Introduction:

EMPLACED INSPIRATION

Researchers' reflections on formative island experiences

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> *If remembering, feeling, decision-making and other "psychological" processes are by nature animated or embodied processes, then the geography of embodiment also includes a geography of mind. And if, further, such cognitive and affective processes are distributed and ecological processes, in that they sometimes spread across brain, body, and world, then human minds are partly geographical or environmental in nature.* (Sutton, 2020, p.113)

We open this finale issue of *Shima* Series I with John Sutton's intriguing characterisation of human minds and of the "processing" they undertake as "partly geographical or environmental." In one swift, rhetorical move, Sutton links place, affect and personhood in a way that is provocative and compelling for the project of this issue. The theme of formative encounters and inspirational islands is one that emerged from social interaction with other Island Studies scholars, students and media interviewers over two decades. One of the recurring questions that has been put to us – and that we, in turn, have put to colleagues – is whether any particular island or islands have been inspirational in our research trajectories. While the question can be simply answered by a 'yes' or 'no' and, in the case of the former, usually requires an island or islands to be named; the more intriguing aspect is precisely *why* the researcher's encounter with the island was inspirational and *how* this inspiration played out in the researcher's subsequent work. We have often tried to tease out these aspects in discussion with colleagues and they usually involve a combination of the impression the island made upon them (either as their home or when they encountered it as outsiders), the thoughts and questions this encounter prompted and the impact of these on their subsequent research and reflection. As this might suggest, some of the encounters detailed in this issue are ancestrally and/or biographically deep-seated, others have been more fleeting, but each holds a particular significance for the researcher and for the ideas that have informed their research. By encouraging a group of Island Studies researchers to develop extended reflections on such encounters, this collection attempts to give insights into their intellectual development and to provide a valuable historical snapshot of some of the sensibilities informing Island Studies in the mid-2020s. The authors have been encouraged not only to consider the manner in which subjective perceptions, imagination

and interpretation have informed their research and writing practices but also to analyse the implications of this. This exercise thereby allowed them to consider, reconsider and reframe seminal encounters in self-reflexive manners that can be characterised as autoethnographic, and they were encouraged to explore this through a variety of approaches and textual forms.

At its simplest, autoethnography is an approach that recognises the value of members of society, communities of interest, professional bodies etc. considering and relating their own experiences, perceptions and reflections on their communities and their activities. The field is a well-established and increasingly sophisticated one, ably represented by the project of and contributions to the *Journal of Autoethnography* (2019-). Arthur Bochner, a pioneer of the field, has characterised autoethnography in a manner that is directly relevant for the project of this issue, positing that it "troubles and transgresses the boundaries separating scientific and literary modes of truth telling" and, further, that by "encouraging modes of intimate, personal, caring, and self-reflexive expression," it "raises important questions about the meanings and uses of memory, storytelling, truth, and reality" (2017, p.67). As he also characterises, it "is not a discourse of order, stability, control, and destiny but one of ambiguity, contradiction, contingency, and chance that allows scholars to maintain an emotional and personal connection to their research" (2017, p.67). As Adams, Ellis and Holman Jones, (2017, p.4) similarly emphasise, autoethnography "allows what we see, hear, think and feel to become part of the 'field.'"

The processes of formulating reflexive auto-ethnographic accounts of inspiration are, of course, complex. To begin with, there is the nature of inspiration. There is common etymological agreement that the term derives from the Latin *spiritus*, which refers to breath,[1] that it entered the English language in the 14th century, and that it had several applications that led to its current sense of being "a motivational state that compels individuals to bring ideas into fruition" (Oleynick, Thrash, LeFlew et al., 2014, p.1). In theology, inspiration is understood to emanate from the divine and this meaning can be seen to bleed over into its secular meaning, suggesting some kind of greater force behind inspiration. Drawing on Thrash and Elliott (2003), Oleynick, Thrash, LeFlew et al. (2014) address the "state of inspiration" (i.e. being inspired by something) and identify three core characteristics of it: *evocation*, *transcendence* and *approach motivation*. As they go on to explain:

