ISLAND FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES, ISLAND FRAGMENTS OF INSPIRATIONS

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ABSTRACT: In this piece, I respond to an invitation to remember and discuss the island or islands that have proved particularly inspirational to me. In accepting the invitation and following the editorial instructions, I find that I cannot give a clear explanation in response. Instead, supplemented by island videos I made, this piece presents my fragments of memory and inspiration which relate to islands and Island Studies, parallelling my explanation of perceiving the fragmentation of islands and Island Studies, particularly through spatiality and temporality. This non-answer for the editorial mandate does not really matter; since memory and inspiration are, to a large extent, manufactured, as are islands and Island Studies. This piece concludes with the importance of enjoying islands, Island Studies, memories, and inspirations, so that they can continue to be inspired and to inspire.

KEYWORDS: Inspiration, memory, space, time

Fragmentation: The Island Cracked

What island or islands have proved particularly inspirational to me? I do not know. Perhaps it or they is/are yet to come. Or perhaps I simply do not remember.

The arbitrariness of my inspirations and memories, or the arbitrariness of the lack of my inspirations and memories – which is common for humanity (Kindt and den Hout, 2003; Liao et al., 2022; Mary et al., 2020; Nguyen, 2025; Thrash et al., 2017; Wagenaar, 1986) – matches the arbitrariness of an island. What an island is and efforts to delineate islands from something else – typical phrases are non-islands, continents, and mainlands – permeate Island Studies (Baldacchino, 2008; Grydehøj, 2017, 2023; Suway, 2007). This objectification of islands and critiques of this process (Baldacchino, 2005, 2007b; Hayward, 2016; Stratford et al., 2023) can distract from as well as highlight people, as in islanders, and places, as in island homes, lives, and livelihoods. Fixating on the island, whatever it may be, further raises the question of the point of Island Studies and this field's own arbitrariness. Why merely study islands, rather than seek island(er) policies, island(er) actions, island(er) teaching, island(er) learning, and island(er) improvements?

Founded on these questions, in this piece I respond to the invitation to remember and discuss my "inspirational islands" (Hayward, 2026), interlaced with my inspirational islanders, island inspirations and islander inspirations. Perhaps island(er)s are, have been, or still will be "the 'stimulus objects' that lead human subjects [in this case, me] to gain awareness of new ways of understanding and thinking about phenomena and to motivate them to communicate these." (Hayward & Evans, 2026, p. 2). Given how fragmented human

memory is (Kindt and den Hout, 2003; Nguyen, 2025) – which includes my memory, not to mention the fragmentation of my career across disciples, continents, outputs, and outcomes – I will inevitably fail in achieving the expected goal, "to consider the manner in which subjective perceptions, imagination and interpretation have informed [my] research and writing practices but also to analyse the implications of this" (Hayward & Evans, 2026, p.2). I can offer island fragments, namely fragments from my island memories, supplemented by island videos I took.

(Note: All videos referred to in this article were produced by the author.)

Fragments of my island memory and my memory construction

My island memory fragments must be constructed according to what I can and cannot recall, in addition to what manifests in my mind for a piece like this one, with all the advantages and constraints of its ethos, format, and content. Multimedia, multi-experiential island moments are poignant for me, without any particular chronological or spatial order. They tend to be dissociated from their context, still being (re)discovered by me for myself.

The nights spent on Akimiski Island in Hudson Bay in a camp surrounded by a fence to counter polar bear curiosity. Day trips to the Toronto Islands in Lake Ontario, with a thriving community and gorgeous beaches neighbouring the downtown skyscrapers of a megacity, punctuated by the roar of jets at the airport which is reached by the world's allegedly shortest ferry ride. Being dive-bombed by terns while strolling across Shetland's Isle of Noss. Wandering the coasts of Inisheer in Ireland's Aran Islands as sunbeams pierced the clouds to grace the ocean swell.

I reached Island Studies slowly, reading about the field and enjoying it before my initial academic foray into analysis during my Masters' dissertation (1998). This dissertation sported a verbose and outmoded title explaining simply that I desk-researched technology's role in addressing island volcanic eruption impacts. Then, I worked in Barbados for almost a year at a Caribbean non-governmental organisation followed by the United Nations. I did little but learned a lot. With my contract coming to an end, I was applying for anything that looked interesting. I jumped at the first relevant offer I received, which was a fully funded PhD examining how houses collapse during coastal flooding in England, with a key example being Canvey Island, on the River Thames downstream of London. I surveyed houses across Canvey Island and across Victoria Dock Village in Hull, analysing their external features to provide minor advances in the fluid mechanics of water flowing through cracks and orifices, unreinforced masonry failure, and glass windows breaking. I never intended to enter academia, but I enjoyed it and have thus far stayed.

