did not turn to retail trade but instead worked as salary earners in transport (as drivers and repairers), following their experience with the US Army, where they had gained a good reputation for reliability in these fields. With freedom of residence, many moved to Nouméa and métissage increased rapidly. But it was the events of the 1980s that really brought the Javanese community onto the local New Caledonian scene. They were courted by the Europeans to support the loyalist side, and, forgetting the harsh conditions of the contract period and seeing that they had no place in the Kanak independence project, they backed the Europeans. But they were disappointed to be forgotten when the crisis was over.

The Javanese in New Caledonia still consider their culture as important and wish to preserve their identity, but a growing number of youth just want to live like local Europeans. Islam is still practiced by a majority, but only a small number consider religion the main part of their cultural identity. Many visit their families in Indonesia and send remittances. An Indonesian consulate in Nouméa, an impressive celebration of the centennial in 1996, and several associations whose leaders have served elected functions in the government of New Caledonia help the Javanese to “integrate by adjunction” (meaning not real integration, but simply a juxtaposition of cultures) into a New Caledonian culture that does not yet exist (267). Their choice to keep their tradition appears to be an example of “traditionalism for tomorrow” (287)—a way for the community to survive as such, to avoid being just any immigrant community.

The author goes too far, however, when he considers the Javanese—over 80 percent of whom live in greater Nouméa—to have integrated into the New Caledonian melting pot, or more precisely, the Noumean melting pot. But other than this assertion, the study is precise and well documented, with abundant demographic and economic data in the text and numerous facsimiles of historical documents included. It also offers a very relevant analysis of the colonization processes and the integration of a former contract worker community into the still unstable New Caledonian society.

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This collection of timely, sometimes splendid essays was culled from a variety of workshops at the 1999 conference of the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO) in Leiden, the Netherlands. The papers focus on the shifting dynamics of Pacific identity within some sort of political context. Each essay presents a case study of change and often continuity in how a Pacific Island community defines itself on the stage of globalization.

Several aspects of the volume are commendable. First, the papers incorporate varying degrees of con-
temporary theory, but laudably (or unfortunately, depending on your perspective) remain tethered to on-the-ground social experience. Theory rarely eclipses description and analysis. The book will thus appeal to readers interested in specific Pacific locales as well as scholars seeking conceptual frameworks or analytic ideas to apply elsewhere. Second, each paper includes at least some reflection on history and the colonial experience. Third, the chapters exhibit a nice range of topical and regional focuses, and, fourth, they represent a broad spectrum of national intellectual traditions, mainly from Europe. Finally, most essays in the book are written in clear, accessible prose.

The introduction by Toon van Meijl trawls the spectrum of social science to summarize some key ideas for thinking about identity. Here, and throughout the volume, identity is defined as a sociocultural rather than a psychological construct. The chapter stresses the fluidity of identity as well as themes of contestation, contradiction, and colonization. Identity often plays with and against history; it is a matter of both continuity and discontinuity. Tradition, as van Meijl stresses in agreement with most scholars, is often reconstructed to sustain emergent forms of cultural and political self-consciousness in the postcolonial Pacific.

Don Gardner discusses how the forces of colonialism, ranging from the formation of administrative units to the determination of clan-based mineral rights, heightened an us–them opposition among the Miyanmin of Papua New Guinea. Traditionally, Miyanmin conceptualized their group identities through fluid notions of body substances, kinship, and residence. All groups were permeable. A sense of fixed, bounded “we-ness” emerged largely through the imposition of Western institutions. Similarly, Jelle Miedema draws on myth, migration, marriage patterns, and language to stress the diffuse nature of traditional group identity among the Kebar of the Bird’s Head Peninsula, West Papua. A common tribal identity often masks differences within the group; conversely, boundaries obscure similarities. Here, again, the overall message is that premodern corporate identities were far more fluid than modern notions of the social unit as inextricably closed or bounded, and thus traditional identities often clashed with Western practices and institutions.

Allen Abramson discusses the use of “neo-traditional symbolism” by village Fijians to appropriate public space during protests staged at luxury hotels on Viti Levu over the non-payment of ground rent in the early 1990s. The protesters challenged the inequality of an encroaching capitalism by appealing to the traditional institutions of chiefs, land tenure, and ritual hierarchy. Yet this mobilization of tradition also reproduced inequality by promoting long-standing political—that is to say, chiefly—hierarchies. In this instance, appeals to tradition both sustained and subverted a grassroots egalitarian sentiment.

