contemporary development. As early as the 1900’s, newspapers and tourist magazines began to advertise the islands as places of retreat and felicity, spurring a third, and somewhat temporary, population of Monhegan; the summer employees. Young adults from around the world flock to Monhegan during the “peak season” to lend a hand and enjoy the scenery. While the island shifts facades from isolated island town to tourist destination, the summer help step in to staff the hotels, wait tables at the few remaining restaurants, manage the registers of bustling shops and babysit the youngest of the “summer kids”. For these temporary islanders Monhegan is a spirited island; to them, islandness includes nightly rendezvous with friends and a constant circulation of people and personalities. While some visitors come to the island in search of isolation, others know the island as a deeply social place.

Still others come to the island as a way of relaxation, with no need to sustain themselves. This category, the retirees or summer tourists, are pulled to the island by what many think of as a “simpler life”. These people often only stay until the leaves change. According to one islander, in more recent years there have been new homeowners who are usually in the house for
approximately two weeks during the summer and then rent it out at all other times. Although they own property, they never bother to integrate themselves into the island community; “they never get past the question phase…always asking what it’s like living on the island. Usually people quit asking after a while, but (the new homeowners) never hear the answer enough to know not to ask”. Recently, this new category of island people has caused turmoil amongst the year-round population, as the winterized houses that sit unoccupied for the majority of the year are taken off the market, thereby preventing new people from moving onto the island and therefore preventing growth of the community.

From the highest point on the Monhegan

For those who find themselves drawn to the island powerfully enough to stay longer than a few weeks, the sense of islandness is almost immediate. As Fowles writes of his first visit to Monhegan,

“I instantly recognized various key aspects of islandness ... the feeling that I had been there before, this almost metaphysical sense of isolation. I loved the close-community feel of the island and then its brooding male eiders close offshore, to say nothing of the rarer creatures, both avian and human. There was a poetess, a most pleasant surprise, and
the kwarking sound of ravens, for me the indispensable sign of greeting from all truly wild and remote places. ... On Monhegan I knew I was home” (Fowles 1999).

The people who claim Monhegan as home for an extended period of time, who find the islandness unshakeable, will undoubtedly find themselves picking up positions around the island, whether by choice or coercion.

With so few people living full-time on the island, each person has to play a part in its maintenance, and thus islanders must wear many different hats, often a mixture of volunteer and paid positions. During the summer and peak tourist months islanders pick up odd jobs around the island, holding multiple positions throughout a single day in different restaurants, stores, and museums. Then, as soon as the final tourist ferry leaves the dock, islanders resume their quiet lives, maintaining the community organizations with limited human resources. For example, one of Monhegan’s residents has a position in local government, runs her own business, and is the head of the school board. This is not a case of an over-active parent; with less than 50 year-round residents they have to take on a number of roles. People living on the island realize that without manual labor many aspects of the island wouldn’t be able to sustain themselves, so most of the positions are volunteer, relying on the community members to maintain it. In many ways, these multifaceted positions create a web of consistent community, but it can often be difficult to navigate between the roles depending on the situation. As one islander puts it, “sometimes you have to watch what you say…you never know which hat they think you’re wearing”.

Often times, there are multiple people who have, at one time or another, held the same position or know the details of the job. Although one person may hold a specific title for a position, there are bound to be multiple people on the island who can step in if need be. Everyone on the island who is able to do a job will do it if required. As Eva Murray of Matinicus claims, “there is no ‘them’”; no one is coming onto the island to fix anything for them, so the islanders have to be willing to fix it themselves. Further, just because someone doesn’t have a license to do something does not make it impossible. For example, Eli, a three-year-old from Matinicus, takes
on the duty of operating the ferry ramp every month to the bemusement of the crew. As the crewmen shout to his parents that he shouldn’t be touching the controls, his parents remind them that he is more than capable; “He’s doing more than you, and he’s f*cking three!”. When there is an issue on the island whoever is around will come up with a solution or contact someone who can help, no matter what, because there won’t be help coming from the mainland very soon.

Lobster fight

Although the community is always willing to lend a hand when needed, people on the islands, or who come to live on the islands, are often fiercely independent and don’t want to rely on others. Because of this, it is often difficult to encourage islanders to seek help. As a Monhegan resident puts it, “Sometimes they’re too tough. One of the sternmen once got a fishbone in his thumb and wouldn’t let anyone touch it…soon enough he had the red line up his arm (marking infection).” During my fieldwork, one of the lobstersmen had his thumb crushed by a lobster claw and was having trouble putting weight on his foot after a season of standing on the shifting hull of the lobster boat, but was putting off going to the doctor until all his traps were up, as it would
require a trip to the mainland. Here, the independent ruggedness of many islanders could potentially cause problems; swelling may just be pain, but it could also be a broken bone. In situations that require medical attention, the wide oceanscape becomes much more prominent; the distance, usually navigated relatively easily by boat or plane, becomes much more vast. Often, this physical distance from the larger state can be the leading barrier that keeps people from staying on the island, especially into their old age.

For many, leaving the island after a lifetime spent there can be the hardest step in life and it is put off as long as possible. For one Monhegan resident, Kathie, leaving the island is not yet an option. Her son recently built her a home attached to his family’s house in order to maintain her comfort and their peace of mind. During an afternoon in January, seated next to a wood-burning stove, Kathie reflected on her time on the island; “The people have kept me here. There’s always something to be done, and with my family here I know I have people watching out for me…when I lived down near Victor I could call over to him if I thought something fishy was going on with the radiator or anything”. Similarly, Cynthia Bourgeault describes the pull of islands; “What counts on islands, is that a community has to work together. Island life is rigidly communal; the people you squabble with one day may save your life the next. When your car goes into a ditch, or your outboard quits halfway down to Mount Desert Rock, or you awake with chest pains in the middle of the night and need to get to the mainland fast, it's your neighbors who will bail you out. And you will do the same—not just out of neighborliness, but because a refusal to help threatens the safety of the entire community” (Bourgeault, 1990). Islanders have perfected the ability to be simultaneously independent and interdependent, much like the island itself. Although both the individual and island rely on others to maintain their own vibrancy, they remain as independent as possible.

Weale describes this attachment to the island, explaining, “This is exactly what happens when you live here for so long—you take the Island inside, deep inside. You become an Islander, which is to say, a creature of the Island. Islandness becomes a part of your being, a part as deep as
marrow, and as natural and unselfconscious as breathing” (Weale, 1991). In this sense, islandness is a quality of being that is deeply internalized and ultimately cannot be separated from an islander's identity without risking ‘soul-destroying failure’; this in spite of the fact that islanders need to be linked to the mainland (Conkling, 2007). During the founding of the Monhegan Island Plantation, the geography gave way to plentiful fishing grounds and farmland. However, as time has progressed the geography has encouraged the pilgrimage of independent people, reflecting the island’s own juxtaposition of isolation and interdependence while perpetuating the culture of islandness. While islanders continue to relate to the geography of the island through their own islandness and isolation, there is an increased interaction with the outsider, which may lead to a romanticization of the place by the serenity-seeking traveler. As Monhegan becomes an increasingly popular island destination for tourists, it is important to define the culture of islandness as it pertains to the islander in order to avoid being encapsulated in the romantic notion of isolation. In the chapter to follow I investigate how the tourist may have an impact on the culture of islandness through their involvement in the community and how the culture of islandness may be shifting in response to the influx of outsiders. As the occupancy of the island shifts from season to season and year to year there are adjustments made to the varying perceptions of islandness from the outsider and islander alike.
Chapter 2, *Home Away From Home: Navigating Tourism and Place*

As the tourism industry continues to grow with globalization, tourists are beginning to shape local cultures as they travel through both urban and rural areas. Rojek and Urry argue that tourism as a cultural practice or a set of objects is highly significant within contemporary Western societies organized around mass mobility (Rojek and Urry, 1997) and Monhegan is no exception. Although the island is physically isolated from the mainland by a one-hour ferry ride, it is still a community with pathways to and from their isolation; it is still a place of comings and goings. Therefore, it is vital to address tourism in the context of the shifting island culture, as Monhegan becomes an increasingly popular island destination scrutinized under the tourist’s gaze. During the advent of tourism on the island there was a worry that by welcoming an influx of people from “away” there could be a threat to the wellbeing and quality of life for the islanders. As one long-time resident recalled, “There was a time when we wouldn’t let articles be published about us.
We fought with newspapers and magazines, but eventually the fight just faded”. As distinct locales with well-defined geographic boundaries and small populations, island destinations such as Monhegan and Matinicus create and sustain tight-knit protective communities with distinct cultural identities. By opening their island to outsiders, change was inevitable, and some people were worried about the social and cultural impact the influx of new people may have on the island. Many residents recalled a sense of anonymity that came with the summer tourists, especially the day-trippers, who would arrive on the morning boat and leave on the last boat out of the harbor. However, as time has progressed, some feel removed from even the property owners on the island. One islander recalled, “It used to be that everyone knew everyone else. Even during the summer—we knew everyone that had property on the island. Now, I only know my old friends”. During the battle to keep Monhegan “off the map”, anyone who found their way to the island was bound to have a connection; they had most likely heard about it from a friend, or been personally invited by someone on the island. Thus, everyone was connected in one way or another, creating a type of affinity between each person on the island. Now, however, it’s not uncommon to have someone on the island with no familiarity with the space or the core values of the island.

As Michael Cross points out, any small change, especially in the realm of tourism, is bound to have an effect on the subjective well-being of the residents (Cross and Nutley, 1999). Although their immediate safety may not be at risk, small changes in the daily routine may lead to larger acculturation through the constant presence of tourists. The development of sustained tourism has the potential to affect the sense of community in small island destinations through changes to social systems and natural resources (Lim and Cooper, 2009). Social systems might be the ability to navigate the walking paths and roads that wind around the island or disembarking from the ferry during peak tourism times. For example, when Monhegan’s Island Farm Project first started hosting farmers markets there was a large interest from the summer people and day-trippers on the island, which consequently discouraged some of the locals from attending. As one
islander put it, “I don’t like getting bumped around…that’s not why I’m here”. In this case, the increase of tourism was obscuring the local community, hindering their everyday lives. The locals were becoming commoditized under the tourist’s gaze (Urry, 2002), having meaning instilled into their existence by the tourist instead of allowing them to interact as they normally would.

Tourism development is often touted as an economic panacea for certain destinations. However, that wasn’t the original purpose of Monhegan’s tourism industry. The island is home to a vibrant fishing industry that could potentially sustain the lobstermen’s lives on the island. Ultimately, the attraction of artists from around the globe drew people to the island. Jennifer Craik, in a study on the culture of tourism, emphasizes the importance of finding a balance between the tourist and the local, where the tradition of the lobstermen and artist is maintained while the economic benefit of the tourist is harnessed (Craik, 1997).

