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TIVAIVAI IN THE COOK ISLANDS CEREMONIAL ECONOMY

AN ANALYSIS OF VALUE

Jane Catherine Horan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology, University of Auckland, July 2012.
ABSTRACT

This thesis is about *tivaivai*, which are unquilted quilts made and used by Cook Islands women in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. They are the paramount form of valuable in ritual exchanges during kinship ‘life’ events, and other public gifting events, which draw people together via translocal and transnational kin and wider social networks. How Cook Islands women use *tivaivai* as the gift and/or as decoration in these ceremonial arenas is part of the way Cook Islanders do economy as a local model of livelihood (Gudeman 2001, 2008). Such a model is founded on the material and non-material aspects of the base, as in the priorities dictated by a group’s cultural framework. This is an expanded, more encompassing notion of economy, and necessarily moves beyond standard Western economic theory and the centrality of the market.

I argue that *tivaivai* are semiotic media of value (Turner 2006b, 2008; cf. Graeber 2001), so they are iconic valuables, and indexical symbols of the structural properties of the Cook Islands system of social relations. As such weighted valuables, *tivaivai* are models of and models for how to be a Cook Islands woman and mother. As the gift and as decoration of ritual venues, *tivaivai* materialise the key values of kinship and *aro’a* (love) which orientate the way Cook Islanders exist and act in the world, so *tivaivai* are the access to and axis of prestige as *mana* for women.

This relationship among value, values, and valuables is also important, because as such weighted valuables, *tivaivai* dignify the gifting of lesser valuables in a ritual complex, which is deployed in the various types of Cook Islands ceremonial events to transform people and objects. These lesser valuables include envelope wrapped money and food. I argue that the gifting of envelope wrapped money is as much about the reality of living in a capitalist political economy like New Zealand and the formulation of subaltern strategies to get by and prosper in New Zealand, as it is about the display of Cook Islands values, womanliness, mothering, and the pursuit of *mana*.

Key Words: *Tivaivai*; Value, values, and valuables; Cook Islands ceremonial economy events; Culture and economy.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SDA Seventh Day Adventist
MC Master of Ceremonies
CIANGO Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations
CINCW Cook Islands National Council of Women
cf. Compare
GLOSSARY

‘akamā - shame

‘akamana - filled with power

‘akaono’anga - customs

‘akapū - template pattern of a tivaivai taorei

‘akava’ine - behave like a woman; third gender

Ariki - paramount chief

aro’a - 1. Greet, welcome, salute, offer good wishes. 2. Welcome with a gift, present (i)
somebody with (ki) something; a gift (usually ‘apinga ro’a). 3. Forgive, have pity on. 4.
Kindness, sympathy, sorrow, (for somebody in trouble), love (i.e. divine love, or
loving kindness, not love between the sexes, cf. ‘inangaro)

tau’iri pāreu - bedspread, pāreu bedspread, usually made on the machine

chop suey - food made with vermicelli noodles, soy sauce and often included tinned corned
beef

‘ei - 1. (Wear) a necklace, garland, wreath, chaplet, scarf. 2. Encircled, ensnared,
entrapped

‘ei katu - head wreath, circlet of flowers or leaves (natural or other) worn around the head

‘enua - 1. Land, country, territory. 2. Afterbirth, placenta

‘enua’ānau - mother land, country of birth

Enuamanu - Ātiuan name for the island of Ātiu

fa’a Samoa - (Samoan) ‘the Samoan way’

hapaha - the correct bark cloth for spreading over a mother after childbirth as noted by
Buck (1927: 81)

hare tangata - (Tongarevan) nuclear family, household

hiti tangata - (Tongarevan) Tongareva people

huanga - (Tongarevan) descent group

‘ie tōga (Samoan) - fine mat

‘inangaro - 1. Require, need, want, desire. 2. Love, like, lovesick, love enough to want to
marry, love a favoured child

ipukarea - inherited land, homeland, ancestral home

kai - food, eat.
kaikai – feast, meal.

kaio’u - debt

tongan kie hingoa (Tongan) – ‘named’ fine mats

koni raoni – ‘dance round’, competitive dance competition

kōpū tangata – extended family

laelae – a ‘third gender’ individual; biological man who may adopt feminine characteristics

Māmā - the correct way to refer and speak to an older Cook Islands woman

mana – (have) authority (legal, moral, religious) and the powers, rights and prestige which this confers

manga – branching

marae – a square or roughly rectangular area, bordered with stones, containing a platform or terraces, used for ceremonial and (formerly) religious purposes

mata’iapo – 1. First born (generally son) of an immediate family (ngutuare). 2. Titled head of a major lineage

mātiriti – Ox-eye daisy and similar Compositae, including chrysanthemum

matua – (Tongarevan) parent, same generation siblings and cousins of either parent, i.e. uncles and aunts

metua – parent, esp. father; elder

mokopuna – grandchild, great-grandchild

mu’umu’u – island style dress, generally in the ‘Mother Hubbard style’

ngati – local descent group, comprised of the matakeinanga less affines and those who were residing in the locality who were not kin


Ora Metua - minister

‘orei – handkerchief

pakoti’anga ‘o’ora (or pākoti’anga rauru) - haircutting ceremony

papa’ā – white person, European.

papa’anga – genealogy, family tree

pāreu - waist-wrap, kilt, dancing skirt

piri’anga Māmāo - distant kin

‘piri’anga vaetata – close kin
*poke* – a kind of pudding containing grated vegetables (typically taro) or fruit (often banana) baked with coconut cream

*pū* – complete section of pattern from a *tivaivai taorei*

*Pūnanga Reo* – language nest for pre-schoolers

*pūpū* – a small whorled shell of a land snail/crab. The creatures are gathered, particularly in the southern Cook Islands, after rain. The animals are then boiled in hot water to divest the shell of the flesh of the animal and are then strung together to make strands of yellow shells ‘*ei*. The shells are sometimes bleached further until they are white, these strands of shells are more expensive to buy

*Rangitira* - minor lineage heads, generally associated with an *ariki* title

*rima aro’a* – literally ‘hand love’; a gift given as a form of payment for a service done, but considered explicitly different than a ‘charge’. *Ta’unga* had specific amounts that were considered appropriate *rima aro’a* when they cut a *tivaivai* for another woman

*tamariki ‘āngai* – literally ‘feeding child’, adopted child

*tāmoumou* – 1. Fasten, fix securely. 2. The act of tacking the top layer of fabric of a *tivaivai* to its base fabric

*tapa* – bark cloth.

*tapere* – subdistrict of a *vaka* (on Rarotonga at least)

*ta’unga* – 1. An expert, skilled craftsperson, one with special lore or skill. 2. An expert in the various components of *tivaivai* making; a tutor of *tivaivai* processes.

*teina* – younger/junior; younger brother of a male, younger sister of a female

*tere* (party) – a trip, voyage, journey; a group of Cook Islanders who travel together for family reunions, visiting parties, fundraising parties etc.

*ti* – an intensifying prefix, one giving force and intensity to the proceeding adverb and conveying the sense of ‘wholly’, ‘entirely’ or ‘all over’

*tikoru* - special thick white *tapa* cloth made by men and used in pre-contact times especially, to wrap god images and to dress high chiefs and priests (Neich and Prendergrast 1997: 75)

*tīvae* – 1. To patch something. 2. A patch.

*tivaivai / tīvaevae* – 1. Patches, patchwork, patchwork quilt. 2. The group of textiles made by Cook Islands women employing specific techniques of appliqué, embroidery, and patchwork

*tivaivai manu* – appliqué quilt using two colours of fabric, top pattern is cut from one piece of fabric

*tivaivai taorei* – patchwork quilt

*tivaivai tātaura* – appliqué quilt with embroidery embellishment
tuangane – brother, male cousin of a female

tuahine/ tua ‘ine – (Tongarevan/Rarotongan) – sister or female cousin of a male

tuakana – older/more senior; older brother of a male, older sister of a female

tuitui tāviri – a particular stitch used on tivaivai tātaura and tivaivai manu which is purportedly a Cook Islands stitch. It is a version of the standard blanket stitch but involves two loops of cotton around the needle. The effect is a sort of zigzag stitch

tupuna – ancestor, grandparent, granduncle, grandaunt

‘ūtē – a song with a marked four beat rhythm, often with narrative or love interest, or composed to commemorate some event

Va‘ine tini – women’s group; collective of women who get together to make tivaivai

vaevae – leg

vai – 1. Be watery, juicy. 2. Water, liquid, stream, creek. 3. Keep, remain, stay, last, exist

vai - to wrap up, to enclose with or in something, to encase or fold together, to enfold

va‘ī – wrap

vaka – tribe; canoe

veru – style of tivaivai manu. The reverse of the normal manu; with this tivaivai the pattern is actually cut out and different coloured fabrics were placed behind the cut outs to bring them into relief and create the contrast
Figure 1: Map of the Pacific with insert of the Cook Islands
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: TIVAIVAI, VALUE, AND ECONOMY AT THE BASE

“People have always given gifts. It is how you tell their stories that matters” (Edward de Waal, The Hare with Amber Eyes, 2010: 348)

1 INTRODUCTION

Tivaivai are beautiful cloth ‘unquilted quilts’ made by women (and some men) who are of Cook Islands descent who live in the Cook Islands or in the various migrant communities around the Pacific basin, including Auckland, New Zealand which is the largest Cook Islands city in the world. Tivaivai are a legacy of sorts of the colonisation of the Cook Islands which began in 1821 with the arrival of the missionaries. By the 1890s, these cloth fabric textiles were beginning to replace indigenous plant fibre textiles in the wake of missionary conversion. Tivaivai and matching pillowcases were initially made as decoration for the bed which was the main piece of furniture in the home, but they have come to be the paramount form of wealth in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy at events in the islands and amongst the diasporic communities around the Pacific basin. Here, they are gifted publically (for the most part) to close kin, and used to wrap and adorn the people going through rites of passage events such as weddings, funerals, haircuttings (male rite of passage ceremony), and key birthdays and anniversaries. They are also gifted to dignitaries at public ceremonies, or to church ministers, generally at the conclusion of

1 See Appendix One for a note on the orthography of the word tivaivai.

2 The Cook Islands lie 3270 km to the northeast of New Zealand, in a broad band of low lying atolls and mountainous islands that sit between Tahiti to the east of the group and Samoa to the west. The Cook Islands group contains 15 islands and atolls. Tongareva, Manihiki, Rakahanga, Pukapuka, Nassau and Suwarrow comprise the northern group and Palmerston, Aitutaki, Manuae, Miti’aro, Ma’uke, Ātiu, Takūtea, Rarotonga and Mangaia, the southern group. The administrative capital is Avarua on the island of Rarotonga. See Map 1.

