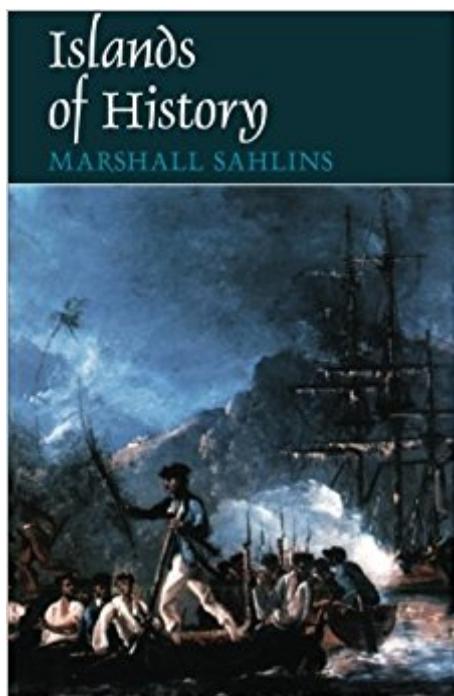


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Islands Of History



Synopsis

Marshall Sahlins centers these essays on islands—Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand—“whose histories have intersected with European history. But he is also concerned with the insular thinking in Western scholarship that creates false dichotomies between past and present, between structure and event, between the individual and society. Sahlins’s provocative reflections form a powerful critique of Western history and anthropology.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Marshall Sahlins is the Charles F. Grey Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Chicago. The author of numerous books, Sahlins is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Read it for a college class. Would not recommend reading for enjoyment, but was a valuable book.

Marshall Sahlins, a renowned expert in Polynesian archaeology, has produced an excellent, well-written book that focuses on synchrony and diachrony in archaeology, as reflected in the early encounters between Captain Cook and the early Polynesians. This book is essential reading for scholars interested in the concepts of cyclical and linear time. The text also demonstrates that the early Polynesians, like many other non-western societies, in fact had a dynamic, recursive history before European contact; a history not based on written records but rather on a rich array of oral traditions. Essentially, this book can be used as an important frame of reference for scholars of

other early oceanic societies, for example pre-Columbian societies in the Caribbean, particularly with respect to issues of European contact and indigenous time reckoning and time conception.

This book is thoroughly researched, and intelligent. It is simultaneously an account of the history of Hawai'i's integration into the world economy, a reminder of the complexity of social change in colonial contexts, and a rekindling of the beauty of structuralism

Highly recommend this book, especially cultural historians. It is amazing to read the blend of Island and British culture.

Structuralist hogwash, but an interesting read. Was all the rage when I was in grad school. Academics of all stripes still worship this stuff. I get it every day when one of them tries to decode the up from down button on the elevator. Remember, there is no history. There is only theory. History conforms to theory. Sahlins can't even be sure when Cook landed in Hawaii. He makes the most of it, though.

As a graduate student in history, I was intrigued by Sahlins subject. However, Sahlins does his best to hide his subject from any reader not in "the club" -- i.e. anyone who does not speak the jargon of a structuralist (or post-structuralist) anthropologist. Sahlins is a very inaccessible (and is thus, by most rules of writing, a BAD) writer, whose elitist attitude negates any interest I may have had in his subject matter.

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