

Editorial: Five Years On

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The island studies community has had much relevant material to read and contemplate of late; and will soon have more. Three panels were convened at the 2010 annual meeting of the well-attended Association of American Geographers (April 2010), held in Washington DC, USA, to ‘rethink islandness’: discursive spaces and tidalectics in island worlds. Our sister ‘island studies journal’, *Shima*, has just published (as Vol. 4, No. 1) a guest edited collection of papers – the first of three being planned - dedicated to the archaeology of small islands. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics*, a specialist natural science journal, has just published a special issue (as Vol. 12, No. 2) dedicated to comparative ecological research on oceanic Islands. Following in May is a special guest-edited issue of the journal *Space and Culture* (as Vol. 13, No. 2), dedicated to Postcolonial Islands. *New Literatures Review* (NLR), published by the University of Tasmania, Australia, has an island studies special this year, and which will include a seminal and thought-provoking ‘critical survey of island studies’ by Lisa Fletcher. In June, the Small Island Cultures Research Initiative (SICRI) convenes its now annual international conference on small island cultures on Guernsey, Channel Islands. Also in June, a workshop on 'Branding Islands and Small States' is being held in the Isle of Man. Then, in August, we look forward to three international conferences. The first is the biennial conference of the International Small Islands Studies Association (ISISA), its eleventh, being held in Bornholm, Denmark; to be followed in hot pursuit by the second international conference of the Islands Commission of the International Geographical Union (IGU) on the smaller island of Ven, Sweden. Over a hundred scholarly papers will be presented at these two events. The third is scheduled for Ambon, Indonesia, where an international small islands conference will convene to discuss how to “save small islands from global warming”. We would have had yet another international island studies conference, hosted this time in Madeira, Portugal, in July by the Centre for the Study of Atlantic History (CEHA), were it not for serious floods on that island last winter which diverted the conference budget to more needy pursuits.

Meanwhile, an active pesky volcano has kept a small island nation in the news, leading to the cancellation of some 100,000 flights throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Some of our academic colleagues have been stranded for days, here and there. Iceland has had more than its fair share of news visibility of late.

Island Studies Journal (*ISJ*) offers the first issue of its fifth volume as part of these rich offerings. The journal has been generally well-received and continues to be well-regarded, judging from the steady and decent flow of manuscripts, peer reviews and book reviews. The hundredth manuscript to be submitted to *ISJ* was received by this editorial office, without much fanfare, on 17 September 2009. The tally of book reviews carried in *ISJ* is now over ninety. We have come a long way.

But the road ahead is even longer. We embarked with a mandate to provide a platform for serious and rigorous island studies scholarship. Judging from the submissions we have attracted, this we think we have done. But: we also set out to broaden *ISJ*'s academic platform beyond the usual realm of 'Am-Brit' university-based scholars. In fairness, we have been partly successful here – a steady supply of manuscripts and book reviews has been forthcoming from Australia (especially Tasmania) and New Zealand. And yet, in recognition of the fact that places like Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia are some of the world's most heavily populated island nations, with their own tertiary education institutions, and with their own professional researchers, teachers and postgraduate students, we expected to offer a platform to their scholarship as well. But this engagement has not (yet) materialised. This situation may be a result of the Journal's monolingualism and a function of the fact that, for these archipelagic countries in the Asia-Pacific region, 'island studies' may be conceived differently. Be that as it may, may we stress that *ISJ* welcomes submissions from any and all parts of the world.

One thing which we seem to have done well is our book reviews section. With the collaboration of publishers who send us complimentary copies of their material, we continue to publish a steady stream of scholarly reviews of recently published texts dealing with island studies. In some cases, this effort affords a unique opportunity for island studies aficionados to become aware of, and engage indirectly with, a text that may be published in a language that they do not have the fortune to be able to understand except via the services of translator-reviewers. We continue to welcome suggestions from readers as to which books to review and seek volunteers to take on such tasks.

We are pleased to inform our readers of yet another milestone in the evolution and 'coming of age' of island studies. Stephen A. Royle was installed as Professor of Island Geography at Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, in March 2010. This development is probably a first in the history of academe, and suggests increasing recognition among peers in various disciplines and contexts that island studies is a fully-fledged subject of study and inquiry in its own right. We are excited to be able to offer you Professor Royle's inaugural address in this issue of *ISJ*, an apropos inclusion as the Journal kicks off its fifth year.

In her 2010 *NLR* paper referred to above, Fletcher insists that "islands are always already places in process". Their geographical specificity masks a more complex and dynamic constitution that can only be appreciated via ultra-disciplinarity, and multiple methodologies and epistemologies. *Island Studies Journal* has its work cut out.

My thanks to the Editorial Board, so many volunteer reviewers, manuscript submitters, and proof readers, and the various members of staff, students and faculty at the University of Prince Edward Island, for making *ISJ* possible.

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