

Indigenous Islander's Wisdom

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Yapese surveying and discussing the use of a Traditional Indigenous stone-wall fish weir located in Yap. Photograph by Bill Jeffery, 2008.

What does Pacific Island/Oceanic wisdom mean to you?

I think Pacific Island / Oceanic wisdom is a bit of a misnomer. Islands cannot seem to have wisdom, but Islanders can, and I think it should be more defined as, Indigenous Islanders' wisdom. This is the origin of island wisdom and they should be recognized. It means to me how indigenous islanders learnt over time to live in harmony with the environment and their socio-cultural and political world. They created many different customs, cultural practices, rituals, sacred and spiritual associations to help facilitate this harmony.

How/why do you bring island wisdom into your scholarship?

I try to bring indigenous islander wisdom into my scholarship through investigating and researching traditional indigenous material culture and living heritage, comparing certain 'themes' such as fishing across Oceania, and more broadly across Asia-Pacific. I have also used for example

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foreign material cultural and how a lack of multi-vocality pervades interpreting and using archaeological sites located throughout Oceania, and how traditional islanders might value this material. I emphasize and reinforce in my teaching for students to question hegemonies about how heritage is perceived, how it should be researched and preserved from a number of perspectives.