3 Almost 60,000 Cook Islanders live in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand 2007: 5), and only some 20,000 (Cook Islands Census 2006) reside in the island homelands. Auckland, New Zealand, is the biggest Polynesian city in the world. It is also the biggest Cook Islands city in the world. So while Avarua on Rarotonga is the administrative capital of the Cook Islands nation, Auckland is the capital of the various island identities. According to the 2006 New Zealand census (2007: 5) 34,776 people of Cook Islands descent are resident in Auckland. Communities of Cook Islanders live in various cities in New Zealand, Australia, the United States as well as the Cook Islands and other Pacific islands like Tahiti, and operate via the ritual economy as a nexus.
their tenure at a church, and they are also used as decoration at ceremonial venues during these events. They are given to maintain, underline, or create the most important relationships in a woman’s life.

One of the first tivaivai I saw being made was in Titikaveka on Rarotonga, when I went to meet Māmā4 Tirata Bailey, a notable taʻunga (expert) in tivaivai for the first time. She had summoned me to come and see her after reading the short article about my proposed research on tivaivai which had appeared in the Rarotongan daily newspaper, the Cook Islands News (Laxton-Blinkhorn 1999) days after I had arrived in Rarotonga for a month of fieldwork at the beginning of my doctoral research in November 1999. Māmā Tirata lived in Auckland and was also visiting Rarotonga. She was there to take part in family meetings about the possible sale of family land on her home island of Aitutaki. She was also busy cutting tivaivai for women and attending family events. Māmā Tirata was born in the village of Vaipae in the early 1930s but moved to New Zealand just after the Second World War in her late teens. She met her Australian papaʻā (European) husband Bill, in Auckland when she was in her early 20s. They had nine children together, and like many Cook Islands families, lived between New Zealand, Australia, Rarotonga, and Aitutaki, until Māmā Tirata’s death in Sydney in 2009. Family and tivaivai were Māmā Tirata’s life.

When I arrived at her auntie’s house in Titikaveka that day in November 1999, Māmā Tirata was sitting atop a large yellow on turquoise chrysanthemum (mātirīta) pattern tivaivai manu5 (see Figure 1). She had cut the tivaivai and laid it out earlier in the afternoon before I arrived, and she was now rapidly tacking the top pattern layer of fabric to the base fabric layer. The pattern was beautifully proportioned and balanced; it seemed to me that she had carved the stylised chrysanthemum petals out of fabric in a way that masterfully represented different sized flowers, buds, and leaves to accurately render the pattern in relief from a single coloured fabric. The tivaivai was magnificent and manifested her beautiful design aesthetic and visionary command of symmetry.

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4 ‘Māmā’ means mother (Buse and Taringa 1995: 217). When Cook Islanders use the term as part of a name in this way, or to refer to a group of usually older women, it is a term of respect, and affords honour to the mothering role. The plural form of the word used by Cook Islanders when they are speaking English is ‘Māmās. Cook Islands Māori words are not pluralized like this normally, but some words are treated in this way when speaking English when no English equivalent exists.

5 See Appendix two for a précis of the different types of tivaivai, a summary of their features, and methods of construction.
As she tacked, she sat with the agility and repose of a much younger woman, bending forwards to sew, talking all the while about her life, her children, what tivaivai were, and who she had given them to. The ease and seemingly nonchalant way she moved her needle rapidly through the maze of fabric that comprised the pattern, one layer to the next, evidenced her prodigious skill and prowess with the azlin fabric, whilst belying the many hundreds, perhaps more than a thousand tivaivai she had cut. But as I was to learn, being a ta’unga, or even just making and gifting tivaivai, was more than just dexterity and finesse with fabric and the sewing of tivaivai.

Figure 2: Māmā Tirata in Titikaveka, on Rarotonga, November 1999, tacking the chrysanthemum tivaivai manu.

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Azlin is a particular type of cheap cotton fabric that Cook Islands women use to make tivaivai. See Appendix Two.
Māmā Tirata’s expertise was also borne out in her mastery of the social power of *tivaivai*. The importance of this, the parameters of the value of *tivaivai* - in all senses of the word - and the wider implications of this in the lives of Cook Islanders in New Zealand in particular, is what this thesis is about.

Throughout the course of my research, so many Cook Islands women told me “you are not a woman without *tivaivai*”. Women gift *tivaivai* to maintain, underline, or create key relationships in their lives, but in doing so, the making and/or use and gifting of *tivaivai* effectively delineates a Cook Islands woman’s essential muliebrity. Muliebrity means womanliness, for older Cook Islands women this has to do with mothering in particular ways; dressing, behaving, carrying themselves in ways that show decorum and poise; being home makers and keeping house in a way that involves having *tivaivai* in particular to adorn their homes with; and having the ability to sew, as in *tivaivai* and being seen to do so. All of this has a public aspect to it, which is very important. Most older women embody this ideology and younger women, particularly those born and bred in the diaspora, have a different, ameliorated or abridged version, but who a woman is as a mother, grandmother, auntie, extended kin and/or wife is publically displayed and broadcast when she gifts *tivaivai*. In the process, there are culturally sanctioned accesses to prestige as *mana* created, because the making and/or use of *tivaivai* is the axis of prestige and “being appropriate” for Cook Islands women. Kinship and the maintenance of kinship relationships and networks are fundamental to the way Cook Islanders exist in the world and see the world. During kinship events, ceremonial processes turn the “vast array of potential social relationships encoded in a person’s or persons’ kinship relationships into actual linkages traced and traceable ... by the flow of material wealth” (Evans 2001: 134).

Those kinship linkages are maintained, underlined, or manifested by the act of gifting, and for Cook Islanders the paramount form of wealth for such exchanges are *tivaivai*. These top a hierarchy of textiles and other forms of wealth, whereby *tivaivai* effectively dignify the gifting of lesser forms of valuables in service of the same kinship parameters. Those lesser valuables include sums of money wrapped in envelopes, food, and other lesser textiles. So the circulation of *tivaivai* and the lesser valuables they dignify, actually constitute, or re-constitute, kinship links, a process that is fundamental to Cook Islanders’ ways of being and existing in the world.

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7 See Appendix Two for a list of the different types of textiles that feature in this category.
As Māmā Tirata talked about how she had made and gifted *tivaivai* to her closest kin and occasionally dignitaries, instructed others in how to make and cut them, as well as cutting umpteen *tivaivai* for others, she was really talking about how she had converted her skilled production into value in the public domain of Cook Islands ceremonial arena where she accrued prestige, honour, profile and power in the process. That first day she talked for six hours, the large *tivaivai* was rapidly tacked, and I learnt about her family, her *tivaivai*, who she was, and her life lived between New Zealand, Australia, and the Cook Islands. What I did not realise but would come to understand as my research progressed, was that:

> [O]ne cannot hope to understand circulation of valuables in a ‘gift economy’... without first taking into account more fundamental processes by which the human person is created and dissolved. And then when such general principles as action and reflection, or the movement between abstract potential and concrete form do appear – which they generally do – these too are always aspects of persons before they are aspects of things. [Graeber 2001: 167]

This thesis is about the making and the use of *tivaivai* as a valuable in Cook Islands ceremonial economy, and how the production, exchange, and display of these textiles is about kinship, conjoinment, prestige as *mana*, and female identity, as the parameters of value for Cook Islanders to varying degrees. It is about "[h]ow forms of value emerge to regulate a process which is ultimately about the creation of people" (Graeber 2001: 142). Whereby the relationship among the nexus of value, values, and valuables becomes the story of the relationship among the actions of people, embodied cosmologies, the ideological rhetoric of how things should be done, and the forms that coveted valuables take (Turner 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Graeber 2001, 2005).

That the gifting of *tivaivai*, envelope wrapped money, and the other lesser valuables are integral to the lives of many Cook Islanders, depending on their level of involvement in Cook Islands ceremonial arenas, expands the notion of what an economy is. Such a form of economy is one that intertwines sociocultural processes with what is considered Western economic process (Gudeman 2001, 2005, 2008, cf. 1986). The way the Cook Islands Māmās and the radiating layers of people they affected with their *tivaivai* through the myriad of events at which the textiles, envelope wrapped money, food and other lesser valuables were given as gifts, amounts to Gudeman's notion of a local model of livelihood (2008: 3; cf. 2001:1), which is part of his broader more encompassing notion of economy, necessarily
going beyond standard Western economic market theory, and entailing more complexity and substance than the latter can entertain.

**Thesis Aims**

This thesis has three main aims. The first is to describe the gifting of *tivaivai* and to analyse why *tivaivai* are gifted by Cook Islands women, and for what purposes. How such laboured-over textiles have come to be the paramount form of wealth in such weighted, powerful contexts and in doing so, maintain, underline, or create key kin relationships. I look at how this relates to the spread of the Cook Islands population between New Zealand, Australia, and the islands that comprises the translocal and transnational kin networks that Cook Islanders exist in. I argue that such analysis necessarily involves delineating the parameters of *tivaivai* as a valuable, and how this is connected to values and the more general notion of value for Cook Islanders. Secondly, because the making and using of *tivaivai* as gifts and decoration, are the paramount form of ceremonial wealth and are integral to the circulation of value for Cook Islanders, I argue that *tivaivai* dignify the gifting of lesser valuables within the scope of ceremonial arenas, and in particular, the gifting of envelope wrapped money. The implications of the way money moves as envelope wrapped gifts are important for the way Cook Islanders live in New Zealand. Thirdly, the changing attitudes and conventions around *tivaivai* are a particular framework in which to view the ways Cook Islanders are adjusting to the vagaries of the contemporary environment, modernity, and globalisation. This contemporary format of ceremonial economy as focused on rites of passage events, and other non-kin gifting events in the diaspora and in the islands, is a response to the realities of living in capitalist contexts such as New Zealand and the wider global economy, as much as it is about perpetuating and being orientated by key values for Cook Islanders. Such a process of analysis adds considerable complexity to the understandings of the way *tivaivai* works and the way Cook Islanders do economics, and sheds light on the subaltern strategies that Cook Islanders have and employ in response to the hegemonic forces that are part of living in a capitalist economy like New Zealand.

