The place is dignified by the doer’s deed.

*Shakespeare, All’s Well That Ends Well, Act ii, Scene 3*

To me, Bob Kiste is more than a college professor. He is a mentor, an advisor, and a good friend. He introduced me to his family, took me to the beach, and motivated me to work hard. For someone like me who was far away from home, Bob Kiste was a godsend teacher.

*John Haglelgam, former president,*

*Federated States of Micronesia*

This book celebrates an idea and an individual. The idea is the importance of place in our lives, and the individual is Robert C. Kiste.

First the idea. Place matters. It gives us identity, shapes our imagination and experience, and informs our understanding of the world around us. It is both matter as well as metaphor, a source of material as well as of cultural and spiritual sustenance. It can be “home” or “away.” It sets limits on those who live there. It connects us to time and locality, perhaps even to life and death. The need to connect, to claim or reclaim, resides deep within us all. But just as place shapes us, so do we shape places physically and imaginatively. The transformation of space into place can be a private act, but it can also be a very public and social one as well. Whatever the nature, purpose, or context of the construction, places are never neutral; they are defined by our hands and by our minds. Places change, sometimes even beyond recognition, but often they remain fixed in our minds as unchanged and unchanging reminders of past moments, past connections between place and person. And they become more complicated with each passing day with the transnational movement of peoples, ideas, technologies, and cultures. Global capitalism complicates and alters established ethnographic assumptions about the meaning and importance of place.
This collection of essays is a reflection on the significance of place. I invited a number of scholars of the Pacific Islands to reflect on places that have been important to them in their personal and professional lives and to contemplate how their experience of them has enriched their scholarship and helped raise larger questions about the construction of identity and epistemology and, beyond that, an understanding of the human condition itself in all its variety and diversity. The emphasis had to be on a dynamic engagement with, and interaction between, the writer and his or her place, rather than a straightforward narration of research. And place was defined broadly as a site to include not only physical spaces—atolls, islands, villages, towns and cities, the ocean and the beach—but also such things as a spatially contextualized historical event, a special moment in time in a place, an office or a library, an important formative experience for the writer that helped raise the larger questions I have already mentioned. Most, but not all, of the contributors chose a physical place for their critical reflection.

The result is a veritable collage of deeply moving pieces, diverse in their origins and divergent in their journeys and transformations. These essays are about a group of people and their travels to or from different places, their interactions with them, the way in which that experience influenced their thinking and forced them to jettison previously acquired paradigms as inadequate or irrelevant, to embrace new modes of thought, to better comprehend the complexity of the new environment, and—in some cases—to take a stand and declare their hand. They are about “letting go,” about learning and unlearning, about transgressing physical, emotional, and intellectual boundaries. They are about personal quests. Each writer approaches the subject of place from the perspective of his or her own disciplinary background: as a historian, a geographer, an anthropologist, a political scientist, a literary scholar, or a combination of any of these.

Personal and scholarly endeavors are often closely interconnected, and that is one of the strengths of this collection—to discover how people from a multitude of backgrounds and experiences contemplate a single theme. Such a cross-disciplinary reflection, which transcends the essentialist construction of place and identity, enlivened by more passion and imagination—or at least personal approach—than academic writing generally allows, is both liberating as well as overdue. Each essay can be read and enjoyed on its own, without the need for editorial summation, which would be difficult and undesirable in any case.
The essays have their own internal coherence and character, and they speak cogently in their own distinctive voices, raising their own particular concerns. It would have done great violence to their integrity for me as editor to impose an artificial uniformity on their style and expression.

Broadly, the essays place themselves in three overlapping clusters. The first, which opens the book, is about journeys from one place to another and the authors’ reflection upon the emotional and intellectual texture of the transformations they experience: Mac Marshall from California to the islands of Micronesia; Kerry Howe from Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island to Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand; Terence Wesley-Smith from Ireland to Hawai‘i via New Zealand; and Stewart Firth from Port Moresby to Suva through a sojourn in Hawai‘i. The second cluster is a meditation on a single (physical) place: Gerard Ward on the Taupo Country in the North Island of New Zealand; Hank Nelson on Rabaul; Eugene Ogan on Bougainville; Clive Moore on Malaita in the Solomon Islands; and Fran Hezel on the atoll of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia. Linking this cluster with the next are reflections by Mark Mosko (on the Maipa of the Central Province of Papua New Guinea) and David Hanlon (on Wone Valley on the volcanic island of Pohnpei) on how their intense engagement with a single place has shaped their intellectual perspectives as an anthropologist and as a historian, respectively. The last cluster offers a set of more directly autobiographical reflections: Teresia Teiawa and I on our formative experience of university education at Mānoa and Laucala Bay, respectively; Joakim Peter on his love affair with Uleletiw, the place of his childhood; Karen Peacock on her experience as the custodian of the most extensive Pacific research library in the world; and Ben Finney on his involvement in the Hōkūle‘a project. Mike Rynkiewich’s evocative piece on his journey from Minnesota to Micronesia provides a fitting conclusion to the book and takes us back to the theme of the first cluster.

Time frames overlap. Some of our contributors have been in the field, so to speak, from the late 1940s to the present, while others came a generation later. There is thus a progression from older to less-old (to put it politely) scholarly generations from the 1950s to the 1990s. Reading through their professional and personal lives gives us vivid recollections of a half century stretching from the end of the Pacific War to the end of the millennium. Come to think of it, there are a lot of nos-
talgetic “ends” here, which is not altogether surprising in a book such as this: end of a career, end of a place as it once was, end of island civility, end of positivist history, end of colonial empires, end of youth and innocence, and the death of friends and mentors. Occasionally, there are happy endings as well: the emergence of a professional Nasioi anthropologist (and of island scholars generally throughout the region) and possible settlement of the Bougainville crisis. These years also saw the establishment of major Pacific area studies institutions—Research School of Pacific Studies at The Australian National University, the Center for Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawai‘i, the Pacific Collection of the Hamilton Library, the East-West Center, to name only a few—and of island universities at Laucala Bay in Fiji and at Waigani in Papua New Guinea. Each experience has its own unique character, but taken together, the essays provide a generous overview of the past fifty years of Pacific studies.

They do more. They humanize our experience. We live in a world full of endless and often mind-numbing talk about globalization, localization, identity, the clash of civilizations and collision of paradigms, about the end of history. Indeed, there is a flourishing academic industry around these subjects. The discourse is conducted at a high level of abstraction and expressed in a language that is inaccessible, if not often downright impenetrable. The essays here ground the discussion in personal experience, through individual stories about the spiraling relationship between boundaries and migration, between indigenous and exogenous, between home and abroad, and about people attempting to make a home in places far distant from the place of birth. We note in them the importance, for many of our contributors, of what might be called “fictive homing” that recalls the better-known practices of fictive kinship.

