Book and Media Reviews

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 28, Number 1, 247–275
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disparate information. At times, she seems to go off on unrelated tangents but always manages to show their relevance. The current situation is complex, but this presentation makes it possible for the layperson to grasp the big picture. One charming aspect of the film is the inclusion of archival footage of the type used in classroom documentaries in the mid-twentieth century. Enthusiastic children marvel at this wondrous new material, "Plastic!", and images of industrial activity creating plastic goods for the benefit of humankind roll past while grandiose music plays and the narrator extols the virtues of plastic.

It is easy to imagine how *Plastic Paradise* might be used for numerous pedagogical purposes in classroom contexts and this may be, ultimately, its greatest value. However, the film is lacking in the kinds of deep exploration of contexts that we often expect. Sun glosses over the history of how we came to be so reliant on plastic, omitting several important factors that have driven so many of the negative behaviors responsible for this ongoing catastrophe. For instance, decades ago all retailers used paper bags to sack customers' purchased goods. They were vilified for this practice because it allegedly destroyed the forests. There was no foresight that switching to plastic might be great for trees but deadly for the ocean. Similarly, single-use plastic bottles are among the leading environmental offenders, but there is no explanation of how this came to be. Furthermore, a more robust discussion of the region and the peoples most immediately affected by the plasticization of the Pacific Ocean would have been a welcome addition to the film's speculations about human impacts for continental metropolitan populations.

Like all enormous and enormously difficult problems, the Great Pacific Garbage Patch is wildly complex. The prospect of turning off the faucet of plastic pollutants seems reasonable, but requires two important elements: a widespread willingness to forego the use of problematic materials and a determination to find and use viable alternatives. A future documentary can chronicle the problems those alternatives create.

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Nuclear Savage: The Islands of Secret Project 4.1. Documentary, 87 minutes, DVD, color, 2011. Written and directed by Adam Jonas Horowitz; produced by Adam Jonas Horowitz and Johanna Giebelhaus in collaboration with Pacific Islanders in Communications and the Kindle Project. Available for rent or purchase from Primordial Soup Company/Equatorial Films at http://www.nuclearsavage.com. Rental US$4.99.

The Frankfurt School was among the first to analyze the deeply immoral capacities of modern rationality, bureaucracy, and capitalism. The state, on both sides of the Atlantic, has stood out as the exemplary figure of this Janus-faced contradiction. One thinks of Nazi Germany and the Jews, Zyklon B, and the "Final Solution." Hawaiians, Native Americans, Vietnamese, and now Muslims would no doubt attest not just to the violence

but to the ignorant contempt with which the United States has exploited, or at least tried to exploit, them.

In *Nuclear Savage,* Adam Jonas Horowitz, a filmmaker and environmental activist, presents a gripping and discouraging account of the United States' moral disregard for Marshall Islanders over the course of nuclear tests on their atolls conducted during the first thirteen years after World War II. I suppose the rationale, from the government's perspective, was that the radiation poisoning suffered by multiple generations of Marshall Islanders was acceptable as "collateral damage," given the Cold War and their utterly marginal position in the bigger geopolitical picture. To whom would it matter if a few "primitives" suffered, and, anyway, who could possibly take the US military to task?

This film exposes the huge "Bravo" test and explores "Program 4.1." The former was the largest hydrogen bomb ever exploded in the atmosphere, while the latter was a research project on Islanders who lived just downwind from the 1954 test site. Told through a deft narrative, the video documents Horowitz's dogged pursuit—stretching from Mejatto and Rongelap in the Marshall Islands to the United Nations in New York City—of facts and stakeholders. Horowitz weaves excerpts from 1950s propaganda films and network television reports together with grotesque images of burned skin and hair loss and with talking heads reciting genealogies not of kinship, but of cancers, neonatal birth defects, and cultural malaise.

The experience of Rongelap people epitomizes the modern nightmare of violence and lies in which they have lived for more than six decades now. After the Bravo explosion, despite having been subjected to radiation levels "well above a lethal human dose," they were not evacuated right away. Claiming everybody was healthy, the United States waited two days before removing the population to nearby Kwajalein Atoll. A senior Marshallese woman recalled then being sprayed down with a fire hose; "even the old ladies" were instructed to strip off their clothes. A few months later, everyone was returned to Rongelap, which had been declared "safe" for human habitation. They lived there for the next twenty-eight years as part of "Project 4.1," the goal being to collect "ecological radiation data," particularly with respect to the effects of eating foods grown in contaminated soil. Speaking in a voice-over while old images of Rongelap are shown, a woman recalls how, during a US military autopsy, her deceased grandmother was cut up "like an animal." A contrasting excerpt from a propaganda video depicts Marshall Islanders in New York City at a barbecue hosted by their primary physician and given sightseeing tours.

