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Introduction by the Guest Editor

Relations between Europe and the Pacific have always been multistranded, diverse, and highly dynamic. Yet in the wake of the decolonization process, they have no doubt changed more substantially than in the centuries before. The peoples of Oceania have long been renowned for taking outside interests forcefully on their own terms, but today they also insist on the need to address structural imbalances of power between the region and its former colonizers. The quest for more equal relations with outsiders has even received a sense of urgency because the impact of climate change can no longer be neglected, at least not in the Pacific region. After all, ironically, Pacific peoples may be seen to contribute least while suffering the most from the effects of climate change.

Changing relations between Europe and the Pacific triggered the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO) to organize its tenth conference around this theme to generate new thoughts for the reconsideration of interregional relations. In this special issue, five keynote speeches delivered by leading scholars in the field are brought together to continue the debate about relations between Europe and the Pacific held at the conference in Brussels in June 2015 and also to engage with a wider audience. Collectively, these papers offer some innovative ideas and insights for developing new kinds of relations between Europe and the Pacific in the twenty-first century. They address not only the elementary question what emergent roles and capacities Pacific peoples are fashioning for academics who are interested in their region, but they also discuss the more

fundamental issue concerning the implications of a transformation of research relations for academic questions and the status of knowledge and epistemology. Indeed, they show that a demand for exchanging knowledge into activities that are directly useful for Pacific peoples themselves not only entails different working relations but also new conceptual frames that derive their force from different rationales. Let me begin, however, with a brief sketch of ESfO and its landmark conference in Brussels.

Founded at Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, in 1992, ESfO is a loosely structured organization that meets once every two or three years in some European city, attracting scholars in the field of Pacific studies from around the world, including Australia, New Zealand, the United States and, of course, from the Pacific Islands (see http://esfo-org.eu/). ESfO does not raise membership fees; therefore it operates on a zero-sum budget with no institutional anchorage. In practice, ESfO simply comprises a social network of scholars with a professional interest in the Pacific. ESfO does have a constitution, but this has no statutory status. In fact, it is no more than a set of guidelines for the operation of the organization. The so-called constitution stipulates that ESfO is run by a board, made up of representatives of a range of European countries with some tradition of Pacific studies, but non-Europeans doing research in the Pacific can also become a member. This is also reflected in the countries represented at ESfO conferences. Over the years, the number of delegates from the Pacific, and from the southern hemisphere generally, has increased substantially. In this context, it must be realized that ESfO was established in the era before the Internet was available, which made it inherently more complex to advertise and organize international events. At the same time, it is fair to say that initially European scholars conducting research in the Pacific were not immediately imbued with the need to collaborate with their so-called informants from the South Seas. As His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi astutely remarked in his opening speech in Brussels, ESfO began talking chiefly about the Pacific, if not talking "down to" the Pacific, which gradually changed into talking with and alongside the Pacific. ESfO conferences have always been advertised as widely as possible, but during the first couple of conferences, not many delegates from the Pacific made it to Europe, although an effort has always been made to invite Pacific scholars to deliver a keynote lecture at each conference.

A turning point in the history of ESfO was perhaps the conference held at Verona, Italy, in 2008, which was organized around the theme "Putting People First." This theme was derived from the motto of the Suva Declaration on sustainable human development, which was adopted by the South Pacific Forum in 1993. It expressed a concern for enhancing the quality of life and the continuing well-being of Pacific peoples in light of accelerating processes of economic

and environmental change. The conference theme was addressed most explicitly during a closing round table discussion with only representatives from the Pacific in the panel. All of them forcefully urged their European colleagues to follow up the consequences of adopting the agenda of "Putting People First." They applauded European research in the Pacific but drew the attention of the largely European audience to the fact that research activities entail obligations that tended to be neglected too often. Hence, they appealed to all academics to recognize their responsibilities not only to the academy but also to the peoples of Oceania. They did so by reminding them that Pacific protocol prescribes them to develop research relations into a mutual exchange of knowledge. And they not only wanted knowledge transfers to work both ways, but they also expressed a desire for academics to act upon their findings.