Tranquility, unspoiled beauty, isolation, raw nature, remoteness, a strong sense of place—all of Monhegan’s current charms contributed to what is arguably the turning point of its history: its establishment as an art colony and subsequent role in the development of American artists (Golub, 2010). According to Golub, the art culture on Monhegan began to emerge in 1858, with the arrival of two young men on a sketching tour of the Maine coast. When they came to Monhegan they found inspiration from the lone village, peaceful glens, and dramatic headlands. It was this grandeur of nature, similar in many ways to the subjects painted by members of the Hudson River School that brought more artists. The rugged landscape of Monhegan was ideal for the Hudson River School’s realistic, detailed, and sometimes idealized portrayal of nature, which often juxtaposed peaceful agriculture and the remaining wilderness (HR Museum, 2013). In 1890, several artists began to regularly summer on Monhegan, informally launching it as an art colony (Golub, 2010). The popularity of the island as an artistic getaway grew after New York artist Robert Henri returned from Monhegan in 1903 and, taken with its dramatic scenery, exhorted his students to travel there. This newfound interest in the island led to the establishment of summer homes and studios interspersed among those of the fishermen and other residents. Suddenly, the
sense of place on Monhegan began to shift; although the lobstermen still remained, the artist began claiming Monhegan as part of their livelihood, and thus imbued it with a new layer of meaning. Art on Monhegan flourished through the 20th century. Today, much of the island appears the same as in paintings more than a century old, but the culture that surrounds it has shifted; instead of centrality of the place being localized in fishing, Monhegan quickly became know as an artist colony, catering to the artist as much as to the fisherman. Where Matinicus is now known for its ruggedness, Monhegan has become known for its artist culture. While there are some very well-respected artists living on the island, there are also those who consider art a hobby, merely stopping in for the day to paint a watercolor or two and leaving with a self-developed souvenir. When I step off the ferry in June it is not uncommon to see a dozen packable easels waiting on the dock, accompanied by their visiting artists. Once on the island, the Lupin, an art gallery, is the first shop along the main road, at the crossroads of the dock, ushering in the tourist, and the hill that leads to the local homes. Here stands an example of what Jennifer Craik suggests as strategic marketing of the local culture to welcome the tourist into a familiar space, while highlighting the local (Craik, 1997). The Lupin is available for the purchase of art supplies, ranging from coloring books to oil paints, as well as a collection of paintings from Monhegan artists past and present. By navigating the complex relationship between local and tourist, The Lupin is able to find a niche marketing possibility while also encouraging notation of the local. There is an incorporation of the islander through the local works of art, while also indulging the tourist’s artistic inclinations.
Ironically, however, the artist's' success might be the island’s downfall. As people flock to the island to gaze at the same landscapes of Rockwell Kent (1907) and Lynn Drexler (1959), it encroaches on the apparent authenticity and solitude of the experience by bringing boisterous noise, foot traffic, and trash. The popularity of the island shows how a cultural phenomenon, such as a local artist, can engender a new type of cultural tourism, bringing people from around the globe to embrace the same natural scenes that were once seen by a few. Therefore, it has become necessary for the community to address the tourism industry, and to harness it to their advantage before it becomes uncontrollable. Although the island community does not advertise itself as a tourist destination, it must work within the tourism industry as a way to maintain their own unique cultural identity. Dougless Pierce describes tourism development as “any action by public or private organizations aimed at facilitating the visitation of tourists” (Pierce, 1989). However, it could also be argued that instead of a means of facilitation, tourism development is a way of maintaining authority over how a space is used by people from “away”. As Pierce goes on to describe, tourism is the sum of dynamic processes, activities, and outcomes originating from the relationship between the actors involved in the tourism phenomenon, with the ultimate goal of
endowing the residents of the destination with the freedom to decide on their own development. In this way, the local community is able to maintain claim to their own island, while also allowing others to revel in its tranquility.

For example, instead of approaching tourism as what George Ritzer and Allan Liska describe as ‘McDisneyization of society’ (Ritzer and Liska, 1997), or highly predictable, efficient, calculable, and controlled experiences, islanders allow their own experiences and interests to shape how the tourist interacts with the island. In places like Disneyland there are souvenir shops, presenting mass-produced objects for purchase to represent the tourist’s experiences. Even within tourist attractions in Maine, such as the state parks, there are the iconic mass-produced red lobsters that adorn the gift shop shelves. Craik describes these common objects as losing their meaning, quoting Cohen; “On the one hand, popular souvenirs, as they become standardized, tend to be industrially produced by people often unrelated to their original producers…though touristic, they are thus neither ethnic nor art anymore, even if they have preserved their character as external ethnic markers” (Cohen, 1992). On Monhegan the apparent necessity of the tourist to commoditize their trips has given many people the means to open their own shops and sell some of their own art work, but there is no sense of mass-production, with very few sightings of the red lobster. For example, Winter Works, a co-op that carries local art pieces such as knit hats, stuffed animals, and jewelry, allows for a form of complementary commercialization, or the production of art that remains popular with the locals and encroaching commercialism, where the external forces sponsor the reorientation of craft for tourism (Craik, 1997). The red lobster makes an occasional appearance, but because of its standardized form, it is no longer considered to be authentic. Instead, there will be lobsters of many colors, or cats or owls or sea glass wreaths. Through the introduction of tourism, islanders are able to work on a project that they enjoy throughout the slow winter months, and then make profit from them when the tourists arrive in the summer. As Craik describes, this typology suggests that combining culture and tourism is a complex and strategic activity, which involves reconciling local cultural
producers to niche marketing possibilities and modifying cultural production accordingly (Craik, 1997). Craik goes on to explain that Cohen (1992) describes tourist art as dynamic and adaptive; the local artist is able to adjust designs to better suit tourists’ tastes or expectations, standardizing products, or simplifying detailed art work, thus employing a form of encroaching commercialism. Depending on the artist, some pieces may be sculpted to what tourists seem to gravitate towards, thus allowing them to continue with their art while also guaranteeing a profit. However, this adjustment may remove some autonomy from the artist, and give the tourist a sense of primacy. Although the profit is a motivator for pursuing an art, it can also become a dictator, limiting the amount of creativity and experimentation an artist can have leading up to the peak tourist season. For example, while one artist creates wreaths constructed of wire and seaglass of many different colors, her most popular wreaths are made of blue seaglass. Although this may be beneficial in guaranteeing profit during the summer months, it limits her in some way as she often gets requests for blue seaglass. While the artist still maintains her artistic creativity, the tourist has the potential to harness it towards a specific goal.
For the tourists who find themselves on the island for a short period there is little attempt to adjust to the local culture, which often causes a barrier between the visitor and islander. For either side it is only important to live alongside one another until the next round of tourists roll in. Tourists can be defined by their relatively short stay in the place of visitation. Once the length of stay starts to increase to a more open-ended visit, such sojourners tend to be shifted by the locals to another category; that of newcomers, settlers, or in this case summer people (Baldaccino, 2005). When tourists first come to the island, they inevitably have some preconceived notion of what it will be like. Chris Rojek describes these expectations as “sight framing”, or an interpretation of the factual and fictional elements of a place to support the orientation of the tourist (Rojek, 1997). Depending on the original motivation for visiting, a person may picture Monhegan as an artist’s oasis, a bird-watcher’s haven, or a recluse’s retreat. The tourist’s processes of indexing, according to Rojek, will have a great impact on how they interact with the island. For example, what one expects to encounter after the journey on the ferry will be vastly different if they have been reading the Island Journal, a local publication based on Maine islands, as opposed to someone whose sole source of information about islands has been from listening to Jimmy Buffett. The former, relying on local cultural items such as the Island Journal, is bound to be more informed than those relying on the incidental knowledge gained from pop culture such as Jimmy Buffett’s ‘Margaritaville’ that strictly encompasses islands as places of relaxation and rejuvenation. The latter, although not representative of the pine and spruce groves of Monhegan, does entice the cultural imaginaries and touristic mythologies that are so often associated with Maine’s “vacationland” imagery. Despite the juxtaposition of reality and imaginary, both expectancies are still considered files of representation (Rojek, 1997). Metaphorical, allegorical, and false information remains a resource in the pattern of tourist culture as an object of reverie, dreaming and speculation. In the social construction of sights this information is no less important than factual material in the processes of indexing, as the people that translate the space have these preconceived notions of what the spaces will represent and how they will be navigated (Rojek,
1997). Whatever the motivation, when people step off the *Laura B.* onto the wooden dock they already have a notion of how their time will be spent, and that attitude directly impacts the rest of the community on the island. For example, if someone on the island doesn’t have a respect for the land, they may be more likely to leave trash on the trails or walk through lupine fields as a shortcut, thus damaging the priceless local beauty that is held so highly by islanders and summer people alike. Although the minimal use of navigational cues such as signs and fences may explain their ignorance, any researched knowledge of the history and values of Monhegan would divulge the importance and connection to the natural beauty by islanders and visitors alike. In a discussion about the tourists, one local explained, “It would be nice if they were educated about (the meaning and values of) the island”. For the locals, someone who had been reading the *Island Journal* on the ride over would be ideal, but they would have to be willing to learn more. On Monhegan, there is a reverence of nature and reflection that shapes a lot of the local customs. For example, beyond the rumble of the occasional truck there is very little noise on the island. Some islanders have even forgone the lawn mower or weed whacker for a quieter scythe. These alterations in the soundscape of the island reflect the reverence of the place, giving priority to the sounds of the natural space over the sounds of the manufactured. Consistent with anthropological acoustic ecology, in which the relationship of people and their environment is mediated by sound, the tendency towards whispered tones allows for a deeper understanding of the surrounding environment (Samuels et al., 2010). Further, there is a strong emphasis on localness that is rooted in the natural environment. From the artists of Monhegan to the self-sustaining islanders, there is a pride for the island, and for those who call it home. As Lucy Lippard explains, “The intersections of nature, culture, history, and ideology form the ground on which we stand--our land, our place, the local. The lure of the local is the pull of place that operates on each of us, exposing our politics and our spiritual legacies” (Lippard, 1998). Not only are islanders tied to their own history and culture, but also their history and cultures are tied to the natural environment, making the islander inseparable from their surroundings. In order to incorporate
these ideals, the tourist has to be willing to learn about the culture. For example, instead of using the space as their own playground by shouting across trails and peaks, the tourist would have reverence for the soft soundscape. According to Craik, cultural tourism consists of customized excursions into other cultures and places to learn about their people, lifestyle, heritage and arts in an informed way that genuinely represents those cultures and their historical contexts (Craik, 1997). If visitors to the island are to follow this type of cultural tourism, they will be more likely to heed the social cues presented to them. For example, as a way of guiding the tourist, the Monhegan Associates have posted signs on the trails encouraging certain behaviors and discouraging others. For islanders, much of their identity with the island comes from the experiences and social standing of who they are in relation to, and how they interact with, the natural environment. Therefore, when people disrespect the environment it is seen as an assault to the community. People who are only on the island for a few days may not have the same connection to the island, and therefore not hold the same values as the islanders do. However, if they acknowledge the posted signs they may be more likely to understand the importance of their actions on the trails.

*Reminders on the trail leading into Cathedral Woods*
In a study done by Teye, Sirakaya, and Sönmez, they found that islanders are more welcoming to the tourism industry when the characteristics of tourists are beneficial and “respectful” (Teye et. al., 2002). These findings support those of cultural tourism, suggesting that if tourists are aware and respectful of the culture they are in, they will be more informed and thus seen as less of an intrusion by the locals. Further, Teye and her colleagues have analyzed the influence of the variable ‘social interaction with tourists’ on resident’s attitude towards tourism; the more positive the perception that residents have about the respectful behavior of tourists, the greater is their overall perception that the positive impacts of tourism outweigh the negative impacts, and the more favorable is their attitude towards further tourism development. However, this relies on the interactions with tourists, which is necessary for only a portion of the islanders. As most tourist destinations, there are mixed feelings amongst the community as to the benefits and potential problems of the tourism industry.

According to Andereck and Nyaupane, those who obtain a substantial personal benefit from tourism are those who most strongly support the present level and further development of tourism (Andereck and Nyaupane, 2011). It is logical that those residents who benefit from tourism activity perceive the behavior of tourists more favorably, for various reasons, such as having a greater tolerance of them and familiarity with them, as they’re more likely to interact with them on a daily basis. While the shop owners and local artisans may benefit financially from the tourist and get to know them on a more personal level, those with no interaction or benefits may not feel as welcoming towards them. For most of the lobstermen still on the island, there is no necessary contact with the tourists, and therefore very little attention is given to them.

Lindberg and Johnson argue that tourism can be considered a disruptive threat to local cultures when tourism development leads to decrease in traditional industries in particular regions (Lindberg and Johnson, 1997). On Monhegan, it seems the growth of the tourism industry is quickly overtaking the lobstering industry, which could lead to a change in employment patterns, and thus a shift in the overall culture from the traditional lobstering village to a more touristic
arena. From the beginning of its settlement, Monhegan’s existence revolved around fishing and lobstering, and although it continues to be a major source of its economy, there aren’t as many lobstermen continuing the trade as there once was. For the lobstermen, their occupational identity (Carrol and Lee, 1990), in which their sense of identity is closely tied to their occupation, creates a barrier between themselves and the tourists. To some, they feel as though they’re becoming part of the tourist attraction. For one of the veteran sternmen, just walking from the dock in his gear attracts the camera flash of the tourist. In this way, the lobstermen’s occupation becomes trivialized by the tourist, distilled down to a photo of the ‘Maine lobstermen’ for the tourist’s gaze, leaving the lobstermen themselves with no voice on the subject.

Lobstermen gathering gear from the fish house

Although there may be benefits here in economic exchange by providing the island businesses with more clientele, there will also inevitably be some degree of social exchange, whether welcomed or not. Further, those who come to the island will most likely bring with them similar backgrounds and expectations as consumption of tourism becomes a class-related
phenomenon. Rojek describes this form of tourism as a concentrated instance of the phantasmagoria of capitalism, as an escape packaged in an intensely commoditized form (Rojek, 1997). People pay to ‘get away from it all’, in some cases buying property to have a reliable place to retreat to. However, this causes issues for the local community, as the purchasing of secondary homes takes away from the houses available as primary residences.

