that the *kau fokonofo* came as support for their high-ranking relative who was *moheofo*, but that there was a distinct difference in rank attribution between the two, especially when it came to their sons’ succession.

Gailey quite rightly points out (10) that role definition within the life cycle is crucial to understanding the division of labor, but she does not succeed in convincing the reader that she has grasped what that means for Tonga. (See Kerry James, "O, Lead Us Not into 'Commoditisation' . . ." [JPS 1988], for an excellent analysis of the problematic nature of Gailey’s analysis of the division of labor, *koloa*, and commodity production in Tonga.) While much is said about the position of “wife” as introduced by the Wesleyan missionaries and how the Christian model contributed to the overall degradation of the status of women, almost nothing is mentioned about traditional Tongan marriage. More discussion and some analysis of the chiefly practice of polygamy, especially the *moheofolofokonofo* relationships of the *Tu’i Tonga*, would have been welcome, as would some attention to the unions of the *tu’a* (non-elite or “commoner” in current parlance), which were not, unlike their elite counterparts, given the status of “marriages.”

In conclusion, while *Kinship to Kingship* may tell us something about the theoretical state of a feminist Marxist approach, it adds very little to our understanding of gender relations in Tonga in the precontact period and the nineteenth century. Eleanor Leacock proclaims on the book’s jacket that the volume is “one that will doubtlessly become a classic in its area.” A classic it may be in Marxist theory, but it is but a poor showing in Tongan studies, and one may have to question the approach if a “classic” exemplifies itself in a flawed case study.

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Judith Bennett’s comprehensive and splendidly researched economic and social history of the Solomons is a landmark in recent Pacific scholarship. It will be immensely useful both to scholars and to those engaging the problems and challenges of this ten-year-old country’s present and future. Solomon Islanders steeped in colonial and mission ideologies will find many myths about their recent past systematically dismantled and corrected.

As a reference book, the volume is essential, giving everything from annual copra prices to the names and dates of service of prewar district officials. But it is much more than a collection of data. I found the arguments and interpretations compelling and valuable in a number of ways, of which I can enumerate only a few.

First, the superbly documented picture of the early whaling and trading period should dispel widely held misconceptions that most Solomons societies were little changed by Western
Second, Bennett shows clearly how in the nineteenth century Solomons leaders responded to changing circumstances by transforming, adapting, and extending “political systems” and power opportunistically. This dynamic view of political processes, which I have attempted to convey in my own recent writings, contrasts with the crude typologies and static models of much anthropological writing.

Third, Bennett explores the historical formation of the regional disparities, internal contradictions, and conflicts dividing the western and eastern Solomon Islands. The roots of contemporary class and regional conflicts are well over a century old.

Fourth, Bennett at once keeps the colonial Solomons in clear focus and shows how events there were tied to the world system—economic and political—on whose periphery the protectorate lay.

Fifth, Bennett makes telling use of her own interview data and oral historical research to augment and correct patchy and distorted archival records. The book goes far beyond a meticulously documented archival history—although it is that as well—in incorporating the experiences and perspectives of scores of indigenous participants in the events she describes.

Bennett effectively ties the history of the colonial period into recent political and economic developments. The reader gets a clear sense of how forces set in motion long ago—land alienation, colonial patronage, the establishment of mission empires, even language policies—move and shape the contemporary postcolonial Solomons. The “development experts” that arrive every week in Honiara proffering pearls of wisdom should be required to read this book before they set foot beyond the Mendiña Hotel.

The book is an interpretive synthesis, and one cannot expect it to be perfect or error-free, or to accord with the perspectives and prejudices of every specialist on every island or language or mission. My own list of minor quibbles does not alter my enormous admiration for the book as a whole or my gratitude to Bennett for countless helpful references, details, compilations, and insights.

Bennett’s use of anthropological material is generally excellent, although some developments of the last decade call for a few qualifications (e.g., on mana). I found her endorsement of the anthropologically constructed “big-man” as quintessential Solomons leader rather at odds with the picture she goes on to draw of powerful—and opportunistic—chiefs in many parts of the Solomons.

From my own Malaita-centric, and indeed Kwaio-centric, perspective on the Solomons, I found some distortions in the picture she draws of plantation labor and its consequences. In portraying the undeniably harsh, brutal, and exploitative side of plantation labor, she underestimates the high valuation Malaitans have placed for a century on “going abroad” (Kwaio leka naa faka) as an adventure and a rite of passage to manhood. Of my adult Kwaio male subjects, 96 percent had worked on plantations; and from the labor trade onward, plantation experience was valued as well as “hated”: even the vio-
ence was cast as a test of strength. The resilient spirit of Solomon Islanders, which emerges so well in the book, sustained Malaita plantation workers through decades of exploitation and injustice.