The conclusion of the conference in Verona was subsequently turned into the point of departure for the next conference, held at St. Andrews in 2010, that was organized around the theme "Exchanging Knowledge in Oceania." Theoretically this conference built not only on the call from the Pacific to acknowledge obligations activated by research relations in the region, but also on a parallel call from governments, research funding agencies, industry, and policymakers to demonstrate explicitly the usefulness of academic research and academic knowledge. Indeed, knowledge transfers and plans for public engagement have become key conditions of research funding. The widespread demand for knowledge exchange and its transfer into useful activities, however, entails different working relations and new conceptual frames that derive their force from different rationales. As a consequence, it has become necessary to reflect on the epistemological status of academic knowledge since its exchange value runs the risk of being determined solely by the use value that others consider it to possess. This instrumentalization of knowledge might transform anthropology into a discipline of prescription instead of a refined technique of description that necessitates a fundamental rethinking of cultural concepts.

Interestingly, the conference at St. Andrews was also attended by two representatives of the European Commission, one working for the Directorate-General for Development and the other for the Directorate-General for Research, but both being responsible especially for "relations with the countries and the region of the Pacific," as it was formulated. The European Union's development cooperation with the Pacific is significant, with the EU being the second largest donor of development assistance to the region. Yet it was argued that EU-based initiatives for research in the Pacific are fragmented and also hardly accessible by EU institutions and perhaps also by the wider academic community in Europe and elsewhere. This was thought to hamper the development and coordination not only of Pacific-oriented academic work in Europe but also the establishment of Pacific-tailored policies and strategies by

the European Union. The goal of the visit by the two representatives of the European Commission, therefore, was to explore the possibilities for enhancing cooperation among Pacific-focused academics working in countries belonging to the European Union and to attune their research more to the strategy of the European Union for engaging with the region.

Since the representatives of the European Commission were impressed with the level of expertise available in the European Union and the invigorating debate at the conference of the European Society for Oceanists at St. Andrews, they decided to organize an expert meeting in Brussels in the fall of 2010. For this workshop, some 40 people were invited, including 30 European researchers, mainly anthropologists, who discussed "EU Pacific Research: Contribution to EU-Pacific Relations and the Way Forward." At the workshop, thematic discussions were held about regional security and stability, about the impact of climate change, and on the need to improve the understanding of the Pacific context for more efficient external action on the part of the European Union.

Following the workshop, the European Research Council advertised as part of its Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) a call for proposals on "Climate Change Uncertainties: Policymaking for the Pacific Front." In the call, it was contended that climate change had already had a negative impact on the livelihoods of Pacific people. It was emphasized that it was affecting infrastructure, agriculture, food, and housing availability as well as access to land and water resources, all with the potential to exacerbate tensions around scarcer resources and to affect food security. At the same time, it was stated that European researchers on the Pacific were poorly coordinated and insufficiently linked to policymaking. For that reason, the European Commission advocated the formation of a network of European researchers, including European and non-European researchers from the Pacific and the Overseas Territories in the region, which should develop tools to take stock of ongoing research on the impact of climate change on the Pacific Islands. Furthermore, the network was expected to support EU policymaking on the links between climate change and security-stability-conflict–prevention issues but also migration, governance, access to resources, and economic development to define better options for sustainable development. Finally, the network should also help to address key policy coherence issues, such as the challenge to define the Pacific as a "climate change global priority."

As a result of this call, the European Consortium for Pacific Studies (ECOPAS) was established; it was officially launched at the ninth conference of the European Society for Oceanists held at Bergen in December 2012. Following the aims outlined in the call of the European Research Council, the specific goal of ECOPAS was to provide coordination and support to research and policy communities on issues connected to climate change and related processes in

the Pacific Islands region to define better options for sustainable development. Linkages between research networks and policy interfaces had to be reinforced to contribute to more context-sensitive EU external action and to set a future research agenda for the social sciences and humanities in the Pacific.

ECOPAS was hosted by four recognized European university centers of excellence on Pacific research, in Bergen (Norway), Marseille (France), St. Andrews (United Kingdom) and Nijmegen (Netherlands) and by two major Pacific institutions (i.e., the University of the South Pacific in Fiji and the National Research Institute in Papua New Guinea). ECOPAS was active over a three-year period and intensified extensive collaboration between European and Pacific scholarly institutions, as well as between research institutions and local, national, and international political agencies. It outlined and strengthened the potential of European research in the Pacific by creating a platform and portal for knowledge exchanges (www.pacific-studies.net), a long-term plan for capacity building and a strategic plan for Pacific state and non-state involvement. A final outcome of the project was the delivery to the European Commission of comprehensive, forward-looking, long-term social sciences and humanities research policy agenda for the Pacific Islands region.