2 **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

The ethnographic detail in this thesis is orientated by two main theoretical perspectives that effectively operate in the background of my ethnographic analysis. The first is Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) expanded notion of economy, and the other is Turner’s
(2006b, 2008; cf. Graeber 2001, 2005) formulations of the anthropology of value and the relationship among valuables, values and value, as well as his focus on the public ritual realm where values are actualised as valuables and value circulates. These contextualise the range of contexts that *tivaivai* are made and used in, and facilitate my expanded, more encompassing analysis.

**Economy from the Base: Gudeman’s expanded notion of economy**

Economy “revolves about the making, holding, using, sharing, exchanging, and accumulating valued objects and services” (Gudeman 2001: 1). Such activity is founded on what Gudeman calls “the base”, by which he means the “shared material and nonmaterial interests and values that mediate relationships” (2008: 22). So what happens to the material things and the knowledge of a base “is not [a] physical incident but a social event” (2001: 27). What it means to be a member of a community is represented by the substance of the base (2001: 30). The real strength of Gudeman’s model is that the base and what it is comprised of, becomes not only part of economy, but a foundational, essential part of the way all people live and conjoin with one another. For groups of people, such as Cook Islanders, the base is actually part of the community itself, not separate or externally driven (2001: 34). Gudeman’s notion of economy from the base (2001) infers that economic processes are founded and contingent on the priorities dictated by a group’s cultural framework. This is what comprises a local model of livelihood. This is an expanded, more encompassing notion of economy, and one that moves beyond standard Western economic theory and the centrality of the market (cf. Löfving 2005 and Helgesson 2005).

In Gudeman’s formulations, economy consists of two realms: mutuality and market (2008: 4). Mutuality comprises different configurations of community (Gudeman 2001: 1) which interact. Here, “economy is local and specific, constituted by social relationships and contextually derived values” (2001: 1). Valuables move within this realm according to adhered to values, and the sociocultural parameters of value as the framework within which a cultural group defines itself. The realm of market comprises anonymous short-term exchanges. Here economy “is impersonal, even global, and abstracted from social contexts” (Gudeman 2001: 1; 2008: 4) and the logic and values of the Western configuration of the market operate. These two realms are not dichotomised, nor is the former merely embedded in the latter (Gudeman 2008: 28; cf. Polanyi 1944 and
Granovetter 1985); rather they are a continuum and the forces that prevail in each realm exist in dialectical tension, intertwined, often conflicting and resisting, or mutually constituting (Gudeman 2008: 4; cf. Gudeman 2005). Economy in other words, entails “more than most economists and everyday dogma allow, and is more complex than most anthropologists realize.” (Gudeman 2008: 4).

From this perspective, Cook Islanders live in, exist in, operate economically in both the realms of mutuality and market. *Tivaivai*, and the public ceremonial economy where they wrap and adorn – literally and figuratively – as they are gifted and used, are part of this expanded notion of economy. The production and use of *tivaivai*, and the changes that have occurred to these processes, are also part of the contingencies of living in a migrant context including the realities of making a living in a capitalist context, and managing the legacy of colonisation and being a Cook Islander in New Zealand (and beyond). In the Western economic model, the two realms of mutuality and market are often thought to exist as separate entities, with only one value domain as important, that of the market “which is modelled as a separate sphere making up the whole of the economy in which all goods are priced and available for exchange” (Gudeman 2001: 5). In such a model, it is difficult to entertain the idea that *tivaivai* could be a valuable, and cash money a lesser valuable that does something other than buy merchandise, and that production of a textile like *tivaivai* could have a relationship to market processes. Gudeman contends that “we live in a world of inconsistent, or incommensurate, domains of value that are locally specified. Culture is made and remade through contingent categories... Different value arenas make up economy” (2001: 6-7).

The strength of Gudeman’s model lies in the inclusion of the realm of mutuality in the analysis of economy, and the structure of his notion of “community” as the working unit of this realm. The central components of Gudeman’s realm of mutuality are “(1) a base, (2) local stories that justify [the base]... (3) relationships that are mediated through a shared base, (4) a relational identity of the person, and (5) processes for sharing the base that are usually linked to the explanatory narrative” (2008: 27). When interactions in the realm of mutuality “make up a collective” (2008: 27), he calls this a “community”. Gudeman’s notion of “community” is broadly construed (Gudeman 2001: 25), and depends on the analytical perspective: at once a small assemblage as delineated by Tönnies (1988

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8 Gudeman refers to this as the “submerged realm” (2001: 20), meaning the consideration of the economic activity in this realm has been missing from previous analysis.
[1887]) or an “imagined” construct as discussed by Anderson (2006: 6). Examples of such communities in the scope of this thesis are a family group, extended family groups, a church congregation, or the Cook Islands community in South Auckland.

But in order to understand why tivaivai are important, how they are utilised to maintain, underline or create kinship links, as well as define muliebrity, and operate as the access to and axis of prestige, how the base actually works becomes important. Gudeman uses Mauss’ notion of “sacra” (Mauss 1990: 43, cited in Gudeman 2001: 28-29) to designate different specific material components of the base as integral. He notes that “sacra, as remembrances of the suture of society and economy, cast their significance on ordinary items of wealth including those traded within the sphere of commercial value.” (Gudeman 2001: 32). This is what tivaivai do within the scope of ceremonial arena, because they dignify the gifting of lesser valuables, including envelope wrapped money. But the sense of how tivaivai operate like this and how value relates to values or to valuables, let alone how this works is left undifferentiated (cf. Hornborg 2005: 69, Pålsson Syll 2005: 87-88, and Guyer 2004: 174). Gudeman’s notion of the base contains ideology, cosmology, customs, and valued objects as in sacra, but they are all conflated (Hornborg 2005: 69). From my perspective, given the focus of this thesis, this is problematic. Some things, such as tivaivai, matter and a great deal more than others, and how and why is significant (cf. Miller 1998).

The relationship among value, values, valuables

When I look at everything that tivaivai represent, I am led to a multidimensional understanding of value, and an expanded notion of economy. What Cook Islanders achieve by making, gifting, and using tivaivai, what they say about them, what these beautiful, laboured-over quilts actualise and enable people to do and be, is multifarious. Tivaivai are material objects, literally and figuratively, they are the paramount form of ceremonial gift, a specific form of decoration of ceremonial contexts, an art object, and at times, a commodity. Tivaivai materialise values to the extent that they dignify the gifting of lesser valuables like envelope wrapped money in ritual contexts in the service of kinship connections, by embodying identity and being an appropriate woman, and/or mother,

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9 In 1995 the Auckland Art Gallery opened a new building across the road from its long occupied site on Kitchener St in Auckland Cty. The Auckland Art Gallery is arguably the premier art institution in the country, alongside the National Art Gallery in Wellington; the Auckland Art Gallery defines high art in this country. This new section of the gallery was to be known as “The New Gallery” and the one of the main opening exhibitions of the new building was called Patterns of Paradise: Cook Island Tivaevae and featured 50 or so tivaivai made by Cook Islands women who were for the most part, based in New Zealand.
and/or wife, and/or auntie for Cook Islands women (and some men) in New Zealand. What it all comes back to, what offers the way of bringing all these issues, realms, and contexts together is a multidimensional understanding of value within an expanded notion of economy. *Tivaivai* have agency (Gell 1998), but the true source of the value that creates that agency is not the objects themselves.

Turner’s (2006b, 2008; cf. Graeber 2001, 2005) Marxian derived theoretical formulations offer a way to bring the various aspects of value together in the same analytical framework, thus differentiating Gudeman’s “base” (2001, 2008), and giving substance to why and how Cook Islands women make and use *tivaivai*. This provides a framework through which to analyse the implications of changes occurring in the way *tivaivai* are produced, and then used in the ceremonial economy as a Cook Islands response to hegemonic forces, whilst maintaining the fullness of Gudeman’s broader more encompassing economic perspective.

Turner’s elaboration of Marx’s analysis of value in capitalism connects specific, weighted manifestations of material culture – those things that matter like *tivaivai* – with orientating values and the more general parameters of value, whereby values and valuables are seen as refractions of value as a relational aspect of social structure (Turner 2006a, 2006b, 2008). Here, ideas of agency, the performance of actions, and social consciousness are integrated with social organisation (Turner 2008: 43). Turner’s thesis is that Marx’s formulations on value, constitutes “a philosophical anthropology of universal scope, applicable in principle to all human societies” (2008: 44). What Turner calls “Marx’s value theory of labour” (Turner 2008; cf. Elson 1979) as espoused in *Capital* (Marx 1967 [1867]), contains a number of ideas that he asserts are of “central relevance” to current anthropological theory and analysis.

10 Turner’s (1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1989, 1991, 2006a, 2009) corpus of published and unpublished literature that deals with his long term field research amongst the Kayapo of central Brazil, adds context to his published theoretical musings.

11 According to Turner (2008: 46), Marx’s critique of Classical Political Economy’s notion of the “labor theory of value” which effectively defined value as an intrinsic, natural part of labour, was that value was not a “positive inherent property of the labor invested in products”, rather it was “a relational aspect of a structure of independent productive activities”. Turner notes, “[a]gainst this uncritical positivist approach, Marx reformulated the problem of value in structural terms as the question of why, in capitalism, value becomes the form of representation of labor. As Elson puts it, he thus created not a ‘labor theory of value’ but a ‘value theory of labor’ (Elson 1979).” Hence, Turner’s use of this sequence of words.
Turner’s theoretical perspectives are useful for the analysis of *tivaivai*, because his parsing of Marx’s corpus of literature generates four main premises. Firstly, he contends that for Marx, the nature of human agency and activity was “both subjective and objective, individual and social, material and ideal (in the sense of being consciously guided by representations of its relations to the object world and of the needs that arise from those relations).” (Turner 2008: 44). This holistic formulation accommodates the different meanings of value (cf. Turner 1979c: 19 and Graeber 2001: 1-3, 2005: 439). Secondly, and of significance given the focus of this thesis, Turner contends that Marx “developed a powerful and sophisticated analysis of the central role of semiotic representation in mediating and shaping material activity, and the way ideological representation tends to objectify itself as the producer rather than the product of that activity and its social form” (Turner 2008: 44). Thirdly, Turner asserts that Marx’s notion of value in his discussion of the extraction of surplus value as the mechanism of exploitation in capitalism and the source of uneven distribution of wealth is a mechanism for looking at power relations even in non-commoditised contexts. Here, exploitation in the ethnographic context takes the form of the extraction of value in whatever form value takes (2008: 44). Lastly, he argues that the emergence of a public ritual arena, as in Cook Islands ceremonial economy, is part of the way value is actualised as specific objects circulate (Turner 2006b: 20).