More island fragments surface in my memory. The haunting chord shifts in *Islay Ranters Reels* while playing in dawn Ceilidhs. Setting up my island website (https://islandvulnerability.org). Days of cycling around Åland to find research sites. The aurora dancing overhead at noon while walking around Longyearbyen, Svalbard. Placidly drifting past an iceberg in a Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) fjord compared to the bouncy return journey (Video 1).

Video 1 Greenland 2018.mp4

Iceberg and storm in a Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) fjord (2018).

Doing far too many pointless media interviews as the horror of the 26 December 2004 tsunami escalated across Indian Ocean islands and coasts. Completing highly useful research by interviewing eyewitnesses of the tsunami across these islands (Kelman, Spence, Palmer et al., 2008; Spence, Palmer, Petal et al., 2007[1]). The poignant and touching – even inspirational – words of Sri Lankan survivor Kodiyatu Sunimal, reported by the BBC as "But despite everything, I still love the sea. I am an islander." A cetacean corkscrewing through the air in front of our boat motoring alongside Fernando de Noronha, Brazil. Being entranced by the novel *Islandia* (Wright, 1942) each time I read it and now being able to download it for free (a mere 4.3 MB for 1,019 pages).

Some fragments are more amusing than inspirational. Norwegian colleagues becoming inexplicably upset when I pointed out that all our study locations are islands, so we could consider publishing in Island Studies journals. Purchasing a last-minute final-seat plane ticket from Kangaroo Island (KGC) to Adelaide (ADL) (Video 2), because the ferry company could not commit to the boat operating. US anthropologists, who would be expected to be experts in accepting differences and communicating cross-culturally, publicly and privately lambasting me followed by breaking their own rules to remove me from online venues. The reason was that I noted how science, including my own publications of which some are from Island Studies, does not indicate unavoidable destruction from human-caused climate change, such as for islands.

Video 2 Kingscote TakeOff 2017.mp4

Taking off from Kingscote/Kangaroo Island Airport (KGC) for a flight to Adelaide (ADL) (2017).

These interplays of island-ocean, land-water, people-places, and spaces-times fascinate me. It is never clear to me where one or the other starts or ends, given multiple tidal cycles layered on climate and ocean variabilities; human structures and tectonic processes; and peoples who feel they lack existence without their places. These insights are neither original nor deep, with self-identifying islanders long expressing them in many formats and with far more comprehension and eloquence than I could ever manage (Baldacchino, 2007a; Hau'ofa, 1993, 1994, 2008). Coasts as fractals is a basic mathematical construction (Mandelbrot, 1975), with the words 'shoreline' and 'coastline' inappropriately and inaccurately conveying the existence of a delineated (!) boundary that might be fixed or which can be fixed. I soon learned that those living near and with water accept that coasts, shores, and banks are neither lines nor static.

Within these fragments and memories, I am often asked why I am interested in islands and how many islands I have been to. I have never been able to answer either question. Counting islands seems fruitless and would entail defining 'island' and 'been to'. Certainly, when trying to define 'island', academics are talented at arguing over meanings, interpretations and connotations of 'small', 'piece', 'land', 'surrounded' and 'water' – not to mention disputes over 'a', 'of' and 'by'. In particular, have I been on islands, to islands, with islands, by islands, through islands, in islands, or a combination? Video 1 indicates that I have been alongside islands while Video 2 demonstrates that I have been over islands.

[1] I tried to avoid self-citing, but the Editor declined my request.

At the time of writing this piece, I had been to Puerto Rico twice – San Juan airport (SJU) only, which hardly gives me a claim to 'count' it as a visited island. Antigua and Barbuda's High Commission in London has special protections and statuses. I have no desire to amble in, to say "hello/goodbye", and to state that I have now sort-of been-to Antigua and Barbuda or, at least, to a non-sovereign territory strongly linked to the country. Wearing hip waders while seeking snow geese along tundra near Churchill, Manitoba meant stepping onto and off of numerous rocks, tufts, mounds, and damp soil patches. I have passed close to numerous small pieces of land (and ice – Video 1) while in watercraft, including going through tidal zones. I have not entered all the places named for islands, with the 'Beauty Island' shop in Vienna standing out. It does not intrigue me to determine which of these are islands and which are not islands, despite creating a photo essay about them (Island Vulnerability, ndb).