> *Evocation refers to the fact that inspiration is* evoked *rather than initiated volitionally by the individual. In other words, one does not feel directly responsible for becoming inspired; rather, a stimulus object, such as a person, an idea, or a work of art, evokes and sustains the inspiration episode. During an episode of inspiration, the individual gains awareness of new possibilities that* transcend *ordinary or mundane concerns. The new awareness is vivid and concrete, and it surpasses the ordinary constraints of willfully generated ideas. Once inspired, the individual experiences a compelling* approach motivation *to transmit, actualize or express the new vision.* (2014, p.1.)

In terms of the discussions advanced in this issue, islands are the "stimulus objects" that lead human subjects to gain awareness of new ways of understanding and thinking about phenomena and to motivate them to communicate these. Perhaps the most elusive aspect

[1] See, for instance, the entry in the Etymologyonline: https://www.etymonline.com/word/inspiration

of this characterisation is precisely how the "stimulus object" functions to inspire human subjects to conceptualise and communicate their insights.

Mick Smith's exposition of the concept of "recollective ecologies" (2017) offers a valuable path into this topic,[2] identifying the:

> *myriad ways in which memories make connections that are affected by, and affect, more than just human beings. Indeed, there is an important sense in which memories might be said to be inherently ecological, namely, that they serve to sustain (even if they sometimes reconfigure) an intimate temporal interconnectedness and relationality between 'person(s)' and places…*
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> *To be a creature with memories, then, is to inhabit a phenomenal world where certain past experiences re-appear, bidden or unbidden, to inform and change our physical and mental relations in the here and now. These rhizomatic or fluidic intrusions of temporally distinct past events that re-present themselves, comprise, but can also compromise, our current selfunderstandings. They might be thought of as the partial re-surfacing, the temporary liminality, of what Gadamer refers to as our effective historical consciousness, the way that the past always informs and delimits our interpretative (and self-interpretative) horizons.* (Smith, 2017, p.2)

These concepts, which posit memories as floating, apparently dormant, only to reappear through subliminal processes and/or to be activated by conscious consideration of issues to which they might be relevant, are clear and engaging. Smith also emphasises the extent to which emotional ecologies are heavily coloured by the emotional content of memories (even when these are not readily apparent to us), asserting that this focus:

> *helps resist temptations to over-rationalise our interpretative and ecological situation, to understand life and history in terms of abstract over-arching schema or as linear chains of causation, rather than as complex, often unpredictable events experienced through anastomosing inter-relations and imbrications.* (Smith, 2017, p.3)

This also allows us to consider inspiration in a similar way, not as something straightforward – i.e. in terms of stimulus providing a predictable result – but one in which the "anastomosing" (i.e. joining of strands) depends on complex factors and is open to varying inflections.

Intersecting with Smith's approach, Thrash and Eliott (2004) have identified two types of inspiration; that of being *inspired by* a stimulus object (or event) and that of being *inspired to do* something as the result of being inspired by a stimulus object (or event). The first involves a moment or moments of insight and the second, an application of ideas grasped during the moment(s) that represent the *approach motivation* aspect. The distinction is salient, even if we recognise that the two might be best understood to 'bleed across' each other rather than remain discrete. Gilson and Kool (2021) acknowledge the latter in their succinct characterisation of inspiration that asserts it as "two-sided, transmissible, positive,

[2] My thanks for John Sutton for pointing me to Smith's essay after reading the initial draft of this article.

individual, transcendent, unexpected, holistic, requires receptivity, and receptivity may be cultivated" (2021, p.1).