Turner’s justifications for his Marxian derived theoretical stance are detailed over the next few paragraphs. Marx’s formulations are reducible to an anthropological understanding of how the actions of individuals, their consciousness, and their material activity are dialectically interrelated (2008: 44). In other words, Marx’s way of approaching the relationship among value, values, and valuables effectively links social structure and the values that are inherent in this for a given cultural group. Turner’s thesis depends in part on his very broadly construed notion of production. He essentially asserts that what is counted as production in any given society is an ethnographic variable, and such productive activities is driven by, and is a consequence of the form and prescription that the core values of that society constitute, it is also the inherent process of power. So he defines production in terms of “the satisfaction of the needs of individual persons and the meta-needs of those who control key aspects of the relations of production and use that control to extract a surplus in the form of value from direct producers” (Turner 2008: 54).

To quantify value and its production in the terms of the capitalist system to contexts other than this, may seem incongruous, even ridiculous, and make the application of such
general principles to the operation of a system like the Cook Islands ceremonial economy as part of the realm of mutuality seem nigh on impossible. However, herein lays the strength of Turner’s argument, his theoretical thesis elicits a methodology of analysis that uses the mechanism of the “value theory of labor” rather than its philosophical endpoint (hence, Marxian, rather than Marxist). He contends that the form of value that will prevail, is an “ethnographic variable”, as are the fundamental Marxian designates of production, objectification, circulation/exchange\(^\text{12}\) as well as surplus, exploitation and value (Turner 2008: 45), whereby “the general principles of Marx’s approach to value and its relation to the structures of social production may nevertheless apply, *mutatis mutandis*” \(^\text{13}\) (2008: 45). It is the nature of this relationship between value and what amounts to the structure of the given society on which Turner’s thesis hinges. And this is quite specific. Turner contends that value is a “relational aspect of a structure of interdependent productive activities, rather than a positive, inherent property of the labor invested in products” (2008: 46). Value is therefore a “special form of representation, which requires a medium of representation” (2008: 49) and a set of specific productive relationships, which makes it useful for the analysis of *tivaivai*.

Marx’s tenet of fetis\(^\text{12}\)him is indelibly linked to his theory of value (Geras 1991: 191), which is a point that Turner notes. Turner (2008: 54) contends that the fetishising of money in capitalism is tantamount to the obscuring of the true nature and source of value in the capitalist system, which in turn facilitates the effective masking of what amounts to

\(^{12}\) In a commentary on a paper by Beidleman (1989), Turner (1989) notes that contrary to both Mauss and Simmel, but in accordance with Marx, he argues that exchange must be “understood in relation to the total process of social production, circulation, and reproduction of which it forms but one moment or aspect” (1989: 260). In marking the distinction between the two, he contends that exchange is a more specific form of circulation, Exchange is a concretized form of circulation, but circulation is a more general relation of communication that can assume other forms of public discourse or action not involving the transference of objects or aspects of identity. The dialectic between exchange and circulation in this more general sense is often a major aspect of the social and cultural construction of exchange systems. [Turner 1989: 263; cf. Fajans 1993a, 1993b, and Graeber 2001: 81].

\(^{13}\) Marx himself implied as much in a paragraph in a letter to his friend Kugelmann dated July 1868 (Marx 1973) where he railed against the assertions of a reviewer of *Capital* who did not grasp his formulation of value. Turner notes that Marx indicated that the “value relation” is a “universal feature of human social organization, albeit in different ‘forms’ related to different ‘forms of social production’” (Turner 2008: 47). And as Turner notes, the Kugelmann letter effectively constitutes a “charter for a comparative investigation of the varying forms assumed by the ‘value relation’ in different societies” (Turner 2008: 47). As Turner points out, Marx used the term value relation rather than value in reference to the universal entity, implying that given the range of contexts that this notion could be applied to, there may well be analytical constructs where the ‘value relation’ applies because of the absence of ‘value’ (Turner 2008: 47).
the relations of exploitation. Geras puts it this way: in the process of the capitalist system, with the production and exchange of commodities, labour “gains expression as an objective property of its own products: as their value” (1991: 191). In effect, labour is commoditised too. He notes, “in other types of economy, both communal and exploitative, labour can be recognised directly for what it is, a social process”. Geras contends that the “illusion of fetishism stems from the conflation of the social characteristics and its material shapes” (1991: 191). The nature of money and gold in Western economies is a case in point. The value of gold is seemingly intrinsic, it becomes the “very incarnation of value, pure concentration apparently of a power, that is in fact, social” (Geras 1991: 191). Capitalism effectively presents itself as a realm inherent with “appearances that mystify and distort spontaneous perception of the capitalist order” and this is how the system works, social forms are objectified:

[S]imultaneously determined by and obscuring the underlying relations...Thus, the reality of social labour is concealed behind the values of commodities...wages conceal exploitation since, equivalent only to the value of labour power, they appear to be an equivalent for the greater value that labour power in operation creates. What is actually social appears natural. [Geras 1991: 191]

In this thesis, I argue that an analogous process happens when tivaivai are gifted and displayed. In capitalism, the medium of representation is money, but what is important is the mechanism of the fetishising of money, rather than money per se14 (Turner 2008: 54). Turner is analysing with the hallmarks of what money is, and as Comaroff and Comaroff (1990: 192) put it, Turner's application of Marxian principles is arguably a general model for analysing relations among people and goods by way of exploring the production and representation of value in society.

The essential quality of any medium of exchange, including money and any other ethnographically specific materialisation of this category such as tivaivai, are prescribed. Such an entity is exalted because it has to:

[T]ake on the structural properties of the system of social relations it mediated, both in its aspect as collective representation and as medium of exchange, in both cases with the requisite properties of generality and abstraction. The semiotic medium, in other words, could become effective

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14This becomes more apparent in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, because it is the envelope that wraps the money notes within that is fetishised (see Chapters Five and Six).
The semiotic medium becomes a model of and a model for social relationships and action, which is what tivaivai are for older women at least, even though this is being attenuated for younger people in the current environment. It is in this way that Turner contends that the particular medium of representation operates in a performative way in the process of exchange or circulation which enables the exchange of values it represents to take place. In other words, an entity like tivaivai is both the representation of the amount of value being transacted in a given exchange, as well as “a precondition for the exchange, and thus the realization of that value, to take place” (Turner 2008: 51).

3 CONTEXT

This section provides background sociocultural context to the subsequent analysis in the rest of my thesis. In order to understand how tivaivai operate as such an iconic and indexical category of valuables, I need to establish what key values orientate Cook Islanders. In the first part of this section, I delineate Cook Islanders’ core values, because what tivaivai are and how they are used, makes no sense without an understanding of the way kinship conjoins people and determines hierarchical parameters, and how the multidimensional aspects of aro’a (love) orientates the way people act, especially via gifting. In the second part, I look at the extent of the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, and the importance of this realm for the actualising of value. The third section looks at Cook Islanders in New Zealand.

Kinship and aro’a (love) as cosmology and action

Core values for Cook Islanders are orientated to varying degrees by two multifaceted concepts: kinship and aro’a (‘love’). Both concepts effectively name the core values for Cook Islanders, and contained in the very definitions of these concepts are the means and methods for how people as Cook Islanders are connected to one another, as well as how to actually act appropriately, and exist in the world. These concepts also define what is considered right generally, and more specifically, how Cook Islanders honour one another publically, as well as the way individuals’ access and negotiate prestige as in mana,15 and ultimately power. In other words, these concepts have cosmological

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15 Mana is defined as "(Have) authority (legal, moral, religious) and the powers, rights and prestige which this confers" (Buse and Taringa 1995: 219).
foundations, define and create value structural parameters as frameworks, and orientate behaviour accordingly. This is analogous to Gudeman’s notion of the “base” as an analytical construct. From his perspective, a base is:

[A] shifting, heterogeneous collection through which relationships are made. Contingent and locally specified, a base mediates relationships between people and relates them to things. It is a heritage that lies outside the person as material resources, tools and knowledge, and within as sediments from others that create an identity. [Gudeman 2008: 28]

Part of the base for Cook Islanders is the ancestral land in the islands (cf. Crocombe 1964), and the kinship system that links people with land and belonging, but ultimately to one another through membership in cognitively reckoned extended family groups. The gifting of tivaivai and the lesser valuables that tivaivai dignifies in the ritual complex, which amount to the hierarchy of valuables, is determined, perpetuated by, or is created by those links. The construction of this aspect of the base for Cook Islanders, with its various produced material parts and its non-produced things as in cosmological, and ideological components is “made, held, and used through social relationships” (Gudeman 2008: 29).

Aro’a and kinship are orientating concepts in that they describe key structural features of the way Cook Islanders see the world, determine how to act and exist in the world. They are at once notional and structural, general and specific. How this works in actuality varies from person to person according to the degree to which they seek legitimacy within the Cook Islands sociocultural framework, and what choices they have made about being a Cook Islander given that most now are born and/or live in the diaspora, and New Zealand in particular. But to be a New Zealand Cook Islander to whatever degree, is about existing in the world, seeing the world, and operating in the world, in terms of kin networks, and the way you act in that world within the parameters of kinship structures is with aro’a. To use Turner’s (2006b: 1) terminology, kinship is “the main locus of the value relation and serve[s] as the source of the principal forms of social value”, whereby the main modus operandi is aro’a. Here-in lies the mode of belonging, of acting appropriately, of accessing prestige as mana, and garnering power and gain, which all require traffic in value, the adherence to values, and the wielding of valuables.

