Elsewhere, the discussion of population in Chapter 7 relies exclusively on English sources, thereby overlooking the important work of Baudchon and of Rallu.

On a more substantive level, Aldrich occasionally glosses over his ignorance of certain key personalities and crucial events by referring to “two Melanesians,” “another Union Calédonienne member,” “another European settler” and so on. Generally insignificant in the context of the wealth of detailed information provided by the author, such lapses become crucial in the context of his discussion of the assassination of Jean-Marie Tjibaou and Yeiwene Yeiwene in May 1989. Here the reader is informed that “A Melanesian shot the two leaders dead . . . The assassin, a young FLNKS member, . . . was arrested and convicted of the murders” (255). The assassin was, of course, Djubelly Wea, who was shot dead on the spot by Tjibaou’s bodyguards and who, at forty-four years of age, was hardly a young man.

I have perhaps one more important complaint. Aldrich draws surprisingly few parallels with the American Pacific, and yet they are numerous and pertinent. The United States, too, has its “noncontiguous territories,” its strategic interests in the Pacific. It, too, has sought more or less successfully in the postwar years to draw its dependent territories closer to itself. France and the United States have conspicuously converging interests in the Pacific. There was certainly some degree of cooperation with respect to nuclear testing in Moruroa and, perhaps, complicity in the Rainbow Warrier affair. The links and parallels surely merit reflection.

But such are minor grievances with regard to a book that offers an immense wealth of information, a refreshingly intelligent, lively, and measured view of the postwar French presence in the islands. I commend it to anyone with an interest in the contemporary Pacific.

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This is a brilliant study of how certain nonwestern places came to be understood by certain constructs that take on a life of their own, and in so doing, show much more about the west than about the others to whom they were meant to refer. In anthropology, for example, it has been difficult to think of India except in terms of caste, Mediterranean societies except in terms of honor, and Middle Eastern tribes except in terms of segmentary lineage systems. The recent spate of studies that have treated such constructs dominating ethnographic areas of classic and continuing anthropological interest as representations rather than as realities has opened these areas to new questions and foci of attention, as well as provided the bases for strong cul-
Here, the representation in question is cargo cults, first appearing in a 1945 issue of the colonial newsmagazine *Pacific Islands Monthly* to label Melanesian social movements, for which Lindstrom provides a genealogy that is at once the product of thorough scholarship and critical writing full of satirical wit and delightful ironies—a very rare combination indeed. Lindstrom traces the intricate history and features of local colonial discourses on Melanesia, involving the enterprises of missionaries, planters, anthropologists, and administrators, in which cargo cults emerge repeatedly as the frame for discussing natives. Lindstrom’s lengthy treatment of the John Frum stories in Vanuatu, where he has worked, is the centerpiece of sustained analysis in this volume. He then moves beyond these local tales to show the dissemination of the cargo cult construct, not only among contemporary Melanesians themselves, who have attempted to remake it as their own, but also among all sorts of western writers—journalists, policy analysts, and popular novelists—for whom cargo cults represent the essence of the exotic, as well as underdevelopment, validated by the science of anthropology. Most poignant and painful in this account is the bind of contemporary ethnographers of Melanesia who try to escape from the legacy of a construct, now understood as overly simplistic and stereotypic, only to find this legacy reproduced as simple fact in edition after edition of the most popular introductory texts of their discipline. Anthropology continues to make this construct part of the deep cultural capital of its own culture quite in spite of the intentions of its most sophisticated practitioners.

 Appropriately, Lindstrom entitles his last chapter, “Cargo Cults Everywhere,” and prepares the way for a striking and passionately articulated conclusion: “The term now has boomeranged back into the hand that once pitched it. We are the cargo cultists. And we? We are the lonely natives here in the jungle who have never had the miracle” (182). We? Cargo cultists? In the last section of the last chapter, Lindstrom, inspired by poststructuralist psychoanalysis, expounds a universal essence for the cargo cult phenomenon in unrequited love and unfulfilled desire:

Perhaps cargo cultists are just unrequited lovers, and the cargo story is an allegory of love gone wrong. As a native cargo cultist myself, I believe I now can permit myself to reveal cargo’s true secret. There is a metadiscourse of desire itself within Western culture that powerfully informs how we think and feel about our yearnings. This script, or master trope, structures both love stories and cargo stories so that each may be read in terms of the other. The story of the cargo cult is just another avatar of the prosaic Western romance. (198)

Fascinating, but an odd way to end the sort of analysis that preceded this climax—an ending, the form of which is worth some extended discussion in concluding this review, because I believe it suggests a more general problem in critical projects of this sort, which have been undeniably important in recent years in renewing anthro-
polity. Now the genre in which Lindstrom has so skillfully been writing works by exploring certain historic and ethnographic realities through the contexts of the production of representations, and not by attending to the referents themselves of such representations. Treating representations themselves as social facts through their meticulous readings and tracings is what gives this genre its empirical groundings, its critical edge, and its interpretive complexity.