With the prevalence of the internet, we’ve been introduced to a superficial visual culture based on superficial and diverse information (Rojek, 1997). The constant bombardment of information may have lead to the increase of tourism to the places of “isolation”. As globalization increases, the concept of isolation becomes progressively more extraordinary, drawing the tourist in. According to George Ritzer and Allan Liska, this response to visit the island would be in line with the postmodern tourist, who is drawn by a number of different choices, particularly ecotourism (Ritzer and Liska, 1997). Most recently there has been a crucial role of adventure in modern leisure: adventure is identified with escape and illuminates the ‘motif of the attempt to escape from the mundane everyday world’ (Jokinen and Veijola, 1997). Monhegan fits well into these touristic pursuits, allowing for an escape from the mainstream while offering controlled adventure through trails and consumerism through the shops and studios. Although the island did not originate, nor purposefully become, a tourist destination, people are attracted to it for its apparent simplicity and adventure. Despite the tourist’s time on the island being limited, tourism as an industry has changed the culture of Monhegan from its beginning. Now, lobstermen and artists are not the only ones able to remain on the island; with the introduction of tourism, a new economic field was expanded and opened the doors for new businesses and organizations. There is a palpable shift in island culture as increasing numbers of tourists come to the island every summer. There is an adjustment in function, and that shift has the potential to affect the community beyond the departure of the tourists. The effects of increased tourism and the threat of invasion ride over and feed into the fear of the Other, developing a nervousness between the insiders who are from here and the outsiders who are from away. King and Connel describe the
development of tourism on small islands as characterized by a condition of dependency including loss of social control and identity among host communities, environmental destruction, and cultural alienation (King and Connell, 1999). However, Monhegan has strived to maintain their independence and control over the local economy. Ultimately, because most of the island is privately owned, the physical changes are up to the community, and those changes will feed into how the culture develops. As Schecyvens explains, “When faced with the prospect of tourism development, they’re challenged to determine levels of change that are acceptable to the greater community” (Schecyvens, 2008). For Monhegan, the physical changes are minimal. Although new businesses may come onto the island, very few new buildings are added, giving agency to the local community and maintaining their claim to the island. As the landscape and natural environment is central to the sense of islandness on Monhegan, anything that interrupts it would be directly affecting those who live there. By maintaining the landscape, as it currently exists, islanders are able to maintain their jurisdiction amongst the influx of tourists.

The average tourist never knows much beyond their summer visits. Craik explains in her writing, “although the tourists think that they want authenticity, most want a degree of negotiated experiences which provide a tourist ‘bubble’ out of which they can selectively step to ‘sample’ predictable forms of experiences” (Craik, 1997). The temporary tourist is happy to know Monhegan as a summer oasis, free from the stresses of daily life. Cultural geologist Phillip Crang describes the local as becoming part of the touristic product to the conceit of the tourists who make local people the object of the tourist gaze (Crang, 1997). One of the islanders related to this, explaining, “they never get past the intro questions”, which usually consist of how they live out on the island during the winter and “how nice it must be”. Tourists continue to revel in “the Other” offered by tourism, seeking transcendence from the everyday or escape from the familiar; tourism on the island offers a trance-like suspension from the everyday (Craik, 1997). At the same time the advantages, comforts, and benefits of home are reinforced through exposure to difference and they are happy to leave the island when the time comes, which opens the island to
their secondary culture; one without the Tourist. There is an air of freedom that comes with the departure of the last group of summer people and day-trippers. For example, people aren’t as worried about walking over neighbor’s yards as they are during the summer as more and more summer visitors seem to be more possessive of their space. In the past, Monhegan had a more tolerant societal understanding, enacting more freedom to roam behaviors than may be usual on the mainland (Nilsson, 2013). This cultural phenomenon of place encouraged the investigation of unfamiliar spaces. To the islanders of the past, it was a person's right to be able to explore their own island. For example, as one summer person recalled, “There would be bird watchers walking around the yard first thing in the morning…I would have to be sure the curtains were pulled before I got up.” The large windows that dominate many of the houses on the island don’t lend themselves to privacy from the passer-by, so discouraging people from walking on private property has become the solution. However, during the winter when there aren’t people in the homes to shoo away the wandering hiker, the islanders claim their right to roam.

As with any tourist destination, it is often difficult to accommodate both the tourist and the local community, but Monhegan has balanced it well by maintaining their own values and encouraging visitors to do the same. In a compilation of navigational cues from the islanders and encouraged background knowledge from the tourist, a symbiotic relationship can be nurtured between the outsider and the local. Although there are bound to be cultural adjustments around the soundscape, landscape, and ethnoscape with the introduction of the tourist, the core values remain intact in the island community. In the following chapter I explore how the community on Monhegan has maintained these values, and how the incorporated organizations sustain and empower the sense of locality and ownership of the people. While the development of the tourist industry is economically beneficial to the island, it is vital to keep in mind the autonomy of the year-round community in order to maintain their linked identity with the island.
Chapter 3, *Life on a Shared Rock: Community and Organizations*

*Hauling lumber off the Laura B.*

Islands are unique because their geography facilitates a particular sense of place; an attraction and involvement with the sea and an obvious sense of alterity with the world beyond the horizon. Place, in the anthropological sense, fosters a sense of communion between individuals who share in it (Baldaccino, 1999). However, with increasing globalization, it is possible that this local sense of place is endangered. In order to maintain their place, the communities have developed their own resources in order to be as self-sufficient as possible. Malinowsk (1960) suggests that institutions, including the school, library, ferry service, town government, fishing industry, emergency response teams, and local shops, all contribute to the vitality and viability of the community. Comparing these institutions to the human body, he suggests that the individuals and the institutions, acting as the metaphorical cells and organs, make up the social organism, necessary for the overall success of the social system (Malinowski, 1960). These institutions and organizations are vital and meant to maintain the larger community through future generations, for they seldom operate solely for the advantage of their members. What is gained is a celebration of identity and fellowship. Institutions, when maintained through
generations, become equated with the community and thus a part of the island tradition. The island’s organizations and institutions are a blend of romanticism, of security, sharing of wit, art, and commiseration; all necessary things in island life when companionship is not guaranteed and long winters keep people indoors and further isolated (Putz, 1984). Through the encouragement and growth of these institutions, the islands are poised to develop increased dictation and responsibility for their own future outside of the larger social and political structures. In the following pages I utilize Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown’s functionalist analysis to examine the social significance of these institutions and the function they serve in maintaining the community in relative isolation.

Although the way of life, according to the islanders, may vary between Monhegan and Matinicus, there are some core elements that remain the same including the school, town office, library, lobstering industry, and emergency rescue plans. The most notable difference between the two islands is the presence of additional shops, restaurants, and stores on Monhegan, which arose as a direct response to increased tourism beginning in the early 20th century. Although there are differing economic approaches across islands, there are many more similarities than divergences. On the governmental level both Monhegan and Matinicus are categorized as plantations, which in the state of Maine is a type of minor civil division falling somewhere between an unorganized territory and a town. Although similar to a town, plantations cannot make local ordinances, which is a moot point because there is no sheriff to enforce them. Due to their isolation, the populations never grew to the point of becoming a full-fledged town with the full complement of town officials, so they remain a plantation. Despite not being able to create local ordinances, there are still roles that need to be filled to maintain a sense of order to the island jurisdiction. On Monhegan there are twenty-three positions made up of thirteen individuals who remain on the island most of the year. During my stay on Monhegan I was able to attend one of the weekly Plantation Assessor’s meeting, where four people arrived clad in heavy jackets and knit hats, bracing themselves against the cold. In the small office, situated on the side of the building that
holds one of the seasonal shops and post office, we sat around a space heater and discussed the upcoming plantation elections and budget. After about twenty minutes the meeting was adjourned and the three other islanders grabbed their flashlights to make the trek back to their homes.

According the First Assessor, this is typical for winter meetings; because there aren’t many people on the island, there aren’t many things to discuss and not enough input to decide on major topics. A larger Town Meeting, the one most islanders usually attend, is held when more of the community members are back on the island in late spring. Alta Ashley discusses these meetings in one of her letters,

“About seven-thirty that evening little swaying spots of light could be seen moving along the road to the Schoolhouse as the islanders gathered for Town meeting. Once inside, we doffed slickers, sou’westers and boots ad got down to the business of running the town. Fitz, who had arrived on the noon boat, swelled the numbers of voters to seventeen. Magee Barstrow, Les Young, and Joe Pease formed and interested gallery.

Sherm Stanley, Harry Odom, and Don Cundy were elected assessors; Barbara Stanley the clerk, treasurer, and collector of taxes; Prue Cundy the new school board member (they finally voted to continue the school if a teacher can be found within reason—and possessed of reason! Llewellyn is retiring this June.) There was much discussion about fire equipment and what to do with the money Emily Tompkins had left the town. It looks as though taxes will be about the same as last year. THE GARBAGE IS GOING TO BE TAKEN OUT OF THE HARBOR BY SHERM!”
(Ashley, 1985)

It is here, during the Town Meeting, that the major decisions get voted on, where the islanders achieve the autonomy that is provided by having local government. However, the decisions are usually made before the town meeting commences, which further suggests the functionality of the town meeting as an ‘instrumental need’, or a formal organization to ensure order through institutional devices. Usually, island consensus arises through chatter, on the ferry, at the post office waiting for the mail, on the lobstersmen’s radios. The real decision-making goes on at an informal level, arising through the natural conversation between islanders. Residents who decline to participate, who save their oratory for the official meetings, frequently find that the debate is already over (Bourgeault, 1990). Despite this rather casual decision-making, it is important to maintain the weekly assessors meetings and annual town meetings in order to maintain democracy, voice, and community on the island.
In the past the town meeting has been in early spring. However, when the beginning of the lobstering season was moved from January 1st to October 1st in 2007 to allow the lobstermen to take advantage of the prolific fall fishery and higher lobster prices, many of the lobstermen decided to take the last months of winter to leave the island to visit family or simply find warmer weather. With the absence of many of the lobstermen, the town meeting was no longer representative of everyone. Attempts were made to move the town meeting, but people quickly realized that later town meetings meant the involvement of summer people or, in some cases, property owners who spent mere weekends on the island. This involvement from the outsiders posed a problem to what Malinowski would refer to as institutional norms; suddenly, there were outsiders involved in parts of the community that were reserved for the locals. Despite assessor’s best efforts to find timing that works for all the personnel on the island, it is inevitable that some summer people will sit in. However, the year-round community can vote to silence them and they cannot raise their hand to vote for local positions, thus allowing the local community to maintain their autonomy. Anthropologist and islands scholar McCall puts it succinctly: “When islands control themselves, there is innovation and the elaboration of island high culture in monuments and, probably other works of art and literature” (McCall, 1994). By having control over the decisions that affect their year-round community, islanders maintain their microcosm of culture. Following Malinowski’s theory, McCall would agree that it is important for the plantation to maintain control of itself, even if there is some reliance on outside resources.

The Monhegan Island Boat Line, consisting of the *Laura B.* and *Elizabeth Ann*, has become essential to the maintenance of island life by providing mail delivery, transportation for islanders, and shipment of parcels including household appliances, lumber, and trucks. The *Laura B.* and *Elizabeth Ann* are the links to the mainland, connecting the island to the rest of Maine and the US. For islands, there is an additional obstacle of the ocean for what suburban families may consider an afternoon errand; picking up lumber from Home Depot or stocking up on milk and eggs needs to be planned many days in advance, and the weather has to cooperate for the ferry to
arrive on time. In many ways, the ferry supplies another part of Malinowski’s social apparatus, serving to connect the community with the greater society. Every couple of years, according to one of the islanders, the United States Parcel Service reconsiders the necessity of the local post offices, as there is such limited use of them. However, they often do not take into account the ocean that divides the community from the next closest post office. Monhegan and Matinicus have further constraints than a rural town in the Midwest, where a road could potentially link them to their neighboring town. On the islands, the neighboring towns can’t be reached by foot. The ferry serves to minimize that divide by providing a connection to the mainland. On Monhegan, the ferry runs three times a day during the ‘peak season’ when tourists are coming onto the island in droves for day trips or long weekends, but as soon as the cold sets in, around late October, the boat begins to run only three times a week. Matinicus, although supported by Penobscot Air flying service for grocery and mail services, has significantly fewer opportunities to transfer material on the ferry, as it only arrives monthly. Although limited, the arrival of the ferry still brings commotion, whether by new passengers or a new haul of mail and freight.