Three contributions focus on art. Judy Flores discusses artists who, since the 1970s, mobilize traditional as well as (more interestingly) modern symbols to assist the indigenous
rights movement in the Mariana Islands. Wolfgang Kempf, borrowing ideas from Foucault, interprets historical themes of diasporic tragedy as performed by a Banaban dance and theater troupe during a tour of Japan in 1997. (Banabans were displaced in the 1940s to an island in Fiji, due to phosphate mining.) Monique Jeudy-Ballini, in a brief but terrific essay, shows how Western desire for ceremonial masks among the Sulka of New Britain impacts on local perceptions of cultural identity vis-à-vis Westerners. Formerly, these masks were burned after ritual, since the ceremonial act of display exhausted aesthetic potency and efficacy. Viewers, moreover, received compensation for the highly emotional experience. Today, the situation is reversed. Now viewers (Europeans) give gifts (money) to preserve the objects. Consequently, the masks allow the Sulka to rethink notions of value, beauty, vitality, materiality, and what aspects of culture are best preserved. The role of art in these encounters, too, engenders in the Sulka a perplexity about their own culture, since the masks allow them to exercise some degree of power—exactly what, Sulka do not know—over a people generally thought to be far more powerful than themselves. Do Europeans know something about Sulka culture that the Sulka do not? Erich Kolig’s fascinating, provocative essay probes ironies of—and conflicts in—the official policy of biculturalism in largely secular New Zealand. While some Māori traditions loosely described as religious achieve an inviolable public status, some Pākehā (Anglo-Celtic European) religious sensibilities are publicly diminished. University students who mocked a haka (traditional Māori song and dance, popularly associated with stylized aggression) were beaten; but an art exhibit containing a condom-clad statue of the Virgin Mary was protected by appeals to artistic freedom. Māori counter-hegemony often becomes unofficially official, ironically alienating virtually everybody. This essay nicely probes the clash between indigeneity, hegemony, and political correctness.

Despite the book’s overwhelming focus on identity as a cultural constellation of symbols, Elfriede Hermann explores Banabans’ emotional constructions of displacement and placement—that is, connections to both ancestral islands and new homes. She draws on the anthropology of emotion as well as Foucault to explore themes of love, nostalgia, and pity in Banaban song and conversation.

Many Pacific peoples have a “strong” sense of group identity. Cultural attachment consciously shapes individual selves. Rotuman identity, argue Alan Howard and Jan Rensel, is relatively “weak,” gelling mainly after migration to Fiji accelerated following World War II. What is interesting is the further argument that Rotuman success in cosmopolitan communities today contributes to their “weak” sense of cultural identity. Howard and Rensel then investigate what aspects of cultural identity diasporic Rotumans select as salient—eg, language, genealogies, dance, current information about Rotuma that is largely transmitted through videotapes, books, and other publications about the island as
well as musical CDs, and a Rotuma Web site arranged by the anthropologists themselves, on which they have posted, among many other sources, electronic copies of all their publications.

In an epilogue, Jocelyn Linnekin situates the collection in the broader social science literature on cultural identity, especially social-constructivist approaches, and summarizes the broad themes and importance of the papers. The epilogue also offers some useful directions for further study, such as the relationship between consumer desire and cultural identity.

In sum, this collection of essays is useful and informative yet inevitably uneven. Some essays offer clear, concise arguments that are aimed, moreover, at a wide readership (eg, Gardner, Howard and Rensel). Other contributions present fascinating case studies (eg, Jeudy-Ballini, Kolig). Yet some entries will likely appeal only to regional specialists (eg, Miedema). Surprisingly, there is little incorporation of empirical and theoretical material from other disciplines, regions, and contexts. Those contributions that discussed diasporas could surely have benefited more from contemplating some of the growing literature on this topic—a topic that is increasingly salient and cutting-edge in many disciplines ranging from American studies to Jewish studies—than from citing Foucault. Nonetheless, it is a book well worth consulting by all Pacific scholars interested in how to study, theorize, and construe cultural identity in the contemporary Pacific.

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Paul D’Arcy, who teaches Pacific and environmental history as well as colonial race relations at the Australian National University, makes two major claims in this short and impressively researched book. First, he says academics have neglected the maritime dimension of Pacific history. Second, he maintains that “the realities of living in an oceanic environment promulgated openness to external influences among Islanders. As a result, the impact of Westerners is perhaps exaggerated” (2).

Like the proverbial shoe that may or may not fit, depending on the last used and the foot in question, his first allegation must be carefully qualified to be sustained. D’Arcy acknowledges that much has been written about Pacific Islanders and the sea. The problem as he views it, however, is that Pacific scholars have not been writing the right kind of stuff about the ways in which living in this great ocean have shaped human values and survival strategies. Unfortunately (he tells us), what has been written has been rooted too firmly in “Western scientific discourse”; as a consequence, he says, “Islanders’ conceptions of the ocean” have evidently not been properly valued (8).

However popular it may still be in the social sciences and humanities to disparage science as a way of knowing, the substance of this book belies...