

# Editorial Note - The Global Pacific: Coastal and Human Habitats

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The present special issue is based on a call for papers that sought to explore the ways in which the Pacific is being re-imagined. Not surprisingly, our point of reference was Epeli Hau'ofa's seminal essay 'Our Sea of Islands' (1993). This text is the point of departure for transformative Pacific studies, an emerging disciplinary area that decolonises the Western academic discourses of which it is part. In his call for the reconceptualization of the Pacific as 'a sea of islands belonging to Pacific peoples' instead of 'far flung islands in the South Seas', Hau'ofa instigated a revolution. His essay was pointedly addressed to academics and administrators in the region who were perpetuating, through their research, teaching, and policies Western perceptions of the Pacific as remote, disconnected, and above all, lacking. By challenging this then widely held attitude, Hau'ofa reframed the region in terms of the *Moana*, that is, indigenous views of the Pacific. From this 'internal' perspective rather than that of distant Western shores, the Pacific consists of interrelated archipelagos connected by water - as opposed to being separated by it. Moreover, such connections extend to all aspects of the Pacific's diversity.

The present issue brings together contributions that aim to act in the same spirit, reconceiving of their chosen topics in innovative and radical ways. This type of thinking operates by either reimagining the familiar or by identifying new objects within it; objects that, once recognised, transform our understanding of what we thought we knew. Contributions include architectural imaginings, literary and aesthetic analyses, poetry, political analysis, and studies whose methodologies are based on Pacific ways of knowing. Indeed, the contributors to the present special issue come from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. They have offered their work as part of a contribution to our understanding of the Pacific in a holistic way, but one that is transformative, in the sense of being self-reflexive. As such, the contributors address topics relating to the Pacific but are equally concerned with the discourses of which they are part. The juxtaposition of self-reflexive, disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches promotes dialogue and reflection from a 'global perspective' which aims to be holistic and inclusive. However, the term 'global' requires further clarification.

Accordingly, the special issue begins with a contribution by Ian Fookes entitled 'Exploring the Relationship between Global Studies and Ekistics'. In this article, the author elaborates on the meaning in which 'global' is used in the issue's title, before arguing that global studies has been simultaneously attempting to define itself through its interdisciplinary history and progression beyond its roots in International Relations and Area Studies, as well as maintaining a stance according to which it resists definition in order to remain a 'boundaryless' field of study. This 'transdisciplinary' aspect of Global Studies is then compared with the C.A Doxiadis' approach to ekistics. Despite some tensions between the ambition of ekistics to be the science of the problems of human settlements and the 'boundaryless' aspect of global studies, the common ground relating to transdisciplinary and the applied nature of both fields is established.

Norman Wei's contribution, 'Pacific Man – A Future Speculation developed from Pacific Architectonics' presents an exercise in imaginary architecture that deploys Pacific construction techniques to reimagine the notion of land-based settlement. His study challenges Ekistics theory to develop by highlighting its bias towards land-based settlements, thereby coming into dialogue with Pacific ways of knowing and the special relationships to water prevalent in the *Moana*.

This is followed by Ricardo Arribas' article, 'Spacing Decoloniality: De-figuring the Coloniality of Space and Subjectivity in the Caribbean and Oceania'. This author provides an analysis of the ways that space is reconceived and used as a pertinent critique in works by Ibrahim Miranda, John Puhiaata Pule, Epeli Hau'ofa, and Eduardo Lalo. The article highlights the ways that these artists reimagine geographical outlines and landscapes to decolonise their experience of colonial space. However, such decolonisation is not guaranteed of success as Arribas' analysis of the fate of intellectuals in archipelagic postcolonial spaces demonstrates. Through an analysis of Hau'ofa's short stories, he shows that the educated elite are faced with harsh dilemmas vis-à-vis their societies, pointing out the challenges in neo-colonial and postcolonial contexts in the Caribbean and the Pacific. Arribas analyses how the works of these artists and writers reimagine space and time in acts of resilience and reasserted agency, gesture which, nevertheless, cannot escape the entangled nature of postcolonial states.