The closing event of ECOPAS was organized in collaboration with the European Society for Oceanists that was preparing its tenth conference to be held in 2015. In view of the important connections between the many European researchers affiliated to ECOPAS and the European Society for Oceanists, between which substantial overlap existed, it was decided to organize the conference in Brussels, the capital city of Europe. This major event in the history of Pacific studies in Europe was focused on relations between Europe and the Pacific in a broad sense. It is important to emphasize that the call for proposals did not simply follow the political agenda of the European Union, but it departed from the apparent irrationality that the geographical distance between the regions of Europe and the Pacific does not necessarily hamper cooperation between peoples of the two regions. Although in Europe the region of the Pacific was long viewed as a remote and isolated continent, in recent decades European researchers have capitalized on the insight that Pacific Islanders themselves do not necessarily view spatial separation as problematic. On the contrary, as Epeli Hau'ofa (1994) pointed out so well, spatial separation might paradoxically be regarded as promoting proximity and stimulating connections. This perspective on connectedness characterizes not only social relations across the region, whereas it remains equally important to those islanders who now belong to diasporic communities on the Pacific Rim. Such a vision also suggests that Europe's geographical distance from the Pacific needs not necessarily place it at a relational disadvantange. For European scholarship, the distance between Europe and the Pacific might even be regarded a virtue, as shown, for example,

by the strength of Pacific studies in Europe and the increasing size of ESfO conferences (Hviding 2015).

In some respects, however, European connections to the Oceanic region relate uncomfortably to the aspirations and ambitions of Pacific peoples themselves, as mentioned before. The peoples of the Pacific Islands not only have a long and distinguished history of engaging with the people from other regions in the world on their own social and cultural terms and on the basis of their own economic and political interests. After the decolonization was completed, the spirit of Hau'ofa's "Sea of Islands" (1994) and Ratu Mara's "Pacific Way" (1997) has come to characterize the Pacific's vision for its future, indicating also that Pacific Islanders increasingly demand to define their own priorities in their connections with Europe, including not only policymakers but also academic researchers. These calls from the Pacific for a new kind of relationship with Europe—in whatever shape or form Europe may be perceived as a region—were taken as an interesting yet also critical starting point for further reflection, debate, and dialogue, all in light of the goal to rethink and reconfigure historical, contemporary, and future connections between Europe and the Pacific.

The conference theme generated wide interest such that eventually some thirty sessions were run in parallel over four days, in which a record of 250 papers were presented. Over the four days, the uniqueness and diversity of the Pacific region was explored, debated, and celebrated. Engagements between Europe and the Pacific in past and present were discussed in a variety of dimensions, ranging from colonial relations, contemporary legal-political relations, trade relations, sustainable development programs, humanitarian aid, new migration patterns, and tourism, to environmental concerns and widespread anxiety about the impact of climate change. Many presentations testified to the strength of the Pacific region and the cultural creativity of Pacific peoples in developing alternative future orientations to contemporary global challenges. We were reminded that the problems to be addressed and the questions to be raised in the examination of the multitude of alternatives that the Pacific is offering to the global community are far from simple.

The opening ceremony of the conference was held in the Gothic Room of the old City Hall of Brussels, for which special permission was granted by the Mayor of Brussels. We welcomed 280 participants from more than twenty different countries and nations, with a significant number from the Pacific region, including Samoa, Hawaii, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, and French Polynesia. Included in the audience were also forty-three delegates from Australia, twenty-four from New Zealand, and twenty-two from the United States. Indeed, it might be noted that informally the conference has been described as the largest gathering ever to have taken place in the field of Pacific studies. In any case, the conference is being remembered as a gathering

about the Pacific that was held in Europe but that was attended by a sizeable number of people from around the Pacific Islands.

One of the reasons why such a large contingent of scholars from the Pacific was attracted to the conference was undoubtedly the early announcement that the opening keynote address would be delivered by the Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa, His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taʻisi Efi, one of the foremost Pacific thinkers and writers. His Highness is the eldest son of Samoa's first Head of State and was himself Prime Minister of Samoa from 1976–82. He took up the role of *O le Ao o le Malo*, Head of State, in 2007 and since 2012 has been serving his second term. His Highness is highly respected as a leading expert on Samoan culture and philosophy and is the author of dozens of scholarly papers and addresses (cf. http://www.headofstate.ws/; see also Suaalii-Sauni et al. 2014). His Highness' scholarly writings have reached into climate change, Pacific leadership, the aesthetics of fragrance and sound and political discourse, traditional navigation and bio-ethics, and in each case offer important and original thinking about the issue.