The ferry also serves a purpose beyond the basic needs of food and communication. When the ferry is running, anyone who is interested gathers at the dock to see who (or what) is coming and going. It becomes a type of ritual, where islanders are able to catch up with one another and learn about what new things are about to happen on the island. Unloading the boat is a group activity, from the numerous Amazon packages being brought out of the hull and put into the beds of the waiting pickup truck, to the loading of lumber from the bow onto the gravel-covered dock to be moved up the island later in the day. Whoever is able stays until everything is unloaded and the ferry has hauled up its moorings, ensuring that whoever needs help is given it. This camaraderie is essential in island communities, and is demonstrated throughout the institutions of the islands. Marcel Mauss, in an attempt to define such social norms that are interwoven within culture, defined a ‘total social fact’ as an activity that has implication throughout society, in the economic, legal, political, and religious spheres (Mauss, 2011). Using
Mauss’ argument, it could be said that this camaraderie is done by obligation in order to remain in social graces with the rest of the community. As Mauss explains using the practice of gift giving through the potlatch of the American Northwest, he suggests that any act, when done by many, could be considered a cultural requirement of the individual (Mauss, 2011). Whether by obligation or out of the goodness of the heart, multiple people have to be willing to work on resources in order for them to be available.

On Matinicus, although there is a state ferry that arrives monthly to deliver heavy cargo such as trucks and lumber, a small airline, Penobscot Island Air, makes multiple flights a day throughout the year to deliver groceries ordered from the local mainland grocery store, in addition to packages and letters from USPS. As it happens more often, the arrival of the plane doesn’t draw as much of a crowd as the ferry on Monhegan, but the camaraderie is still present. For
example, if people are passing by on the airport road, especially if they’re older, someone driving by will offer a lift, as they did for Bill Hoadley when he came to meet me at the airstrip upon my arrival.

Transportation between the islands and the mainland is vital, and as fewer people have lobster boats to use as personal transportation, the use of the ferry or airplane becomes more necessary. This reliance on the institutions of transportation is especially prevalent when visiting family or friends, or simply getting in shore for a doctor’s appointment. Even people who have been living on the island for years have difficulty planning around any particular event if it is on the mainland. Most often than not, islanders rent a secondary apartment not far from the mainland dock as a sanctuary from foul weather and adjusted plans.

Given the difficulty of transportation and the importance of education, it is understandably necessary to have schools on the islands, however small. Not only does the school present another vital institution necessary for social development, according to Malinowski, but the school also encourages population growth, as new families can move to the island with the assumption that their children will have easy access to an education. Using Malinowski’s layout of institutions, it is assumed that the teacher would be part of the ‘personnel’ of the system, but due to the small class sizes ranging from two or three children on Matinicus to seven or eight on Monhegan, the students are essential and would be considered part of the ‘personnel’ as well. Each student plays a vital role in the class dynamics, and because of their continuous involvement it is important for the island children to attend school as often as possible. As one parent put it, “Obviously, if they’re really sick, we’ve got to take them out, but taking a kid out of a class that size can be a huge interruption”. Living on an island is an exceptional experience as a kid, and they become much more ingrained in the society than may be typical in larger metropolitan communities. As the teacher of the Matinicus School points out, “They know everyone, and say hi to everyone who passes by the schoolyard. I guess age is just a number when your peers are that much older than you”. In isolation and small numbers, children have the unique experiences
of using their own homes, their islands, as learning tools. Often, the teachers will encourage exploration of the shore, or in the case of Matinicus, the nearby farm where they learn how to care for the cows, chickens, ducks, and turkeys. In addition, the other community resources, such as the library, are utilized as an extension of the schoolhouse.

During reading time on Monhegan students put on their jackets and mittens to walk from their one-room schoolhouse to the library across the road to peruse the book collections. Whereas Matinicus’ library depends on an exchange system, Monhegan’s library operates as a nonprofit organization, with staff to maintain library cards and collections. Despite their differences in operation, both libraries encourage education in the communities, and facilitate casual collisions for those stopping by. Although there are plenty of books available from cabins around the island, the libraries become a central institution that the community takes pride in; they are available to everybody, and provide common ground between the children, artists, and fishermen, as many of
the local institutions strive to do. As island populations are so small, integrating the community members becomes vital in maintaining a thriving community. In an attempt to utilize island resources, embrace the local history and tradition, and encourage exploration of the local environment, there are dozens of books in the schoolhouse and the library on sea creatures, fishermen and island kids. These books serve a very specific niche for the island children, encouraging an understanding of their own environment in a larger context of Maine and the mainland.

In the past, many of the children that attended the school were from families of lobstermen. Although students now come from a range of different backgrounds, fishing and lobstering continue to play a very important role in the islander’s lives. In many regards, fishing is the cornerstone of island life, providing an initial supply of food and work for the first settlers of the island. As great cities emerged where land had great economic potential, islands became populated from the waters that held value. This vitality of fishing has positioned the industry as a key performer in the social relations of both Monhegan and Matinicus. Anthropologist F. Taylor points out, “the ideological role of fishing is based on the opportunity the pursuit offers for acting out and expressing the relations and values of an important social entity—the local community (Taylor, 1981). This becomes especially relevant during trap day on Monhegan, when the entire island population comes out to lend a hand in setting the first lobster traps of season. Here, not only are the families helping their own kin, but the families that have no direct involvement in the fishing industry are also lending a hand, moving traps where they need to be. On Matinicus, one of the islanders suggests the “lobstering is what keeps the old Matinicus afloat”. As fewer people pursue the trade, many of the old customs that were once common, such as the patriarchal ladder of command has faded, and the possession of territory that often turned to violence has nearly been abandoned. This is not to say it no longer exists in small circles, but it no longer involves the community at large.
Pulling up traps & banding lobsters

As urban areas have survived by finding alternative uses beyond the land, some islands must find a way to survive beyond their valuable waters (Summers, 1986). Economists have pointed out that although mono-product economies are not unusual, such as the lobstering industry on Matinicus, they can lead to a ‘crowding out’ effect and the infamous ‘dutch disease’ economics easily play a role (Blazic-Metzner, 1982). Similar to the cod industry of Newfoundland, local staples assume paramount importance in the insular micro-economy, elbowing out other investments or potential economic or entrepreneurial growth poles. In this way, Monhegan may have an advantage in incorporating multiple different organizations and businesses into their infrastructure including artists studios, the Island Farm, the Monhegan Brewery, and the scattered restaurants and shops that encourage the island economy.

Monhegan and Matinicus have different approaches to daily life. For example, on a visit to the mainland, one couple saw themselves as “suburban parents” compared to parents from Matinicus. While the parents from Monhegan wore what would be considered ordinary on the
mainland, the couple from Matinicus arrived in Muck boots and flannels, a stereotypical yet common choice of attire on Matinicus. By islanders and visitors alike, it is often assumed that Matinicus is more ‘rugged’, maintaining their abilities to cope through a winter by chopping wood, wearing flannel and Muck boots, and being prepared for a disaster at any moment. The discrepancy may be partly due to the availability of a number of luxuries not currently available on Matinicus, such as a grocery store, coffee shop, pizza shop, and toy store. The addition of these stores and eateries is a response to increased tourism on the island, and with the tourists comes a more modern lifestyle, focused more on capitalism. Although most of these businesses are closed during the winter months, they have changed the overall context of Monhegan and thus must be addressed in Malinowski’s assessment of industry and society.

In an interview with the First Assessor of Monhegan they told me, “I was once told I wouldn’t survive out here without a business, so I started one”. One of the local businesses on Monhegan, L. Brackett and Sons, has become the hub of the locals; every morning there would be at least a couple people at the counter having a cup of coffee from the designated mugs that sat on top of the fridge. Some of the lobstermen and carpenters talked about repairs on the trucks and weather for lobstering, while others wandered by to pick up their milk or frozen tater-tots for lunch. In talking about her shop, Lisa explained, “I like having it be a meeting place...everyone stays in touch that way”. This sentiment is similar, in a way, to the meetinghouses of many West Papuan groups where men of the village talk of daily politics and gossip (Austin, 1993). The store becomes a central meeting place for the community, as the library does, encouraging visitation and accidental encounters. Alta Ashley further illustrates the importance of the store after a fire in the village in 1963 destroyed the store at the time; “At least the Laura B. is still running even though the pulse of the island has nearly stopped with the loss of the Store. All food and supplies are having to be imported by individual orders and there is now no central gathering place for the islanders. It will be a bleak winter for all” (Ashley, 1963).
The store, as with the library, relies heavily on the trust of others, and the willingness of others to work with the local resources. Economist Henry Srebrnik explains, “The cornerstone of economic success is the creation of a society suffused with trust and social cooperation amongst its members”. Although many people may be able to pick up groceries while they are in shore, the produce and frozen foods are often purchased at Lisa’s as courtesy to her business. Although there is a price increase to compensate for the transportation costs, islanders are willing to pay a bit more in order to keep a store on the island. The store, by providing food for the islanders, plays into Malinowski’s often-literal theories of survival, but also into the social platform as well; by providing a place of meeting, L. Brackett and Sons is encouraging development of the local community.
On an island, it is vital to have communication and involvement from all members of the community, both in regards to organizations, such as the grocery store and library, and larger institutions, such as the plantation legislature and public school. This sense of commitment to the surrounding community extends further to emergency response. Small islands in many respects face special disadvantages, including insularity, remoteness and proneness to natural disasters such as snowstorms and strong winds. These factors often lead to the characterization of small islands as being fragile (Beller et al., 1990). However, islanders of Monhegan and Matinicus both have the willingness and determination to keep one another on the island. At the core of the islander’s steadfastness is the commitment to the larger community. In order for anyone to realistically maintain themselves on the island they must rely on other people; thus, in order to remain on the island, there must be a strong community to maintain the structure.

In order to maintain preparedness, informal institutions made up of mostly unofficial members have been put in place to update protocols and encourage continued education on the subjects of first-aid and fire safety. In a letter written in October of 1996, Alta Ashley recalled, “I came over on Friday to hold a civil defense meeting. About thirty people showed up, much to my surprise. After an early show of hostility there developed an interest in improving intra-island communications, and in the first aid set-up. A visitor jumped to his feet and made an impassioned speech about survival after the holocaust and everyone clapped. The whole thing was a bit incongruous. There we sat in the Schoolhouse in a circle of chairs left in position since Miss Anderson’s farewell party the night before with candles, flowers, and paper decorations still in place, talking about thermonuclear attacks, fall-out, and forest fires. Well, anyway, we have a plan for disaster control keyed to fire, accident, and storm, despite the gallery play made by the visitor.” (Ashley, 1984).

Heeding the example of Ashley and those who followed her, steps have been taken to ensure safety on the island. Now, despite the controversial cost, there are community resources, such as fire trucks and fireboxes distributed throughout the island as well as strict smoking policies on the trails. In one of her letters from April of 1965, Ashley recalled the initiation of one of the then-new fire trucks that remains on the island today; “‘They tried out the new fire machine yesterday with success. It was the first time I had seen the controversial creature. Very Impressive’” (Ashley,
In addition to fire preparedness, there is always an alertness and willingness to assist during natural disaster, including storms and high winds.

As people are constantly aware of the weather, it is not a surprise when a storm arrives, but the outcomes of some storms can be unpredictable. However, the town has persevered with the help of one another. It is this enforcement of community as an institution that maintains the island’s cohesiveness; the interdependence in isolation is essential. In one account from Alta Ashley’s letters, a rather timid storm in September of 1975 had the most unlikely consequence, and it was the perseverance of the community institution that prevailed.

‘He’s been found! He’s safe!” This rang out through the still morning air the call which the close to two hundred searchers had longed to hear through the thirteen hours since little two-and-a-half year old David, son of Wendy, had wandered away from his mother at dusk on Friday night. Clad in yellow slicker and sou’wester (rain hat), David had followed his mother from the Monhegan Store through heavy drizzle and gathering darkness to their home on the Black Head Road. As they neared the steps to their home a heavy rain began to fall and the bag of groceries which Wendy was carrying began to fall apart. Because David needed help in climbing the steps he was told to wait until Wendy could dash to the kitchen with her collapsing load. On her return to the road a moment later David was nowhere to be seen nor did he answer her call. Her neighbor Rusty Court happened by. In moments he’d assembled a group of people to search for the little boy.