**Kinship**

For Cook Islanders in New Zealand in particular, kinship links “do not exist a priori” (Loomis 1983: 223), they need to be actualised via social interactions whereby all kin
relationships are effectively a social construct which is either reproduced or neglected on a daily basis and "dramatised in ritual" (1983: 223). Loomis notes:

There are no social units, including even the ‘nuclear family’, which are not in some fashion constantly having to be replicated and thereby potentially transformed in social interaction. The interesting kinship relations, then, are those which have been actualised at a given place and time for a specific purpose. From this it follows that the focus of analysis must be on shared cultural principles of kinship identity and relatedness among Cook Islanders which provide the guiding clues when choosing whether or not to actualise possible relationships. And also, the occasions and purposes around which various typical patterns of kinship are constituted. [Loomis 1983: 223, emphasis in original]

In this introductory chapter, I am delineating the "guiding principles" that Loomis is referring to, the "occasions and purposes" are the substance of my following chapters. Connections forged through and because of the composition of the base “define the person as a composite of relationships and features shared with others” (Gudeman 2008: 29). The script by which such connections are reckoned by for Cook Islanders, are the parameters of kinship connections and descent. Kinship structures determine who an individual is connected to by birth and where they sit within a hierarchy vis-à-vis others which have wider political implications. The forms of kinship relationships orientate behaviour and have prescribed behavioural expectations. Rasmussen (1995: 28) contends that there are four types of close kinship relationships between people of either the same or cross generation and sex for Tongarevans. These are:


2. Matua (metua in Rarotongan)/tamariki - parent, same generation siblings and cousins of either parent, i.e. uncles, aunts/ children, nieces and nephews. All kin of the matua generation are considered parents to all their own birth children, adopted children and the offspring of their siblings, half-siblings and their cousins as in non-sibling kin of the same generation (Rasmussen 1995: 29-30).

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16 It is inaccurate to write of 'Cook Islands kinship' because each island in the archipelago has variations on a general theme (including the New Zealand versions of island-specific manifestations) but for my purposes here I am dealing in more general terms that apply for the most part across the Cook Islands population. Much of my information is drawn from Rasmussen (1995) and from personal correspondence with him, and while he states that his summations are Tongareva specific, he acknowledges "a lot of commonality [with the rest of the Cook Islands population]" (1995: 4; personal correspondence, Rarotonga, August 2010; see also Crocombe 1964).
3. **Tauhine** (*tua’ine* in Rarotongan)/**tuangane** (*tungāne* in Rarotongan)- sister, female cousin of male/brother, male cousin of female. Individuals in this relationship are of the same generation and it applies to siblings and cousins within the same generation regardless of age (Rasmussen 1995: 30).

4. **Teina/tuakana** - same generation junior person, same sex younger sibling or half sibling, same sex younger cousin/same generation senior person, same sex older sibling or half-sibling, same sex older cousin. This relationship applies to individuals of the same sex or on a “cross sex and cross generational basis” (Rasmussen 1995: 31), and applies in ‘operational terms’ in birth order or in genealogical ordering.

Rasmussen contends that it is this last category, the **teina/tuakana** (junior/senior) axis that has the most dimensions. This orders relationships inside close kin family groups (the domestic realm) but also, in the wider extended family (*kōpū tangata*), and essentially determines the hierarchy, and therefore has wider political applications, which are enacted in the public realm, especially at ceremonial events via the negotiation of prestige as *mana* and forms of socio-political power.

**The reckoning of descent**

Descent is derived by connection to land in the islands, however distant the connection. On Rarotonga for example, people are divided into particular groupings which were territorial and as well as social (Crocombe 1964: 26). The “tribe [sic](vaka)” (Crocombe 1964: 25) was the largest social grouping, headed by a chief (*ariki*), and “in conception it was composed of all those who traced their descent from persons who had travelled to the island on the same canoe (the term *vaka* means canoe as well as tribe)” (1964: 25). The area of a *vaka* was further divided into sub-districts (*tapere*) which were headed by sub-chiefs called *mata’iapo* who were effectively heads of major lineages which resided in a certain section of land within the *vaka*. Those who lived in a *tapere* and were kin, (i.e. not affines or those who were not descended from the apical *mata’iapo*) were called a *ngati* as in a major lineage, but membership to a *ngati* of this level was not restricted by residence (Crocombe 1964: 26-28). Crocombe notes that descent could be traced either patrilineally or matrilaterally (1964: 26), although it generally depends on which parent’s land ego resided on: those living on the father’s kin group’s land tended to trace through patrilineal lines and those living on the mother’s traced through matrilineal lines (Crocombe 1964: 28). However, a child’s primary lineage was usually decided at birth and was confirmed by the process of naming. Generally if a child was given a name or
names by his father or by members of the father’s lineage, then the child became a member of that lineage, and “a permanent relationship was set up between the child and the person who bestowed its name” (Crocombe 1964: 29; cf. Crocombe and Rere 1959), which has implications in regard to the gifting of tivaivai in particular.

But while an individual generally had a primary lineage membership, the person was potentially a member of all other lineages to which they were connected, and Crocombe used the phrase kōpū tangata to describe the extent of all the lineages to which ego could trace descent through. Most children joined the lineage of the parent in whose lineage they resided which was often the father’s, but Crocombe contended that it was normal for the family of the other parent to name and provide for at least one of the couple’s children. “[I]llegal children [sic]” (Crocombe 1964: 29) joined their mother’s lineage or were adopted out, which is also a way to acquire primary membership of a lineage. Adoption is common (cf. Baddeley 1978, 1982), but is contingent and potentially more tenuous (Crocombe 1964: 29), such children are called feeding children (tamariki āngai).

At the time that Crocombe was doing his research on Rarotonga, lineage allocation was determined by residence because most people were born and lived in the islands. However, in the current environment, where most Cook Islanders are now either born outside of the Cook Islands or resident elsewhere, the importance of residence has been attenuated. When reckoning descent as belonging, Cook Islanders have always thought in the dual terms of ēnuā‘ānau meaning motherland or country of birth, and ipukarea meaning inherited land, homeland, ancestral land, the land where your parents, grandparents, ancestors were born. This has taken on new significance in the diaspora. Crocombe notes that the major lineage was primarily a unit of residence, but it did include all those born into the lineage but who now lived away for “socially accepted circumstances” (1964: 29). Crocombe called such people “contingent members of their lineage of origin” (1964: 29), and their rights to land were weaker. He refers to the children of contingent members as “secondary members of the lineage of that parent” (Crocombe 1964: 29), and “distant secondary members” (Crocombe 1964: 30) were the children of these children. Given that most individuals who call themselves Cook Islanders are now so called contingent members of lineages and secondary, even tertiary members, descent now seems to be more cognatic than not, as people reckon descent according to the most useful
affiliations. This has bearing on who gets invited to Cook Islands events and on how value is extracted as prestige as mana and a form of power.

**Aro’a**

The word aro’a is an extremely complex term. The word is glossed as love, but linguistically, the notion of loving and showing love is contiguous with gifting as well as modes of decorum. From the dictionary, the word aro’a means:

1. Greet, welcome, salute, offer good wishes to (especially to guests on arrival or departure).
2. To welcome with a gift, to present somebody with something (including publicly);
3. To forgive, have pity on; and
4. Kindness, sympathy, sorrow, love as in divine love or loving kindness (Buse and Taringa 1995: 76).

Expressing aro’a is about actions rather than just words: aro’a prescribes a way of acting towards kin and people in general. To gift is to show aro’a, to be loving towards a child is to show aro’a, to extend hospitality to kin or others is to show aro’a.

I was in Rarotonga briefly in October 2000 en-route to the United States. The Cook Islands National Council of Women (CINCW) were holding their annual conference at the Pukapukua hostel in Avarua, and across the road in the National Auditorium, the CINCW were simultaneously holding a craft display where women attending the conference from around the archipelago, had brought tivaivai and other crafts that the local women’s groups had been working on all year. I had recently suffered a miscarriage, the story of which I found myself relating to Māmā Kimi, whom I had met the year before in Mangaia, after she asked if I had any children yet. At the conclusion of my story, Māmā Kimi was moved to go to the display of crafts from her Mangaian groups, she took down a seed pod ‘ei (neck wreath), and then placed it around my neck. As she did so, she expressed her sadness at my loss. Her act of gifting was the amplifier of her words, and the greater

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17 I was continually asked this question upon meeting women for the first time, or seeing women I knew again after intervals. Being in my mid-30s during the intense period of my field research, I was considered an odd entity because I had no children yet.
expression of a general form of aro’a\(^\text{18}\) (cf. Alexeyeff 2004:71; Besnier 1995: 98). By endowing me in such a way I was drawn into a specific form of relationship with her in a public manner. By my telling my story, and by Māmā Kimi gifting to me in that way, we were conducting an on going relationship in Cook Islands terms. Māmā Kimi’s act was also part of her acting appropriately, in the prescribed Cook Islands way by giving me value (as a minor valuable as was appropriate), and by her acting in a valued way by the act of her gifting.

Aro’a is expressed and shown by gifting, but the obligation created by such action was what conjoined people in the Maussian sense. As Mauss notes:

> [Polynesian] exchange is not solely property and wealth, moveable and immovable goods, and things economically useful. In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness: banquets, rituals, military services, women, children, dances, festivals, and fairs, in which economic transaction is but one element, and in which the passing of wealth is only one feature of a much more general and enduring contract. [Mauss 1990 [1925]: 5; cf. Alexeyeff 2004: 70]

This rather prefigures Gudeman’s notion of the base and the workings of the realm of mutuality (2001, 2008). When I asked people about how they knew what, and how, and when to reciprocate when a gift was given, and how much and when to give it, Māmā Mere said “you just give what you feel you can give”, and “you don’t have to give back, but if you feel you want to you just give with your heart”. But as I saw time and time again, this was a particular form of rhetoric, which also prescribed how to manage obligation and how to be connected to others (cf. Alexeyeff 2004: 75). The reality was a measured process, part heartfelt, part calculated, mostly about affection, obligation, and connection, but with aspects of prestige and even power depending on the context. Alexeyeff identified “a ‘what comes around goes around’ version of gift giving” (2004: 74), which was apparent to me as well amongst my informants. It seemed to me that those who were active in the system of

\(^{18}\) It seems to me that there are different levels of aro’a, and while the dictionary explicitly states that the word ‘inangaro’ is not the same as aro’a (Buse and Taringa 1995: 77), this is inferred with the third meaning of ‘inangaro. In the first instance, ‘inangaro has the meaning of “require, need, want, desire” (Buse and Taringa 1995: 123), including sexual desire, secondly it can mean “like” as in what you like to do, for example fishing (Buse and Taringa 1995: 124). But in the third instance, it means “love”, and encompasses the feelings of heartfelt love/affection that an individual has for their spouse, child, God, or favoured person (1995: 124). ‘Inangaro was not a word I heard used, possibly because of the sexual connotations of it, but that there are different grades of aro’a was apparent. It seems to me that domestic aro’a is that which binds a family or the closest of kin together, whereas public aro’a is a more general expression. This was the form of aro’a that Māmā Kimi was bestowing on me. The designated intensity depends on the weight of relationship, and is indicated by the gift given and the intent.
gifting effectively lived in a live matrix of obligations that they owed to others and that others in turn were beholden to them. Who gives what in whatever context is generally noted by the hosts of the event, be it a funeral, haircutting, or wedding (Alexeyeff 2004: 75; Loomis 1983: 229). Kinship relationships are also gifting relationships, whereby the weight and importance of the relationship is publically signalled by the process of gifting. Unlike Samoan and Tongan (cf. Addo 2004) competitive agonistic gifting processes, there is not the drive, nor financial means for most to give greater and greater quantities of gifts, and money in particular. An individual can gift large, but it would be a calculated socio-political strategy to do so, general gifting is more about the act of gifting as conjoinment.