The essays collectively raise an overarching set of issues and themes that frame the overall structure of the book. I can do no more than alert the readers to some of them, secure in the inescapable knowledge that they will all “read” the various reflections through the prisms of their own social, cultural, and intellectual experiences and backgrounds. We all know that in the Pacific Islands, physical space is more than a commodity. It is invested with all kinds of social and spiritual significance. A Fijian vanua is more than a physical locality. It encompasses land, people, the social system, and a culturally distinct way of life whose experience goes to the heart of how indigenous Fijians understand
their selves. A Fijian may live in the remotest part of the world and acquire a new citizenship, but his or her native place, recorded in the Vola Ni Kawa Bula, the Register of Native Births, is permanent; the link to the place of birth is ineradicable. Non-Fijians may live side by side with Fijians, even for a century, and share the fruits of the land and interact in the marketplace and on the sport field, but admission to the membership of the *vanua* is impermissible. Salman Rushdie’s contention in the aftermath of the Fijian crisis of 2000 that migrant peoples “do not remain migrants forever,” that in the end “their new land owns them as once their old land did, and they have a right to own it in their turn,” cuts no ice with the indigenous nationalists.

The indigenous Fijians are not alone in the Pacific Islands in their assertion of exclusiveness about land. Joakim Peter writes about the depth of attachment Pacific Island people have to their place: “We need to belong to places, the physical plots, taro field, coconut grove, sandy beaches, portions of reefs, fishing corals, and island in general.” If there is one thought that island people cannot endure, it is “the idea of being lost, of being without a place.” Come to think of it, much of the conflict in the contemporary Pacific—in Bougainville, in the Solomon Islands, and in Fiji, to name only a few notable, or notorious, examples—is about place, about who is allowed to belong and who is not, about the obligations and responsibilities that belonging brings with it. It is much the same in other troubled parts of the world.

But places can be just as intimate, just as full of warm memories, even if you are not native to them. This is perhaps the strongest theme that emerges from the book. The sense of belonging, attachment, affection, involvement, the deeply felt obligation to contribute, to give something back, to cherish a continuing relationship, to be part of a place, is as inescapable in the essays as it is powerful. Boundaries of exclusion, drawn on the basis of ethnicity or some other equally essentialist criteria, binary oppositions between “us and them,” “outsiders and insiders,” and “natives and strangers” are blurred and porous, not to say obsolete, for most of our contributors. As Kerry Howe puts it, in our search for interpretive specificity, “we can sometimes overlook the basic commonness of our humanity, which includes self- and cultural doubt, and compromise, and opportunism, and compliance, and all the myriad ways humans behave.” Or as Mac Marshall suggests, as he contemplates the Namoluk Atoll diaspora at the Micronesia Mall in Guam, the University of Hawai‘i campus in Honolulu, in Portland,
Oregon, and in the lumber town of Eureka, California, islands today are islands in the physical sense alone.

Gerard Ward takes great pride and joy in being given the Maori name Tuwharetoa by Te Mare Kerera, elder sister of Hoani Te Heuheu Tukino VI, paramount chief of Ngati Tuwharetoa. His experience of growing up in the Taupo District of the North Island of New Zealand, he writes, “laid the foundation for many of my later interests, attitudes, and even my profession as a geographer.” And so it goes, as other contributors remind us. They all would “claim” a place in the Pacific for themselves as an integral part of their existence, while being sensitive to the concerns and aspirations of the indigenous communities. They would all share Mike Rynkiewich’s reflection on his time in Micronesia: “I don’t have saltwater in my veins, but I am getting a transfusion.” I suppose what matters in the end is not how we are defined by others, how the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion are drawn, but how we define ourselves and where we decide to take a stand.

Places claim us even if some people don’t, laying the foundation for long and deep—and not always untroubled—relationships. But which human relationship is free of friction? “Bougainville and Nasioi will never cease to be important to me,” says Eugene Ogan, who has kept in touch with the island’s fateful history for nearly forty years. For Fran Hezel, Chuuk “was my classroom and my laboratory [and] the home of some of my best friends.” David Hanlon calls himself “a Child of Wone” in Pohnpei. Mac Marshall has spent more than half his life with the people of Namoluk Atoll. “We stay in touch,” he says, “we see each other when we can, whether in the U.S. or in Micronesia; we mourn together when someone from the community dies. I do not fool or flatter myself that I am ‘one of them.’ I know better. But I also know that our lives are intertwined in a profoundly meaningful way that none of us can undo, even if we wanted to. The island experience has shaped the way I relate to others.”

Island places sometimes do more than just shape, as Mark Mosko reminds us. Mark has been studying the Maipa people for more than two decades. Maipa, and the Mekeo generally, have a well-established reputation for practicing magic and sorcery, and Mark wonders whether his “fixation” with Maipa, returning to the same place, same clan, same family ties, same network of adoptive relations and friends year after year, much to the puzzlement of his Western academic colleagues, is not due in some way to Maipa magic. “My mind—my likes
and dislikes, even as regards to what I think—has been changed by Maipa,” he says. Other places yield their secrets in different ways. Rabaul, the city built by and for Germans, captured by Australians in 1914, occupied by Japanese forces in 1942, retaken by Australians in 1945, and handed back to Papua New Guinea in 1975, has cast its own magic spell on Hank Nelson, who has been contemplating the place ever since he went to Papua New Guinea in 1969. He uses the occasion of his visit there soon after the city was devastated by a volcanic eruption in 1994 to reflect on its history, its contradictions, its “tropical fecundity, the occasional drift of sulphur, the volcanic peaks and instability,” all of which were in sharp contrast to the “flat, stable, red-and-brown Australian landscape” of his youth. Hank Nelson reminds us of the complex relationships between people, places, possessions, and feeling at home.

A deep and empathic engagement with a place does not only enrich us as individuals, but also has the capacity to confound conventional wisdom and collapse the categories and paradigms we carry in our heads. Fran Hezel went to Micronesia as a Jesuit priest armed with the theories of psychology that, he thought, would unlock the deep secrets of the island peoples’ heart and soul. Ideas, he thought, were what really mattered. His encounter with the Chuukese people soon set him straight, forcing him to the conclusion that insight into the island culture would come from focusing on social relationships and networks and not from peeking into the minds of individuals. With time, he began to sympathize with the Chuukese’s impatience with abstract ideas, ideas that “soared too high above the roofs of the houses.” Eugene Ogan confronted a similar truth in Bougainville, finding the arcane debates in his discipline of anthropology at Harvard irrelevant to comprehending the complex realities in the field. “Any notion of disciplinary purity—that anthropology should remain aloof from history, political studies, or sociology—today strikes me as laughable,” he says. His Bougainville work gradually took him away from conventional anthropological issues to a greater concern with colonialism and with social change.