As time went on more people joined the search, which went on through the night. Flashlights bobbed through the darkness as people bushwhacked through heavy growth of spruce, alders and serviceberry bushes which cover much of the island; they peered into wells, cellars and sheds, lifted cesspool covers and tramped along trails and through briar patches. The nearby Ice Pond was diligently searched from a skiff which criss-crossed from shore to shore and then the water level was lowered by opening the dam and by pumping water through the fire engine for several hours. The heavy rain, however, filled the pond almost as fast as it could be emptied and pumping was abandoned, everyone feeling that David’s yellow slicker would have come to light in the shallow water. The Island Spa (now the Lupin Gallery) was opened for people to renew their flashlight batteries, get hot coffee, or just rest for a few minutes before renewing their search in the continuing downpour.

Walkie-talkies furnished by the Coast Guard Fog Signal Station on Manana Island were brought into the search by 11p.m. and a helicopter was promised to as soon as there was enough light. Shortly before dawn it arrived and began circling the island, concentrating on the Black Head area at the northern end of the island. After making several passes over the area it was decided that heavy growth prevented seeing the boy and arrangements were made to bring in State Police search dogs. To aid the dogs a bundle of David’s clothing was assembled and searchers were called from the trails by two blasts from the fire whistle. The Sheriff’s department in Wiscasset was preparing to come out and join the search.

Dr. John Andrew’s, vacationing on the island from Boothbay Harbor, was about half a mile down the Black Head trail and didn’t hear the fire whistle, so he kept on searching. About 7:30, right after the helicopter made its last pass overhead and the noise of its propeller subsided, he thought he heard a gull mewing, and then realized it was a child crying. Following the sound along a deer run for about fifty years off the trail, he came across David lying half covered by a log which had pinned down his legs so the child
Alta’s narration of that night’s events demonstrates the importance of the ultimate cultural institution of community; every person on the island was willing and ready to take a part in the search for David and that willingness reinforced the trust between community members.

Malinowski explains that in order for a society to function there must be multiple working parts made up of individuals working towards a common social goal. Sociologist Emile Durkheim expands on the necessity of involvement from the individual using what he refers to as ‘mechanical solidarity’. According to Durkheim, the types of social solidarity correlates with the types of society they are being implemented in. In a society exhibiting mechanical solidarity, its cohesion and integration comes from the homogeneity of the individuals; people feel connected through similar work, educational and religious training, and lifestyle (Durkeim, 1997). He further associates this form of solidarity with smaller societies with kinship ties of familial networks, common on both Monhegan and Matinicus. Through the individuals’ similar identification, possibly through islandness, there is a greater conscience collective or shared value. Radcliffe-Brown comparatively explains functionalism as being purely societal, lacking the need for the individual (Radcliffe-Brown, 1940). Monhegan and Matinicus illustrate the possibilities of both the geographic and social, while still relying on the agency of the individual. Although it is necessary, as Malinowski suggests, to fulfill physiological needs, it is also necessary in a community as small and isolated as Monhegan and Matinicus, to maintain a system of tight interrelationships, as Radcliffe-Brown suggests. Thus, the institutions and organizations that surround the island communities help the society function as whole, encouraging development and sustaining the social. Central to many of these institutions, however, is the physical environment. As Monhegan and Matinicus are so closely tied to their boarders, the local
institutions can be shaped by the changes in them. While the social institutions serve different needs within the community, the natural environment affects them all. In the following chapter I address this influence of the natural place and the built environment on the overall culture of the island.
Islanders live a life closer to nature than most mainlanders. The rhythm of tides, wind, and storms determine the practices of everyday life. Survival depends on a deep respect for the forces of nature and an instinctive understanding of one’s relative powerlessness to exercise control over them (Conkling, 2007). Islands are unique places that demand an interaction with a geography that creates the isolation of the community. I use the word place, here, as an anthropological comparison of the interaction between the culture of the island and the geography itself. In this framework, space is something abstract, without any substantial meaning, while place refers to how people are aware of and interact with a specific space. In the context of Monhegan, place is claimed by the local as lived in and inhabited, while space is simply a transit
for the temporary tourist. While the tourist can revel in the space of the ocean bluffs, it can only be claimed as place by those whose lives they impact. For example, the spruce groves on Monhegan remain a space until considered within the larger cultural context in which both islanders and summer people know the wooded space as Cathedral Woods; a place of connection and wonderment, where constructed fairy houses, miniature structures of lichen, pinecones and twigs built mostly by children, most often reside to the joy of some and the bemusement of others. Islands as place, then, are paradigmatic places, topographies of meaning in which the qualities that construct place are dramatically distilled. Novelist Carol Shields further describes the sense of place to which islandness lends itself;

“Children born on [small] islands differ from Elsewhere children in that they are knowing of each rock and fencepost of their home place, of every field-corner and doorway, every spit of sand and beach pebble… [T]hey are able to look out across the wide water and observe the wonder and diversity of our earth-home. May it ever be so…” (Hay, 2006).

For those living and growing up on the island, the central sense of place is shaped by the geography and the natural environment associated with it. For islanders it is vital to recognize the power of the natural world in order to live so intimately alongside it, while also gaining an appreciation for its beauty.

The ocean plays a large role in the sense of place on the islands; the environment responds to its ever-present power, both shaped by the individual and shaping the individual islanders. Using anthropological design theory and place theory, I analyze the place of the island and address how the environment encourages core traits of the island communities. Here, I use Julian Steward’s theory of cultural ecology to address the influences of environment on cultural production. However, I do not mean to infer any aspect of environmental determinism. Although the natural geography of Monhegan has had an influence on the local social structures, built environment, and culture, it did not shape the individual nor did it set the community on a predetermined trajectory of development.
The Red House

As the connection to the natural environment is a primary component to much of island life, it is understandable that the typical island cottage includes unpainted cedar shingles, produced from the northern cedar that is common in Maine, trimmed with white or gray paint. Anything else stands out, such as the yellow house above the meadow, or the red house by the beach. The browns and grays have become part of the landscape, becoming synonymous with the rocks and waves, while the primary colors create landmarks beyond the typical earth tones that create the canvas of the landscape. Similar to the homes in Tilting, an isolated Newfoundland outport on the northeastern coast of Fogo Island, most of the homes on these Maine islands are built in response to the environment. Using cross-cultural comparison, I consider the similarities of the environments that have lead to the construction of similar structures. For example, although Tilting is lacking many of the trees that are present on Monhegan, the strong wind is still a factor for the islanders, thus encouraging houses to be built on the western edge of the island where the winds and waves are obstructed by the smaller surrounding islands. In a description of the Tilting’s structure’s Robert Mellin (2003) explains that as the road became the central mode of
transportation, houses began to have their facades face in that direction instead of towards the sea. A similar pattern is followed on Monhegan. Although most homes have windows that frame the surrounding ocean, the entrances of the most recently built homes face the gravel road that runs through the middle of the island. Ruth Grant Faller, a summer person of Monhegan who collected records of built structures on the island, noted that as the house ownership shifted away from the fishermen, the houses started to be built more inland, away from the havoc of the shore but still connected by the road. Further similarities lie in the facades of the homes of Monhegan and Tilting through their ability to be seen as part of the natural landscape, subdued and effortlessly incorporated into the space they occupy. It is rare, now, for a new home to be built on Monhegan. Most often, renovations and additions are made from old ones, incorporating what is already in place on the land. This is similar to Tilting, in what Mellin describes as “malleable and expansive, opening up instead of closing down” (2003). As the environment and population has changed, so to have to structures, but rarely to the point of being removed from the landscape. Before they fade into the backdrop of stone and wood, however, the buildings hold meaning and memory for the islanders. Ruth Grant Faller recounts her own connection to the homes, explaining, “I had wondered about all the living that had gone on here, the houses and the people who had lived in them. Who were they; when did they come to settle and populate Monhegan, so many years ago?” (Faller, 1995). There seems to be an innate instinct to understand the impact of those before us, and through the knowledge gained from the investigations of the buildings we are better able to address the impacts of past islanders and their environment on the built environment of today. Steward, I believe, would suggest that by knowing the reactionary responses of construction to the natural environment, we would be able to create a narrative of the island culture that came before us. The houses, as built places, have come to represent the people and cultures and environments of the past.

For many, the island functions in response to immediate needs, operating in their own microcosms of ocean, woods, and village. The weather presents many of the immediate needs,
shaping or challenging the structures and environment in place on the island. During the summer, the weather is relatively harmless; bringing rain that may put a damper on a hike, but not lasting very long. However, when the tourists leave and the weather begins to change, islanders begin to interact with their own structures more as a means of avoiding the inclement weather. Thus, the natural environment begins to shape even the interests and interactions with the larger social environment. As Eva Murray points out, “Food and weather are the two biggest hobbies”; when kept inside, the kitchen becomes a primary center of action. Not only is the central source of heat usually close by, but all cooking, a popular hobby, also occurs here, as well as it serving as the primary location for the radio, the most reliable source of communication from the water.

According to Eva, on Matinicus it used to be that at 6pm everyone has to be very quiet to hear the weather on the radio in the kitchen; now, everything is on the computer, but the kitchen still functions as the primary social location in the home. I expect Steward would suggest this attraction of the kitchen to be due to the natural environment; had the weather been consistently warm and sunny, the focal point of the home may be the deck, as it often is during the summer months. However, as the weather is often unpredictable and inhospitable during the winter, the warmth and familiarity of the kitchen becomes a central gathering place. This pattern of locality and interaction seemingly incorporates many of the factors of the Danish concept of hygge, where warmth and familiarity is the focal point (Linnet, 2011). Here, the authenticity of the connection is more important than the commoditization of the place, encouraging relationships beyond the surface level. This is particularly important during the winter, when the weather is battling the structures and the population becomes smaller and more insulated. Despite being made up of independent individuals, island communities, as other rural communities, develop some level of interdependence amongst themselves, seeking friendship and kinship within their small communities. Hygge in the cottages and homes of the islanders allows for social connections to be made while avoiding the artificial aspects of group gatherings that often are associated with a more urban setting.
In addition to the cottages, many of the public buildings on Monhegan such as the firehouse, school, church, local shops, and hotels embrace vernacular architecture and reflect the natural environment. There has been talk about fixing up one of the public sheds on Monhegan as the truck that is housed there barely fits and no one can get in to work on it when it’s cold because their hands freeze in the cold. However, some islanders worry that making the building wider or taller would disrupt the view of the houses around it, thus blocking the interaction between the individual and the geography or nature. In this case, the community is giving agency to the landscape; they are not responding to its change, as Steward would expect, but protecting it from obstruction. Similarly, there is a debate on Monhegan about the possible introduction of wind turbines as a solution to the community’s heavy reliance on fossil fuels. Although it may offer more economic and ecological independence, the possibility that the wind turbines would draw the eye away from the bluffs towards the giant machines is enough of a disruption to the landscape for some people to denigrate the proposal. However, the awareness of the natural
environment still plays into the daily lives of the community, being incorporated into the built landscape to confront the community in order to address the importance of nature on the social environment.