Even noting the above complexities, it cannot necessarily be assumed that every Island Studies researcher *has* an island (or islands) that can be characterised as inspirational for their research trajectory. We were cognisant when we issued invitations to contribute to this issue that the mere act of requesting an account of an inspirational location might incline a researcher to consider whether they had an island place and encounter that they could *convey* as inspirational. Indeed, some researchers declined our invitation to contribute on the grounds that they could not identify such a singular locale. Others requested a broader canvas that could encompass key places (in the plural), which we acceded to, provided the focus of the issue was not lost.

For all the apparent ease and confidence with which some of the accounts in this issue unfold, they all result from endeavour in dual senses: 1) the research endeavours that were undertaken that have subsequently been recognised *as* formative by the authors; and 2) the cognitive and communicative endeavour that has been expended to identify and elaborate why these earlier endeavours *were* formative. This does not undermine the value of the project but rather reflects a process Sutton refers to whereby "constructing a useable past is a paradigmatic exercise and component of individual and community agency" (2024, p. 602). The project of the issue is to grant such agency to the authors concerned in order to address issues of inspiration, memory and research subjectivity in an open-access academic context.

The sources that the authors of articles in this volume draw on vary. Memory is obviously one key (re)source, together with various types and combinations of diaries, field notes, audio, visual and audio-visual recordings, seminar and conference papers, lecture notes, journal articles, books and personal correspondence etc. As will be apparent, these sources are complex, partial, contextual and interrelational, and merit interrogation in these regards. None can be taken at 'face value.' Human memory (let alone, social, cultural and/or institutional memories expressed and manifest in various contexts) is an intricate, amorphous and often perplexing topic that has been explored by the interdisciplinary field of Memory Studies. The field began aggregating in the 1980s-90s, drawing on philosophy, psychology and sociology, and has produced key works such as Huyssen (2003), Rothberg (2009) and Erll (2011); the journal *Memory Studies* (founded in 2008); and various university courses and research entities, such as the University of Stirling's Centre for the Sciences of Place and Memory (CSPM), established in 2024.[3]

One of the most significant publications in the Memory Studies field for the purposes of this theme issue is John Sutton's 2024 article 'Situated affects and place memory,' which builds on themes outlined in the quotation from his earlier research paper (Sutton, 2020) that opened this Introduction. In this former article, he contends that:

> *Traces of many past events are often layered or superposed, in brain, body, and world alike… More generally, there can appear to be a tension between what we know about the highly constructive nature of remembering, whether it is drawing on neural or worldly resources or both, and the ways that we need and*

[3] https://placememory.net

> *use memory to make claims on the past, and to maintain some appropriate causal connections to past events*. (Sutton, 2024, p. 593)

He goes on to contend that:

> *We are not merely influenced by past events, but also sometimes take them as objects of thought, feeling, and social negotiation… As has long been recognised in research on remembering in many fields, these are constructive processes – selection, abstraction, condensation, interference, consolidation, pattern-transformation, reconsolidation, generalization, and more. We do not store replicas or canonical versions of past events, and so must deploy resources in the present to create more or less stable, more or less adequate memories, often on the fly and iteratively in the ongoing whirl of bodily action and social interaction.* (2024, pp. 593-594)

All of the contributions to this theme issue are based on "constructive processes" that engage with the "whirl" of academic careers, interaction with peers and collaborators and, specifically here, with a journal editor asking researchers to reflect on specific aspects of their experience. The heterogeneity of approaches individual researchers deploy to identify and discuss their inspirational encounters illustrates the complexity of the issue's theme and provides a broad range of issues and interpretations.