Terence Wesley-Smith, who came to Hawai‘i well schooled in dependency theory, reaches a similar conclusion as he moved from “dispassionate discourse to more committed and objective engagement” with Pacific studies. The “conceptual structure of articulating modes of production and class relations” seemed to him “mechanistic
and far removed from the actual experiences of the people caught up in the maelstrom of externally generated change.” He found the contentious issues swirling around the Hawaiian sovereignty movement emotionally and pedagogically difficult, couched, as they often were, in narrow ethnic and exclusivist terms. But ultimately, it was a liberating process. “It has forced me to confront some hard questions about the politics of knowledge that I had only toyed with before.”

Encounters with new places, if we keep an open mind, can also alert us to new ways of looking at things, open up paths to possibilities for alternative interpretations. David Hanlon’s reading and writing of history is deeply influenced by his experience of living and working in Pohnpei. Western scholarship, he says, is simply unable to cope with the range and complexity of the island’s past, recorded not in written texts but in lineages, titles, ritual practices, clan titles and movements, and land rights. “I came to understand and appreciate how histories on Pohnpei are by their very nature personal, political, partial, fragmented, contested, privileged, and not at all hesitant to acknowledge the involvement of deities and other spirits.” How to preserve the integrity of local histories, with their fundamentally distinctive understandings of the past in an age of homogenizing and hierarchical pressures, is a question that lies at the heart of contemporary Pacific historiography.

Clive Moore found that he understood the motivations behind Malaitan migration better when he focused on the decision-making processes of descent groups rather than on the individual agency preferred in many history texts. He came to that conclusion “through a process of total immersion.” “I lived with the Malaitans, ate with them, and existed as part of their world. Slowly I came to realize how that world functioned and was able to make educated guesses about the manner in which it might have operated in the nineteenth century when the labor recruiters came to the island.” Kerry Howe’s sojourn in British Columbia convinced him that Pacific historians (of the Canberra School) had “underplayed the significance and complexity of a broader imperial framework” in their interpretations. He became profoundly aware of the interconnectedness of things, rejecting the notion of center and periphery as “dangerous conceits,” blind to the idea that these categories are constructions of the mind and thus infinitely fluid. His Pacific experience has taught him to “reject notions of a binary past, with characters confined to categories and constrained by boundaries.”
While close attachment to a place can enrich our insights, it can also be a disillusioning experience to confront a reality that destroys or at least compromises everything one believed in, or, conversely, reaffirms one’s commitment to one’s deeply held beliefs. The Fijian crisis brought Stewart Firth “face-to-face with the depth of my own attachment to order, civility, tolerance and modernity—the modernity that delivers education, health care, convenience, efficiency, and opportunity to large numbers of people in the developed countries even as it generates inequality and atomization.” Firth also raises questions that most teachers of Pacific history would have encountered at one time or another. Like most of us, he began as a critic of colonialism, but he thought hard about his views when Ted Wolfers, his colleague at Macquarie University, asked students: “Was the order that the British brought to the Solomon Islands a bad thing?” “What was sacred about Melanesian traditions that required young men to kill before they could be regarded as men?” And “tradition,” that much-discussed concept in contemporary anthropology, is not an unproblematic virtue. In the modern Pacific, “at least in the mouths of the powerful,” Firth says, it is “best understood as an ideological device for legitimating power interests by defining them as natural and therefore incontestable inheritances from the past.” As a colleague put it to me, with a slight hint of cynicism, “In the South Pacific, ‘custom’ has replaced patriotism as the last refuge of the scoundrel.”

These are difficult intellectual and moral questions we all face. We respond to them in a variety of ways depending on the values and beliefs we cherish and the understandings and assumptions we have about people. Some of us would privilege particularities and espouse the virtues of relativism, others the ideology of universalism and that innate humanity common to all. Some of us would take a stand, others would not, and there are compelling arguments on both sides. Hezil insists on dealing with “people in a culture, any culture, on their own terms.” Otherwise, “we impose our own labels, our own understandings on behavior that is ripped out of its cultural context and is seen as problematic and dysfunctional.” Perhaps, but my own direct involvement in Fijian public life as a member of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission, whose report forms the basis of Fiji’s 1997 multiracial constitution, has led me to make explicit my own values—about the fundamental oneness of humanity and the deep interconnectedness of things—and assumptions about an appropriate political arrangement.
for a multiethnic state. I declared my hand and took a stand. And my unalterable opposition to the coups in my country—to the idea of using violence as an instrument of public policy—has led me to accept that academic detachment has no currency on the moral battlefield. So there is no closure, only more questions. And this, too, is one of the strengths of this collection.

From reflections on physical places, the essays move to reflections on special moments, sites of a different kind. Teresia Teaiwa and I reflect on the formative years of our university education, Teresia on the University of Hawai‘i in the 1990s and I on the University of the South Pacific two decades earlier. Teresia writes movingly of the richness of the personally and intellectually enlarging experience of being a Pacific Islands graduate student in a multicultural setting, of coming gradually to understand the complexity of the native Hawaiian experience of colonialism, the novelty of East-West Center experience, the thrill of new learning. What “we all took with us from our time at UH and the East-West Center,” she says several years after graduation, “was a respect for learning from learners, a humility as students of students.” For me, too, a boy from the back of beyond, formed and deformed by life in an impoverished sugarcane village, the University of the South Pacific was an exhilarating, daunting, formative experience: meeting students from places I had never heard of (Kiribati, Vanuatu), experiencing the thrill of reading and writing, participating in debates about the future of our new fledgling democracies, and being saddened by developments that have corrupted the culture of learning.

Like Teresia, Joakim Peter employs the strategies of the creative arts to reflect on his place. Jojo, a “wannabe-filmmaker,” revisits Ulietiw, the cherished place of his childhood, through an imaginary film, a film that he would one day like to make. It is his way of desperately trying to hold on “to every stitch of my memory of my paradise as it slowly slips deeper into the dark regions of my memory.” The words and images he uses evoke the world of lost youth in an atoll world, a world troubled and traumatized by the vagaries of outside forces. They remind us of interesting new developments in contemporary Pacific scholarship.

