Pacific places are by no means subordinate pieces of the contributors’ academic careers. These scholars share lengthy histories themselves in the Pacific, maintaining multigenerational contacts with their informants-cum-friends. Eugene Ogan’s four decades of grounding in Bougainville and his consequent fertile insights testify to the extraordinary value of long-term attachments to place. He emphasizes that ongoing affiliations with place enable scholars to develop a deeper understanding of societies, exposing the ways in which they respond to change over time, rather than simply at one moment in time. Thus long-term relationships with place allow researchers to transcend the restrictive disciplinary boundaries so comfortably entrenched in the academy yet so inadequate in capturing the complexity of villagers’ ever-changing lives.

In numerous ways, these contributors challenge the sterile stereotype of the confident, dispassionate scholar. Indeed, the volume teems with healthy anxieties and candid advocacies, resulting from the personal and professional pursuits of engaged scholars who earnestly desire to understand their place as Oceanic researchers and coresidents. The essays demonstrate that awkwardness and unease invariably accompany Pacific research, particularly when attempting to understand peoples and places within the confines of western intellectual categories and assumptions. Yet anxieties and apprehensions can be productive, creating what Terence Wesley-Smith calls a “common ground” between indigenous students and Pacific scholars, all “struggling with a deep sense of estrangement, loss, and disorientation” (84). These anxieties, echoed throughout the volume, will remind Pacific scholars, students, and enthusiasts that many of the region’s deepest concerns have historically coalesced around issues of place, a critical detail that grounded Bob Kiste’s Pacific work for more than four decades.

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In this well-organized and carefully researched book, Clive Moore surveys the history of the entire island of New Guinea. In eight chapters and an introduction, supported by an impressive 636-item bibliography, Moore, reader in history and head of the history department at University of Queensland, Australia, presents a “big picture” of a region that has often been portrayed in fragmented terms: whole books about half an island, or about only one of a thousand cultures.

His first chapter, for example, emphasizes the broad sweep of prehistory, examining landscapes, climate, biogeography, cultural and linguistic diversity, and change spanning about 35,000 years. In chapter 2, he focuses on the large-scale cultural spheres and trading systems extant in New Guinea and surrounding lands over the last
5,000 years, with special reference to recent research in archaeology and linguistics. Chapters 3 and 4 probe the earliest contacts between New Guinea and the rest of the world, one chapter emphasizing the trading relations between West New Guinea and the Malay world and Asia beyond, and the other showing the extent of early European exploitation of the region.

The next chapters explore the “gradual process by which European navigators explored, commercially exploited, and incorporated New Guinea and the islands to its east and west into empires” (74). In each of these, Moore is careful to discuss West New Guinea, not just the eastern half of the island. In some cases, of course, the parallels are clear, and in others, the contrasts are stark and enlightening. He successfully avoids the problem of some books purporting to study the whole island, where the western part is too quickly dismissed as more remote or too poorly documented. Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the nineteenth-century activities of European traders, settlers, missionaries, and government administrators, with special attention to the drawing of new borders in those years. Despite his necessary “fast forward” overview of even the most complex and detailed of historical events and processes, Moore manages to include pithy examples, not just quick summaries. In a section on scientific expeditions, he discusses work pursued in west New Guinea in the early twentieth century: “European exploration in west New Guinea between 1900 and the First World War far exceeded that in eastern New Guinea. Expeditions penetrated deep into the central mountains, drawn by the magnet of the permanent snowfields, always searching for new species with which to confound the scientific world. The reaction of the New Guineans to these intruders prompted Hendrikus Colijn to report in 1907 that ‘in the mind of the Papuan there is no other difference between a Resident [government official] and a native bird of paradise trader than that he understands the presence of the latter, that of the former [is regarded] as a mystery, impossible to elucidate’” (144).

The next chapter, “Interpreting Early Contact,” is a masterful discussion of the cultural dynamics operative in the early and continuing encounters, and includes twentieth-century inland contacts. Characteristically, Moore extends his discussion here with numerous quoted accounts, and with careful reference to such analyses of early patrols as Edward Schieffelin and Robert Crittenden’s Like People You See in a Dream (1991) and Bob Connelly and Robin Anderson’s First Contact (1987).

The final chapter, about colonialism and independence, and intentionally designed not to privilege recent history, highlights twentieth-century changes in economies, politics, and society. Moore carefully sorts out the multicultural complexities of colonial rule in New Guinea: “Edward Said’s writings about ‘Orientalism’—the Western conception of the Middle East and the Orient—have their valid critics, but it is hard to argue against his premise that all cultures tend to shape their representations of foreign cultures in order to master them better, or in some way control them.
Any study of how Western knowledge depicted and understood Melanesia must examine the representations and the political power they express. With New Guinea, this is complicated by a western differentiation between the Malay and Melanesian cultures, and also by Indonesian (mainly Javanese) conceptions of Melanesia as more primitive than the Malay cultural area. Added to this are Australian conceptions of differences between the Aboriginal and New Guinea cultures” (183–184).

Moore predicts that “the Indonesization of west New Guinea—the introduction of a Malay population through transmigrasi and casual migration—must eventually, during the next century or two, affect the whole island” (202).

Despite the formidable challenges to the writer, including “the size of New Guinea and its adjacent archipelagos, the complexity of a 40,000-year time span, and its thousand indigenous languages, several lingua franca, and three European languages” (xi), Moore has accomplished an admirable goal. The only previous book that comes close to this comprehensive geographic and historical treatment is Gavin Souter’s New Guinea: The Last Unknown (1963), which, of course, was written for a different audience and did not have the advantage of the scholarship of the last forty years nor the postcolonial perspectives available now. This book’s finely drawn maps by geographer Robert Cribb are a valuable feature, as are the thirty-one photographs, woodcuts, and early sketches, arranged in a central section and given informative captions and clear source identification. It is indeed refreshing to see so many maps in one place that show the whole island, not chopped off at 141 degrees of longitude!

The lack of such truncation, in scope of discussion as well as literally on the maps themselves, should make New Guinea: Crossing Boundaries and History a valuable tool for general readers as well as scholars and teachers, providing a clear survey of New Guinea’s historical and cultural developments across the whole island and within its larger global and temporal contexts.

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Worlds Apart is a further revision of I C Campbell’s A History of the Pacific Islands, first published in 1989 and slightly revised in 1992 and 1996, all published by Canterbury University Press. It has been expanded to 341 pages from 227, with new material weighted toward covering events from colonization onward and shoring up coverage of Micronesia. Campbell’s interpretations are also somewhat updated with a “major debt to the writers of the new histories” that focus on Native peoples and indigenous agency (8).

Despite changes in Worlds Apart, both strengths and weaknesses carry