practice of carving. Lewis looks to museums as one possible source of artistic revitalization, drawing on Northwest Coast examples.

Dark and Mead approach overviews from opposite perspectives: Dark from that of style throughout the Pacific, Mead from one tradition—that of the Māori. Mead argues that the continued importance of the arts lies in their holding firm a cultural heritage under threat from a variety of forces. Dark suggests that emphasis on the preservative functions of art derive from western perceptions of the “work of art” as being something precious that may be used to authenticate tradition. He argues for an appreciation of the active role of art to comment on and give meaning to the social present. His closing query, whether current Pacific emphases on the role of the arts in cultural preservation are not anomalous, deserves further consideration.

There are some minor complaints: a list of the color plates, at least, would be helpful, and the index referred to in the Cataloging-in-Publication Data does not exist. Otherwise, the publication details, and the incorporation of a wealth of photographs, drawings, and maps in the figures, are exemplary. One would hope for more extensive coverage of the Pacific in future Pacific Arts Association volumes and for continued support of indigenous artists and analysts and their progression from presentations to publications.

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Today, when much of the scholarly writing about museums and their exhibitions leans toward wholesale criticism, O’Hanlon’s book offers a refreshing alternative. It is substantive, insightful, and unpretentious, and, through its complex narrative, calmly and convincingly challenges much of the judgment others have offered. O’Hanlon is guided by his belief that in our efforts to rectify earlier failings we must not impose a new subjugation by ignoring local agency (13). As a result, his writing is rich in the exploration of local agency and perceptions.

Paradise, written to accompany an exhibit of the same title at the Museum of Mankind in London, is much more than an ordinary exhibition catalogue. Its main purpose is to record the process of collecting the artifacts and fabricating the exhibition, as well as to document the items in local context. O’Hanlon, who conducted fieldwork in the Wahgi area of the New Guinea Highlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, returned in 1986 and 1990 specifically to collect for the Museum of Mankind, where he is also an assistant keeper. Thus, the book interweaves the experiences and perspectives of field ethnographer, collector, and curator as it explores local agency and perceptions.

The catalogue feels elegantly slim, especially given the weight of its substance. It consists of just three chap-
ters. The first outlines Wahgi culture and history, emphasizing the momentous changes that have occurred since the Wahgi people were first contacted by the Australian Leahy-Taylor patrol sixty years ago. Most of this history is presented from the perspective of the Komblo tribe, among whom O’Hanlon lived. Readers learn about political changes, the important Pig Festival, warfare, and the 1970s boom in the coffee industry and resultant increase in the use of cash, vehicles, beer, and other imports.

In the second chapter, attention shifts to Wahgi artifacts, especially war shields and net bags. O’Hanlon describes the process of gathering the collection and how this activity was influenced by local processes, rules, and personalities. The chapter unsettles many contemporary assumptions held by Western scholars about such topics as what constitutes an artifact, the politics of collecting, and the effects that the introduction of money has on artifact production. For example, O’Hanlon found himself preferring those items produced in Wahgi. When he asked to purchase a wooden bowl used in processing pandanus, he rejected the one he was brought initially because it was made in the Sepik River area for sale to tourists. Yet, as the artifact seller reminded him, this was what they used. In addition, Wahgi people, whose life often revolves around the accumulation and presentation of objects, didn’t view O’Hanlon’s collecting as the politically insensitive hostage-taking of cultural material, but as an extension of envoys in continuing relationships. Motivated also by pragmatic concerns, they placed O’Hanlon in the position of in-law owing payments. Additionally, the idea of marketing cultural heritage that is heavily critiqued by many scholars is a Wahgi tradition, as evidenced by the long history they have of selling components of the Pig Festival to other groups.

In the third chapter, O’Hanlon deconstructs the exhibit process and product. “The exhibition is itself a large artifact, whose manufacture merits a measure of the interest usually confined to the component objects included within it” (92). Here, he devotes the same amount of attention to the fabrication of the exhibit as he did to the fabrication of the shields and net bags in the previous chapter. If, as we saw in chapter 2, the presence of beer bottle pull tabs influenced aesthetic decisions about body decoration, we now learn that what some people regard as mundane technical facts are unseen but powerful influences in decisions about exhibit design and presentation. These include budgetary restrictions, physical constraints of the gallery, and issues of safety, security, and staffing. The extent to which artifacts can be contextualized in exhibits, for example, may depend on precisely such mundane facts. The New Guinea Highlands exhibit had to fit into a museum space that was originally designed to evoke a desert landscape, left over from the preceding exhibit about Palestinian costumes.

The compelling conceptual underpinnings of the book—the unfolding of complexities, the layering of perspectives, and the importance of context—are also responsible for a slight unevenness of style. As evident in O’Hanlon’s
introductory remarks and in his division of the book into the three chapters, he is writing for three audiences: Melanesianists, museum professionals, and Wahgi individuals. The first chapter is for serious Melanesianists. The second and third are clearly for the museum-minded. Perhaps all of it is, in some way, for select Wahgi individuals. But will museum professionals find the complexities of Wahgi marriage patterns discussed in the first chapter engaging enough to understand how this relates to museum objects? And will Melanesianists be captivated enough by the discussions of institutional politics about space constraints in the galleries? Of all the audiences, the Wahgi people will probably enjoy the book in its entirety the most.

But, this juggling of perspectives aside, the book accomplishes a major feat in its ability to substantively counter many assumptions held by commentators on museums. Furthermore, Paradise succeeds where no other book has, in its ability to explain local appropriation of external influences. Readers are offered complex understandings of why, for example, elastic ribbing from sock tops replaces plaited leg bands, or why reformulated beer ads and rugby league idioms appear on shield designs as creative commentary on clan politics.

Last but not least, the book has good maps and excellent color plates that portray powerful environments, ingeniously crafted artifacts, and believable, contemporary people.

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Nius Bilong Pasifik is the latest tro net effort by University of Papua New Guinea journalism lecturer David Robie, in which previously published material from conference papers, mass media, and trade union journals has been compiled into an omnibus volume designed to make the materials more widely available.

The book is set out in three parts: an overview of issues in the region, a series of six case studies, and three appendixes offering Pacific codes of ethics, country profiles, and contact information for professional media associations in the Pacific. Its focus is primarily Papua New Guinea, as ten of the eighteen contributors are either based or have research interests there, but also includes chapters on the French Pacific, Fiji, and Tonga. It aims, Robie notes in the introduction, to expose young journalists to the professional issues of direct concern to them as Pacific Islanders.

Toward this end, cross-cultural communication scholar Sarah Finau's contribution on bias and race-tagging in the New Zealand media is a standout effort. In the manner of the best essays of Epeli Hau'ofa, her discussion of the effects of such headlines as “Father Shot Dead in the ‘Old Bar-