Among these developments is the increasing variety of ways—chants, music, poetry, drama, songs—in which scholarship is practiced in the islands and historical and contemporary experience are repre-
sented, especially by indigenous scholars who find Western canons and standards not only stultifying but also incapable of capturing the underlying spirit of the lived life. The conscious choice of alternative approaches and modes of scholarship, the assertion of local indigenous voice, the use of the vernacular, the deliberate flouting of the rules of grammatical precision of the English language for creative purposes—all are acts of resistance against the homogenizing tendencies of global cultural discourse, designed, as Eric Waddell puts it, to “break once and for all [the Pacific voices’] subordination to forced modes of thinking, totally imported from outside.”

The new trend, contested and challenged though it is and as it should be, draws sustenance from postmodern scholarship that prides itself on disregarding intellectual and disciplinary boundaries and collapsing categories that once seemed sacrosanct or immutable.

Ben Finney and Karen Peacock take us to different kinds of places. Ben is a trained social anthropologist with significant publications on Pacific Islanders’ adaptation to modern life, especially in Polynesia. His research in Hawai‘i and Tahiti sensitized him to “how much the Hawaiians and Tahitians had suffered from their encounter with the West.” He was troubled by claims made by historians such as Andrew Sharp that ancient Polynesians had neither the skill nor the intelligence to make long-distance voyages of discovery and planned settlement. To disprove that assertion, he enlisted the support of like-minded individuals, designed a reconstruction of an ancient Polynesian voyaging canoe—a nineteen-meter, double-hulled craft named Hōkūle‘a—and sailed it from Hawai‘i to Tahiti and back, covering a distance of almost six thousand miles. It was a spectacular achievement that proved the skeptics of the ancient Polynesians’ navigational skills wrong. The voyage was for him a deeply fulfilling experience even though it had its share of high tension and treacherous moments. He recounts these with sensitivity and honesty. His advice to Pacific scholars? “I think that anthropologists and other scholars working in the Pacific should go beyond the easy critiques of colonialism, postcolonialism, globalization, and the like and apply their training and skill toward something more directly useful for Oceanic peoples.” This sentiment will be shared by most of us.

Karen Peacock writes about the favorite place of all Pacific Island researchers, the Pacific Collection in the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. It has been her place for nearly thirty
years. She pays tribute to Renée Heyum, that bibliographer extraordinaire who built up the collection over many years. Karen recalls her first interview for an internship with Renée. Before discussing the business at hand, the first question Renée asked was, “Can you get for me the new publications of the government of Micronesia?” When Karen stammered yes, Renée smiled, and Karen got the job. I remember my own first meeting with Renée in early August 1983. As I entered her cluttered office on the fifth floor of the Hamilton Library, Renée, white-haired, diminutive, and with a creased face, balancing herself on her walking stick, looked me in the eye from behind her thick glasses and asked with a perfectly straight, serious face if I could steal the latest Fiji telephone directory for her. When I mumbled that I could try, she chuckled, “Good. Then we can do business.” She was that kind of person. Since Renée’s death in 1994, Karen, Lynette Furuhashi, and their colleagues have continued to build the Pacific Collection into the world’s finest research library on the region. They have indeed honored Renée’s legacy and created a rich one themselves as they navigate their way through a new, bewildering world of instant communication and burgeoning web sites.

So much for place. Now for the person. This collection of essays honors Bob Kiste and celebrates the contribution he has made to the promotion of Pacific Islands studies in the latter half of the twentieth century. By the time he retired from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa in July 2002, after serving as director of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies for twenty-four years, his reputation as the world’s premier encourager and publisher of the best scholarly research on the Pacific Islands was secure. The contributors to this volume, former colleagues, collaborators, research students, staff, friends, and admirers, have benefited from Bob’s support, generosity, and vision for Pacific Islands research. This book is their appreciation of a remarkable person, a remarkable personal and professional journey, and a fundamental, enduring contribution unlikely to be repeated anytime soon.

Like many of the contributors, Bob found his place in the Pacific Islands through chance—or fate, if you will. His journey to his place has been an improbable one. Improbable, yes, but not exceptional, for while the roots and routes will vary, with different points of departure and different personal and professional destinations, most of us have also come from just or nearly as improbable backgrounds. In Bob’s unplanned and unpredictable journey, we will all recognize markers of
our own special moments, coded allusion to our own various dispersals, sounds of our own footsteps. Like him, we are all pioneers in our own way: the first in our families to graduate from college, enjoy secure academic careers, make enduring cross-cultural friendships, travel to distant and sometimes previously unheard of places, or simply do something outside the realm of family tradition. We are all full of “firsts” of one sort or another. Like many of us, Bob is a man of many places whose ideas and imagination of those places have changed over time. Change, in fact, is a constant in Bob’s life, as it is in many of ours.

Bob has been a most reluctant participant in this project. When I first proposed the idea of a book of essays to him sometime in the late 1990s, he was genuinely taken by surprise. He was flattered at the thought but felt he did not deserve the honor. He is that kind of person, product of an earlier generation, slightly reticent, emotionally uncomfortable in the public limelight, not one to bask in the glory of his achievements, always distributing credit around. When I persisted, he agreed to let me proceed but on the firm understanding that while he would cooperate, he would prefer not to know what the book was about or who might be asked to contribute to it. I have respected his request. I eventually compiled a list of the “usual suspects” with the assistance of some of Bob’s close friends and colleagues who all agreed to abide by my request to keep the project secret from him.

When contributions began arriving on my desk, I needed to talk to Bob about his life. He agreed, though still with no firm idea of the theme of the proposed book nor of the contributors. We met in his office in Moore Hall in late January 2002, and over a weekend of long, sustained conversation, several hours long—all on tape—I obtained details of Bob’s journey. He was completely candid about people and places he had encountered, about his own disadvantaged family life in the American Midwest, his professional work, its satisfactions and disappointments, his reflections on the island world he has come to call home. What follows is based largely on our conversation—but not all of it, I should hasten to add, because some things said in the privacy of a confidential conversation must perforce remain private.

Bob Kiste was born on August 26, 1936, into a poor family in remote, rural Spencer, Indiana, population two thousand. His father Edgar and his mother Hazel were typical Midwesterners of their time in their attitudes, values, social relationships, and expectations of what life had to offer. That is, they were devotedly church going, unskilled,
and untraveled, eking out a meager existence at the end of the Great Depression, the father as a factory employee and the mother as housewife, living in rented, small, inner-city apartments in Indianapolis. That experience of poverty and deprivation, that limited and limiting life, marked them as it marked Bob. Rural Indiana was not going to be his place if he could help it, he decided early in life. He began dreaming of something different, more adventurous, more meaningful than fifty-mile family reunion car trips between Indianapolis and Spencer. I know the feeling well, coming from a village background myself.