As the island environment changes, it is important to keep in mind the historical ecology of the space and the place. Changes to the environment that correlate with anthropogenic landscapes have long-term impacts that may or may not be recognized or expected; introducing new plants may lead to invasive species (D'Appollonio, 2006), or terracing may modify water flow and retention (Unger et al. 1991). Using Iceland as a case study we can further understand the human influence on the environment. As a solution to erosion on the island, Nootka lupine was introduced in the first half of the 20th century in hopes that it’s deep roots and tolerance for cold would combat erosion, speed up land reclamation, and help with reforestation (Aradottir, 2002). However, while it serves as dense plant cover that fights erosion, it has grown at incredible rates, preventing native flora from flourishing (Aradottir, 2002). Now, the lupine has become a common feature of Iceland due to the human intervention that brought them there. Although landscape modification and long-term ecological impacts are most often associated with densely populated urban areas (Chase & Chase, 2016), islands such as Iceland, Monhegan, and Matinicus are by no means unscathed from the human influence. As Chase points out, even presumed “pristine” landscapes such as ancient Amazonia were altered by humans, leaving some trace of the previous civilization in its landscape. Monhegan, according to Ruth Grant Faller, was first opened to development in 1842 with the decision to divide and sell the Horn properties on the island; “people were willing to let us onto their Island and into the homes and hearts”. Following this decision, the land had been built upon and manipulated to accommodate the changing population. After the settlement of Monhegan there were very few structures, most of them centrally located by the harbor. However, as more people purchased property they expanded their build environments, and in order to keep the community relatively connected a road was constructed.
Roads facilitate transportation within and to areas of interest. On Monhegan, the road permits relatively easy travel across the island, while providing an outsider with a navigational anchor; as long as they stay on the main road, it is difficult to get lost. To visitors, the road becomes easier to navigate than the paths that are so familiar to the islanders. The road provides a break from the natural environment, serving as a catalyst for the construction of buildings and houses along its communication route. However, because the road it primarily used as a walking path, there is often overlap of community members and buildings that scatter the road. According to Anthropologists Arlen and Diane Chase, in areas where walking is the primary mode of transportation, communities are more heterogeneous, engaging all parts of the community at once, instead of separating them into class or occupation (Chase & Chase, 2016). This integration is partly due to what Steward would refer to as the cultural ecology of the place; because the island is so small, it is feasible to walk from one end to the other, thus allowing for organic communication between neighbors and thus a more heterogeneous community. Once a visitor
passes by the structures on the main road, however, they begin to be surrounded by the relatively untouched beauty of the woods, cliffs, and ocean that have drawn so many people over the Atlantic and have enticed a handful to stay.

“When I walk on the trails, beaches and rocks of Monhegan my heart and mind respond to the antiquity of the Island, trying to visualize what it must have been like over two hundred years ago when Henry Trefethren of Kittery bought Monhegan” (Faller, 1995). Ruth Faller thus conveys the feeling, the connection, that so many feel as they walk through the brush out onto the open plateau to the crashing waves of the Atlantic below them. Here, there is an overwhelming sense of serenity and understanding, worthy of conservation. Colin Ellard, in an investigation of psychogeography, or the influences of geography on the psyche through everyday life, proposes that this compelling feeling may be in response to “faint echoes of some deep primal connection with the type of environment that shaped our species” (Ellard, 2015). He suggests that it is our disconnectedness from nature that makes moments such as these remarkable and unusual. Here, perhaps, is the draw for the visitor to find solace and reverence. However, research suggests that these connections may go deeper than the sense of awe achieved when presented with the crashing waves and rocky shores. According to a team of environmentalists from Stanford University, the impacts of natural experience may extend to both psychological and physiological benefits to humans (Bratman et al., 2012). Now, in addition to the cultural and structural development that is shaped by nature, individuals themselves are being influenced. In Ellard’s investigation of the natural world, he references a study done by Francine Kuo and William Sullivan (2001) that suggests that people who live in a more ‘natural’ environment, with more vegetation, tend to have greater communication with neighbors, and enjoy levels of social cohesion that not only help to protect them from certain kinds of mental pathologies, but also decrease the levels of petty crime. Although it is important to keep in mind that these results may be biased by their lack of recognition of the class divisions of these “greener” areas, the impact of a consistent relationship with the natural environment is interesting to consider because of the
potential to benefit not only the individual but the entire population. We can once again utilize cross-cultural comparisons to investigate these effects, by considering whom Colin Ellard refers to as the San people living in a traditional way. Unlike many urban settings and habits, the San people, according to Elizabeth Thomas, relied solely on their environment to provide food and water, living “peacefully and intimately with an environment that offered them everything they needed” (Ellard, 2010). Here, the connection with the natural environment was of primary importance, and if we are to accept the results of Kuo and Sullivan, we can assume they have greater happiness and contentment. Although the islanders of Monhegan do not rely solely on the ocean or land to provide food, they do have the opportunity to be connected to the natural environment as the traditional San people experienced in Elizabeth Thomas’s description (Ellard, 2010). Similarly, islanders on Monhegan and Matinicus and the traditionally living San people have adapted and worked alongside their environments in order to maintain its authenticity while utilizing its resources, whether physical or psychological.
The natural landscape of Monhegan has always been an asset to the island, and has been made famous by many of the artists that call the island home. Given the importance of the environment, then, it is understandable that the island community has wanted to do its best at conserving it. Monhegan is unique in that 490 acres, by far the greatest share of the island, are preserved in their most natural state possible. A private organization, the Monhegan Associates, Inc., was established in 1954 in order to “preserve for posterity the natural wild beauty, biotic communities, and desirable natural, artificial, and historic features of the so called ‘wild-lands’ of Monhegan Island, Maine, and its environs, as well as the simple friendly way of life that has existed on Monhegan as a whole”. Based on their description, there is an association with the “wild-lands” and “simple friendly way of life”, and this is made evident through daily life on the island. Even in January, when the wind was blowing and snow covered the outermost paths, some islanders were drawn to the trails to chat and take in the beauty of a fresh snowfall. On one particular walk, one of the islanders reminisced about their life on the trails, “(My husband) and I walked this trail on one of our first dates…it’s the most popular activity around…we’ve spent a lot of time out here”. Clearly, the preserved land of Monhegan holds a special place in the islander’s heart, but the relationship between the islanders and their natural environment is not as simple as a hike in the woods. As a summer visitor I am often in awe of the tranquility of Cathedral Woods, or the unforgiving beauty of Lobster Cove, but while I’m walking the trails I often get caught up in the meaning of the place and forget about the manual labor that goes into keeping the trails. While the islanders revere in the nature of the island, they also recognize the necessity to maintain it. However, this then brings into question the limits of manipulation. How do we define “wild” (Thorndike, 2005)? In the romanticization of the Monhegan trails it is tempting to imagine oneself ‘out in the wilderness’, when in reality the majority of obstructions have been removed for the hiker’s convenience. This type of ‘false connection’ is an important aspect of the cultural construction of the island. While some residents, particularly the ‘summer people’, as described by Thorndike, believe the island wildlife should be preserved as thoroughly
as possible, others who live full-time on the island believe the island ecosystem is running its natural course. This juxtaposition creates a dichotomy between the two groups, where those living temporarily on the island strain against the changes that occur naturally between their visits and those who see the changes occurring gradually. To the visitors and the summer people, the island they remember disappears with the shifting vegetation. Consequently, there are often debates in the public forum about the preservation, or lack thereof, of the forest and shrubbery. For example, in 2003 Dr. William Livingston of the University of Maine made a study of the forest and found that Japanese barberry, an invasive species, was preventing new growth of the quintessential spruce of the forest, thus changing the landscape (Thorndike, 2005). While some believed there should be an active campaign to remove the barberry, others thought it best to let nature take its course. One islander explains, “Some of the winter people have the sense that nature heals itself. If you stand back far enough, you’ll see the planet has tremendous self-healing possibilities…Are we trying to keep this the same as it was? And isn’t that futile?” (Thorndike, 2005). While those who live on the island year-round are more willing to respond to the changes in the environment, as I imagine Steward would expect, those who leave want the island to remain the same and are thus willing to alter it directly. Social scientist and geographer Doreen Massey (1994) addresses this demand for a static landscape and impossibility of the notion by explaining the life of place and landscape. She argues that places are made up of multiple identities; that places cannot be frozen in time but are processes; and that places are not enclosures with clear delineations of inside and outside (Massey, 1994). By allowing natural alterations to the environment to occur, islanders are recognizing their environment as place to be interacted with, whereas the tourist, and in some cases the summer person, want the environment to remain stagnant and unchanging, ideally molding it into the mechanical space they are expecting.

Culture, especially island culture, is often thought of a consequence of place, an aspect of geography (Ronstrom, 2012). However, we must be careful not to tread too far into the
assumptions of island culture based on the geography alone. Unfortunately, as Ronstrom points out, the association of ‘folk’ and ‘culture’ with the bounded and remote, archaic and endemic, have made islands and islanders, islandness and insularity, ordinary to the point of assumed knowledge. As people are more able to visit isolated communities, they lay claim to the natural environment, wanting to maintain a grasp on the reprieve that comes with a hike through Cathedral Woods. However, this can lead to some inaccurate metaphors of islands and islandness. Islanders themselves are drawn to the romantic notion of the connectivity of the place and nature, but they maintain the reality of the situation as well. For example, Ruth Grant Faller of Monhegan considered the utilization and communication with the landscape of islanders past, inquiring into the lives of islanders past;

“Don’t you suppose those first three families experiences these same joys as they pursued their fishing and farming activities? There were sheep to shear in the spring and wood to cut in the fall, from the woodlots scattered about the island. What it must have been like to either row over to Manana or walk out to Black Head on a sunny day in June to pick the abundance of wild strawberries” (Faller, 1995).

Despite her emblematic description of the possibilities of past lives on the island, Faller, as an islander, was also aware of the trials and tribulations that came with island life. There has always been a connection to the natural, and even in the present day there is tendency to romanticize the necessary affiliation with the natural world. However, there must also be an understanding that the physical is still present; that the literal must be addressed and that not all concepts of islandness can rely on the metaphor of islands. This is not to say that the physical must be the sole contributor the cultural theory, as with such a hierarchization, the manifest world may stand in the way of anthropological theory or risk the anthropologist losing themselves in the diversity and complexity of the physical world (Ronstrom, 2012). Instead, I merely suggest an awareness of the natural space as both a locus and a focus, providing both a starting point for more abstract spheres while also maintaining its literacy in the lives of the islanders. We, as anthropologists and writers, must be aware of the dichotomization between manifest and latent and avoid dismissing the
physicality of islands while promoting the relevance of metaphorical abstractions. Pete Hay suggest a phenomenology of place as a possible coherent theoretical framing for island studies because “the characteristics that endow space with the shared meanings that transform them into places may be more pronounced, better articulated, and more effectively defended on islands than is usually the case elsewhere” (Hay, 2006). Comparatively, Lisa Fletcher finds that dichotomies that underscore much of island studies gain their persuasive power “from an implicit agreement that studying the real world is a more meaningful and important pursuit than inquiry into the imagined world, and further that it is possible to have a privileged understanding of the real world” (Fletcher, 2010). She thus proposes ‘performative geographies’ as a theoretical framework for island study in order to “foreground an appreciation of the dynamic and mutually constitutive relationship between places and the ways in which they are depicted”, which leads her to believe that the notion of performative geographies “grants greater ontological significance to the space where the act takes place” (Fletcher, 2010). While Hay is suggesting a more detailed look at the interaction between individual and nature, Fletcher is more aware of the way the island, as place, is depicted, but they both recognize the distinction between the metaphorical and the physical. Whether we opt for realism, like in Hay’s phenomenology of islands, or idealism, as in the case of Fletcher’s performative geographies, we will inevitably have to deal with the dualism that these perspectives produce and recognize them in our own writing and understanding of islands such as Monhegan and Matinicus.