Bringing them all together reveals a constructed memory – constructed through my photos, videos, poems, prose, and performing arts. What has to be intuited are the island(er) images and movies I did not take, the island(er) writings I have not done, the island(er) music I have not played or sung, and the island(er) theatre and dance in which I was not backstage. Fragments absent produce as much of my island (dis)memories as fragments present or created. I have published on Bangladesh's chars (Kelman, 2023) and Venice (Kelman, 2021), despite never having been to either. I extensively photographed, videoed, and learned about St. Michael's Mount, England and La Corbière, Jersey (Video 3), but this is the first piece I have produced in which I mention either.

Video 3 La Corbiere 2025.MP4

La Corbière, Jersey at just the moment that the rising tide sweeps over its causeway, islanding the lighthouse from the island of Jersey (2025).

My island memory and my island memory construction are fragments and are fragmented; basically, islanded in their own ways. Given the inevitable emphasis on the 'me' within 'memory', and that memories frequently could be neither corroborated nor refuted, memory is not necessarily remembered, but rather constructed. In the end, my baseline island memory – away from all the academic justification, pontification, and production – is that I have ended up in Island Studies because I like islands.

Space and Time Fragments

I like islands because they are inspirational spaces for me, beyond being inspirational places and inspirational locations. This inspirational space transcends location and time, rather than being fixed in either. Whether considering this article or what might have been my first sole-authored entirely island studies paper (in *Island Studies Journal* in 2007 although I also had a relevant article in *Les Cahiers de la Sécurité* in 2006), they feed off each other in placeness, timeness, and islandness. It was a privilege to live in Barbados for almost a year, never leaving the island, instead always discovering new facets to its peoples, cultures, histories, environments, and inspirations.

Islands are not my only inspirational space. Mountains, to me, are as inspiring. I lived in a mountain city, Boulder, Colorado, for 2.5 years, walking to work each day with a spectacular view of the Rockies and using weekends to hike along mountain trails. I research polar regions, always being inspired by the Arctic and Antarctica, having had wonderful

opportunities to see parts of the former, but never having been farther south than about 46.9°S. That was Ulva Island, part of Rakiura (Stewart Island), Aotearoa (New Zealand) (Video 4). Borders, too, are core to my inspirations (Island Vulnerability, nda) (especially with the parallels (pun intended) to shore(line)s and coast(line)s in that borders have many forms, are not really lines, have many non-boundary traits, are fluid, and are porous.

Video 4 Ulva Wekas 2025.MOV

Ulva Island, Aotearoa (New Zealand), wekas doing what wekas do best (2025).

This trope of constant change is one baseline of my inspiration. Unlike what is often stated about being inspired through exploration, reaching extremes has never particularly been my interest. Instead, I have been inspired by the journeys through and across space and time for the sake of the change process. For mountains, far too many people have died trying to reach specific peaks or to follow specific routes to a peak, with the epitome (apex?) being the highest point above sea level, currently Mount Everest's peak. Aside from this extreme not being of primary interest or inspiration for me, it can change in an earthquake and will change through continental drift. Nor is it the point farthest from the Earth's centre (Mount Chimborazo's peak) or is it the Earth's tallest mountain (Mauna Kea).

People also died trying to reach the extremes of Earth's South Pole and North Pole, which are merely geographic poles since magnetic and geomagnetic poles exist and change. The East Pole and the WNW Pole, among others, remain elusive, indicating how often extremes are arbitrary. People set out for the Earth's Poles of Inaccessibility or Points of Inaccessibility, mainly taken to be places on land farthest from any ocean and oceanic places farthest from any land. At its baseline, any place farthest from any form of boundary – perhaps a jurisdictional border or any form of water-land interstice – would be a Point of Inaccessibility. Calculations and hence the point can change, depending on how a boundary is defined and whether or not large-scale changes happen to these ill-defined boundaries. Consequently, where a point or pole was identified and then calculations redefined it, False Poles of Inaccessibility or False Points of Inaccessibility prevail, which could be more goals to reach, if they inspire. Often, Europe and Asia are taken as a single continent with a single Pole of Inaccessibility, rather than adhering to the usual arbitrariness of continents, in which they are separate. As an added layer, constructing the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal meant that most of Africa and most of North America respectively became islands! As always, depending on how 'island' is defined. Israel's two periods of occupation of The Sinai Peninsula, 1956-1957 and 1967-1982, islanded Africa.