An awareness of places beyond the dusty, featureless horizons of the rural Midwest came to Bob slowly, through big books and bigger encyclopedia sets that traveling salesmen sold to families keen to give their children an education they themselves did not have, and through bedtime stories his mother read to him. One book—the first he really remembers—that made a deep impression on him, that fired his imagination and interest in strange and faraway places (after all these years, he still has a copy of it) was Richard Halliburton’s Complete Book of Marvels. It is an accessibly written and profusely illustrated collection of stories that curious children everywhere find enchanting: stories about great rivers, bridges, pyramids, tall buildings, about mythical places and monumental historical events, about Athena’s Temple, Kheope’s and Khepron’s tombs, about Alexandria and the Tiger of the Alps. Even now, a half century later, they make faraway places come alive, their magic fresh. For instance, Baghdad (before the bombs!): “The domes are shining so brightly they seem to be on fire. Groves of palm trees close around them, trees that wave in the hot desert wind. A broad river, lined with garden, flows nearby. Overhead is the burning sunset sky” (159).

Bob went to Arsenal Technical School with no idea of what he really wanted to do, but trying his hand at carpentry, drafting, and print workshop. Literature and history, as taught by Midwestern teachers with limited intellectual and cultural backgrounds, with emphasis on dates and dry facts, held no appeal for him. That deadening experience of rote learning will be familiar to many of us. More interested in sports than study—sports, not religion, is the opium of the masses, including well-heeled university professors!—Bob left high school with an undistinguished academic record. He also left behind him a narrow fundamentalist faith that regarded all pleasure-giving things as evil—drinking, smoking, sex, cinema, even soft drinks—and a culture that
regarded anything different—Jews, Catholics, Blacks—as undesirable and threatening.

After high school, university. Ambition was one thing, though, and financing university education quite another. That problem, too, is familiar to many of us. Fortunately for Bob, the Korean War provided a way out. By 1954, the shooting war was over, but young boys, including many of Bob’s friends and contemporaries, were still being drafted into the army. Draftees were entitled to three years of university education on a GI Bill, volunteers four years. Bob volunteered. He joined the army. Unfortunately, accounting and finance, his allotted tasks there, did not suit Bob’s temperament, and his lack of enthusiasm was noticed. Prospects for promotion and a fatter paycheck looked decidedly bleak. Bob began looking for alternatives. When an overseas posting opportunity presented itself, a friend, a fellow Hoosier in the personnel section, managed to get him listed for Hawai‘i. The other alternative—no alternative at all—was a winter posting in Korea.

In December 1955, he took a troop ship to Honolulu. He recalls: “I had no idea that the voyage upon which I was embarking would have enormous consequences for the rest of my life.” His first encounter with the Pacific taught him that Magellan was flat wrong, even though he did not know then who Magellan was, he says with a chuckle. The Pacific Ocean was anything but pacific. Hawai‘i was different, though. It hooked him the moment he saw it for the first time from the deck of his ship at dawn just before Christmas 1955. “I knew I was seeing something special. Something very special. I was struck by the place. Nothing in my imagination had prepared me for this experience.” The contrast with what he had left behind could not have been greater. Nor more welcome.

By the time his tour of duty was over two years later, Bob had decided to stay in Honolulu, lured by the seductive beauty of the place, its relaxed multicultural lifestyle, and the youthful pleasures of the beer-soaked beach culture of Waikiki. He was scheduled to leave in August, enough time to get his papers processed. Unfortunately for him, the departure date had been advanced to July without his knowledge, the discharge papers still not finalized. Rules were rules, the orders had been issued, and he had to leave. Bob returned reluctantly to the mainland in 1957 to begin college. In hindsight, he does not regret his enforced departure. Had he remained behind, he fears, he might have easily joined the sand and surf crowd. It was one of those
fateful, unexpected moments, unwelcome at the time, that changes one’s life, he recalls, in this case for the better. That sense of unpredictability, the role of chance, will be familiar to many of us.

He enrolled at the Missouri Valley College in the fall of 1957. There he met Lowell D. Holmes, freshly graduated from Northwestern University and the sole instructor for all courses in sociology and anthropology. Holmes had done a restudy of Margaret Mead’s work in Samoa, and his courses were heavily infused with cultural anthropology. That was appealing because “I do not recall having heard of anthropology before, and certainly it was not a household word in the American Midwest of the 1950s.” Those courses reignited his interest in exotic places, now rosily colored by the exhilarating two years in Hawai‘i. “I was immediately drawn to the discipline, particularly cultural anthropology. It helped make sense of what I had experienced in Hawai‘i, and it offered a vehicle for an involvement in the Pacific.”

The new discipline promised intellectual liberation. “Anthropology was also brave enough to tackle questions about the diversity of human cultures and races, and intellectually it was much more satisfying than the fundamentalist Christianity that I had known as a youth.” The holistic approach of the discipline to understand the nature of human evolution and cultural diversity, dealing with real people, real places, real issues, appealed to Bob. He knew early on at college that he wanted to become an anthropologist, and he was determined to pursue his dream. And so, after a couple of years at Missouri Valley, Bob transferred to Indiana University, where he graduated as an anthropology major and Phi Beta Kappa.

Two universities offered graduate programs of the kind Bob had in mind. One was Stanford, under Felix Keesing, the internationally distinguished New Zealand-born anthropologist, who had worked in New Zealand and Samoa.4 The other was Oregon, under Homer G. Barnett, a brilliant, intensely private scholar with a theoretical bent who had worked in Micronesia (Palau).5 Both were interested in applied work, and both were interested in Bob. The Woodrow Wilson scholarship to Stanford, which he won in a national competition, was for one year only, although Keesing promised further funding. Oregon offered a National Defense Education Act (NDEA) fellowship for the full duration of the graduate program. The NDEA fellowships were established by the U.S. Congress in 1961 in the aftermath of Sputnik to support graduate work in the sciences, including anthropology. Financial secu-
rity settled the choice of graduate school, the prestige of Stanford notwithstanding. As it happened, Keesing died soon afterward.