Through his dual role as Head of State and scholar, His Highness was in an exceptional position to comment upon the rubric of the conference about "Europe and the Pacific" and to speak to the emphasis on the human dimensions of climate change in support of European efforts to galvanize the international community and reach a breakthrough to challenge the status quo. In 2014, Samoa hosted, on behalf of the Pacific region, the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS), which put not only Samoa but the entire Pacific region on the international map. The event itself was hailed as a success that demonstrated a Pacific way of putting dialogue rather than negotiation at the heart of international relations. The conference outcome document, entitled the "Samoa pathway," had a significant impact on the changing character of development partnerships and the politics of climate change. As such, Samoa accomplished a remarkable feat. It politely but firmly showed the international community how it should be thinking about partnerships and where it should be going. It demonstrated a Pacific way of responsibly doing relations between persons and it advocated a Pacific way of doing relations between humans and nonhumans. It offered these up as resources to the international community to breakthrough the current paradigm and impasse on climate change.

Following this unprecendented contribution to the international debate about climate change, we were indeed delighted to welcome His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taʻisi Efi to open the tenth conference of the European Society for Oceanists in an overwhelming ambience in Brussels. In his paper, entitled "*Le fuia, le fuia, e tagisia lou vaelau:* Starling, starling, we pine for your nimbleness: Towards a Samoan indigenous framing of responsibility for

'climate change.'" His Highness reflected on the issue of climate change through an exploration and exposition of Samoan indigenous knowledge. His scholarly intervention into the debate about climate change built on his well-known development of the method of using Samoan indigenous reference as a means of engaging contemporary issues and a means of advocating cultural history as a resource for guiding the future. He used the trope of the *fuia*, the Samoan starling bird, which is exceptionally skilled in finding a right balance on flimsy leafs, as a model for the need to strike a new balance between humans and the environment as well as between humans with different cultural values from around the world. He promoted a fundamental dialogue, both critical and commending, with one's own cultural assumptions about the world, with the aim of avoiding both reverential adherence and unthinking abandonment so that everyone may be able to fashion future orientations through the cultural creativity of their own peoples and places.

The address of His Highness represents a relatively recent trend in the international and interdisciplinary field of Pacific studies, which he described as a shift from talking about the Pacific to talking with and alongside the Pacific. This comment in his speech was not only an empirical observation of developments in the European Society for Oceanists, but it was also reflected in the trope of the fuia that simultaneously symbolizes a type of scholarship that is principally based on indigenous knowledge. As such, it is testimony to the progressing process of decolonizing Pacific studies (Uperesa 2016). Initially, it was advocated that decolonization had to be achieved by introducing more indigenous voices and perspectives in the scholarly debates, but soon it was recognized that it also requires the critical scrutiny of established modes of inquiry. This tendency has also been noted by Terence Wesley-Smith (2016), former editor of *The Contemporary Pacific*, who recently revisited his classic paper of 1995 on Pacific Islands studies programs, which was originally published in this journal, *Pacific Studies*.

Some twenty years ago, Wesley-Smith (1995) put out an overview of Pacific studies programs, in which he made a distinction between three different rationales for Pacific studies teaching and research: the "pragmatic rationale" that emphasizes the need to know about the Pacific Islands for metropolitan countries, the so-called "laboratory rationale" that values the Pacific Islands and their peoples as objects for study, such as in classic anthropology and linguistics, and, finally, the "empowerment rationale" aiming at the liberation of Pacific studies from the hegemonic use of western theories and methodologies to complete the process of decolonization. A seminal contribution to the latter frame for doing research was the highly influential book *Decolonizing methodologies* (1999, 2012) by the Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai-Smith. She focused especially on the question whether western intellectuals can be reliable allies in the resistance

to imperialism and argued that peoples who are subjected to research should always be able to control all research that concerns them directly or indirectly. Soon, however, the debate shifted from the question who is conducting Pacific Studies to the question how it is practiced, which introduced the demand for more attention to indigenous epistemologies.