None of these inspirational spaces to me – islands, mountains, borders, polar regions, and I will add various forms of cities and other settlements—are a category unto themselves ("No man [person] is a mountain" and so forth). They interact, overlap, and co-evolve, typically lacking clear or consistent definitions. The Arctic and Antarctic Circles move over time. Smaller islands can join larger land masses while parts of larger land masses can separate into smaller islands. A sub-field of studying *presqu'îles* (almost islands, rather than a neighbourhood in Lyon) has emerged (Gold, 2016; Hayward, 2016; Fleury and Raoulx, 2016). Any geographic category in space and time typically has as many exceptions or disputes as adherence to proffered rules and agreements. It is, effectively, the intersectionality of geographies.

This space-time interplay of islands-plus yields so much inspiration within and beyond Island Studies:

- Island borders, dividing islands between or among countries or governed sections, such as Borneo, Cyprus, Hispaniola, and Saint Martin / Sint Maarten.
- Island cities, as in cities from islands, such as Auckland, Copenhagen, Havana, and Singapore.
- Island cities, as in cities comprising islands, such as Amsterdam, Bangkok, Montréal, New York City, and Venice.
- Inland deltas as ecological islands, such as for the Amu Darya, Niger (the Macina or Masina), and Okavango rivers.
- Exclaves and enclaves.
- The Small Island Developing States (SIDS[2]) grouping is fundamentally political, has shifted through time, has precedent groupings, and lacks a consistent list (Hassall, 2023; UNCTAD, 2021). Malta and Cyprus were part of the original grouping of small island states, but now no Mediterranean islands are SIDS. Bahrain removed itself as a SIDS in 2023. Noting that analyses can depend on definitions of terms as well as on the list of SIDS used, some SIDS are not small (Papua New Guinea), are not islands (Belize), are not developing (Singapore), and are not states (Montserrat).
- Islands of conflict, such as Cyprus, Kuril Islands, Paracel Islands, and Spratly Islands. Past examples include Ireland and Sri Lanka, although some would contend that the conflicts continue.
- Microstates and micronations, self-declared, such as Christiania (Staden), Molossia, Sealand, Talossa, and Užupis.
- Microstates and micronations, formally recognised, such as Brunei Darussalam, Monaco, and the Vatican City (Holy See).
- Territories unclaimed or governed by unique treaties, such as Antarctica, Biʾr Ṭawīl, and Svalbard.
- Temporary islands, such as from sea grass, plastic accumulation, and disappearance due to a volcanic eruption.
- Doughnut holes: Locations of international waters surrounded (islanded) by countries' Exclusive Economic Zones.
- The International Date Line deviates from the 180° meridian to place countries on the same day of the week. The most pronounced zigzags are to keep the Aleutian Islands on the same day as the rest of Alaska and to keep all of Kiribati together on the same day (although neither Alaska nor Kiribati have a single time zone). Yet the Cook Islands and Niue (Video 5), each self-governing in "free association" with Aotearoa (New Zealand), are on the opposite side of the International Date Line from Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Tokelau which is a non-self-governing territory administered by Aotearoa (New Zealand).
- Virtual islands, with people building, purchasing, and selling them in video games as well as through structures such as NFTs (non-fungible tokens).

As always, categories are not mutually exclusive. Gornja Siga/Liberland is a microstate and unclaimed territory. Sealand is a self-proclaimed microstate and an island. Pheasant Island is a river island (not the clothing company) with a changing border, since its ownership shifts each year between France and Spain. All these examples offer a wealth of academic publications providing amazing knowledge to me.

[2] The acronym SIDS also sadly overlaps with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, said to have been coined in English by Beckwith (1969), and so bringing difficulties to people looking for information on either topic.

Video 5 Vaha Family Band 2025.MP4

Tourists in Niue enjoying the Vaha Family Band (2025).

Some of these entities have been described as 'anomalies,' 'oddities' and 'amusements.' An alternative perspective is that sovereignty and nationhood are strange and manufactured. Countries and states display a variety of governance systems with a variety of autonomies and sovereignties – nationally, supranationally, and subnationally – all of which change over time and through space, again with a wealth of academic publications providing amazing knowledge to me. Venice used to be an island state and is now an island city within a state. Dubai constructed numerous islands in the Persian Gulf, making it an island city, as in a city with islands. The Republic of Minerva was an effort in 1972 to create a sovereign state from reclaimed land. The Order of Malta (known fully as the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of Saint John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta) is a religious order recognised as sovereign, but without any territory of its own. Its existence predates the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) for which one criterion for being a state is "a defined territory", although few countries have ratified this convention. These situations and changes become inspirational for their diversity and lack of consistency, even as people seek patterns, clusters, and categories.