The mission statement of the aforementioned CSPM is also relevant for this theme issue in that it explicitly twins place and memory as key concerns and specifies that it draws on cognitive science, social science and humanities approaches "in the study of spatial thinking, disorientation, and remembering" in order to address questions of "how people locate and orientate themselves in space and time" (CPSM, 2025). These are useful emphases, as any discussion of formative places and of experience in and of place necessarily requires reflection on the nature *of* place. Island Studies is fundamentally concerned with questions of place. Its key questions concern: what is an island? What is an archipelago? And, more latterly, what is an aquapelago and how does it relate to the aforementioned entities? Given this orientation, the topic is not one that Island Studies researchers are likely to avoid but the deeper interrogation of such issues can be elided through consensual understandings and an understandable desire not to encumber each and every article with a cumbersome introductory section defining what an island *is*. Yet, as *Shima's* various attempts to problematise the notion of islands should have made apparent, the issue of what an island may be considered to be is still a 'hot' one. As the title of the journal and Suwa's opening article in the first issue (2006) have made explicit, there is more to islands and islandness than can be characterised by reductive geographical definitions alone. The simultaneous bio-cultural insularity and connectivity of island populations is a crucial aspect and the role of the sea and freshwater environments (in the case of riverine and lacustrine islands) is also central, as has been asserted in the journal's address to concepts of aquapelagality.[4]

As the CPSM mission statement also mentions, temporality is an important factor and the limited address to this in *Shima* in 2006-2026 has been one of its key failings, with most of the (still limited) investigations of islands, time and temporality having been published

[4] See *Shima* (2025).

elsewhere.[5] Time – albeit the 'shallow' time of a researcher's career rather than the deep history of settlement patterns, sea level rise, and continental fragmentation, for instance – is a key concern to all the accounts in this collection. The writers are obviously writing from a 'now', reflecting on a 'then' and what eventuated between these two points. While this finale issue thereby raises questions of temporality it is to be hoped that *Shima* Series II: *Shimaqua* (discussed below) will be able to follow through on such topics in more detailed and thorough ways.

This theme issue aligns with a tradition of incorporating of reflexivity into ethnographic practice that literally transformed our core understanding of how conceptions and representations of the world – especially, but not exclusively, the worlds of others – are made. Building on the hermeneutic phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur, Clifford Geertz's *The interpretation of cultures* (1973) insisted that ethnographic representations are best understood as the result of conversations in which common shared understandings are built (rather than discovered), tested, and rebuilt iteratively. Not coincidentally, examples of misconception, misrepresentation and misapprehension figure prominently in Geertz's work, most famously in the chapter 'Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight' (pp. 412-454), where an extended interrogation of the author's journey to adequately comprehend the practice is used to demonstrate how the dynamics of "thick description" are linked to an interpretive theory of culture. Here ethnography as method/methodology and the processes through which we know/understand/enact/share culture with those around us are laid bare.

The psycho-social elements of communication and culture and ethnographic representation are further explored by others (e.g. Crapanzano, 1977; Rabinow, 2007, [1977]) who insisted that ethnographic representations were constructs rather than simple descriptions, with the ethnographer an intrinsic element of the product and not just the process. Wider critiques of ethnographic practices soon emerged, fundamentally eroding ethnographic authority and scholarly privilege.[6] Among the most cogent and impactful of these was Donna Haraway's 'Situated Knowledges' (1988), which rendered transparent what she calls the "god trick" of naïve claims to objective knowledge while at the same time demanding that all knowledge claims (in her case, feminist ones) be carefully situated within the subject position of the author/ethnographer as well as the phenomenon being explored.

While not all of Island Studies is ethnographic, a great deal of its work is interpretive, and the field has increasingly acknowledged islanders' attempts to critique and transform the representations of others. One foundational intervention was Epeli Hau'ofa's 'Our Sea of Islands' (1993) in which the land/sea dichotomy at the core of Islands Studies was inverted to highlight the connectivity of seaways over the isolation of islets. Arguably, several of the key Island Studies journals over the last several decades are rooted in such dynamics, at least in part. Resistance to these developments might be ascribed to the naïve empiricism that also continues to inform some elements of contemporary geography, but the field has also been enriched by ideas of place, landscape, and ecology that have emerged in that discipline

[5] See, for instance, the material published in *Narodna Umjetnost 59*(2). The principal exception to this characterisation is Tomislav Oroz's critical survey 'More than space: Rethinking island temporalities in Island Studies' published in *Shima 19*(1).