In her analysis of the food gift giving done by the woman with whom she lived in the Cook Islands, Alexeyeff noted that the woman gifted to her relatives to:

[D]emonstrate her attachment to them and to incur obligation. This system of exchange was a central element of her understanding of relationships; goods and services are obtained primarily through gift exchange with relations and friends not by direct monetary payment. In this system, money could be given as a present, but it could not be given as a direct payment. [2004: 74]

Alexeyeff was really writing about how Cook Islanders are conjoined. Her paper on food exchanges (2004) describes the food giving part of a much bigger system of exchanges that interfaces with all aspects of Cook Islanders’ lives: a ceremonial economy that is to do with the base of communities (Gudeman 2001, 2008) in an expanded notion of economy. Here, food is one of a number of valuables exchanged in this system, cash money and enveloped wrapped money are others, as are lesser textiles, dancing, and locks of hair, but overall, the most elite valuable is *tivaivai*. These effectively dignify the whole system because *tivaivai* are the valuables that express the most profound and closest of bonds in the domestic sphere. This mode is writ large in the public sphere (cf. Graeber 2001: 73; Turner 2006b: 20), by the performance of the gifting of *tivaivai* in an ostentatious public way, along with the lesser valuables which are generally used to connect one community to another via reciprocity.

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The reality of living in a big city like Auckland is not like living in the village in the islands where kin were neighbours. So the importance of public events has taken on added significance in the current environment (cf. Gershon 2007). Such events gather kin together from across the diaspora and the islands, and whilst people still travel back to the islands on a regular basis to attend events, there is still a considerable amount of ritual activity in Auckland. The public process of gifting for Cook Islanders is important. Turner contends that value is realised for the most part, in the public domain, as symbolic media like tivaivai circulate in a domain like the Cook Islands ceremonial economy (Turner 2006b: 20; cf. Graeber 2001: 74). In the Cook Islands context, these public domains are the kōpū tangata (extended family) rite of passage events and the non-kinship events for dignitaries or ministers that comprise Cook Islands ceremonial economy (cf. Strathern and Stewart 2005: 230). This realm is the primary integrating force in Cook Islands society (cf. Petersen 1982: 142) and the site of social (re)production.

To understand how the Cook Islands ceremonial economy facilitates the actualising of value, and how what Turner calls “exploitation” (2008), brings about the claiming of value as mana by certain individuals at the expense of others, he locates the relationship among the realm of the ceremonial economy, value (or the value relation), valuables and values. The development of a public ritual realm, as in ceremonial arena, where the
circulation of the “symbolic tokens of value” take place (as in the exchange of *tivaivai*, gift money, and the use of *tivaivai* as decoration amongst other value processes) is:

>[A]n essential concomitant of the development of the generalized forms of value that circulate within it. Institutional frame and circulating symbolic medium thus constitute the complementary components of a total\(^{22}\) system of communication and transaction of social value. This system is the form of the collective political and ritual life of society. It is the framework within which the goals, motives, orientations and attitudes of individual actors are defined. The values pursued by individuals acting within the structure of society are in fact themselves a symbolic refraction of that structure. Through the socially appropriate forms of political and ritual expression, persons become communally recognized and defined as imbued with value, and thus accumulate value(-s) as an attribute of their personal identities. This construction of subjective identity in the terms valued by the society is in fact the prime motivation of collective political and ritual behaviour from the standpoint of the actors who actually carry it out. The accumulation of value thus entails engagement in the forms of social structure, and, other things being equal, tends to promote commitment to the structure of social relations thorough which the values in question are realized: in short, social solidarity. [Turner 2006b: 20-21].

Turner adds that inevitably, since things are seldom equal, “the struggle for value also tends to promote conflict and the disruption of social order” (2006b: 21). Such disruption is provided by the contestation over prestige and hierarchy and the negotiable nature of *teina/tuakana* (junior/senior) status in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. Turner is at pains to add that his Marxian derived theoretical formulations of the analysis of value “no way presupposes the eufunctionality of value or predicated as its corollary [on] a ‘functionalist’ notion of social equilibrium”,\(^{23}\) Rather, both:

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\(^{22}\) On totalities and totalities: Turner unashamedly evokes the term totality as if resurrecting a long dead structuralist or functionalist ghost, noting that the application of his theoretical stance requires a totality of some form or another. He asserts that the summation of such a sphere is an empirical question, carved out of the ethnographic detail of the particular cultural grouping (Turner 2006b: 4). But his use of the notion of totality could be construed as problematic, and as Graeber notes, generates a degree of discomfort for the “modern reader” (2001: 86). But there are totalities and there are totalities, namely those imposed by an analyst (i.e. modernism etc) and those in the mind of the actor.

\(^{23}\) This prefaces the critique that can be leveled at Turner’s theoretical formulations. His published paper (2008) and the unpublished parts (2006a) and (2006b) appear for all intent and purposes to deal with a bounded unit in as much as the Kayapo data that he analyses appears to relate to a cultural group who seem to be both separate from the wider political economy of both Brazil and the global economy. In the absence of further discussion, values appear as uniformly consistent across the population and the perspective is essentially synchronic, and the historical analysis is a ‘weak one (cf. Eiss 2008). However, in the wider corpus of Turner’s writings on the Kayapo, he has dealt with the engagement of his fieldwork populations with the wider context extensively (see for example 1979c), and the history of the Kayapo (1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1991, 2009 amongst other published and unpublished articles).
Social and political solidarity and conflict alike must be understood in terms of the way the structure of society becomes symbolically refracted as value. It follows that ‘social structure’ itself must be conceived as intrinsically including its own reflexive symbolic projection as an order of value, with this order being understood to have its own specific structural properties and patterns of contradiction. [2006b: 22]

The so called “value relation” is effectively operating in the midst of, is articulated with, and contingent on, to varying degrees, the wider capitalist economy (cf. Steward et al. 1956) which characterises the New Zealand environment as well as Australia and the other locales where kin reside.

The membership of the relevant kin groups, to the level of minor or even major lineage relative to ego at an event like a wedding or a haircutting, determines not only who is invited to an event, but also the order in which they do the prescribed process of public gifting – of tivaivai, lesser textile and/or envelope wrapped money. The order is important because it confers prestige as mana, which is one of the key aspirations of participants in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, and it is the teina/tuakana (junior/senior) ordering that determines this. Each person in a lineage is ranked vis-à-vis everyone else in their lineage. The ranking orders a more muted version of hierarchy in the family unit, but in the public domain, it has much wider implications because the status of teina can be negotiated. This way of behaving provides the framework for both the transaction of value and the appropriation of surplus because it is not a given that the tuakana will always be the one in charge. What is of relevance to this thesis in particular is how this relates to the gifting of tivaivai, especially in the public domain.

**Cook Islanders in New Zealand**

The collection of islands that became known as the Cook Islands in the post-colonial era have been inexorably linked to New Zealand as both nations have become part of the global economy. By the mid-1800s, New Zealand was operating as a “white settler dominion” (Loomis 1990a: 35), in service to the bigger economies of Great Britain and other larger more powerful metropolitan nations. Hence, New Zealand was locked into a semi-colony status, dependent on the more powerful but unable to develop because of the hold of overseas capital. As a response, New Zealand in turn exploited her Pacific neighbours, which included the Cook Islands (1990a: 35). In terms of Worsley’s (1984) world system theory, New Zealand was on the inner periphery but the Cooks were the outer (cf. Simpson 1990).
In 1888, the Cook Islands became a British Protectorate, and in 1901, they were annexed by New Zealand (Loomis 1990a: 35, Scott 1991; cf. Gilson 1980). However, as Scott reports, the Cook Islands process of colonisation was not merely one of usurpation. He contends that “Polynesian initiative, not gunboat persuasion, was the prelude to bringing the Cook Islands within the orbit of a foreign empire” (Scott 1991: 29). The Cooks were of no strategic value until the Panama Canal was opened in 1914, nor were they well endowed with land let alone bankable minerals, but New Zealand politicians’ and merchants’ delusions of grandeur, wealth, and empire building, coupled with the not to be underestimated machinations of the ruling elite of Rarotonga in particular, brought about the would be alliance (Scott 1991: 29). That initial negotiated and strategic, yet forced coupling with New Zealand has set the tone for the on-going relationship that Cook Islanders have had with New Zealand.

After the Second World War, there were shifts in power relations whereby “the Cook Islands changed from being a colony to a dependent client of New Zealand” (Loomis 1990a: 37). In this period, industrialised countries like New Zealand assumed Keynesian inspired economic development strategies which entailed a form of economic nationalism, with protectionist policies and state intervention via strong economic leadership (Barcham et al. 2009: 325). This created a significant demand for labour in New Zealand and it was to the Pacific that employers turned for recruitment (Barcham et al. 2009: 326; Loomis 1991; Macpherson 2004: 136; McCall 2006; Ongley 1991). This included the Cook Islands, particularly because there were no visa issues by virtue of the on-going colonial links between New Zealand and the Cook Islands. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, New Zealand enjoyed considerable economic growth and virtual full employment, so demand for Pacific Islander labour did not abate, so short term and long term migration from the Cook Islands began to gather momentum.

