his restatement of this history as narcotic abandonment, leads astray. Cutting through this part of the onion brings tears to the eye. However, the endpoints of this journey—a comparative analysis of kava consumption at the top, and an ethnography of Tannese social and religious volatility at the center—are both welcome and useful. *Fuvi tamafa! as the Tannese say after a dose of kava.

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The anthropology of health is a fast-growing area of interdisciplinary interest that is enhanced by Cohen's book, which proposes an alternative to the accepted view that health has improved over time. This view, held by those who celebrate the progress of civilization (2), is countered by Cohen's argument that as populations have increased over time, the risk and the occurrence of disease have also magnified.

The author offers a reconstruction of health patterns of the past using three lines of inquiry. First, he surveys observations and analyses of illness in populations in past times in order to extrapolate epidemiological rules about the effects of illness on populations. Second, he uses field studies of health in contemporary groups such as hunter-gatherers. Third, he draws on analyses of archaeological skeletal material and paleopathology. Together these analyses suggest that health patterns have changed, often for the worse, and that so-called progress has been at the expense of health.

The increase in size of populations is the centrifugal force leading to increased health risks; as more people are drawn together in enclosed spaces, the risk of disease spreading has greatly increased. Similarly he argues that "behavior" such as body contact, body coverings, and trading foodstuffs affects the incidence of particular disease types. But the frequency of these types varies markedly from group to group. He devotes a whole chapter to various studies of the health problems of the San of South Africa as reported in the 1960s and 1970s. These show that the San are relatively well nourished, have varied rates of infection, and have a life expectancy at birth ranging from twenty to fifty years; reproductive rates are below modern Third World averages.

The overall approach draws heavily on the medical model at the expense of the social model. Cohen provides a valuable synthesis of three types of disease—infectious, nutritional, and degenerative—that have had varying effects on populations worldwide. Interest in disease patterns over time has been woefully lacking, so this exercise in reconstructing the health patterns of earlier times is both timely and valuable.

But that reconstruction requires that health be seen not as a material attribute that a person or group has or has not, but as part of a group's broader social organization in that it
touched beliefs, body image, values, and activities including eating and producing the goods to eat. Understanding the boundaries of health and sickness in people's own perceptions is vital, especially with the current emphasis on primary health care. Knowledge of this broader social basis for health is essential to a total understanding of health issues, of which disease etiology is one part.

Cohen omits from his discussion of the evolution of health any mention of intervention practices, either Western or local. The pills, potions, and treatments that medical practitioners have developed over several thousand years to counteract diseases that so-called civilization has introduced or spread cannot be discounted. Although discussion of the development of such treatments would require a whole volume in itself, some allusion to this important aspect should have been made in this text.

The incidence of particular diseases within Cohen's three types and the means by which they have spread through Pacific societies are not dealt with in this book, but are of growing interest to a diverse group of scholars. Reconstructing the development of infectious diseases such as malaria, influenza, and venereal disease is drawing together epidemiologists, historians, anthropologists, and archaeologists to discover the pathways of dispersal. The large question is whether Europeans were the agents of introduction and dispersal or whether these diseases were affecting Pacific Island peoples before European contact. Developments in human osteology, such as the information derived from bone collagen and from magnetic fields within the body, may yield more information about the nutritional state and the immune systems of early populations.

Diabetes is a major health concern in Pacific societies that highlights the distinction between the medical and the social models. Epidemiologists such as Prior, Zimmet, and Baker have argued that diabetes is a disease of modernization that has been triggered to almost "epidemic" proportions in some Polynesian societies. The potential, they say, has always been there because Polynesians carry the gene for obesity that allowed them to survive the rigors of irregular food supply in times past. But with current practices of food aid in times of hurricanes, and well-stocked supermarkets, the food intake is maintained at a high level with few periods of hunger. From 17 to 25 percent of the adult population have been found to have maturity onset diabetes.

The counterview to this medical model argues that the social factors are stronger than the genetic ones, namely the love of food, both for exchange at feasts and for consumption, and the practices of social fattening that were (and are still in some places) a key part of social tradition. Photographs by early anthropological expeditions in the Pacific demonstrate clearly that fat women were to be found long before the supermarket intruded into these societies.

Those who endeavor to understand the patterns of health in Pacific societies, past, present, and future, can both draw on and react to the ideas on the evolution of health that Cohen presents.
BOOK REVIEWS

across all societies worldwide. The half of the book that constitutes notes and bibliography is valuable for its breadth of summary of issues tangential to the main thesis. The notes permit the reader to keep the central issue clearly in mind and at the same time provide background information for the researcher who wishes to pursue a particular topic in depth. The book is written in an easy, readable style, without too much specialist jargon. It should appeal to a wide range of readers and draw together those from a number of disciplines who are concerned about the validity of the fatal impact thesis in the 1990s.

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The History of the Pacific Islands:

The Pacific has been poorly served by general histories in recent years. Kerry Howe's Where the Waves Fall (1984) overstated the worn "Islander oriented" perspective to the detriment of any other argument or analysis, while I. C. Campbell's History of the Pacific Islands (1990) was simply superficial. Scarr's effort is at once better grounded and more balanced in its coverage than either of these, and probably more useful to the postulated "general reader" so dear to publishers and booksellers, yet its very expertise may reveal the flaws of the general-history project more starkly than did its predecessors.

The book's range is astonishing. As opposed to the few pages that preface most general works on the Pacific, there is in the first part (80 pages) a serious attempt to deal with prehistory, migrations, and oral traditions. Part 2 deals with early contact in the Marquesas and Micronesia and with late eighteenth and early nineteenth century interactions in Tahiti and Hawai'i. Part 3 explores the development of trade and settlement in the nineteenth century and concisely reviews different modes of colonialism up to the 1940s. The final part deals with the Second World War and its ramifications, the decolonization process, and political changes in the 1980s. Though many of the chapters are brief, what is captured within them is often surveyed effectively. There is an attempt to draw Micronesia, the smaller Polynesian islands, and even the New Guinea Highlands, into a review that understandably privileges Scarr's established interests in Fiji and administrative developments.

However, the range of the topics covered leads inevitably to superficiality and inaccuracy in specific areas. For instance, the implication that the graded society was general in Vanuatu, rather than specific to the north, is misleading; the further suggestion that hermaphroditic pigs were preferred for sacrifices everywhere within that area obscures significant variations in the ritual economy. It is also surprising to find reiterated the old geographical determinist argument that political centralization was impossible in the Marquesas because valleys were iso-