[6] Extended critiques of previous ethnographic works followed. Among the most notable here are analyses of Bronislav Malinowski's work in the Trobriand Islands by James Clifford (1988) and Annette Weiner (1976), Marcus & Fisher's (1986) discussion of Margaret Mead's early work in Samoa, and the more general critical examinations of ethnographic practice offered in Clifford (1988), Clifford and Marcus (1986) and Behar & Gordon (1996).

over the last few decades (see especially the contributions of "more-than-human" geographers e.g., Whatmore, 2006).

The trajectory of Island Studies has also been textured by ecologically oriented systems theory[7] and related developments in assemblage theory (e.g., Bennett, 2005), including a turn towards archipelagic (Stratford et al., 2011) and aquapelagic (Hayward, 2012a, 2012b) models for Island Studies to inform geographical and anthropological thinking more generally. In other words, the general focus on Islander agency has been extended into complex systems theory that includes careful attention to exactly the kind of human/ecology/landscape interactions that Sutton alludes to. Our invitation to contributors to contemplate the generative power of their own intersections with specific islands and/or those of others, is positioned in a theoretical mélange that revels in the complex even as both islanders and analysts seek to establish order through their choices.

One area not explored in Sutton's 2024 article is the role of textual artefacts in the triggering, rearticulation and construction of memories (with the three understood as overlapping creative processes rather than quasi-cybernetic data 'retrievals'). This is a topic of direct relevance to this issue in that all the researchers who have contributed have drawn on various forms of records in addition to – and thereby in interaction with – their (current) memory of place encounters, experiences of these and subsequent reflections on them. When this issue was first conceptualised, we assumed that the main types of artefacts utilised in auto-ethnographic reflection in this volume would be fieldnotes, published material that drew on these, and photographic, audio and/or audiovisual materials.

Fieldnotes are fundamentally contested and contestable objects. However immediate observations might be in the moment, their contributions to an ethnography (or any type of analytical work) are filtered in two senses. First, they are the product of necessarily imperfect and positioned observers and second, the movement from notebook page to published page requires contextualisation in the relevant literatures; consideration of phenomena distant in time and space; and relationship with the source of the fieldnotes. There is a rich body of work on the purposes, methodologies and limitations of anthropological and ethnomusicological fieldwork, fieldnotes and field recording and their subsequent interpretations in academic literature. Much of this dates back to the 1990s, when these disciplines intensified their self-reflexivity (see particularly, Sanjek [Ed.], 1990 and Barz & Cooley [Eds.], 1996). Much of this work centres on ethnography, but while this is not as prevalent a method across the field of Island Studies, the focus on fieldnotes offered by it is relevant to the field, which includes a diversity of approaches. Jackson provides an illuminating survey of seventy researchers'[8] understandings of the nature and use of fieldnotes that reveals a wide range of note making practices, of means of recording these and perceptions of their function. These include forms of loose, impressionistic writing and hypotheses through to detailed and inclusive lists of phenomena and encounters recorded in a structured manner. While the purpose of her survey was to represent the range of researcher perceptions rather than to offer detailed critique of them, the relationship between event, remembered event and impressions and details of the event written down

[7] Such as (e.g., Bateson 1972, 1979). NB, While Bateson is not cited widely in geography, Tim Ingold, and others influenced by Bateson's approach, have been (see for example Ingold 2021/2000).
[8] Predominantly anthropologists working on the US East Coast.

at the time and later reconstructed from the aforementioned sources is clearly complex and represents precisely a *reconstruction* rather than any form of simple *retrieval*.[9]