After the early years of taxation, the head tax was, I think, a less heavy burden on Malaitans than Bennett suggests. Senior men, in Kwaio at least, retained (and continue to retain) control over the prestige economy and access to wives by insulating shell valuables from cash. Young men earned the cash older men in their group needed to pay taxes (and the latter collected the “beach payment” or recruiting bonus as well). But young men could (and still can) seldom acquire shell valuables with cash, and could at best piece them together by selling rice or tobacco for shell beads.

The steady flow of Malaitans marrying western Solomons women through the years, and entering the copra economy as producers there, scarcely appears; nor do the Malaitans hired as laborers by local copra producers in the west. Yet both these (interconnected) elements have crucially shaped modern western Solomons—Malaita relations, in some ways more than the cloistered labor forces of the large plantations.

I have some other minor disagreements with Bennett. I believe she overemphasizes resource distributions and economic factors as the basis for Malaita’s being left alone by whalers and traders, and underemphasizes the unrelentingly hostile foreign policy of the politically fragmented Malaitans and their rigidly punitive sexual code. Although the Adventists in the west ern Solomons get reasonable representation, the role of Marovo as their lingua franca, in competition with the Methodist-fostered Roviana, is given short shrift.

Bennett’s depiction of Malaita custom, like that of the British chroniclers, adopts labels and stereotypes appropriate to northern Malaita and attributes them to the whole island. Langalanga is not the only source of shell valuables: the Kwaio make their own bata “white valuables” and do not use tafu-li’ae. “The Bulu” refers to a class of wild spirits, not a particular spirit; there was probably no direct connection between the Kwara’ae buru of the 1920s and the prophecies of the Kwaio ancestress La’aka (which incidentally began as early as 1934). But such points are trivial, given the whole sweep of the book, and in no way detract from its excellence.

Some of the mistakes are not hers—she merely passes them on. Where she uses archival sources, she is at the mercy of colonial scribes and observers who got names, facts, and cultural interpretations wrong—and inevitably she perpetuates some old errors (even a curious one by a naval surveyor who added 2000 nonexistent feet to the elevation of a southern Malaita mountain). But her care with revised spellings is commendable.

A longer list of such quibbles would be pointless. Bennett has a strong interpretive view, one I mainly agree with. Some colleagues may find more to disagree with and less to agree with than I, but we must all be grateful for such a bold, sweeping, yet minutely detailed and documented synthesis. This work will provide a foundation for further
detailed study (hopefully, much of it by Solomon Islanders) and, inevitably, a challenge to counterinterpretation. Given its length, substance, and handsome production, the book is very reasonably priced. The Pacific Islands Monograph Series has achieved rare distinction through this and other recent volumes.

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Unlike most Pacific Island countries, whose demographic majorities are clearly either indigenous or immigrant, New Caledonia is a bipolar society. Its mainly rural native peoples and mainly urban colonists—Jean Guiart likens Noumea to an ancient Greek city-state, others call it a French fortress—face a political conundrum that meddling by Paris only worsens.

Alan Clark, a French language and history scholar from New Zealand and longtime visitor to New Caledonia, rejects the usual “binary” view of the crisis as a struggle between French colonialism and Kanak nationalism. He argues that the real conflict is among three to four groups—indigenous Melanesians (43%), immigrant Europeans (37%) and non-Europeans (20%), and metropolitan French officials—each of which is divided and at least partly responsible for the problem. He focuses on historical experience and constitutional evolution, insisting that the future of New Caledonia lies in “the permanent character and—short of protracted civil conflict—the stark unavoidability of the electoral dimension” (29). His explication of the debate over who should be allowed to vote in territorial elections reveals a gray area that both Kanaks and French seek to define to their own advantage. Ultimately, he forsees neither the maintenance of the tense status quo nor independence for the outnumbered Kanaks as practicable, but rather a “neo-Caledonia” that treats all ethnic groups fairly and still preserves French metropolitan interests in the South Pacific.

Clark obviously wants Western-style democracy for a country whose indigenous people accuse France of using that principle as a weapon to keep them from gaining their freedom. Indigenous Fijian leaders, in a similar bipolar situation, rejected democracy when the 1987 election threatened their power, but in New Caledonia France holds the military card, as its May 1988 massacre of nineteen Kanak kidnappers demonstrated. Clark himself admits that the pattern in New Caledonia has been one of repeated metropolitan intervention in local political processes and frequent revision (from Paris) of territorial statutes, often in response to “extralegal”