Our focus then shifts towards the way that the Pacific is being studied. Stephen Noakes and Anna Powles present a critical literature review of recent texts on the Pacific from a Politics and International Relations perspective. The review concerns what is known about China's shifting role in the region. The analysis highlights the need for analyses from within the Pacific to play a more prominent role in discussions about the geo-political rivalries and dynamics operating within the region.

In a timely response to this call, Bangguo Du and Patrick Thomasen's study, 'Outside in the *Moana*? Exploring Chinese International Students' Experiences of Studying in Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland through Su'ifefiloi' is a demonstration of what can be understood when Sāmoan methodologies are used to study contemporary experiences in the

Pacific. It not only provides a snapshot of the challenges of studying in Aotearoa New Zealand as a Chinese student, but also serves as an example for further studies into contemporary experiences within Pacific contexts. Significantly, this study reveals how Chinese students in Pacific Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand feel doubly 'other' as they recognise their place as outsiders within a postcolonial nation and as students of a non-western subject area within western academia.

Further pursuing the theme of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, Daisy Bentley-Gray's account, 'Pacific Peoples in Tertiary Education in Aotearoa New Zealand' provides a complementary snapshot of the student experience from the perspective of someone responsible for helping migrants and international students. The challenges identified are different, yet not unrelated, to those highlighted by Bangguo and Thomsen's account. Bentley-Grey provides an account of the student experience with regards to the wider migrant journey from Sāmoa.

This discussion is then extended by Tiyanqi Luo and Patrick Thomsen with an article based on a complementary study of the role that China is now playing in the formal study of Pacific languages. This analysis clearly indicates that China is engaging in the Pacific in new ways linked to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Moreover, by using the Fa'afaletui methodology, Luo and Thomsen are able to grasp with clarity the structure and ambition of the Chinese language teaching policy currently being implemented. This has implications for our understanding of the extent of the Maritime Silk Road and the practical implementation of the BRI in the Pacific.

The impact of the BRI in the Pacific is then addressed from a different angle. Ian Fookes discusses the ways that Yuki Kihara's work 'A Song about Samoa サモアについてのうた' engages viewers in a specifically global art practice which embraces the political. Fookes outlines the ways that Kihara challenges viewers to reimagine their understanding of themselves, their past, and the Pacific region more broadly. Specifically, the work shifts our attention away from questions of identity to a clear focus on the issues raised by globalisation, the impact of climate change and the environmental concerns that take centre stage for Pacific peoples. Kihara's depiction of Sāmoa on Kimono made of siapo material present a mural-like 'aidscape' that highlights the central importance of aid and development to the problems facing Pacific nations. This directly implicates Japanese aid projects as well as drawing attention to the dangers of receiving foreign aid within the context of the BRI.

Kihara's message is rendered more tangible by Glenda Tibe Bonifacio whose report 'Gender and Equity in Post-Haiyan Disaster Resettlement Communities in the Philippines: Reflections from Fieldwork in Leyte' outlines the disproportionate and unforeseen effects of post-disaster aid initiatives on local populations.

The issue then shifts gear and transitions back to the central theme of re-imagining the Pacific. This transition is achieved through the inclusion of a poem by Fiona Chivers-Sherrifs that recalls landing in Tahiti on a flight from Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides a perspective on the Pacific from that particular moment.

Continuing the theme of re-imagining the Pacific, Beau Miles has kindly provided us with an extract from an early draft of his book *Backyard Adventurer* (2022). His text describes how he commutes to work from his rural lifestyle block to the University of Melbourne. His journey takes in the familiar route through the unfamiliar perspective of a pedestrian. The unconventional reflection is an exercise in phenomenology, and helps us to see the impact of our infrastructure on the landscape, and the commute on our perception of our surroundings.

The issue closes with a book review by Peggy Lauer who presents a heartfelt account of Huey D. Johnson's memoir *Something of the Marvelous: Lessons learned from my sixty years as an environmentalist* (2021) (Fulcrum group). The review is an appropriate way to conclude the special issue: It describes the life and philosophy of an innovative and pragmatic land protector who played a key role in protecting the environment in the United States and the Pacific. Indeed, Huey Johnson and his mission were truly global in nature and impact.