At Oregon, the anthropology department required its graduate students to have some experience of ethnographic fieldwork before choosing their dissertation sites. Bob chose the Crow Indians on the Montana reservation. Robert Lowie, a leading figure in early American anthropology, had done extensive work among the Crow, focusing on traditional Crow culture before its disruption by European contact. In Lowie’s work, Bob came across the practice of peyotism among the Crow, a syncretic religious movement that had spread among several Native American groups. It involved the consumption of the peyote plant, a mild hallucinogenic cactus prohibited by federal law. Also known as the Native American Church, peyotism was one response to the trauma of contact with Western society. Bob conducted field research with the Crow in the summer of 1962, and in the following academic year he prepared a manuscript on Crow peyotism. His manuscript and field notes are deposited at the Crow Community College now located on the reservation. Bob saw his Indian work as a fallback in case he was unable to work in the Pacific. As he says, it would have been “far easier to return to Montana for further research, which would have shortened my doctoral dissertation by at least a year or more. I am grateful that I never had to make that choice.”

Homer Barnett supervised Bob at Oregon. Barnett was an old Pacific hand, one of a group of distinguished American anthropologists with international reputations who had worked in Micronesia in the postwar period under the aegis of large research projects sponsored by the United States Commercial Company (USCC) or the Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology (CIMA). The names of those who were there are legion: Leonard Mason, Douglas Oliver, Alexander Spoehr, George Peter Murdock, Ward Goodenough, William Lessa, David Schneider, Saul Riesenber, Melford Spiro. Barnett was a part of the CIMA project under which he gathered material on the Palauans and their experience of colonialism. Between 1951 and 1953, he served as staff anthropologist for the United States Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (USTTPI) and was also a member of the research council of the newly formed South Pacific Commission.

From his Pacific experience evolved a major National Science Foundation-funded project called the Displaced Communities in the Pacific Project (DCPP). Its aim was to study variables affecting cultural change
and stability in displaced communities in the Pacific Islands, communities like the Bikinians, Banabans, Southern Gilbertese, Ambrymese on Epi, and Kapingamarangi homesteaders on Pohnpei. Barnett hoped his graduate students would study the process of migration or relocation and the ways in which the resettled communities had evolved new adaptive social and cultural patterns. Their research would provide him material to understand the broader theoretical questions of cultural change that had been his deep intellectual interest.8

As part of the DCPP, Barnett offered Bob the opportunity to work with the former inhabitants of Bikini Atoll in the northern Marshall Islands, which was then part of the USTTP. In 1946, the Bikinians were moved from their ancestral homeland to make way for the nuclear tests the United States conducted there soon after the war. With little acquaintance with Pacific Island cultures and societies and even less interest in them, the Americans assumed that all islanders were peas in the same pod, who could be moved about from place to place with minimum disruption to their lives. So the Bikinians were removed to Rongerik, an uninhabited atoll close to Bikini in the northern Marshalls, because to American officials, “Bikini and Rongerik look alike as two Idaho potatoes.”

They could not have been more wrong, for Rongerik was small, poor, and unable to support the small community of relocated Bikinians. Realizing the disaster, the American military resettled them on Kili Island in 1948. But Kili was not Bikini. Bikini is a necklace of twenty-six islands along a coral reef encircling an enormous lagoon rich in marine resources. Kili in the southern Marshalls lies in a different ecological zone. It is small, one-seventh the size of Bikini. It has no lagoon or sheltered fishing area and is frequently at the mercy of rough, open seas. Culturally, too, the new migrants bore the brunt of harsh treatment. The southerners considered them backward, of low pedigree and inferior speech. The hosts’ attitude of superiority reinforced the low esteem and unflattering image the Bikinians held of themselves. In short, life for the new migrants was tough. As Bob found out, the “Bikinians compare it [Kili] to a jail, and they have been an unhappy, frustrated, and not infrequently angry people since their relocation. Today they are discontented, dependent wards of the United States.”

From Bob’s Bikini work came his doctoral dissertation “Changing Patterns of Land Tenure and Social Organization among the Ex-Bikini Marshallese” and a report for the DCPP titled Kili Island: A Study of the
Relocation of the Ex-Bikini Marshallese. In 1974, Bob published his major Bikini work (based on earlier studies), *The Bikinians: A Study in Forced Migration.* The book was well received as an important contribution to the growing field of the anthropology of colonialism as well as to what anthropologists call “extended case studies.” While Bob’s empathy with the people he worked with is clear, what is especially striking is his deep disappointment with American policy in Micronesia. “In the Pacific as well as North America,” he concluded in his book, “Americans have assumed a cultural and racial superiority which they believe justifies their disruption of the lives of dark-skinned peoples and the seizure of the latter’s real estate for American ends. The manner in which restitution is sometimes attempted offers another similarity: after-the-fact provision of financial compensation and other poorly conceived welfare measures appear to ease the conscience of Americans and allow them to avoid examining the consequences of their acts” (198). Bob is proud of his Bikini book. He is pleased that the book “has been accepted as an accurate account of the Bikinians’ troubled history,” proving “useful to the Bikinians in their many legal battles with the United States.”

After his research with the Bikinians, Bob conducted fieldwork with the people of Enewetak, another atoll in the northern Marshalls, and his most direct public intervention arising from his Micronesian work was on their behalf. The Enewetak people were the second community to be relocated by the Americans. When their atoll was selected for further nuclear testing by the United States, the Enewetak people were moved to the uninhabited Ujelang Atoll in 1947. Like the Bikinians, they never lost their desire to return to their ancestral homeland, and in the early 1970s they protested when further military activity was contemplated that would inflict more environmental damage to Enewetak. They took advantage of the recently created Micronesian Legal Service Corporation (MLSC) and took their grievance to court. Bob was consulted by the MLSC. He was part of a fact-finding mission to Enewetak and Ujelang and served as a witness at legal hearings in Honolulu. His own position was clear. “I was obligated to the Enewetakese. They had befriended me, tolerated my inquiries into their lives, and had thus made my own fieldwork possible. When an issue that had significant consequences for their future was being contested, I felt I had no choice but to help challenge those who represented a threat to their well-being.” He has no regrets about his partic-
ipation, although he is by nature uncomfortable with public confrontations in emotionally charged situations “when one is questioning the basic intentions and honesty of others.” His advice to his colleagues? Writing in the 1970s, he said: “As events progress in Micronesia and as Americans continue to manipulate the islanders for their own ends, I suggest that a greater number of us in the profession will not easily escape the obligations we have to those who have made our work in Micronesia possible.” Bob was not an “uninvolved ethnographer.” In that respect, he is like most of us.

Fieldwork is never just about collecting research data. It introduces the researcher into a whole new web of relationships full of unanticipated obligations and responsibilities. It often produces bonds of friendship that endure across time and place, as so many of our contributors remind us. It was so for Bob. He discovered that the Bikinians were adept ethnographers themselves, just as curious about Bob’s country as he was about theirs. When Bob told them about John F. Kennedy’s assassination by Lee Harvey Oswald, the Bikinians assumed straightaway that Oswald must be the new president. In pre-European times, people who assassinated chiefs succeeded them. And Bob could not quite explain the “size of his island” to inquisitive Bikinians, nor respond adequately to the question he was asked on a moonlit Kili beach about what Americans were doing on the moon. “Why is it that Americans are so smart they can put men on the moon, but they can’t solve our problems here?” One sadness that Bob has about his Bikini experience is that he did not get to know Chief Juda better and record his life story for posterity. The chief, Bob says, was a wise, gentle leader of a people in distress.