Over the past two decades, a range of Pacific intellectuals has been instrumental in the reconstitution of indigenous knowledge, including David Gegeo (2001; see also Gegeo and Watson-Gegeo 2001, 2002), the Hawaiian educationalist Manulani Aluli Meyer (2001, 2003), the Maori scholar Mere Roberts (Roberts and Wills 1998; Roberts et al. 2004)), the Fijian scholars Elise Huffer and Ropato Qalo (2004), and, last but not least, the Indo-Fijian professor in literature at the University of the South Pacific, Subramani (2001, 2003), who was a strong advocate of an interdisciplinary approach in which distinctions between oral speech and written materials, and between visual imageries, music, and performance had been abandoned. Subsequently, he became an important drive behind a major, interdisciplinary conference on Pacific epistemologies held in Fiji in 2006. The ultimate aim of the quest for indigenous knowledge was formulated unequivocally at this conference: to discard the mantle of colonialism and to achieve indigenous sovereignty throughout the Pacific.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to reflect on this new, important body of indigenous scholarship from the Pacific in depth, but I would briefly like to raise two issues. First, Houston Wood (2003, 2006) and Terence Wesley-Smith (2016) have pointed out that the rise of indigenous epistemology is particularly strong in societies that are suffering from the legacy of colonialism, such as Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand, where they have emerged as central part of widespread campaigns to regain sovereignty. Intertwined with the colonial experience, however, is a rather strict demarcation of boundaries between indigenous and nonindigenous, implying an essentialization of cultural differences, which also disguises cultural diversity within indigenous societies. Second, indigenous knowledge itself is, as a corollary, often also essentialized in such a way that it hardly reflects the various ways of knowing that characterize Pacific societies (Wesley-Smith 2016, 162; see also Van Meijl f.c.). Indeed, knowledge in the Pacific is rarely bounded and unquestionable and it has always been subject of debate, contestation, and negotiation. Many influential Pacific scholars, among whom Epeli Hau'ofa (2008), have demonstrated compellingly that consensus about knowledge is rarely given and usually only temporary, which should be taken on board in any attempt that aims at the completion of the decolonization process of Pacific studies. The various contributions to this special issue endorse and elaborate the view that various ways of knowing are characteristic of Pacific epistemologies, although they focus especially on their implications for future relations between Europe and the Pacific.

These insights into the debate about indigenous epistemology are directly relevant for a range of topical issues, among which climate change and how this should be addressed by institutions of governance in the Pacific and elsewhere because it is a global phenomenon par excellence. Indeed, one of the major strategic challenges in the Pacific relates to the governance of the region, including Overseas Countries and Territories, which has become especially urgent in the context of climate change and its dramatic consequences (e.g., sea level rise, ocean acidification, droughts, and related processes of variable weather systems combined with other forms of environmental change posing threats to the future viability of local lifestyles and national economies that rely on the biodiversity of coral reefs and coastal rain forests, in some cases on low-lying land of very modest extent). In her paper "Our rising sea of islands: Pan-Pacific regionalism in the age of climate change," Katerina Teaiwa discusses scholarly, artistic, and activist networks and projects that move beyond national borders to address issues of growing regional significance such as climate change. Since climate change, much like the earlier *Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific* movement, has begun to achieve multigenerational and multiscalar resonance, an increasing number of critical, engaged Oceanians are writing, performing, and speaking regionally and globally about a range of important issues associated with climate change. The participation profile of these people and projects challenges what some scholars used to critique as regional idealism of interest just to political elites, including Hau'ofa's "Sea of Islands" and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara's "Pacific Way." Teaiwa discusses "Oceania Rising" in Honolulu, "Oceania Interrupted" in New Zealand, "Oceania Now" in Australia, the "Rethinking and Renewing Oceania" discussion forum, the "350 Pacific" and "Pacific Climate Warriors" actions against climate change and fossil fuel consumption (see also McNamara and Farbotko 2017), and the multisited "Wansolwara" movement from which the "We Bleed Black and Red" campaign emerged. She also contextualizes these social movements in terms of official Australian, New Zealand, and European research and development policies, and, following Kate Stone, offers a an innovative perspective on critical regionalism and "an Oceanic identity for the ordinary people."