The Rongelapese asked the US government to evacuate them but were refused. They petitioned the environmental organization Greenpeace for assistance, and in 1985 *Rainbow Warrior* took them to live on Mejatto Island, 150 miles away. As they climb aboard, the video shows how crippled children have to be carried onto the boat. Christian Marshallese compare their departure to the Exodus from Egypt. Years later, while radiation levels remain high, an image of cemeter-

ies, now being reclaimed by the bush, remind us of what has been lost on Rongelap. In 2011, the US government demanded that the Rongelap people return home or lose funding. Elders declined, citing continued contamination, which Department of Energy officials denied. A senior staffer from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources committee even tells Horowitz on camera that he "would raise my children there." When asked when they expect to return home, some Rongelapese schoolboys tell their teacher, "We will be old."

Apart from exposing the Marshall Islanders' ordeal, the central investigative project of this video is to expose "Project 4.1," which was a piece of Cold War biomedical duplicity begun by the US military to determine "the mean lethal range" of radiation on living creatures. It started before the Bravo test as a study of mice but quickly shifted its focus to Marshall Islanders, the people who had been subjected to "accidental exposure to radiation" by an unexpected shift in the winds on the day of the test. Horowitz and others strongly reject this claim of unintentionality. They believe that the United States knew in advance that the winds were headed in the wrong direction, and a clip is included from a congressional hearing in which a lawyer makes this point in no uncertain terms.

In 2004, Greta Morris, who was then US ambassador to the Marshall Islands, spoke at the fiftieth anniversary of the Bravo test. She expressed her government's "appreciation of the contribution" of Marshall Islanders "to the end of the Cold War" and the establishment of democracy throughout the world, for which, she said, "Marshall Island people should take great pride." Subsequently, we see Horowitz in Honolulu attending a meeting between US government officials and the Marshall Islands government; he requests an interview with Ambassador Morris about Project 4.1, which she politely refuses to give on camera. Likewise, a Department of Energy official cups his hand over the camera lens as he whispers, "Turn that off."

In addition to denials and the lack of accountability, the US government has continued testing antiballistic missiles from a site on Kwajalein from which residents were relocated to Ebeye Island, where they live as internal refugees amid piles of trash, disease, and water shortages.

In 1986, the US government agreed to a "Compact of Free Association" (COFA) through which the Republic of the Marshall Islands became a kind of a sovereign state. The compact includes a long-term lease for the missile test range on Kwajalein and settlement of all claims arising from US nuclear tests conducted between 1946 and 1958. By 2001 and the beginning of renegotiations for the second round of COFA economic provisions (the first were 1986–2001), budget cutbacks had already affected medical checkups and the monitoring of nuclear-waste sites.

Behind the closing credits, schoolboys show off crayon drawings of the Bravo test. Obviously, such imagery might be expected to arouse the worst kind of mawkish sentimentality. But the filmmaker should be credited with bringing the nightmare that the modern, American state has created for

Marshall Islanders to light in a way that draws and holds our attention not just emotionally, but politically and historically as well. Any undergraduate or graduate course on people and history in the insular Pacific or on the moral contradictions of modernity would find it a useful resource. General audiences would certainly benefit from seeing it too.

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Melanesia: Art and Encounter, edited by Lissant Bolton, Nicholas Thomas, Elizabeth Bonshek, Julie Adams, and Ben Burt. London: British Museum Press; Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8248-3853-9; xix +362 pages, illustrations, bibliography, index. Cloth, US$120.00.

Melanesia: Art and Encounter includes fifty-seven essays by fifty-two authors, including the volume's five editors, highlighting some of the British Museum's twenty thousand objects from Melanesia. Organized geographically, sections are dedicated to New Guinea (including south and southeast Papua New Guinea, north and highlands Papua New Guinea), West Papua, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and New Caledonia. The richly illustrated volume is a result of the five-year project "Melanesian Art: Objects, Narratives and Indigenous Owners," also known as the Melanesia Project, led by Lissant Bolton and Nicholas Thomas and based at the British Museum. The project was a response to the "scandal—that such a cultural resource had remained largely unresearched for so long" (xiv). From 2005 through 2010, the project included research trips to Melanesia as well as visits to the British Museum by representatives from Melanesia, including several artists, to study and respond to the collections. As Bolton writes, "We were using the objects in the British Museum to engage in relationships with Melanesians themselves" (331).

Driven by a sense of responsibility to those represented by the museum collection and by a desire to change understandings of ethnographic collections, the book's editors sought to "approach the field in an entirely different way" (ix) by learning from indigenous collaborators, collaborating with Melanesian communities, and inviting indigenous practitioners to engage with the collection. Although their approach is not unprecedented—this is a model previously used by the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum, Te Papa Tongarewa, and hopefully others in the future—collaboration with representatives of the knowledge-holders and descendants can help institutions like the British Museum become more responsible stewards and enliven and protect their priceless collections. As West Papuan Benny Wenda reminds the reader, "You can't separate the object from the human being, because the humans are part of the objects and the objects are part of the people" (159). Wenda's sentiment prevails throughout an impressive range of essays that acknowledge the contentious history of the British Museum's collection and highlight the complexities of encounters, legacies, and histories around the artworks representing genealogies, cultural knowledge, or ritual.