tional community more broadly—accepted the coups not only as accomplished facts but as somehow “right.”

Lal’s closing questions regarding the future of Fiji foreground some recurrent themes running throughout the book. Central to these is a tension within the Fijian community between sustaining the “traditional” while facing the necessity of dramatic social change; Lal draws very effectively on the works of Nayacakalou, Spate, Belshaw, and other scholars in outlining this ongoing contradiction. In the political arena such tension is most evident in regard to the chiefly system. To Lal’s mind, who will succeed the present generation of chiefs, and under what circumstances, are critical questions for the future and have been powerful factors in the course of Fijian history during this century. Certainly Lal’s narrative suggests that intra-Fijian debates concerning the future of chiefly power, and the fact that Coalition Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra was not a chief, might well have been as consequential as matters of ethnicity in the 1987 coups.

The historical research is thorough and scrupulous, and the presentation is lucid. Lal brings together a wealth of information, much of it previously unavailable and the earlier available materials often reframed in thought-provoking ways. He relies very heavily on unpublished primary sources, and he provides sufficient texts and documentation to enable readers to draw their own inferences and, perhaps, challenge his interpretations. Broken Waves is an open-ended narrative, one with no clear conclusion. Perhaps its greatest strength is that it presents the history of modern Fiji as very complicated and multifaceted. It invites us to take these complexities seriously and, in doing so, to avoid understanding contemporary Fiji as “the same old story” told once again.

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This historical ethnography of Ngatik Atoll is based on Lin Poyer’s twenty months of ethnographic fieldwork during 1979–1980. Ngatik, called by its contemporary residents Sapwuahfik, is located 88 miles southwest of Pohnpei, the “high island” of Pohnpei State in the Federated States of Micronesia. While it has become commonplace in the last ten years for ethnographers of the Pacific to pay particular attention to local representations of history in oral narratives, cultural performances, and material objects, Poyer takes this trend one step further in studying the connections between history and the construction of cultural identity. This task is especially interesting because the entire male population of the atoll was massacred in 1837 by the crew of the Lambton, under the direction of its master, C H Hart. After this tragedy
the atoll was gradually reconstituted by the less than a dozen female survivors, with the addition of immigrants from the other Micronesian islands and a group of European traders and castaways. Poyer's analysis focuses on two instances of external imposition in the nineteenth century that were critical for this process of social reconstitution: the imposition of Pohnpeian titles on three young males, and the advent of Christian missionaries in 1889.

Poyer's research into the linkage between historical representation and contemporary identity uncovers the "ideology" motivating both of these dimensions of culture. The ideology of history, most likely also a product of external forces, is grounded in an evolutionary view of the past. According to this view, the narratives of the massacre represent it as both a momentous cultural tragedy and a step in the process of Christian enlightenment, leading eventually to the rejection of sorcery and magic, emblematic of a negatively valued "pagan" past. The advent of missionaries is seen as a positive, redemptive reply to the previous murderous devastation. The ideology of identity turns out to be a constantly shifting combination of elements, including both essentialist criteria, such as genealogical connection, residence on the atoll, and distinctive behavioral characteristics (eg, skill in canoe building, speaking pidgin), and relational constructs, such as the opposition to Pohnpei and the positive identification with other atoll populations. Using specific ethnographic examples from exchange, feasting, community decision-making, resource control, and clan affiliation, Poyer details the way the people of Ngatik developed an egalitarian ethos, despite—or perhaps in contradistinction to—the proximity of the more hierarchical political system on Pohnpei and the historical imposition of that system on the atoll. She demonstrates that ceremonial formalism and ranked titles are countered by a local ethos that stresses individual autonomy and behavioral options.

Poyer devotes considerable attention to critically evaluating the sources for her job of historical reconstruction. Because of the massacre, there is a substantial break in the transmission of oral tradition and the loss of the aboriginal language, which, when combined with the paucity of western documentary records, makes this task extremely challenging. In addition, oral accounts of the massacre are not classified as "sacred narratives," and so are subject to less rigorous cultural memorization. However, since outsiders are not able to study sacred narratives, this categorization turns out to be fortuitous. In handling western documents Poyer is equally careful in specifying both the historical context of the textual evidence and the practical interests of the text producers. She separates clearly ethnographic facts from the representation of those facts by the people of Ngatik, as for example in her discussion of the atoll's complex relationship with Pohnpei. Although at several points Poyer introduces the—in my view unfortunate—term "ethnohistory" as the "perceived history" in distinction to the documentary record, her substantive analysis shows that this disjunction is unnecessary.

This is a splendid book based on exhaustive research, informed by ana-
lytical precision, and written in a lucid and flowing style. Thanks to Poyer, the survivors of the Ngatik massacre still have much to teach us.

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More Than a Living is a text that, in many ways, reaffirms the worth and significance of good, sensitive, and sensible ethnography. It is a book written with respect, concern, and affection for the people who constitute its subject. The site of Mike Lieber’s research is the Polynesian outlier of Kapingamarangi, located in the Eastern Caroline group of the larger geographical area called Micronesia. Although some might dismiss the book’s focus on fishing as myopic or mundane, Lieber convincingly shows fishing to be a practice intimately linked with and deeply reflective of the Kapinga view of themselves, their world, and their past.

Lieber writes of fishing as part of a larger environmental, social, and ritual order that once constituted the community on Kapingamarangi. To his credit, he does not attempt to reduce or simplify so rich and complex a topic; rather, he endeavors to make as clear as possible how fishing was and is organized within Kapinga society. Throughout the twentieth century, major change has occurred, not only in Kapinga fishing practices, but in all aspects of life on that atoll. Acknowledging this fact, Lieber combines cybernetics and systems theory to explain how Kapinga cope with potentially threatening, disturbing forces in order to sustain stability and coherence in their world. He also employs the anthropological idea of culture to explain how Kapinga give meaning to their lives in a changing world.

An acute attention to ethnographic detail complements Lieber’s impressive blend of theory and concept. He gives meticulous attention to eighty-four different kinds of fishing activities ordered through seven separate and distinct techniques. Of these eighty-four fishing activities remembered by Lieber’s informants, only fifteen continue to be employed today. The University of Illinois anthropologist also examines traditional constraints, seasonal and climatic variations, and the ways Kapinga named, mapped, remembered, and thus knew the reefs, shallows, and open ocean areas of their environment. The gods proved as variable and vital an environmental category of influence as the winds, tides, and stages of the moon. Men trained their sons to observe the regularity in the habits and habitats of different species of ocean creatures so that they might recognize the intervention of the gods in the deviations and departures from these observed patterns.

The cosmological significance of fishing receives careful scrutiny and provides an acute measure of the