As Teaiwa focuses on social movements that are reinforcing Oceanic regionalism, which is also crucial for the coordination of international climate change policies, Joeli Veitayaki expands the debate into a geopolitical perspective on international responsibility for the governance of the Pacific Ocean. In his contribution about the "Ocean in us: Security of life in the world's largest ocean," Veitayaki offers a compelling description of the vulnerability of many Pacific Island countries that are threatened to become conquested by the sea, which is even predicted to worsen with the effects of climate change. Most of his

examples are from Fiji but many also from other Small Island Developing States in the Pacific that are not benefiting fully from their marine resources attributable to inadequate technical and management capacity and also because of limited financial and physical resources. These are not only critical aspects of life in the Pacific Ocean, but the unprecedented levels of change threaten even the very existence of countries and communities. Although Pacific peoples are observant, adaptive, and resilient, traits honed by millennia of close association and intimacy with their ocean and island homes, contemporary changes such as global warming, acidification, environmental degradation, alteration and loss of natural habitats, loss of territory and boundaries, globalization, and rampant consumerism seem to herald a gathering tropical cyclone or tsunami of a magnitude greater than anything Pacific Islanders have ever faced. To be sure, Veitayaki sketches a bleak picture of the contemporary situation in the Pacific, but in his view there is still hope for the future. Following Henry Puna, Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, he emphasizes the urgent need to recast a regional identity into a Large Ocean Island State to define the future of the Pacific on its own terms.

Emmanuel Kasarhérou, former head of the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre (Nouméa) and currently curator in the Musée du quai Branly (Paris), contributes a unique paper, entitled "The sharing of cultural heritage between Europe and the Pacific: The Kanak experience," in which he explains how European and Pacific relations are being renegotiated in museums that are holding objects originating in New Caledonia. For more than twenty-five years, New Caledonia has experienced different projects aiming to reconnect the Kanaks, the indigenous population of the archipelago, to their material culture from which they have been separated for more than a century. Mainly held abroad and particularly in museums in Europe, this part of their tangible culture has found its way back to New Caledonia successfully through different ways: temporary exhibitions, long-term loans, and publications. The Inventory of the Kanak Dispersed Heritage (IPKD) totaling 5,000 significant cultural objects held in eighty museums throughout the world has been the last project that was released in Nouméa in July 2016. Kasarhérou examines the conditions, expectations, and results of these experiences in a nation-building context and discusses their implications for reshaping relations between Europe and the Pacific. His article offers a compelling description of changing practices in museums that reflect not only the emergence of indigenous models of cultural property that redefine relations among objects, property rights, indigenous peoples and ownership regimes of institutional or other authorities. At the same time, they emphasize, the complicity of the cultural sector in creating powerful interventions into ways of thinking about relations between indigenous peoples and their former colonizers.

Finally, we are pleased to include the Sir Raymond Firth Memorial Lecture, which was delivered by Joel Robbins, Sigrid Rausing Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge, who talked about "Anthropology between Europe and the Pacific: Change, exchange and the prospects for a relationship beyond relativism." He departs from the major role that anthropology has played in mediating the relationship between Europe and the Pacific, which is no doubt more significant than it is for any other world region. This implies that changes in the wider relationship between these two regions may have a strong impact on anthropological thought, even as disciplinary changes can in some respects shape at least the European view of the Pacific. In this paper, Robbins considers changing anthropological understandings of this relationship and their impact on the ways anthropologists approach their studies of Pacific societies. In particular, he zooms in on how studies of social and cultural difference tied to notions of relativism and its critical potential have given way to a focus on local responses to broad global problems such as AIDS, climate change, and increasing inequalities generated by the global economic system. In an attempt to reframe what too often appears as a choice between exoticizing particularlism and Euro-American common sense universalism, he examines Pacific models of sociality to find a relational value for difference beyond relativism that suggests some truly novel grounds for thinking about the relations between Europe and the Pacific. Robbins argues, in other words, that the rise of a universal discourse of human rights in international debates about global issues has not only led to the disappearance of relativism but also to a decline of the anthropology of cultural differences. As a consequence, he promotes the recovery of anthropology's commitment to cultural diversity without falling into the trap of relativism, which in his view would encourage Europeans and others generally to rethink and revalue the important value of connectedness for Pacific Islanders.

In sum, these five papers by leading thinkers in the field of Pacific studies offer new thoughts for reconsidering relations between Europe and the Pacific in a variety of dimensions, with significant implications for anthropological and other academic practices. Oceania has given anthropology a disproportionate amount of the discipline's intellectual resources and key theoretical tools. Even aside from a rich body of influential ethnography, it has provided the exemplary materials for the development of fieldwork methods and analytical models of kinship, gender, and exchange. As mentioned before, however, the peoples of Oceania are also renowned for taking outside interests forcefully on their own terms, as the histories of colonization and decolonization attest. Therefore, all issues and questions that are addressed in this special issue are newly implicated again in the transformations of research relations between Europe and the Pacific in the twenty-first century.

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