Still, for all his affection for the people and the place, Bob did not continue sustained research on Bikini, unlike some of our contributors. I wondered why. The unfolding Micronesian saga, embroiled in large geopolitical questions, was getting messier, he says. Narrow legalistic matters had taken on a life and momentum of their own, something that scholars, no matter how involved or passionate about their subject, find distasteful and sometimes frankly intimidating. Moreover, the Bikinians of the early 1960s were not the same people in 1969. Their image of themselves as a backward, unsophisticated people had changed dramatically within a decade. They had become skilled at representing their grievances and demands to the international com-
community, and by reciting a sorry tale of neglect and damage and injustice, they sought to have the Americans shoulder the responsibility for their welfare. As Bob puts it, “By determining the locus of responsibility for their situation, the Bikinians’ total history has become a political ideology that defines both themselves as victims and their current relations with their former chief and colonial power in a single interpretative framework.”

Bob found that dependent, handout mentality disconcerting. And there were intellectual reasons for moving on as well. Bob was not an inveterate ethnographer interested in doing one case study after another. The Pacific had other mysteries he wanted to explore.

One night in 1964 on his way back from fieldwork, Bob was invited to Leonard Mason’s home for dinner. Mason, an old Micronesia hand, had been a source of much valued advice and help to Bob, who had begun his Bikini work under his tutelage. The friendship between the two has lasted nearly half a century. Also present at dinner that night was E. Adamson Hoebel, a major figure in American anthropology, then chair of the anthropology department at the University of Minnesota. In awe of the great man, Bob said little that evening. A year later, when he was writing his dissertation in Oregon, Hoebel called to say he had been impressed with him at dinner that evening in Honolulu and wondered whether Bob would be interested in joining the faculty at Minnesota. Bob was (and was hired, along with his lifelong friend Eugene Ogan). Hoebel had been impressed because Bob was a good listener! Respectful silence and deference to authority in the presence of potential benefactors can be a virtue. Is this a classic Micronesian (and perhaps a wider Pacific Island) lesson?

Minnesota was intellectually fulfilling, and Bob rose rapidly through the ranks to secure tenure and promotion in a well-regarded anthropology department. But Hawai‘i continued to beckon, the attraction strengthened by a 1972–1973 sabbatical there and a semester as a visiting professor at the University of Hawai‘i in the fall of 1976. The presence of old friends and mentors along with the memory of long, hard Minnesota winters suggested a move. In 1978, Bob finally left Minnesota for Hawai‘i for good. He was hired to build what eventually became the Center for Pacific Islands Studies. It is one of the world’s premier centers for Pacific Islands research and teaching, and its success is without doubt due to Bob Kiste’s untiring effort and envi-
able abilities as a fund-raiser and skills as an administrator. His contribution is best appreciated against the backdrop of what he inherited when he appeared on the scene.

Pacific studies at the University of Hawai‘i had begun haphazardly, gaining momentum after World War II, when much of Micronesia came under the administrative umbrella of the USTTPI. Parts of the region were closed off to outside scrutiny, and the American military had established a firm grip on strategic locations. Atomic devices were tested, missile test sites established, islanders dislocated and resettled. The advent of the Cold War intensified the American hold on the area. Anthropologists were hired to gather social, economic, and cultural data to assist the postwar reconstruction effort. Among them were Leonard Mason, whose entire professional career was spent at the University of Hawai‘i, and Douglas Oliver, who later came to Honolulu from Harvard. Both were instrumental in the development of Pacific studies at the University of Hawai‘i along with political scientist Norman Meller, a significant scholar of Micronesian constitutionalism. Mason, the inaugural director, did what he could with what few resources he had, organizing and coordinating research projects, convening seminars, seeking outside funds, building up the Pacific Collection, and generally creating a consciousness of the Pacific in the community and among federal bureaucrats.

By the time Bob was appointed director in 1978, there was serious debate on the campus about the future of the Pacific Islands Studies Program, as it had become by then. Mason and Meller wanted to maintain and strengthen it, while Oliver was not convinced of its intellectual merit and recommended its termination. Oliver was a firm nonbeliever in the value of cross-disciplinary programs. Mason and Meller’s faction won the debate, and Bob was lobbied to apply (by Oliver, of all people, who managed to have himself appointed as chair of the search committee so he could shape the outcome he wanted!) for the temporary, one-year renewable position as associate professor. Although Bob was a full professor at Minnesota, he opted for the temporary position. He was forty-two years old. The Pacific tug proved irresistible, and Bob did not want to be haunted by the question, “What if you had not done it?” He recalls his decision this way: “I could not have asked for a better opportunity. The chance to develop a Pacific program was an exciting prospect and a challenge.”

Changing old habits of thought on the campus did not prove easy,
though. The university budget was tight, and the Pacific was on the administration’s back burner. But eventually Bob succeeded where others had faltered. The program “had nowhere to go but up,” Bob says with characteristic modesty, but there were, in fact, other reasons. Unlike his predecessors, Bob was able to become full-time director of the center, thanks to the generosity of the university’s Social Science Research Institute, which paid half his salary but released him from teaching and administrative duties to put the program “back on its feet.” The Pacific faculty, especially the old guard, to their great credit, forgot their differences and rallied behind Bob. On the campus, there was an increased awareness of the importance of the Asia-Pacific region, reflected in the creation in 1980 of the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies. The changing mood in Washington also helped, with the U.S. Department of State establishing its own Office of Pacific Island Affairs in 1978, which was staffed at various times by the Center for Pacific Islands Studies own graduates. Bob’s efforts secured federal funding, and in the early 1980s the U.S. Department of Education recognized the Center for Pacific Islands Studies as a National Resource Center, the only one in the nation that focused on the Pacific.

Funds flowed, which enabled Bob to enlarge the center’s activities to facilitate workshops and conferences, mount outreach programs, enable faculty exchange, and bring distinguished Pacific Island public figures to the Mānoa campus. Bob gave the center a region-wide visibility that it had lacked before. He extended his network beyond Hawai’i. For several years, he regularly attended meetings of the (then) South Pacific Commission, where he personally came to know many island leaders and policymakers. He also briefed American diplomats and others heading for the Pacific. The time for takeoff had arrived, and Bob, with his “organizational ability, diplomacy, and sound judgment,” to use Mac Marshall’s words, was the right man at the right time to be at the helm.