Mustapha Mond, the Resident Controller for Western Europe in the novel *Brave New World* (Huxley, 1932), might sum it up best: "It's lucky that… there are such a lot of islands in the world. I don't know what we should do without them" (p. 270). I paraphrase it as, "it's lucky that there are such a lot of islands always changing through space, time, and concept. I don't know what island studies should do without them".

Manufacturing Inspiration and Memory

As the character Louise Banks explains in the movie *Arrival* (Villeneuve, 2016), "Memory is a strange thing. It doesn't work like I thought it did. We are so bound by time, by its order." Not that I remembered these words or the character's name. I had to look them up in the movie's transcript. For the heptapods, "their written language has no forward or backward direction". Why should our memory?

I remember being the first human being to set foot on Mars, in a place earmarked (Marsmarked?) for an island city once we had manufactured a Martian atmosphere and created oceans around the planet. Then, it all went awry with our spacecraft, so we could not return to the orbiter and hence Earth. We were islanded on Mars, eking out our meagre lander's supplies for a few weeks until we perished, knowing that a rescue mission had not even been tried, because it would have taken months. For being the first, my name will be remembered until human beings evolve into another species.

I remember being the first human being to traverse what is today called the Bering Strait, setting foot on this glorious new-for-humans landmass stretching from a string archipelago in what is today called the north to a cluster of islands and straits in what is today called the south as the springboard for the shortest passage to what is today called Antarctica (an island continent?). The large mammal herds sweeping across the vast tundra and plains would sustain and fatten us as we slip down to the tropical forests teeming with the most bizarre creatures and the most bizarre venoms. There, islands in the sky are entire canopy

ecosystems housing critters with no concept of land beneath them. For being the first, my name will be remembered until human beings evolve into another species.

Except that it wasn't. Nor do I actually have these memories. At least, as far as I can recall.

Total Recall (Verhoeven, 1990) is a movie based on the short story 'We Can Remember It for You Wholesale' (Dick, 1966) whose author was allegedly drug- and memory-addled (Arnold, 2016; Youngquist, 2000). In this movie and story, to spice up people's lives and to island them from an increasingly depraved and hopeless existence, a company offers to implant false memories. Reality and dreams meld for one client who requests specific memories which were based on his earlier life, but which had been suppressed.

Inspiration, too, is suppressed and manufactured. Among the many psychological studies on creating and dampening inspirational actions, Liao et al. (2022) demonstrate that online videos about dealing with impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic responses led to more inspirational actions when the videos and comments about them are themselves inspirational. Thrash et al. (2017) refer to the "inspiration contagion" when reading inspiring poems, although poem's originality slightly suppressed the inspiration gleaned from reading an inspiring poem.

Adopting a poetic perspective to provide islands of words surrounded by blank space:

> The reader here
> will never know
> how much of
> my memory and inspiration
> I suppressed.
>
> Since suppression
> is also standard
> for memory (Mary et al., 2020; Wagenaar, 1986).
>
> Nor will the reader
> ever know
> how much I have revealed,
> how much I have fabricated.
>
> I might
> not
> even know.

From its beginnings, Island Studies – also termed 'Nissology' – intellectualised why studying islands could be explained as important and inspiring (Hache, 1987; McCall, 1994, 1996; Moles, 1982) drawing on theories, policies, and practices. Subsequent and continuing deepening, refining, discussions, and counterpoints (Grydehøj, 2023; Hayward, 2012, 2016; Oroz, 2026; Stratford et al., 2023) further drew on theories, policies, and practices. Islands are reframed as either land with water or water with land (or as both simultaneously), creating neologisms such as "aquapelago" (Hayward, 2012). Others are inspired to detail how "we really do not need a new concept to internalise the multiple ways in which the waters fold into island life; or the islands fold into ocean life: the archipelago still deftly clinches it"

(Baldacchino, 2012, p. 23). The inspiration is in the insightful discussion and respectful disagreement.

With a lack of consensus, and typically a consensus that consensus is not desirable, what of Island Studies is not manufactured? What of an island is not manufactured? What of the manufacturing of Island Studies and islands does not inspire? No word or concept is absolute or fixed – not even this statement! Meanings morph, interpretations innovate, and understandings lack uniformity. Is anything inherent to an island or islander?