This duality between the physical and metaphysical is inherent to the ethnoscape of cultures, both urban and rural, but they play a particularly important role on islands such as Monhegan. Here, as the geography is what determines the place as “island”, there is a constant recognition of it. Thus, islanders are constantly confronted with their natural environment and must decide on their communication with it. For summer people, this is often a simple search of reprieve from their otherwise ‘normal’ mainland life, while for islanders it is often an ongoing adaptation from season to season. Through the psychological and physical, the islander interacts
with their environment, shaping their own communities and incorporating the land into their own values. In the following chapter I continue this exploration of the dichotomy of the approach to the island by both summer people and islander as I address the pull to the island and the importance of sustaining space for the Islander. As the physical island responds to the changing weather, so too does the island community respond to the social landscape which increasingly involves the tourist.
The most distinctive feature of islandness is isolation and the oceanscape that creates it. It is the vastness of the ocean that removes the island community from the rest of the world. In a study of islandness as the performance and politics of insulation and isolation, anthropologist Phillip Vannini posits ‘remove’ as an aspect of mobility constellation that refers to the “temporal and spatial performance of distance in which people engage in order to separate places from one another, or to bring them closer together…Whereas route refers to the channeling of motion along certain pathways, remove refers to the degree or stage of separation influencing motion between locations” (Vannini, 2011). Using this concept, Monhegan becomes further removed due to its oceanic separation, an unyielding power that presents a definite barrier to communication with every storm and wind. The perception of place, according to Tim Ingold, occurs through locomotion, particularly by land (Ingold, 2000). Through our movements we alter not only our perception of the environment, but also the environment itself. As a desire line alters the
landscape as people move outside of the built environment for more convenient access to another point, our footsteps form our landscape. Although Ingold focuses mostly on movement by foot, the concept raises an interesting comparison to sea-travel. The absence of a path left behind by the ferry signifies much of the movement to an island; as there is no memory of movement, so too is there no memory of the traveler. To be isolated is therefore to be truly removed; to be wiped clean of one’s past, a production of *tabulae rasaes*. Although the traveler’s path may be erased and their association with the mainland blurred, once on the island, if the individual is the “right fit” for the island way of life, they will be incorporated into the community. While they may be able to escape the physicality of the larger state and their own past, they do not fall into anonymity. These individuals, then, if they decide to stay, become part of the island’s fabric. Yet, recently, these travelers who look to traverse the oceanscape to live permanently on the island are few, and the decreased permanent immigration has the potential to permanently change the island culture as it exists today by deemphasizing the year-round population and possibly encouraging the temporary tourist. Throughout this chapter I discuss the dichotomy between the permanent and temporary residents on Monhegan, and how the roles of each must be balanced in order to maintain authority for the islanders. While it is important to recognize that change is inevitable in any community, the introduction of outsiders to island communities are particularly blatant and potentially interruptive, as the community has already established what Durkheim (1997) refers to as mechanical solidarity. It is important, for the benefit of the islanders, to maintain the core values of the community. My argument is not, however, one of salvage anthropology; I do not suggest that the island must remain as it was at its founding. I simply mean to emphasis the importance of awareness of its current structure and population in order to maintain the community’s decision-making power. Ultimately, there is an importance to maintaining the year-round population in order to preserve islandness as it’s understood today. Otherwise, Monhegan and Matiniclus may become used solely for the engagement of the summer tourist, becoming a surface attraction drained of its deeper values.
In an attempt to define the interactive effects of increased globalization and its associated transfer of objects, people and ideas, on social communities, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai developed a meta theory of disjuncture to address the complex and overlapping global cultural economy. Among the cultural flows is included the ethnoscape, or migration of people across cultures and borders; the mediascape through which we understand our imagined world; the technoscape, or cultural interactions facilitated by the promotion of technology; financescapes, or the flux capital across borders; and the more existential ideoscapes, or the global flow of ideologies (Appadurai, 1990). Some studies have suggested that family and social networks are less significant in today’s fluid ethnoscape because there has been a transition to a ‘risk society’, whereby familiar family units and other systems have declined and the pursuit of individuality has advanced in response to markets and the State (Beck, 1992). Whether this is a global phenomenon is still up for debate, but based on the recent history of Monhegan, it seems reasonable to assume this is an additional factor to the temporary depopulation. In recent years there has been a slight population growth, but only after a couple years of nearly none at all. In the century following the settlement of the island it was expected and assumed that the children of those who lived on Monhegan would marry and continue their families on the island. However, as the education system has become more advanced and far-reaching it is expected that the island children will now leave the island in order to attend high school on the mainland. In an island community, this movement is often viewed as a life stage in its own right. Although there are stable family units on Monhegan, there are few additional social pressures to stay, and in some cases the entire family unit leaves the island when the children go to high school. This may be due to the greater influence from the state, that the ideoscape of the United States has reached across the water to encompass the islands as well. Appadurai’s ‘scapes’ (1990) explain this well; as the population becomes more heterogeneous, incorporating people from ‘away’, the ideals, in this case from the mainland and larger state, are transferred as well, creating a complex overlapping and disjunctive order between the mainland ideals and the ideals of the islander.
Thus, the decision to return home is saturated in the disjuncture between island and mainland and left up to the young adults after they finish school.

Social and cultural networks in isolated communities promote values at odds with leaving the community, forcing young adults to effectively choose between residential aspirations to stay in their community and other goals and aspirations that would take them elsewhere (Petrin et al. 2014). Because limited opportunities exist within the island communities for postsecondary education or jobs requiring higher education, the educational or occupational aspirations of those who value staying are limited. The availability of local employment and housing, their wider sense of community belonging, and the value attached to family and friendship networks present challenges for those returning or migrating to the island from a secondary education.

As Aileen Stockdale observes in the out-migration patterns of rural Scotland, the primary component in this developing challenge to return to the island is the variation in educational and professional qualifications (Stockdale, 2002). Youth who have strong desires or plan to remain on the island after high school are said to have residential aspirations that come from a strong attachment to place (Petrin et al. 2014). Residential aspirations to stay are a result of strong community networks and place. For island youth, place “involves the meaning and relationships associated with land, nature, and local history and knowledge”, leading some island youth to value connections to place above education or occupational opportunities (Howley, 2006).

Sociologist Diana McLaughlin and her colleagues (2014) found that, of youth with home residential aspirations, three-quarters attribute those aspirations to their desire to live close to their parents and maintain the social networks they currently have. In turn, youth with residential aspirations to stay in their community have lower educational aspirations; perpetuating the notion that education is necessary for life outside the home community, but not for life within it (Corbett, 2010). While some returned islanders may decide to take a position in manual labor following their secondary education, most other island youth pursue a higher education, and if they express interest in returning are advised to work with their own family or start a business of
their own. However, the prospect of self-employment can often be daunting. Furthermore, there is no option for a morning commute. While islands such as Peaks Island have the opportunity to make a fifteen-minute commute on one of the fourteen daily ferry runs during the winter, residents of Monhegan and Matinicus can only commute to their boats on the harbor. Equally important is the wider sense of belonging, and perceptions regarding life elsewhere. Similar to how Stockdale describes the rural out-migration of Scotland, “the lure of the bright lights” has been observed with regard to migration from the island (Stockdale, 2000). As she explains, there is an attraction for “places where the individual can be more anonymous…one person’s splendid isolation was another’s loneliness; the close-knit community for many can be a prying, gossiping intrusion for others”. This theoretical anonymity of the mainland provides a curious juxtaposition to those who come to the island to find their own anonymity; although they may not be known from the mainland, there is an unspoken understanding and acknowledgement on the island that they are present. No one on the island is anonymous, but they can find their own silence and isolation in the surrounding tranquility of the landscape, as many an introspective traveler or retiree is wont to do.

For those seeking a slower pace of daily life, Monhegan is a wonderful place to be. In some instances, those looking to move to the island full-time have reached near retirement and have the means to do so. However, the lack of healthcare is often a deciding factor for many, including some islanders themselves. As people get older, it becomes more difficult to maintain their health in isolation and in some cases they are forced to move to the mainland.

Self-actualization, the central concept in Maslow’s writing on hierarchy of needs, refers to a further self-development that emerges when motives for survival, security, and esteem are satisfied (Maslow, 1954). Social well being, according to Wilkinson, refers to social conditions that foster self-actualization (Wilkinson, 1979). Taking both these theories into account, it is fitting, as described in Chapter 1, that the community will have an influence on the individual as the individual has on the community. However, according to Maslow, in order to reach that point
of social well being, the person must first go through the initial levels of his theorized hierarchy of needs. At the base are needs for material goods necessary for biological survival, such as food and water, and security from physical harm, such as shelter and health care. As these are secured, social needs begin to predominate. Further, these necessities must be maintained throughout the individual’s life; in order to maintain a community population, basic necessities must be fulfilled.

During the process of depopulation common in many remote communities, the elderly population increases, while the younger population decreases as they leave for new opportunities (Stockdale, 2000) However, once the older population reaches a certain health threshold, living on the island becomes substantially more difficult. For example, when islanders have to go in for a health appointment from Monhegan they have to plan to be there for a couple days. Alternatively, on Matinicus, as long as the plane is running normally, appointments can be made in an afternoon. During the summer on Monhegan, it is not uncommon to have a visiting doctor living in one of the summer homes. However, while the accessibility to a doctor may briefly relieve some islanders of their health concerns, it is only temporary.

Therefore, although the population Monhegan is small, those who choose to stay must be incredibly independent. Alta Ashley recalled a week she spent on a different island while substituting for an island doctor; “My week on Vinalhaven was interesting and instructive, but I was mighty glad to get back to my own island and its self-sufficient islanders. I felt as though I had to hold the hand of the entire island when I substituted for Dr. Earle” (Ashley, 1970). Now, although there isn’t a nurse or doctor living full-time on the island, those in relatively good health can maintain themselves with occasional visits from the Sunbeam, a vessel from the Maine Seacoast Mission that provides telemedicine check-ups and flu shots in addition to their “meeting place for fellowship, meals and meetings” (MSM, 2017). As one islander describes, “I guess technically it’s a church boat, but it’s more than that. They don’t push religion on you; they just want to give you what you need. I guess for some that’s just a cookie, but others need to visit the nurse and things”. The services provided by the Sunbeam and staff allows many people to meet
their health needs and stay on the island comfortably. However, as the Sunbeam only arrives periodically there is also a necessity to have emergency care, and this relies heavily on the immediate population.

One of the emergency responders on Monhegan explains, “Most islanders take care of one another…if someone needs to get to shore one of the lobstermen can get them there in a pinch, and if all else fails, LifeFlight is always around”. As often as possible, islanders take care of one another, whether by checking in periodically on the islander with a bad cold or getting someone with a broken arm to shore as soon as possible. However, when options are limited, it is necessary to rely on outside sources such as the coast guard or Life Flight. In small, insulated communities such as Monhegan or Matinicus it may seem inappropriate to have an outsider step into a situation, but because rescue teams aren’t sustainable on the island due to the limited numbers of people, there is a reliance on them. However, community members are still involved. Often, those operating the Coast Guard ship need help navigating the harbor currents into the dock, and landing areas have to be lit for Life Flight. In order to ensure a fast response when necessary, some islanders have been designated as response personnel and get notified via radio when necessary. In order to maintain this system, however, there must be enough of an able-bodied population to respond. For this particular part of the hierarchy of needs there must be an established community to rely on, thus creating a more complex hierarchy, where one need feeds into the other, where the community and the individual must rely on each other. Thus, if the population fades so will the basic necessities of the hierarchy, making community growth indispensable.

For whatever reason, sometimes islanders leave, some joyfully, others with lament for their childhood home. They are then replaced by summer people from away, often wealthier people seeking romantic isolation, and innocent of the cultural disruption that their introduction entails. Clark describes this process as island gentrification, (Clark, 2007), and island writing abounds with descriptions of the process and its impacts. As Hay points out, different
perceptions of what is good for the island can lead to sustained conflict between islanders and summer property owners (Hay, 2006). For example, newly arrived retirees may “become staunch conservationists of the islescapes” and “resist developments favored by less affluent locals” (Gillis, 2004). In a discussion of the Sea Islands of the Carolinas, Gillis wrote of “city folk who bought land with no real intention of living there”. A similar case occurred on the New England island of Nantucket; as David Putz describes,

“Older New Englanders will recall what Cape Cod was like 40 years ago, and Nantucket 30 years ago… All of these places have become very different from what they were. Among other things, these places used to be different kinds of places, unique places, not only with different kinds of geography and natural history, but also different kinds of heritage, uses of the English language, and patterns of interaction. By simple observation we understand that a pandemic kind of phenomenon happens because of recreational development. All these places are becoming more and more alike” (Putz, 1993: 53).

The oldest resident on Matinicus, Bill Hoadley, grew up on Nantucket and recalled the encroaching tourism industry during my stay with him; “I had to leave when it started getting too crowded. Really wealthy people were moving in and candy shops were popping up everywhere”. Similarly, people who buy up winterized property on Monhegan with no intention of living or using it year-round are restricting newcomers to move to the island, thus stunting the year-round population.

According to Ioannis Spilanis and his colleagues, there are some islands that suffer from high concentrations of people and intensive use of their resources due to their touristic developments, while other islands suffer from depopulation and the resulting decrease of economic activities (Spilanis et al., 2003). The community on Monhegan has attempted to find equilibrium between these extremes by catering to the tourist industry during the summer and taking the winter to reconnect with the permanent residents on the island. However, in doing so the summer tourist has been enticed by the island and some have taken it upon themselves to purchase property for their summer escapes from mainland life, thus removing it from the housing market of the locals or potential locals. For these tourists, the island holds what Spilanis refers to as ‘soft attractiveness’, that assesses “the place’s perceived image, taking into account
the viewpoints and perceptions of various social groups” (Spilanis, 2003); to the tourist, the summer life extends to infinity, as they are not aware of the further implications of island life. As Buttimer notes, “there is a fundamental contrast between the insider’s way of experiencing the place and the outsiders conventional ways of describing it…choices people make span the divide between the objective characteristic of places as seen by outsiders and their (perceived) subjective status in the eye of the insiders”. In this way, the tourist may be acting in what Edward Said (1989) would describe as neo-colonialism. Here, these tourists are turning the island and islanders into ideas constructed by the tourist, thus allowing the island to become flat and falsified under their romanticization of the place.

