

Editorial

The prevailing image of Seychelles remains one of a tropical idyll, seemingly immune from the problems of the rest of the world. As we all know, the reality is rather different. True, palm trees on white, sandy beaches provide an exotic backdrop but look closer and the islands are home to the same kinds of shortcomings one finds elsewhere. For those who prefer the pretence of innocence, turn away. As this present issue of the journal shows, there is, inevitably, a dark side to the moon.

First in line is Georges Nicette's probing article on how heroin addiction is portrayed in the media. The author is an authority on ways in which the ubiquitous drug can not only destroy individual lives but also corrodes the very foundations of society. Over the years, he has worked as a social worker and academic, talking to addicts and politicians alike. Deservedly, his groundbreaking research on the subject has recently yielded a doctoral award. In this paper, Dr Nicette invites the reader to question whether there is bias in media reporting and then to consider how this might affect resultant policies. His own goal is always to find the best ways to help addicts seeking ways to break their habit.

Next comes an article on restorative justice, focusing especially on how adolescents who find themselves on the wrong side of the law can best be treated. The author, Lisa Harries, has extensive experience of working at the cutting edge, inside the prison service in South Africa. Some of our readers may have met her during a visit to Seychelles, when she was the lead contributor to a colloquium on the subject of restorative justice. In this latest contribution, she argues that restorative justice can be combined with trauma-induced practice to produce a powerful tool in assisting young offenders. Lisa's understanding of its application in South Africa and internationally offers a valuable source of knowledge for practitioners in our own country.

From questions of social policy, in the next article we move on to the subject of traffic management. Apart from its inherent qualities as an exercise in research, it will be of special interest to those who spend hours each day sitting in traffic jams. Over the past few years, car ownership in Seychelles has soared but the roads on Mahé are more or less unchanged. Two German researchers, Marco Buck and Benno Rothstein, suggest – in a well-argued paper – the use of covered cycling routes, where solar panels are used to generate renewable energy. In this way, traffic movement is improved while, at the same time, making a contribution to the country's sustainability.

Such is the nature of an interdisciplinary journal that the practicalities of traffic management can be followed by an article on the use of folklore to reveal aspects of the histories of a once-enslaved people. Penda Choppy, who heads the Creole Language and Culture Research Institute at UniSey is an international authority in the field. In a recent colloquium (February 2025) she presented the now-published paper on how folk tales passed on between generations have continuing value. Through these otherwise lost histories, important aspects of the cultures of people forcibly brought from Africa to work in the plantations have been kept alive. With her deep understanding of oral history, the

author skilfully guides the reader from the past to present characteristics of Seychelles society.

In the final paper of this issue, Hope Johnson, a doctoral student at Cardiff University, has chosen Seychelles to pursue her interest in the blue economy. While acknowledging the innovative approach to management of the ocean, she is wary of the influence of postcolonial values and contacts in shaping it. Her contention is that the colonial past of Seychelles continues to shape 'how nature is valued, who governs it, and whose knowledge counts in environmental policymaking'. The paper raises interesting questions of how an approach reflecting the priorities of the Global South might lead to different outcomes.

Elsewhere in this issue of the journal, Penda Choppy has provided a report of a colloquium held in October 2025 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Seychelles Creole Festival. And Dennis Hardy has written a book review of a recent publication by Dasrhana M. Baruah on the ocean-centred Indo-Pacific.