Through this time, there was growing international political pressure from the United Nations Committee on Decolonisation to liberate the Cook Islands from New Zealand control. This, coupled with the rising cost to New Zealand of the administration of the Cook Islands, culminated in so called supported independence for the Cook Islands. In 1962, the Legislative Assembly of the Cook Islands opted for self-government in free association with New Zealand (Loomis 1990a: 38-39; Scott 1991: 286-303; cf. Gilson 1980), and the first independent elections were held in 1965. The Cook Islands could now govern itself, but her citizenry retained New Zealand passports. The on-going relationship
with New Zealand has delivered to the Cooks Islands the legacy of a New Zealand style public service, the inevitable tourism drive, trade, aid, and remittances. As Loomis dryly notes, “All have proven mixed blessings, providing much needed capital and goods while contributing to economic dependency” (1990a: 31).

The opportunities that the bigger metropolitan centres of New Zealand and eventually Australia (because of the dropping of visa requirements for New Zealand passport holders) offered in regards to employment and education made migration more and more of an option (Loomis 1990a; cf. Graves 1976). After the war, migration to New Zealand slowly began to gather momentum. Many of the older women I met in the Va’ine tini in South Auckland were amongst those in the first waves of migrants to come to New Zealand. Some came to work as domestic workers; others worked in factories or came to be educated here. Some were vague about why they came here, inferring that they were sent here because they were not well behaved at home, others said there were more opportunities in New Zealand. The granting of internal self-government in 1965 opened the migration flood gates (Loomis 1990a: 43). When the international airport on Rarotonga opened in 1974, this gave added impetus, and in that year alone, some 10% of the population left bound for New Zealand (Loomis 1990a: 44; cf. Crocombe 1994). Air travel meant that people could plan to leave and return to the islands as needed. By the 1960s and 1970s the establishment of kinship networks which linked the home island with cities and towns in New Zealand meant that new arrivals had family to stay with whilst studying or working, relatives with employment contacts, and established church networks to join (Barcham et al. 2009: 327). Early research on Cook Islanders in Auckland (Curson 1973; Hooper 1961a, 1961b) described “solidaristic” communities (Macpherson 2004) of this type. It was through this time that New Zealand arguably became the southernmost island in the Cook Islands archipelago from a Cook Islands worldview (cf. Hau’ofa 1993).

With growing competition for New Zealand exports, and the oil crisis in the mid-1970s, the New Zealand economy was not immune to the fall out. The Keynesian inspired policies were toothless in the onslaught, full employment became a thing of the past and one of the knee-jerk government responses was to curtail immigration. The era of the ‘overstayers’ arrived (Barcham et al. 2009: 327; Macpherson 2006: 102; cf. Macpherson 1996). Because Cook Islanders had New Zealand passports by virtue of their nation’s free-association status (McMillian 2004: 282), they were not hunted as overstayers like many
Samoan and Tongan nationals were. However, they were affected by the significant decline in available employment in New Zealand, and the flow on effect compromised the viability of the home economy (Macpherson 2006). Aid to the Cook Islands was drastically reduced, this in turn imposed austerity regimes in the islands and in 1996, the Cook Islands public service was halved in one fell swoop (cf. Koteka-Wright 2007). In the meantime, by 1989 the number of New Zealand born Cook Islanders in New Zealand equalled the number of island born individuals (Spoonley and Macpherson 2004: 180) and by 2002, 70% of Cook Islanders in New Zealand were New Zealand born (Macpherson 2004: 139). The changing balance between New Zealand born and island born people has brought about changes between Pacific and papa‘ā people and between and within Pacific populations, which has brought about “the emergence of new forms of Pacific social orientation and identity” (Macpherson 2004: 139).

The MIRAB literature has tended to cast Pacific nations as being in a precarious, untenable position, but more recent literature has begun to look beyond the Western econometric parameters to understand those new forms of orientation and identity and the complexity and multifaceted nature of remittances (Bedford 2004; Connell 2002, 2010; Marsters 2004; Marsters et al. 2006). For Cook Islanders, remittances “represent flows of goods, money, aroha and identity-forming values, which play an integral part in constituting individual and social experience in ways more significant than the simply economic” (Marsters et al. 2006: 32). Macpherson’s notion of “meta” societies (1996; cf. Bedford 2004) in reference to the way Pacific people traverse the land and sea scapes as transnational kin networks with growing ease (cf. Appadurai 1991, 1996; Spoonley 2001; Spoonley and Macpherson 2004), has particular nuances for Cook Islanders (Crocombe 1994: 329).

The nature of these new orientations and identities have begun to be documented for Tongans (Addo 2004; Evans 2001; Horan 1997, 2002; Lee 2003, 2004; James 1997; Small 1997), Samoans (Macpherson and Macpherson 1999, 2006, 2009; Va’a 2001) both in the diaspora and in the island homelands. The literature on Cook Islanders is sparser, Marsters’ analysis of the nature of remittance from the perspective of residents of Ma’uke

24 Macpherson (2004: 139) notes that this prevailing trend amongst Pacific Islander communities has prompted a change in terminology – from Pacific Islanders to Pacific peoples - to reflect this reality.

25 MIRAB is an acronym that stands for: Migration, Remittance, Aid, Bureaucracy (Bertram and Watters 1985).
and Manihiki (Marsters 2004; Marsters et al. 2006) is a notable exception. The literature on Cook Islands communities in New Zealand is not so recent (e.g. Curson 1973, 1979; Hooper 1961a, 1961b), this includes Loomis’ corpus of literature (1983, 1984a, 1984b, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1991, 1993). Little has been written about Cook Islanders’ responses to more contemporary realities. Apart from Rasmussen’s (1995) analysis of the Tongarevan community in Auckland and sections of Crocombe and Crocombe (2003), little has been written about Cook Islanders in New Zealand26 in a way that accounts for the constraints and opportunities that prevail for Cook Islanders in New Zealand.

That Pacific people, and Cook Islanders in particular are not well represented in the official statistics in New Zealand is well documented (Statistics New Zealand 2008). Cook Islander statistics consistently fare worse than averages designated for the total Pacific population in New Zealand, which tend in turn to be behind statistics for total New Zealand statistics across most indicators. The perception of such indicators is typified by tirades like Clydesdale (2008) news of which was reported on the front page of the Wellington daily newspaper The Dominion Post in May 2008 with the headline “Pacific migrants ‘drain on the economy’”,27 (Ling 2008). This, and the now infamous assertions of the then Prime Minister Jenny Shipley about Pacific Islanders climbing through windows at night (Young 2000), are both typical of the view that surfaces periodically in debates about health care, law and order, and employment, which inevitably rehash racial slurs. However, the reality is generally more complex than the statistics portray. The political economy that New Zealand Cook Islanders exist in as they negotiate the dialectic between the realm of

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27 The abstract for Clydesdale’s academic paper (2008) began with the assertion that “Immigration policies are an important mechanism through which businesses can gain human capital; high skilled workers for high-tech industries or un-skilled workers for cost-competitive industries (Clydesdale 2008: 2), meaning that unskilled migrants can be paid less than local labour thereby keeping wage bills and inflation down, and allowing businesses to remain competitive. However, Clydesdale went on to state that these same unskilled workers “are forming an under-class” (2008: 2). It was this incendiary notion of the underclass that made it foremost onto the front page of The Dominion Post on Tuesday the 20th of May 2008 (Ling 2008). A first by-line of “But community leaders reject study as ‘lazy, unprofessional’” and then a second by-line of “Pacific Islanders’ crimes rates, poor education, and low employment are creating an underclass and a drain on the economy, a study says” (Ling 2008) added fuel to the fire. For several weeks after the headline, debate about the validity of the research was all over the media. Clydesdale was subsequently slated in print, on television, and in radio broadcasts, and by other academics (Macpherson 2008) for his quasi-research, including his omission of readily available data from the latest census that would have challenged many of his claims.
community and the realm of market (Gudeman 2008) is far more multifarious than the story portrayed by the statistics.

Other research pursues the possibilities of this. A piece of research done by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (de Raad and Walton 2007) was verging on positive in its conclusions regarding the possibilities of Pacific Islander incomes eventually catching up with the rest of New Zealand population. Whilst the research is orientated by Western economic parameters, in the introduction they note that as per the terms of reference for their paper, the Pacific communities in New Zealand are important and how they “behave and prosper is... of great significance to the country as a whole – to the performance of the New Zealand economy, to the health and well-being of New Zealand society, and to the shape of our culture” (de Raad and Walton 2007: 1). The report also had some rather interesting things to say about remittances and gifting. The authors note in their executive summary:

An important issue which bears on the results on net worth is whether remittances and gifting should be seen primarily as a transfer to parents and community interest, as a payment for goods and services, or a form of saving. If the latter, then there are assets which are not taken into account and we risk understating the resources of the Pacific communities in New Zealand and the wider Pacific. [de Raad and Walton 2007: i]

They note that Pacific Islanders “build up individual or communal assets in ways that are not measured in the official statistics” (de Raad and Walton 2007: 12) and the examples they gave were remittances and financial commitment to landholdings in the islands, but gifting systems and commitments fall into this category too, including the activity in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in New Zealand.

