The results of the studies in population genetics in this book seem to be consistent with the general archaeological picture. Using mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA, these studies point to genetic variation in Near Oceania consistent with 40,000 years of settlement and subsequent distinct population arrivals. Studies in the anthropological genetics of New Guinea have understandably concentrated on genetic distinctions between Austronesian and Papuan speakers, confirming that the linguistic distinction in most parts of the region roughly correlates with differences in descent, with speakers of Austronesian languages having some genetic descent from the early Austronesian arrivals. But the movements of Papuan-speaking groups in and around New Guinea remain a mystery. Very tentatively, Main, Attenborough, and Gao (p. 766) suggest that, genetically, at least four different groups can be distinguished that moved from mainland and island Asia to New Guinea in pre-Austronesian times.

The book is generally well edited apart from a few glaring oversights, such as Amat instead of Asmat in the heading on p. 10. The book is a must for everyone with an interest in the history of New Guinea.


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*The changing world of Bali* charts several interlinked themes defining Bali’s twentieth-century engagement with modernity: the Dutch colonial legacy and its post-conquest project of cultural preservation; the reification of culture (*kebudayan*) as focus of identity in official policy from the colonial period to the present; the dynamics of hierarchy and caste, likewise transformed from a more fluid play of status and power to fit a fixed model imagined by western colonizers; and the contemporary religious reform movements, which carry on the rationalizing process of simplifying and reinterpreting Balinese *adat* (custom) while separating it from a universalized Hindu ‘religion’ (*agama*).

None of these apparently parallel and linked processes of change have been straightforward and unambiguous, however. Howe cogently argues, for example, that there has been a misrecognition of the place of hierarchy in Balinese life. From the outset Dutch colonizers were ambivalent about the disorderly character of Balinese hierarchy, in particular the real and imag-
ined place of ruling groups. One strand of scholarship and imperial interest inclined them to regard the political and religious elite as inauthentic impositions on Balinese ‘village republics’, while another strand was concerned to tidy up Bali’s fluid and contested status hierarchy into a ‘caste’ system along the lines of an Indic model, itself reified in Orientalist scholarship.

Tourism has had a similarly profound and paradoxical impact in the ongoing ‘renovation’ of Balinese identity. Alongside its economic importance and the symbolic capital tourism contributes to the ethno-politics of Bali’s minority culture position in post-colonial Indonesia, its demands and enticements pose challenges to established ways of doing things. Together, these complex economic and political influences have contributed to a displacement of local attachments in which once integral social, religious and cultural dimensions of everyday life are now becoming increasingly differentiated and institutionalized. Following Picard’s work on this subject, Howe examines the growing conceptual distinction between *agama* (religion) – *adat* (custom) – *budaya* (culture) – *seni* (art). The establishment of official bodies (Parisada, Majelis Adat, Listibya) to regulate these once integral spheres of life indicates the extent of the state’s role in the reframing of Balinese identity and experience. But it would be a mistake to assume a simple process of hegemonic imposition of new frames of reference, while ignoring the intense degree of reflexivity and local experimentation that have marked Bali’s engagements with its ‘others’.

Modernity’s rationalizing project – challenging ascribed status, individualizing experience, relativizing meaning – also fostered new social and religious movements. An unintended heterodoxy arising from official efforts to systematize and modernize Balinese religious practice is reflected in the growth of Sai Baba and Hari Krishna sects, as well as *pasek* (commoner descent group) resistance to Brahman authority. These movements, which have been the focus of much of Howe’s recent research, offer universalizing and individuated alternatives to the coherence and constraints of locally grounded *adat*. While not entirely incompatible with the diverse and practical orientation of local Balinese religious traditions (their ‘orthopraxy’, as Clifford Geertz described it), the voluntaristic and universalizing traits of the new religious movements, and the modernizing pressures that make them resonant, challenge the obligatory and communal character of locally embedded *adat*. While in this era of anxiety and crisis, democratization and decentralization, local *adat* identities have also been reinforced and revitalized. *Adat* remains rooted and reproduced in religio-social relationships that continue to have profound significance on many planes for Balinese. The tensions and self-reflections provoked by globalizing and modernizing pressures – intensified by the terrorist bombings, Bali’s minority cultural status, economic stress, and environmental decline – are being worked through in diverse ways by every community on the island. Howe’s study provides an insightful look at the complex lines of
engagement through which the changing world of contemporary Bali is re-shaping individual and collective identities in the new millennium.


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Listening to an earlier Java is a fascinating historical study of gender and aesthetics in Central Javanese music and society. It is a fine example of historical ethnomusicology, the ‘insights gained through studies of living music cultures to better understand their pasts’ (Shelemay 1980:233). Weiss conducted several years of fieldwork in central Java, where she developed close personal relationships with musicians and dhalang (puppeteers), and learned to play central Javanese gamelan. Her reflexive approach to writing about her fieldwork brings these people and ideas to life, and her vivid descriptions of Javanese soundscapes will resonate with anyone who has ever spent time on Java. The book is a joy to read, peppered with superbly translated examples of Javanese poetry, tales from the field, and stimulating analytical insights.

Weiss focuses on what she calls the ‘old style’ of playing the gender, a metallophone with thirteen or fourteen bronze keys suspended over tube resonators. Old-style playing was crystallized in villages in the Surakarta-Klaten area in the mid-nineteenth century, and gained strength in the first fifty years of the twentieth century. Old-style playing is marked by the predominance of female gender players, whereas it is primarily males who play the new style. Wayang puppet theatre was the main site for old-style playing, where female gender players typically accompanied male dhalang. But as the new male-centric style of gender accompaniment became dominant during the post-independence period, the female style receded in popularity.

The book deals with more than women’s roles in music, as Weiss states in the introduction. Rather, the book treats gender as an ideological system of social relations that has changed along with other aspects of Javanese society during the last 150 to 200 years. One of the main points of the book, which comes through loud and clear, is the gendering of the new-style and old-

2 The term ‘gender’ appears in italics when referring to the musical instrument; the term ‘gender’ as a system of male-female social relations appears in regular script.