

## Book and Media Reviews

---

*The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 26, Number 2, 555-587  
© 2014 by University of Hawai'i Press

landownership differences underlie major issues that continue to be highly contentious and feed a palpable negative sentiment and perception of “outsiders” on Guam among the Chamorro. The Chuukese are immigrants acquiring land on an island that they view as wide-open space. The Chamorro people are indigenous to the island, have collectively lost their land through colonization, have been confined to smaller spaces of land, and, as a result, perceive the available space of the island as limited. The Chuukese, then, while as Pacific Islanders culturally similar in some ways in their understanding of the power of land, are distinct from the indigenous Chamorro in that the Chuukese are viewed as outsiders competing for the limited land spaces once belonging to the Chamorro. In short, the Chuukese people acquire landownership and, therefore, power in Guam, while the Chamorro people are still struggling to own their land and gain back the power they have lost.

Still, *Breadfruit and Open Spaces* illuminates similarities in traditional values bearing on family, food, and land familiar to Pacific Islanders in general and in so doing importantly highlights some of the unexpected conflicts across cultural boundaries in ethnically complex contemporary Pacific communities, a situation by no means unique to Guam. The subdivision residents live on the land as well as from it, which sets up the residents as responsible stewards of the land in Guam. This provides them with autonomy and sustenance presumably not available to them, for whatever reasons, in their homelands. Significantly for Guamanians and

the indigenous Chamorro, Bautista’s film serves to humanize the Chuukese people in Guam by providing intimate insights into this largely understudied and underserved population of Pacific Islanders residing on the island.

SHERYL A DAY

*University of Washington*

\* \* \*

*Savage Memory: How Do We Remember Our Dead?* Documentary film, 77 minutes, DVD, color, 2012. Directed by Zachary Stuart and Kelly Thomson. Produced by Sly Productions, Jamaica Plain, MA. DVD available for purchase at [transitmedia.net](http://transitmedia.net), US\$250.00 (institutions); US\$75.00 (high schools, libraries, community groups).

Of the personalities and times of Pacific anthropologists, we sometimes hear from more or less three kinds of voices: (1) letters and diaries, like Margaret Mead’s (*Letters From the Field*, 1977); (2) memoirs, like Michael French Smith’s (*A Faraway, Familiar Place*, 2013); and (3) biographies, like my own (*Gregory Bateson: Legacy of a Scientist*, 1980). Rarely, however, have we heard from descendants. Yet, the bittersweet, beautifully made *Savage Memory* provides us with not only a portrait of Bronislaw Malinowski’s kin, debating the moral status of the great man’s life and work, but simultaneously one of Trobriand Islanders, doing the same.

*Savage Memory* is not exactly a labor of love. It is more like a labor of ambivalence. With the help of the documentary filmmaker, Kelly Thompson, Zachary Stuart, one of

Malinowski's great-grandsons, tried to come to terms in some way with what his family calls the "Malinowski curse" by making this movie. The curse is never exactly defined by the various kin interviewed during the course of the film, but it seems to refer to being supercilious, if not downright arrogant, and perhaps to the perceived inheritance of a loss of agency. No resolution to this contradictory set of feelings, of course, is depicted here. Documentary filmmaking, it seems, is not a magical counter spell. Rather, the flagrancy of the great man's single-minded vanity is put on display for all to see, and in this sense, *Savage Memory* provides a useful companion piece to the brilliant first volume of Michael Young's 2004 biography of Malinowski.

Psychological motives and mystical forces aside, Stuart, who is clearly a bright, "sensitive," upper-middle class, young American but also merely a filmmaker with no particular scholastic training of any kind, cuts an audacious and resolute figure. He goes off to the Trobriand Islands, the sacred site of the birth of modern anthropology, to explore the memory of his celebrated ancestor, and he there encounters a complicated setting about which he doesn't really begin to have the first clue. Was Malinowski racist? Was he a colonialist? Was his research there unethical? Shouldn't one expect that the Trobriand Islanders feel offended by his research? All of these are questions a nice young man might very well ask, particularly in light of Malinowski's field diary (*A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, 1967). But, basically, the Trobrianders have nothing but favorable things

to say about what Stuart's forebear accomplished while he was there in 1914–1916 or about the shelf of books he left behind for the world to read. Even *The Sexual Life of Savages* (1929), whose topic and title Stuart finds distasteful and possibly salacious, is not really subjected to a uniform local point of view, critical or otherwise. Of the Trobriand approval and endorsement of Malinowski, Stuart makes no judgment.