In the event, no contributors to this issue have quoted from or explicitly cited fieldnotes made during the seminal encounters they discuss (although Hayward does refer to a short-format travel diary written during his island encounter in article 12). All, however, made references to published material that drew on various kinds of representations of their own encounters, including formal fieldwork. Several of the articles in this volume reproduce photos in order to illustrate aspects of the authors' formative research experiences, consciously or unconsciously employing a strategy often referred to as *photo-elicitation*. This involves using photographs to stimulate discussion of circumstances and/or issues represented in them. Mannik (2011) has identified that photo-elicitation can result in rich recollections and often emotional responses to images and notes that "the past is not filed away waiting to be resurrected, but 'reconstructed on the basis of the present'" (2011, p.92). Reflecting on her own experience working with Estonians displaced from their country in 1948 (who she interviewed in 2006-2007), she has identified that:

> *The emotions associated with memories often enrich the breadth and density of oral narratives when photographs are brought into the interview process… the photo-elicitation method allows for open expression while providing concrete contexts where research participants can take the lead, tell their own stories* (2011, p.92)

The use of such photographic materials by authors involves a subtly different process in that they can use the images to stimulate their own "open expression" and reflection – potentially in an internal dialogue based on critical self-reflexivity – and, thereby, "take the lead" in telling their own stories. The representational data present in the images is also useful in that it can be cross referenced to independent memories of events and/or written data, such as field notes, to various check, correct or question the impressions that the researcher is working with.

The range of issues outlined above were presented to invited authors as a guide for contributions for this theme issue and it is worth noting that many found the agenda a more daunting one than they had initially perceived when provisional invitations were sent out in 2024-2025. Despite these factors, the project succeeded in gaining contributions from seventeen researchers who have been active in Island Studies scholarship, publishing, editing and/or international networking and event organisation in the period 2005-2025. Twenty-four researchers were invited to submit reflective essays for this theme issue. Two declined to participate (one on the grounds of their now being retired and the other for unspecified personal reasons), and five withdrew after accepting invitations due to their inability to submit finalised texts by the reviewing deadline. Reflecting the dominance of

[9] Along with the continuing prevalence of field notes, researchers increasingly use audio-visual media, making this process increasingly complex over the thirty-five years since Jackson provided her valuable survey. The latter has been addressed by researchers such as Abas (2023), examining the issue of "multimodal" field notes, by Favero (2023), examining the use of smartphones in conducting audio/visual/ sensory ethnography, and by Grasseni, Barendregt, De Maaker et al. (2021) in writing a "practical and theoretical guide" to audiovisual and digital ethnography.

European, North American and Australasian researchers in the Island Studies field over the last two decades, the majority of researchers invited to submit came from these continents. Similarly, reflecting the predominance of male researchers in the field in the same period, the majority of invitees were male.[10] One factor exacerbating this gender and geographical balance imbalance was that four of the six invitees who declined or who were otherwise unable to complete were female and four were Asian academics. Thankfully, the number of experienced female researchers in Island Studies has substantially increased over the last decade and the number of Asian based scholars has also risen significantly. If an attempt to map the inspiration of the next two decades of Island Studies research was to be attempted in the mid-2040s it is likely that the gender and continent-of-origin balance of contributors would be far more equitable.

There was no requirement in the invitations extended to researchers that the islands that they characterise as inspirational should have constituted the major focus of their published research but, rather, that the inspiration they gained from them should have significantly illuminated their research trajectories and ways of thinking about islands. Reflecting this, while some of the contributors have produced significant volumes of work on the locales they identify as inspirational, others have drawn on particular locations in less obvious manners. As might have been expected, there is no single – let alone exemplary – model of how experiences of and on an island or islands have inspired researchers but, rather, a range of types of experience and reflection that illustrate the possibilities that islands, with their simultaneous insularities and connectivities, offer. Authors report various focal inspirations, including various welcoming and informative interactions with communities and researchers' more individual experiences as they travel to and through, encounter and/or relocate to islands as temporary visitors or longer-term residents. This also reflects the diversity of authors' disciplinary backgrounds and perspectives. The researchers featured in this issue all commenced their activities prior to Island Studies becoming a formalised field with dedicated master's degrees and doctoral research programs and related canonical texts and perspectives. The essays presented here thereby give insight into the ideas swirling in the early phase of the field that have influenced its present, more coherent (and, arguably, more predictable) operation.