Island Studies is replete with explanations of the physical and conceptual manufacturing of islands, from cutting a channel to separate two pieces of land through to etymology across languages (Baldacchino, 2018; Kopaka, 2008; Hache, 1987; Ronström, 2009; Stephens, 2013). Island archetypes range from each harbour anchored in throughout *Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (Lewis, 1952) through to spaceships housing civilisations as they drift toward another star. Fuller's (1969) *Spaceship Earth* islands the Earth within the known universe while Baldacchino and Baldacchino (2025) refer to "Earth as Island Home." Island and islander stereotypes prevail, such as fishing livelihoods (Video 6). Many of these stereotypes are frequently correct, although not always acknowledging variations, for instance islanders living far from water or being vegetarian. Are performers in a Cantonese opera in an outdoor theatre in a pond of the megacity of islands Guangzhou, China (Video 7) temporary islanders, permanent islanders, both, or neither?

Video 6 Bermuda Fisher 2025.MOV

Bermuda fishing (2025)

Video 7 Guangzhou Operat 2024.mp4

A Cantonese opera in Guangzhou, China, a city of islands (2024)

They inspire speculation about islands and islanding. *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace* (Lucas, 1999) offers the undersea settlement of Otoh Gunga on the planet Naboo, matching architectural speculation (Amir, 2015; Kaji-o'grady and Raisbeck, 2005). Islands in the air float via Laputa (Swift, 1726) and Cloud City on the planet Bespin in *Star Wars: Episode V – The Empire Strikes Back* (Kershner, 1980). *The Matrix* movies (Wachowski and Wachowski, 1999 plus sequels) and *12 Monkeys* (Gilliam, 1995) portray human beings islanded in underground settlements.

Questioning different forms of land and placement for islands inspires about different forms of liquid surrounding different forms of solid. A retreating glacier (Video 8) or ice mound is an island of solid water surrounded by land. Pieces of rock in the liquid methane or liquid ethane oceans or lakes of Saturn's moon Titan could be islands. Solidified lava on Jupiter's moon Io is surrounded by liquid lava. The latter happens on Earth when lava flows down a volcano's slopes leaving parts of land or cooled lava poking out. These suggestions are not new. Memory indicates that they have inspired and annoyed interlocuters in Island Studies conferences and manuscript reviewers.

Video 8 Svalbard Glacier 2019.mp4

In a blizzard, strolling along a retreating glacier outside of Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway (2019).

Inspiring Forward, Remembering Forward and Islanding Forward

The opening monologue of *The Glass Menagerie* (Williams, 1944) self-refers – "The play is memory. Being a memory play, it is sentimental, it is dimly lighted, it is not realistic" – and it is fragmented. These descriptors seem to be presented as negative.

Rather than judging, they are what they are, with memory islanding us in our own minds, just like Leonard Shelby in the movie *Memento* (Nolan, 2000). This character lacks the ability to remember anything short-term, from minutes or weeks ago, but he remembers how to function such as eating, driving and walking. He clearly remembers his search for a man he remembers murdering his wife. Shelby, isolated in never-ending forgetting punctuated by remembering past fragments, explains, "I have to believe in a world outside my own mind. I have to believe that my actions still have meaning, even if I can't remember them".

Perhaps Island Studies must believe that islands and Island Studies have meanings, even if we cannot agree on those meanings. Perhaps academics have to believe that papers and presentations have meanings, even when being inaccessible to most of the world's population. I remain flummoxed at why I am so inspired by Island Studies and islands, enjoying these papers and presentations. I remain befuddled at my jumbled memory of my island and Island Studies interests awakening and my alleged contributions to the field.

A more grounded articulation might be that I remain inspired by islands rather than by Island Studies: by liquid, solid, gas, plasma and everything beyond, in between, and overlapping; by islands, continents, and everything beyond, in between, and overlapping; by people, the living more-than-human, the non-living more-than-human, and everything beyond, in between and overlapping; and, ultimately, by space, time, and everything beyond, in between, and overlapping. Or maybe it is simply that the word 'island' contains the letters of my first name in order.

What island or islands have proved particularly inspirational to me? The answer, if it exists, does not really matter, as long as I continue to be inspired and to inspire, backwards and forwards through time and across space. I can definitely assert that my memory is that I have always been and will always continue to be inspired by islands.

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