Yet, after such an exemplary performance in this genre, Lindstrom offers a kind of essential truth about cargo cults that is antithetical to the kind of critical truth he develops about this phenomenon through his treatment of it as a representation or construct. He finally commits himself to a deeper or final meaning of cargo cults that places him suddenly within the field of what he had been studying as a critical genealogist of the construct: he becomes yet another interpreter of the essential meaning of the construct, albeit one who has radically displaced this meaning from the field of the exotic other onto his own culture by the very means of his critical genealogy.

What's more, precisely at the point that he becomes yet another interpreter of the essential meaning of cargo cults Lindstrom loses firm genealogical control of the term. Until then, he traces his field of critique by dealing only with those writers who make explicit and extended use of cargo cult stories for their own diverse purposes. But when he spins off on his own final interpretation, the psychoanalytic writers who inspire him, such as Jessica Benjamin and Jacques Lacan, make no mention at all of cargo cults. Lindstrom himself makes the association between cargo cults and the analysis of desire, and thus he becomes just like the other writers in the field of appropriations of the construct.

Lindstrom's appropriation of the cargo cult for the sake of an argument about unfulfilled desire reminds me a lot of Georges Bataille's appropriation of the potlatch to produce the idea of the accursed share, his own distinctive vision of excess and unfulfillable desire (and since genealogy plays such a large role in the preceding parts of his book, we should note the strong influence of Bataille on the poststructuralists, especially Lacan, who inspire Lindstrom's ultimate interpretation). In a sense, then, Lindstrom has revived, or has implicated himself in, a very old tradition of appropriation of ethnographic materials for the sake of a line of European philosophical cultural criticism that he clearly and passionately finds appealing. The oddness and irony in his appropriation lie in his preceding rigorous treatment of cargo cult as a field of representation rather than as a label for some essential reality, to which he nonetheless subscribes in the end.

While I don't believe that much more can be said here about this fascinating, quirky ending to Lindstrom's study, it does suggest an interesting tension in the production of scholarship that treats representations as the most important social facts. A resolute critique of established representations is satisfying because it liberates a field of inquiry and creates new possibilities. But these older representations do have staying power, even over their
critics. One finds increasingly that critical analysis of representations is not enough. Until this critical project is fully worked out as to the alternative landscapes and practices of research it suggests, the posing of final interpretations, visions really, as in this work, will prove irresistible in confronting questions, such as, What were cargo cults all about as to their referents in social life, even after their construction as a kind of colonial discourse has been explored?

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In his latest work, this prolific author mounts a detailed critique of colonial discourse studies. Because much of this theory originated in South Asian historiography, readers of this journal might wonder what the book has to offer them. The answer suggested here is that anyone caught up (like the reviewer) in "the oxymoronic contortion of 'an anthropology of colonialism'" (7) will be rewarded by the careful reading that Thomas's argument demands.

Thomas starts from the unexceptionable position that colonialism is hardly a monolithic phenomenon in its expression or effects, nor is it to be completely understood solely in political or economic terms. But, he argues, even though there is an increasing body of literature on the cultural aspects of colonialism, "a great deal of writing on 'colonial discourse' fails to grasp this field's dispersed and conflicted character" (3). Therefore, the book is intended to introduce the reader to "the complex range of debates concerning colonial representation" (xi) and to suggest more appropriate methods of analysis.

Chapter 1 begins examining the politics of colonial studies. Here one of the book's strengths quickly appears: Thomas never lets the reader forget the complexities of the situations and representations to which such studies must pay attention. Hence Edward Said's critique of "Orientalism" is itself found to be overgeneralized, and in need of analysis in terms of the specific context in which it was produced. The representation of colonized peoples can be shown to change over time, but in no simple, linear fashion nor according to a single political agenda. Footnote 10 to this chapter (197-201) provides an excellent introductory bibliography of relevant literature.

The problem of the second chapter is to show "how analysis can establish that 'culture' and 'colonial dominance' are deeply mutually implicated without reducing one to the other" (41). While the contributions of such writers as Homi Bhabha, Abdul R Jan-Mohamed, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak are recognized, Thomas faults them for their relative neglect of resistant forms of discourse created by the colonized. Thus "(T)hough pre-colonial elements and syncretic forms are almost invariably found to be signifi-