

Higgins has produced an attractive and important documentation that the artists of Red Wave and the Oceania Centre can be proud of. Congratulations to the author and the artists and to the Institute for Pacific Studies for seizing the moment and getting this book into print. When researchers and writers look back on the region and consider the multicultural art histories of Fiji and the Pacific, the Oceania Centre's place will be secure. For sure, the center's successes are visible in the artworks and ephemera of its projects and exhibitions, but this book captures the context, voices, and memories of these times so they may be heard and seen in the future. This small history is a building block for larger histories yet to be written.

This publication is reviewed after the passing of Epli Hau'ofa in January 2009. It is a time when people are freshly reflecting on Hau'ofa and his many contributions to our understanding of the islands and peoples of Oceania. Higgins has produced a book that marks that time, but also is a product of her time with Hau'ofa, the artists, and the spirit of Red Wave.

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*Le spectacle de la culture: Globalisation et traditionalismes en Océanie*, by Alain Babadzan. *Connaissance des hommes* series. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009. ISBN 978-2-296-07760-7, 286 pages, maps, notes, bibliography. €26.00.

There has been some questioning recently of the familiar divisional

categories—Melanesia, Polynesia, and Micronesia—with many deciding that the first two have outlived their usefulness, and most not even commenting on the third.

But no one doubts another division in Oceania, and that is the gulf between Franconesia and Anglonesia. One can sniff, of course, that this is a remnant of colonial rivalry. It is, however, firmly entrenched in modern educational systems and politico-economic alliances, not to mention transport systems and scholarship.

Exceptions have been those French researchers who have worked in anglophone places, such as Papua New Guinea and Sāmoa, and those Anglophones who have made their careers in francophone islands, such as French Polynesia or New Caledonia. Otherwise, what is produced in the respective “-nesias” remains terra incognita.

Alain Babadzan is well known for his many publications on the Australs and Tahiti; this collection of seven chapters tries to bring Anglophonie to Francophonie in a series of insightful reviews and commentaries for his readers.

The first chapter is the longest at fifty-eight pages and was originally published in English in 1988. It sets the tone with a quote from Guy Debord's *La société du spectacle* (1967): “all that was directly lived is distant in a representation” (15). Chapter 1 looks at the developing culturalist symbolism of “The Pacific (and other) Way” (15), public performance in festivals, and the growth of self-conscious elites struggling to establish both personal and national identities in a postcolonial (or neo-

colonial) world. “Custom” became synonymous with “local” and stood against values imposed at independence favoring the local against the global, the indigenous against the expatriate, and the homegrown against the imported. Revivals and survivals flourished to portray these aspirations. Such festivals, from the internationally known South Pacific Festival of the Arts to the more modest regional and island events, are not part of the tourism bubble that envelops Pacific Islanders in their export industry, but rather are events in character that probably go back to trans-Pacific voyaging and hospitality a thousand years ago. Their staging and use, though, is twenty-first century. Cultural centers and cultural politics proliferate throughout the region.

Chapter 2, “The Demon of Continuity,” embarks on the timorous land of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* (1983), already mentioned in the previous chapter. Basing his text on Roger Keesing’s initiatives, which were slammed by Haunani-Kay Trask, Babadzan quotes and discusses these debates. Hobsbawm and Ranger sought to cast a jaundiced Marxian eye on powerful people’s claims to tradition. In the Pacific, local scholars and their defenders saw “invention” as yet another attempt to cast them as “people without history” (and, therefore, without legitimacy), and as detribalized survivors of colonial conquest—which they did not find very appealing. Babadzan’s summary is focused and expert, closing the chapter by quoting Marshall Sahlins’s wry neologism that such counter-invention approaches are “subjectology,”

whereby the measure of all things is subjective and personal—that is, any explanation is as good as any other (122–123).

As though to emphasize the point made above about a linguistic gulf, I was interested to read that *The Invention of Tradition*, so influential among Anglophones, had to wait twenty-three years before being translated into French, and that the book’s ideas were not well known in France until that happened (126–131).

The theme of nationalism continues in the next chapter, called “The Indigenisation of Modernity,” which was also published in *L’Homme* (190:105–128 [2009]), and focuses on the work of Sahlins (again), especially movements of identity politics in the region. Babadzan’s chapter 5, “Syncretism or the Double Negation,” is a blend of two previous publications and begins by looking at the role of missionary and then Church in the developing Pacific cultural politics, in competition and together. Although centered on Church liturgy, Babadzan here might well have brought in the “Golden Age” lost royalty that one finds scattered around the Pacific, representing the longing for the good times that all are convinced once existed in their islands.

“From the Maori Renaissance to Neo-tribal Capitalism,” the penultimate chapter, ventures far from where most Francophones research and read. The counterpoint here is between the rolling back of the New Zealand welfare state and the rolling out of what Babadzan calls “neotribal capitalism” for Aotearoa’s native inhabitants, often through the Waitangi Tribunal. The irony of the neglect of the Treaty

of Waitangi until the end of the last century is not lost on Babadzan, who footnotes Karl Marx's quip for another document: it was subject to the "rigorous critique of the mice" (222n173). One can see that treaty, so crucial today and displayed in monumental proportions, serving as the centerpiece of the cathedral-like core of the innovative New Zealand National Museum, Te Papa, in Wellington.

The final chapter derives from a 2007 essay analyzing the transformation of the Pacific Islands from sites of romantic nostalgia to their present condemnation as "failed" or "weak" states. By way of summary of the themes throughout the book, Babadzan seeks to examine what has been the outcome of more than three decades of independence for those places, particularly Papua New Guinea, the Solomons, Vanuatu, and fractious Fiji. Joining this are brief footnote references to West Papuan struggles against Indonesia and the institutionalization of the FLNKS (Front de libération nationale kanak et socialiste) in New Caledonia.

In spite of some of the texts (or parts) having been published previously, this series of essays reads as a book rather than a collection, a coherent, sustained, and ordered argument, each piece reflecting on the other or anticipating a later and related argument. I am surprised, given the revisions for republication, that at least a minor chord in Babadzan's theme is not the influence of tourism on cultural politics. For the foreign visiting audience, people rehearse identity positions as a commodity to literally sell themselves, as each Pasifikan is at once the subject and the object of

a scrutinizing gaze. Curious tourists watch the spectacle of culture, as do the critical locals.

More could have been said about that. Perhaps that is the subject of the book Babadzan is composing at the moment.

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*Shiro's Head*. DVD, 81 minutes, color, 2008. Languages: English, Chamorro. A Rockford Images Production. Produced, written, and directed by Kel and Don Muña. Distributed by AKTIV8 Promotionals (e-mail: SHdvds@aktiv8promotionals.com). Currently available through Borders Books and Music. US\$19.99. Also available at <http://www.shirosheadthelegend.com/shirosheadvd.htm>. US\$14.99.

Don and Kel Muña's debut feature film *Shiro's Head* is an engaging tale of revenge set in the landscape of modern-day Guam. Don Muña offers a compelling performance as Vince, a sinister antihero haunted by his role in the accidental death of his father. Seeking to redeem himself, Vince tries to avenge the brutal murder of his half brother Jacob, who is killed by a rival Japanese clan in his quest to recover an ancient Samurai sword held by Vince's family for generations. The holder of this sword controls the island. Helped by family friend Noah (played by Matt Ladmiraault), Vince struggles to uphold his family's legacy.

*Shiro's Head* is the first feature film to be produced on the island of Guam by Chamorros. The film has played at festivals throughout the world, includ-