This attraction to islandness has, over time, increasingly inspired the movement of seasonal residents to the island that has, in turn, driven up real estate prices. In this way, many islands have fallen into a form of gentrification, where the physical structures remain relatively unaltered, but the incoming population has an impact on the current social environment. Gentrification of an area is characterized by a marked shift in occupancy upward in terms of class and socioeconomic position, and reinvestment in the built environment (Clark, 2007). Ruth Glass, a Marxist-inspired sociologist from London coined the term in 1964. Contrary to early formulations, gentrification does not only occur in inner cities; it can occur wherever there is a displacement of residents or land-users by relatively more powerful residents or land-users. Gentrification, in fact, is occurring in some form on Monhegan. What distinguishes gentrification on islands from the gentrification most commonly seen in urban contexts is the strength of recreation, tourism, and summer homes as a better use of land economics. As the interest in the harsh landscape and ‘removedness’ becomes more valued in the world of globalization, there is both a financial and social capital to owning property in a space of remoteness. However, with the influx of outsiders, there is an opportunity for them to influence the spaces themselves, thus shadowing the local culture and values. Essentially, it comes down to power over space, and whose visions of a place actually take place in that space (Hagersrant, 1986). This dictation of
space can further be understood through Foucault’s study of power, where knowledge, the basis of power, is derived from wealth and privilege more so than by truth. According to Foucault, what we determine as fact is in flux, contingent on the power dynamics at the time of theory. If, as we observe, people from ‘away’ claim ownership of the island with exorbitant amounts of money, there is a potential for them to create a new truth for the island, a new understanding of islandness. For the islanders and those associated with the island as it has been, this type of ethnoscape is incredibly problematic, as it has the potential for a type of neo-colonialism that could render the island traditions obsolete. In light of these issues, many islanders have proposed and implemented projects to maintain their islandness and power over their own community.

According to islander Bill Payne, it used to be “that year-round housing was not beyond the reach of those who, having committed (lifestyle and livelihood), could also choose to commit to a mortgage. Those days are gone. MISCA hopes to bring it back” (Payne, 2005). MISCA, also known as the Monhegan Island Sustainability Community Association, approaches the problem of gentrification by acquiring properties to sell only to low-to-moderate income, year-round residents, with sufficient covenants attached to deeds that these properties will be brought and sold in perpetuity, only by similarly qualified applicants. This organization, founded in 2002 by some of the residents, was incorporated under the Maine Nonprofit Corporations Act. Their purpose was threefold;

a. “To promote the sustainability of the Monhegan Island community by contributing to the development of year-round housing and economic opportunities;
b. To create and maintain a community land trust on Monhegan Island to acquire land and building and, while holding the land in perpetuity, to make the building available for purchase by participant in the year-round community for individual ownership and use as their primary residence and/or the location of a business enterprise, and, through the use of covenants on future transfers, insure that a certain number of community land trust buildings remain available to the future year-round population; and;
c. To foster and support access to and provision of decent, safe and affordable housing opportunities for low-to moderate-income persons who cannot provide themselves with permanent housing by their own means, and who are year-round residents of Monhegan Island.”
In doing so, MISCA provides an opportunity to not only allow more people the opportunity to live on the island, but also provides the island itself with more personnel to fill positions in many of the much-needed organizations. Furthermore, by encouraging community growth, there is a renewed sense of empowerment throughout the community as the permanent population grows to remain the majority, thereby maintaining Foucault’s theory of power over their space. Ideally, this encouragement of population growth would increase interest in permanent residency beyond MISCA, thereby creating a self-sustaining cycle of residency. However, there are further aspects to take into account beyond housing.

When people choose their place of residence they take into account factors concerning accessibility, physical and natural characteristic and quality, existence of social facilities and businesses, supply of services, available infrastructure, population size and local ties, property prices, land use and zoning regulations (Spilanis et al., 2003). While parts of most of these can be found on Monhegan, the introduction of the internet has been able to fill the gaps. With the advent of technology, the island has become more socially and culturally connected to the mainland. Whereas in the past the ferry or lobster boat were the only link between the island and the mainland, now people can stay in touch via Facebook, catch up on the New York Times, and stream movies. Among the benefits of this communication technology is the ability for the islanders to keep in touch with the summer people through the depths of winter and foster connections with other islanders during their own voyages off the island. However, technology allows both islanders and summer people to have a connection throughout the year, which could potentially be a problem for the autonomy of the islanders. In order to avoid the influence of too many outside forces, there has to be a clear distinction between them. In addition to communicating with summer people, however, there is a profound benefit from the ability of intercommunication between the island communities themselves or, more specifically, between the schoolhouses of the islands.
Although there are a number of island communities off the coast of Maine, many are relatively close to shore, allowing for relatively reduced levels of ‘removedness’, when compared to Monhegan, which is at least an hour’s ferry ride away. Islands that are further removed were often left out of inter-island events. However, with the incorporation of telecommunication into the schoolroom through video units, island kids get to know people outside their immediate community, thus expanding their cultural awareness. One Monhegan parent explains the vitality of this feature; “they’re able to communicate better…when they get to high school they already know other kids and they know they can meet new kids”. She later went on to explain that many kids also leave the island with their families, to say they are not totally isolated, but the introduction of the classroom software has severely shrunken the gap between the islands themselves.

*The Rope Shed, Summer, Monhegan*

Although the advent of internet access on the islands provided more modes of communication, and provided an ease of transition from mainland to island for some who may
not have moved otherwise, technology has not become the ultimate controller of the island. There are a few who rely on it to maintain their lives on the island, but there are more who simply use it as convenience. As one islander explained, “Yea, we have phones out here, but if I forget it at home it’s never worth going back for. I’ll probably run into whoever was trying to call anyway”.

Currently, most of the organizations on the island post their news or upcoming events on Monhegan’s rope shed, a small structure in the center of the village road covered in faded pastel fliers and spotted with more permanent wooden plaques providing hours for local studios and eateries. However, as the population becomes more tech-savvy, there is an urge to move communications onto the internet in order to stimulate increased collaborations between the Farm Project, Monhegan Associates, Assessors, Brewery, Stores, Fire and Safety, Artists, etc., as some people only go by the rope shed every couple days. The majority of interest for these types of initiatives comes from those who most recently moved to the island, while there is some strong resistance from islanders who have lived with the rope-shed messaging system most their lives. While tradition holds priority for many, as the population is on the upward slope there may have to be consideration for new techniques in order to create a stronger community.

In a world of globalization, ethnoscapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes (Appadurai, 1990), there is a temptation for many to be in centers of commerce, where the newest trends are available and shared. However, as these urban settings become more commonplace, there is a certain amount of social capital to having a second home in isolation “away from it all”. On Monhegan, where islanders are mostly content with their isolation, it becomes a challenge to navigate these groups while maintaining their own sense of islandness. Through community initiatives and advancing technologies there is progress being made in encouraging community growth while maintaining power over their own space, and into the future there is hope for continued revival of the permanent population. In order for the islanders to maintain a claim to the place of the island they have to ensure the strength of the community
and the individuals as its many parts. The islander continuously interacts with the community and their environment, and must continue to do so in order to maintain rich culture on the island.
On the final day of my research I was scheduled to join the daily mail flight from Matinicus, but as I woke up I began to doubt the possibility of getting back to the mainland; the clouds were low and rain was rolling in, which suggested a delay of both the mail and myself. I took the opportunity to meet with Eva over a cup of tea in her kitchen; being warmed by the wood burning stove and nuzzles from their family cat. Periodically her husband would come in from cutting wood to check the weather update from the computer, as we both kept an eye on the clouds out the window. Eventually, as we were deep into stories of island life and the hand-thrown ceramic mugs had long since cooled, there was a break in the clouds and we received a call from the Penobscot Air office letting us know that a plane had made it to the island and was waiting for my arrival. As we were on the opposite side of the island Eva graciously offered a ride and I took her up on it as any islander would. I hopped into her island jeep and we made our way past the recycling center and library followed by the school and town office, interspersed
with island homes; some vacant, waiting for their summer families to arrive, others bustling with the remaining islanders. We stopped by Bill Hoadley’s house to grab my backpack and shared goodbyes with Bill as he sat in his armchair with his dog, Sandy, patiently waiting next to him. As I left, the islandness of Bill Hoadley was evident; having grown up on Nantucket, he had experienced first hand the shift in the cultural landscape during the rise of the tourism industry, and here on Matinicus he sought solace from the inevitable fast-paced life of the New England urbanites. Bill, sitting in the sunken dandelion-yellow chair had become part of the island’s framework, being as much a part of the landscape and culture as the harbors and lobstermen. Bill is an islander, and thus shapes the culture of his island through interactions with his community and adjustments to his own environment.

Once at the airstrip, I said my goodbyes to Eva and I climbed in alongside the pilot and empty mail bins to be transported back to the mainland over the handful of islands that scatter Penobscot Bay. From here, I could see Monhegan in the distance, reasserting its own islandness in the context of Matinicus. The two islands may differ in their approaches to isolation, whether by encouraging local business or encouraging tradition, but they are similar in their geographic isolation and face many of the same challenges such as a decline in the year-round population. By addressing the cultural significance of their isolation and the adaptations that have been made in response to it, communities may be able to preemptively take action to maintain both their community and their culture, whether that includes the tourist or not.

Although islands are unique in their geographic isolations, there are many similarities in their position of the rural and their relative insularity. Mead (1973) invites us to be flexible in our definition of insularity. She takes a part in a long tradition of scholars who identify the sea as one of a series of forms which act as frontiers, barriers, and obstacles for transfer to and from communities and cultures (Baldachino, 2003). David Pitt (1980), Sherwin Carlquist (1965), and Russell King (1993) have postulated a broader definition of the insular. In other words, literal islands, surrounded by water, are only one sort of insular situation in the physical world. This
obsession with the geographical island may be due to the mainlander’s impression of the sea as being ‘the most effective barrier of them all’ (Carlquist, 1965). However, it is important to consider the ability to acquire a 15-minute flight or one-hour ferry ride to these places. It may be that an expanse of ocean could prove easier to cross than a desert, jungle, or continental ice sheet (Baldachino, 2003). Further, there are rural areas in the continental U.S. that face many of the same issues that are presented in island studies. As globalization becomes increasingly emphasized, the small town communities are becoming smaller, some left abandoned to the landscape that claims it. Although not isolated by water, these insulated communities are challenged to maintain their own identity, whether in the mountains of Colorado or the rolling plains of Nebraska. Islands provide relatively candid studies, as their borders are harsh and their community is insulated, allowing for the notation of every adjustment and introduction of people, structure, and custom. As anthropologists we can draw parallels between the rural towns and islands, possibly offering deeper understanding of both in order to help maintain their individual cultures.

Through my research on Monhegan and Matinicus I was able to address the changing cultural landscape in the context of the islander and the outsider, as they become more integrated through time. While the islands strive to maintain their own islandness, there will be an inevitable shift with the influx of non-islanders, whether they are summer people, day-trippers, or student anthropologists. By addressing the potential romanticization of the island by the outsider, visitors can be guided to have more awareness of the realities of the island as the islanders live it. While there is always a temptation to understand a culture or community from the outside, it is not possible until you are part of the community yourself. As a student anthropologist, it is not in my role to dictate how communities should address their concerns. Instead, I attempt to translate the culture, as I understand it, into a broader context, reaching beyond the physical island into the parts of islandness that can be transcribed onto the land-locked small towns in the Midwest.
Monhegan and Matinicuas, influenced by a multitude of community, family, and environment, are thus left to confront these cultural landscapes in order to shape their own role in the larger state.
Resources


Lynne Drexler. (1959). *Early Spring [Oil on canvas].*


McCall, G. (2002). Nissology: something to think about and something to protect--beyond the boundaries (pp. 18–23). Presented at the Proceedings of IUCN/WCPA-EA-4 Taipei Conference.


Rockwell Kent. (1907). Winter, Monhegan Island [Oil on canvas].


