cessful. No incoming paradigm has gained hegemony. Christian missions almost succeeded, but were headed off by John Frum. Even if one were to succeed, it would be temporary, because Tannese visions of sources of information and knowledge permit other persons to create new competing visions.

The biggest question for me was whether an analysis that focuses on the mode of information and sets aside other important dimensions of power tells us anything really significant? Like all models, it directs attention to certain areas and away from others without denying their existence or their importance. Those to which Lindstrom draws attention are both important and fascinating. As a materialist I approached this argument with some skepticism, but the clarity with which Lindstrom sets out this paradigm and the supporting argument, and the quality of the ethnography, convinced me that this book and the approach deserve serious attention from Pacific scholars and a place in their libraries.

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This large volume, attractively typeset and presented, brings together essays by anthropologists Marshall Sahlins, Valerio Valeri, Jocelyn Linnekin, Andrew Strathern, Aletta Biersack, Nicholas Thomas, Roy Wagner, and Greg Dening. With all of them we have come to associate meditations on the relationship between history and ethnography, particularly in the context of accounts and representations of Oceanic societies and cultures. That such a relationship lies in the realm of poetics is suggested at first by the evocation of the muse Clio in the title, and spelled out in the final chapter, “A Poetic for Histories,” by Dening, in which he says, “Poetics are the relationships we have with the texts that suffuse our lives. Poetics are the facility with which we relate the systems of meaning in these texts to the occasions of their reading” (348). Because these relationships between “reader” and “text” are complex and multifaceted, authors must attempt to disentangle strands of significance, elements of agency, and symbolic themes of enduring cultures and momentary encounters from a diverse range of primary and secondary ethnographic and historical source materials, which themselves vary widely in nature and reliability.

Biersack, in a well-informed, wide-ranging introduction, takes as her point of departure Sahlins’ Historical Metaphors and Mythical Realities. Against the backdrop of historical and cultural studies, she explores the implications of historical anthropology for anthropology’s interdisciplinary position, and for the linkages between and among the discipline’s subfields, as well as for its theory and methodology. Three of the eight essays that follow, those by Sahlins, Valeri, and Biersack herself, are long, each over sixty pages, and together account for more than
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half this sizable book. In a chapter entitled "The Return of the Event, Again," Sahlins acknowledges that he is trying to do what good historians have been doing for some time. But he wants to do it explicitly in a context that has unusual structural features, by reflecting on an event that triggered the Great Fijian War of 1843 to 1855 between the kingdoms of Bau and Rewa—the appropriation of a pig in Suva in 1841, and much else. Valeri presents with minor revisions "The Transformation of a Transformation," which appeared in Social Analysis in 1982 and is a structural essay on an aspect of Hawaiian history (1809 to 1819). It complements his synchronic study, Kingship and Sacrifice (1985), with diachronic transformations of the political-ritual system as reflected in the complex of temples attached to King Kamehameha's last residence in Kailua. In "Prisoners of Time: Millenarian Praxis in a Melanesian Valley," Biersack presents an intricate analysis of structure and local history, the coming of whites to the Papua New Guinea highlands and their effect on Paiela ritual and encoded paradigmatic principles, the concepts of time and of mana.

Although generally shorter, the remaining five chapters provide rich and valuable perspectives. Linnekin presents an admirably clear account of exchange patterns and the worldview within a native Hawaiian community and the ways some of these have changed in response to others' "world order" or "global economy" in "Inside, Outside: A Hawaiian Community in the World System," one of the most easily accessible chapters in the book. So too is Strathern's commendably clear "Struggles for Meaning," where he analyzes the meaning of moka exchanges in the Mount Hagen area of Papua New Guinea with which he has long been familiar. He investigates the way the same act can possess significance by virtue of inclusion in widening spheres of action, and the sort of "history" that has emerged with changing circumstances that are imbued nevertheless with Kawelka values. Thomas has examples of the selectivity and hegemonic devices that Fijians have employed in the establishment of their "custom," the vaka turaga of the taukei, and the ways in which some Fijians have rejected the process by incorporating other values and reversing the key symbols of the Fijian customary system. He also employs an interesting narrative device in "Alejandro Mayta in Fiji: Narratives about Millenarianism, Colonialism, Postcolonial Politics, and Custom." In a pithy chapter, "New Ireland Is Shaped Like a Rifle and We Are at the Trigger: The Power of Digestion in Cultural Reproduction," Wagner describes the mortuary feasting of the Usen Barok of south-central New Ireland, an event that serves as a performative enactment of the dissolution of structure, diachrony condensed to a point, instantaneous "history," which, by negating meanings that ground social life, shows a power over society by image transformation.

Each of the chapters takes an event, a moment, or a ritual, and explicates its meanings from standpoints that allow for the possibilities of selective endogenous transformation, as against the historical notion of timelessness often attributed to representations of
“people without history.” Each shows the selectivity that has frequently been at work in the ways boundaries have been drawn around the event and limitations placed on its interpretation by previous scholarly or “authoritative” representations. Changes in meanings that have occurred before, as reactions, become themselves active agents in the ongoing transformative and reconstitutive processes. What is sought is the authenticity of experience rather than a reliance on the authority of an “authority.” Hovering uncertainly over the endeavor is Clio, the muse of epic poetry and history (not to be confused with another of like name), either drifting tangentially or clumping dogmatically between the variously proffered interpretations of events. Authors seem often to be forcing the boundaries of language, with frequent recourse to trope and metaphor, in order to grasp within the limits of the printed page the problems of multilevel interpretation and representation. This does not always make for easy reading, and some exponents manage the narratives and complex interpretations more briskly and directly than others.

“The past, which we are mythically confident is knowable as such, is only known through symbols whose meaning is changed in the reading of them and in the preserving of them” (355). Thus, says Dening, the conventions of the “dramaturgical entertainment,” which is the pursuit of meaning, “include not just the text and its structure but the reading and the cultural rules of reading as well” (368), reminding us again of how much of the reflexivity current in anthropology and, in particular, historical anthropology, had an earlier vogue in literary criticism. Altogether, this is a fine collection of essays by extremely able practitioners of the art of reflecting on the nature of historical events and their relations to different and sometimes multiple cultural orders. Many good points are made, and assumptions that we know what we know are frequently challenged, to provoke further thought. Dening may appropriately have the last comment: “What a complicated two-way ‘Mirror for Man’ anthropology has turned out to be once we understand the poetics of an ethnographic moment” (369).

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The Macphersons have written an exemplary account of Samoa’s indigenous medical system. The book is a combined sociological analysis and practical handbook of Samoan medicine. The authors write in easy style for a multiple readership that includes Pacific scholars, medical practitioners who work with migrant Samoan communities, and Samoan healers (fofo) and their patients. The book documents the technicalities of Samoan medical belief and practice and serves as an effective introduction to medical sociology or anthropology.