Bob has continued to be a productive, though not a solitary, scholar. He has edited books and written a biography of the Fijian public figure Macu Salato, besides numerous conference presentations and consultancy reports. His graduate students remember him warmly as a dedicated teacher, culturally sensitive and committed to bringing out the best in them. Recall John Haglelgam’s words. Bob also devoted a considerable part of his time to institution building. Karen Peacock remembers Bob’s total commitment to “maintaining an international reputa-
tion for excellence in the Pacific Collection,” “his understanding of the need for a library to support research unparalleled in my experience.” The Pacific faculty at Mānoa remembers how Bob was somehow able to find extra funds to facilitate their summer research or finance a conference trip. And Bill Hamilton, director of the University of Hawai‘i Press, remembers him as a “true advocate of the Press,” having served on its board since 1986 (and now continuing in an emeritus capacity). As reader, reviewer, and adviser, Bob made a difference. “Bob’s extensive Pacific Islands network of scholars, political leaders, and government officials, his recommendation that they consider us as their publisher, has led to numerous publications by the Press,” Bill recalls.

Tisha Hickson, outreach coordinator at the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, tells us why Bob has been such a successful director. The center “works the way it does, and feels the way it does, primarily because of Bob’s vision,” she says. Bob has always valued the common good and the common purpose above all else. “The emphasis is on ‘we’ rather than ‘I,’ and he is unstinting in his praise for the good work that others have done. There has always been an excitement about what we could do, and Bob has always been the first to credit others with good ideas.” His collegiality and diplomacy bonded the team. “There was, and is, a remarkable absence of social hierarchy at the center,” she says. Bob would never ask anyone on the staff to do anything he himself was not willing to do. He would push the office refrigerator out on the landing to defrost, make the morning coffee, and take the parking space farthest from the building. This “appreciation of others reflects a true generosity of spirit,” Tisha says. Those who know Bob would agree wholeheartedly.

Building the Center for Pacific Islands Studies into a world-class institution is a significant personal and professional achievement, but Bob is best known—and will probably be best remembered in the future—as the publisher of scholarly monographs on the Pacific. He was the founding general editor of the first sixteen volumes of the Pacific Island Monograph Series published by the University of Hawai‘i Press (now under the editorship of David Hanlon). That series constitutes a benchmark in Pacific scholarship, as Stewart Firth indicates in his contribution. It has no rival and is not likely to have one anytime soon. What is remarkable about the books is not only the pioneering quality of their scholarship in a range of disciplines (with history dominating), but also their elegant look and craftsmanship. Bob
has been well served by his manuscript editors Linley Chapman, who has been associated with the project since its inception, and now, upon her retirement, Jan Rensel. The South Sea Books, another of his publishing ventures intended to publish popular works on the island region, has had a mixed reception and has now been allowed to lapse.

Bob has also been instrumental in the publication of *The Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs*, serving as the chair of its editorial board. His mode of operation is revealing of the man. I speak from personal experience as the journal’s founding editor. Bob was the journal’s ambassador, its representative in the corridors of power, a staunch defender of its integrity and goals. He was, by and large, a good judge of character. Once he had assembled his team and reposed his trust in them, he allowed them the maximum freedom to do things as they saw fit. He never second-guessed their decisions, never interfered, even—or especially—when some submissions from close colleagues and friends had to be rejected. His commitment to excellence was absolute, unwavering, and inspiring. It is no wonder that the journal is internationally esteemed, like the monograph series, for the quality of the scholarship it publishes and, as an added bonus, for its handsome production.

Bob began his intellectual journey as a professional anthropologist. Had he remained at Minnesota, he might well have plowed a more conventional career path. He is quietly saddened by the new directions the academy has taken, and more particularly in his own discipline. As someone from his background, committed to the idea of using scholarship to solve human problems, interested in contemporary developments, in real people and real places, he despairs at the intellectual fragmentation of scholarship. Anthropologists, he says to me, know more and more about less and less. They often ask questions that have little relevance and even less meaning. The lexicon and grammar of postmodern discourse is alien to Bob: in truth, he cares little for or about it. He is a man of his time and place. He is passionate about the Pacific, though there, too, there is private regret about the way some islands are conducting their affairs, squandering time and opportunity that is so nearly within their reach to realize the potential that is undoubtedly there. He feels it is time for him to move on, to continue in retirement his long, unpredictable, improbable but ultimately exhilarating journey from Spencer, Indiana, to the islands of the Pacific.

I want to conclude by stealing a story from Mike Rynkiewich’s
contribution to this volume because it brings a number of strands together. Mike was Bob’s first doctoral student, Hoebel was the one who hired Bob at Minnesota, and there is reference to place, underlining for me the theme of interconnectedness and the essential emptiness of essentialism that runs through this book. Mike was defending his doctoral proposal when Bob asked him, “What right do you have to go out and disturb someone else’s life just so you can get your Ph.D?” Taken by surprise at this question from the chair of his dissertation committee, of all people, Mike responded somewhat uncertainly, “Anywhere I am in the world, I have to live with other people. People do things for me and I do things for people. It won’t be any different in the Marshalls.” Hoebel laughed, recalling a story that not only let Mike out a tight situation, but also has a larger message. “You remind me of the man I once saw in a movie,” Hoebel told Mike. “He was visiting his friend’s wife when his friend came home. The husband was suspicious so he looked around, eventually opening the closet door. ‘What are you doing here?’ he shouted. With a shrug of the shoulders, the man replied, ‘Everybody’s gotta be somewhere.’”

Notes
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3. Published by Bobbs Merrill, Indiana, 1941.
6. His books include Primitive Society (London: Routledge: Kegan Paul,
1921) and An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology (New York: Rinehart & Co.,
new ed., 1940).


8. Barnett was unable to realize his dream. Some of the fruits of this project may be found in Michael D. Lieber, ed., Exiles and Migrants in Oceania (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1977). The book is dedicated to Barnett, “Who began this work and showed us what culture change is all about.”

9. As part of the Kiste-Ogan Social Change in Anthropology Series published by the Benjamin/Cummings Publishing Company.


12. He recounts this in the preface to American Anthropology in Micronesia, xiii–xiv.


14. For this account I have drawn on Agnes Quigg, History of the Pacific Islands Studies Program at the University of Hawaii: 1950–1986 (Honolulu: Pacific Islands Studies Program Working Paper Series, 1987), as well as conversations with colleagues at Mānoa.