Contributions to this issue are presented in three sections:

Section I (articles 1-9): *Island attachments* – comprises essays on islands that the researcher has ancestral connections to and/or significant periods of residence on. The inspiration here is deep-seated and is articulated in various aspects of the researchers' sensibilities and orientations.

Section II (articles 10-12): *Unplanned encounters* – features essays on researchers' encounters with islands during recreational travel that made significant impacts on their perceptions of islands and future research careers.

Section III: (articles 13-16) *Formal research encounters* – includes essays on islands that were deliberately selected by the authors concerned (and/or their academic supervisors) as locales for formal research that became significant on the authors' future research development.

[10] NB no effort was made to redress these imbalances within the theme issue since its purpose was to reflect the cohort of senior Island Studies researchers active in the period in question rather than to retrospectively correct – and/or conceal – its composition.

Ilan Kelman's additional contribution (article 17) serves as a provocation that seeks to question the purpose of and the assumptions underlying the theme issue, commenting on the manufactured nature of memory and of islands and Island Studies in general.

Rounding off the issue, John Sutton's afterword picks up on themes from a number of contributions in noting interdisciplinary memory theory's "shift away from any residual tendency to treat *specific* episodic memories as foundational or as intrinsically better and more functional" (2026, p. 259). As he characterises:

> *non-singular but still recognisably personal, emotional, past-directed episodic memories appear to be absolutely pervasive in and central to most people's cognitive and affective life… we now seek models of memory that treat recurrent or generic experiences, temporally extended experiences, and whole phases or periods of experience as central objects or cases of personal or episodic memory that play significant roles in our socio-cognitive lives.* (2026, p. 259).

While individual articles may not present their accounts within these precise parameters, they individually and cumulatively serve to reinforce these characterisations by offering accounts of such processes in action. And indeed, these may be seen as the very 'engine 'of research published in *Shima* over the last two decades.

We opened this Introduction by describing this issue as a *finale* for *Shima* Series II and that term merits unpacking as we conclude. The term *finale* appears to have originated in the early 1800s to refer to the climax of a musical performance but was also adopted more broadly to refer to the conclusion of various other forms of events or processes. In recent years it has also been used to refer to the final program of a season of a TV drama series that is slated to return or of an overall series (where the *finale* is also the *final*). The sense in which we use this term is both aspirational, and hopefully, in some way accurate, in that we hope that the material presented in this concluding theme issue of *Shima* Series I, is – as the *Collins English Dictionary* characterises – "the last part of it or the last one of them, especially when this is exciting or impressive." Readers can make their own minds up about whether it has achieved the latter.

The finale of one season of a series provides a pause point before a second commences, building on the first but often with different personnel involved, different plot lines and new characters. Appropriately in this regard, *Shima* Series II commences in 2027 with a new editorial team, a modified name – *Shimaqua* – and tighter focus on terrestrial and aquatic interfaces and the manner in which human societies and other actants animate these. Series II aims to build on its predecessor by expanding and developing concepts such as the aquapelago and to explore the nature of waterscapes and wetness in inland areas; submergence (related to changing sea-levels and flood events); vaporous and/or frozen water forms and phenomena; and various social experiences impressions and cultural representations of these.

Research journals are complex enterprises that require collaboration, cooperation compromise and no small amount of determination to deliver. The cast of authors, editorial board members, editorial production staff, external reviewers, facilitators, benefactors, funding bodies, and supporting family members, friends and colleagues who have enabled

Shima Series I over the past two decades is far too extensive to document here, but all are warmly and gratefully acknowledged and hopefully this finale issue of Series I provides an appropriate crescendo before the curtain falls.

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