There is another striking sort of subplot in this video, which juxtaposes divergent views of the dead in Trobriand culture and among Malinowski's kin. The film's narrative has occasion to depict a series of quotations from Malinowski about, as well as images relating to, Trobriand concepts of the afterlife, such as the women's distribution of banana leaves during mortuary rites, the baloma (spirits of the dead), parthenogenesis, and the island of Tuma, where ghosts go to live. In turn, these are interpolated with at times impassioned conversation among the filmmaker's family and other Malinowski kin, like his well-known daughter, Helena Wayne, to make up a kind of dialogue with Trobriand cosmology, which of course turns out to express a classic binary between traditional collectivism and modern individualism, so scorned by the theoretically hip, but still so affecting.

For the Stuart family, Malinowski is alternatively seen as irrelevant to their lives and faults; blamed for leaving them with a heritage of psychological problems that are never really identified, other than to allege that some of them were "crippled"; or vilified for abandoning their great-grandmother and her children, as well as for the

kind of woman he chose as his second wife. That is to say, Malinowski's memory is not based in a shared cosmology about ghosts and the landscape of the afterlife. He is rather an individual whose autobiography is subjected to differing moral assessments that are motivated by how he is seen to have affected his descendants emotionally.

*Savage Memory* is a rich, enthralling movie. Visually and discursively, it depicts a great deal more of Malinowski's fieldwork (including movies and field photos), a lot more discussion by his kin, as well as more academically informed evaluation of his work by several well-known anthropologists than I have space to discuss here.

Suffice it to say that it is worth taking the time to view. But who should take the time to do so? Pacific anthropologists, to be sure, will find it fascinating, as I have. Scholars interested in the history of British anthropology of course will also find significance in it, certainly. And, I suppose, people, also like me, who grew up in the shadows of a great, overachieving, rather self-involved kinsman, will find it compelling too.

But as this is a review for an interdisciplinary scholarly Pacific journal, my last question must be about what kind of a pedagogical context this DVD might serve. What sorts of classes would it benefit? I am unable to answer this question and, being left so puzzled, I am left with the kinds of questions Firth asked in his two introductions to Malinowski's *Diary*. For whom was it made, and for what purpose? For Firth, the answer was that the *Diary* might have an analogi-

cal appeal to anthropological fieldworkers. But I don't think that *Savage Memory* was made for this unique and highly specialized market. I don't know who it was made for, other than the filmmaker's family. Regardless of its rather mysterious purpose, *Savage Memory* remains a beguiling movie.

DAVID LIPSET

*University of Minnesota*

\* \* \*

*Moana: The Rising of the Sea*. Multi-media dramatic performance. Written and produced by Vilsoni Hereniko; choreographed and directed by Peter Rockford Espiritu. World premiere 6 December 2013, Japan-Pacific ICT Theatre, University of the South Pacific, Suva.

Presented to audiences at the Japan ICT (information, communication, technology) Theatre at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in December 2013, in conjunction with the European Consortium for Pacific Studies (ECOPAS) conference "Restoring the Human to Climate Change," the performance of *Moana: The Rising of the Sea* left me moved and with an intensely heightened sensitivity to the plight of Island communities in an age of climate change. Developed through the collaboration of Oceania Dance Theatre Artistic Director Peter Rockford Espiritu, USP Head of Performing Arts Igelese Ete, and Vilsoni Hereniko, former director of the USP Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture, and Pacific Studies and now professor at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, this original performance combined innovative music, song, dance, and video projec-