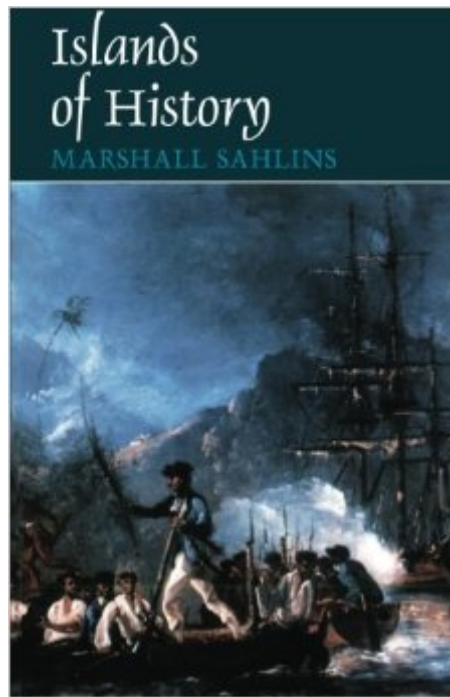


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Islands Of History



Synopsis

Marshall Sahlins centers these essays on islandsâHawaii, Fiji, New Zealandâ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, 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.

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

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.

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