The extent of the role of tivaivai in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in the islands or in New Zealand in particular, has had little mention in the literature. Parts of the roles and functions of tivaivai have been documented. Hammond did a general survey of quilting traditions in eastern Polynesia (1981, 1986a, 1986b), and several Cook Islands women have written about tivaivai: Rongokea (2001: 9-15) extended her previous publication (1992) by mentioning that tivaivai are important in ritual events, see also Porio and Karati-Takairangi (2007) who wrote about the Enuamanu Va’ine tini, the self-

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28 New Zealand Institute of Economic Research is a non-profit economic research organization and operates outside government. Its brief is to provide “strategic advice to clients in the public and private sectors, throughout New Zealand and Australia” (de Raad and Walton 2007: a).
published account of *tivaivai* in Tokoroa (Enoka 2006), and Hutton (2002) surveys the types and uses of *tivaivai* in New Zealand. The role of *tivaivai* at a haircutting was pictorially displayed in Jowitt and Lay (2002: 44-61), other images of *tivaivai* appeared in Küchler and Were (2005). A raft of magazine and newspaper articles have profiled the beauty of *tivaivai* and the skill of their makers (see for example Blake 1998, Cole 1992, Timoti 2002) as have a number of books (for example D’Alleva 1998, Robertson 1989, Urario 1998). Herda (2002, 2010, 2011) has written about the historical aspects of *tivaivai*. Küchler’s raft of literature on *tivaivai* (2003, 2005a, 2005b; see also Küchler and Were 2003, 2005), is focused on *tivaivai* in the Cook Islands, and takes a more esoteric perspective on why and how *tivaivai* are used and made, as does Küchler and Eimke (2009). This thesis is different. Being grounded in a broader definition of economy, and the analysis of value, I take Guyer’s assertions to heart. She notes:

> Cultural analysis has made significant contributions to the study of social reproductive powers while avoiding directly addressing the plans and strategies that value and desire must surely generate (Gudeman 2001). Concentration on the symbolic bases for value is important in avoiding the methodological reductionism of quantification that simply reproduces the reductive political-economic process in the present world...The radical and liberational horizons of Graeber (2001) and Hart (2000), in different ways, reposition alternatives in a political field. But we need to increasingly incorporate attention to thought and calculation. [Guyer 2004: 174]

The thought and calculation that Guyer is writing about here is what I strive to elucidate for the makers and/or users of *tivaivai* in the rest of this thesis.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

This thesis is ethnography via the production and use of objects and ceremonial events. My fieldwork was done over a three year period, and occurred for the most part in South Auckland amongst *tivaivai* makers from various *tivaivai* making groups (*Va’ine tini*). But that first trip to Rarotonga was the way I gained access to the South Auckland community. That first day I meet Māmā Tirata in Titikaveka, she invited me to join her Aitutakian *tivaivai* group, the Tiare Māori *Va’ine tini* in South Auckland, which was to reconvene in the new year when she would be back in New Zealand in February 2000. Other connections I made during that initial fieldwork stint to the Cook Islands, culminated in my joining another group in South Auckland in early 2000, the Ātiuan group, the Enuamanu *Va’ine tini*. I regularly visited three other groups: two different Manihikian...
Va’ine tini, and another Va’ine tini group who were connected to a Punanga Reo (Cook Islands language nest). I also went to Wellington several times to talk to tivaivai makers and recipients of tivaivai and on one occasion, travelled as part of a tere (travel) party to Wellington. In the Cook Islands, I spent time with Va’ine tini and individual tivaivai makers on Mangaia, Ātiu, Aitutaki as well as Rarotonga during the five trips I made to the Cook Islands between November 1999 and August 2010.29 I also travelled to Sydney to attend a Cook Islands wedding.

My fieldwork consisted of “deep hanging out” (Clifford 1997: 188) with tivaivai makers at their weekly, sometimes twice weekly meetings, where I watched and participated in the production of tivaivai. Eventually I was included in Va’ine tini events as well. As I became friends with specific women in the Va’ine tini, I began to be invited to kinship ceremonial events being staged by these women, and events associated with their family networks, as well as into their homes to sit and talk and sew tivaivai. While women who make tivaivai are a small section of the New Zealand and wider Cook Islands society to be sure, these women were active in ceremonial ritual where they used their tivaivai as gifts and/or decoration at ceremonial venues. Being involved in, and watching the women’s assiduous production of such ritually loaded and potent valuables, and then the public gifting and display of their textiles, gave me a particular perspective on Cook Islands ceremonial economy in New Zealand and beyond.

My data gathering was based on informal discussions, more formal interviews, and extensive participant observation. To that end, it was fortunate that I had a reasonable proficiency in needlework, because my time in the Va’ine tini meetings generally involved sewing: either tacking whose ever tivaivai had been cut that day or sewing the tivaivai tātaura that Māmā Tirata had cut for me. This tivaivai, which took me just over 18 months to sew, was in many ways the ultimate piece of participant-observation. Not only did I learn about the lengthy and arduous, but nonetheless enjoyable, task of sewing a whole tivaivai, complete with the difficulties of learning stitches, and being scrutinised by others for neatness and skill, I got a glimpse of the importance of having sewn and finished a tivaivai and I was drawn into the prestige parameters of tivaivai because of it (see Chapter Four). The dual events of finishing my tivaivai and just over a year later of giving birth to my first son, made me more of a woman in the Māmās’ eyes, and cemented my connections

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29 Two were month long stints and the other three trips ranged from three days to just under two weeks.
with some of the women, through gifts to me which I was then bound to reciprocate. I have
been fortunate to have had such longitude to my research, because the connections with
many of my informants are on-going.

**Research at home and multi-sited/siteless ethnography**

The process of doing ethnography for the most part, in the city in which I live, has
been an interesting one. A sequence of realisations changed the way I viewed
anthropology’s other, and my perceptions of my familiar environment. In the first two
semesters of my doctoral studies, I studied Stage One Cook Islands Māori (Rarotongan) at
the University of Auckland. Whilst beginning to make contacts with *tivaivai* makers in
South Auckland, I became aware that I was in class at University with the grandchildren
and children of some of the women I was getting to know in the *Va’ine tini*. That the bakery
some 40 metres from my house which I had taken little notice of, was in fact a Cook Islands
bakery and for a time, became very useful for buying food to take to *Va’ine tini* or peoples’
houses. But when this same bakery eventually closed down and reopened in South
Auckland, the shifting demographic pressures that applied to Cook Islanders became part
of my neighbourhood. In the house next to the bakery around the corner from me, lived
one of the sons of a very talented *ta’unga* from seemingly distant Mangaia. I had spent a lot
of time with this woman on both of my trips to ‘the outer island’, and when I realised she
visited her son here on a regular basis, Mangaia no longer seemed so far away. When most
days I would get into my car and drive to South Auckland to do my research, it dawned on
me that it was the same as getting on a plane to go to ‘the islands’ (Max Rimoldi, personal
correspondence), Auckland changed for me and anthropology became less about the
‘exotic other’ and more about the complexity of the familiar. My Auckland was
reconfigured, and I gained a sense of how this city looms large in Cook Islanders’ views of
the world. I realised New Zealand, Auckland, are in a sense, part of the Cook Islands
archipelago.

The initial month long trip to the Cook Islands proved to be the best way to make
connections with *tivaivai* makers in South Auckland, because by going to the islands, I was
honouring the rhetoric that the island homeland is the centre of the Cook Islands. Also, my
travelling in that way gave my research legitimacy, because being a *papa’ā* (European) and
beginning research in South Auckland was a fraught and politically loaded process. When I
first went to South Auckland, even arriving bearing invitations from Cook Islands women
in the islands, I felt like I came tarred with the weight of the racist, class imbued history of
the migration of Pacific Islanders to Auckland and the rest of New Zealand (cf. Loomis 1990a). That legacy was less potent in the islands, and the chance opportunity to be featured in the *Cook Islands News* gave my study prestige that was enough to pique the interest of Māmā Tirata which paved the way for my research in Auckland.

My research inevitably ended up being "multi-sited" ethnography (Clifford 1997; Gupta and Ferguson (eds) 1997; Marcus 1995, 1998, 2001), as I travelled to attend events, and journeyed with the Ātiu Māmās in particular on the *tere* party (travelling group, see Chapter Seven). Travel was part of the connections that the gifting of *tivaivai* forged and the opportunities that making *tivaivai* in New Zealand yielded. Marcus’ assertion that “[t]he emerging norms of multi-sited fieldwork are the means of growing a renewed attention to the social out of the cultural turn’s revolution in thinking about what goes on in the site of ethnography while still preserving the intensity and complexity of that revolution” (Marcus 2001: 231), became relevant.

The nature of the Cook Islands diaspora and the connections that are created through and because of the gifting of *tivaivai* and lesser valuables in ceremonial arena, gave me a perspective on the domain of the “macro-social” (Marcus 2001: 229), via the methodology and theoretical perspectives of multi-sited research. As Marcus notes:

[T]o use the social within reach in any project is a way to re-engage representations of the social as processes which the ethnography documents in multi-sited space and then uses to challenge existing theories, constructs, narratives and problematic that it would otherwise have precipitously embraced as the context (and limits of interpretation as well), or its work. [2001: 233]

In part, my research has approached at times, what Sissons (1999a) calls "siteless ethnography", which he defines as “the ethnography of human connectedness over space and time” (1999a: 92). Such ethnography is neither bounded by geography nor constrained by theories that rely on it, where, even the notion of multi-sited ethnography can be limiting. Instead, in siteless ethnography “the field is not imagined as a complex of connected sites but rather, as an expanding, ethnographically produced web of relationships between people, places and things” (Sissons 1999a: 93). Whilst my research was multi-sited, this aspect of connectedness was integral to the way people gifted *tivaivai*

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30 Sissons (1999a: 90-94) began such a “siteless” ethnographic project with *tivaivai* makers in Wellington. His stance was generated by his interest in the blurring of “(post colonial) distinctions between Cook Islands and New Zealand identities” (Sissons 1999a: 90).
and other valuables (cf. Gershon 2007). The reconfiguring of my Auckland into the southernmost island in the Cook Islands archipelago was as much about how migration worked for Cook Islanders as it was about shifts for me in theoretical perspectives of how anthropology constructs the ‘other’. Such a focus re-made the events I attended in Auckland, Sydney, Wellington, and the Cook Islands into contexts that represented live matrices of relationships that extended across the Pacific even as the circulation of tivaivai dignified the gifting and exchange of envelope wrapped money and food which revealed the parameters of Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) expanded notion of economy as well as the way things were changing.

I fully expected to get drawn into the church system through the course of my fieldwork, assuming that the various forms of Christianity were such a pervasive realm for Cook Islanders, that this would be inevitable. But this was not the case. Most of the women I encountered in the Va’ine tini were church goers, to varying degrees, and many were also associated with church Va’ine tini as well as the island affiliated ones. But I realised that the production of tivaivai in the church groups tended to be for church purposes, namely the gifting of tivaivai to church ministers at the end of their tenure at a church. Whereas, the island affiliated groups were about the production of tivaivai for women’s own use in kinship connections: for their own gifting obligations and aspirations. The island identities were inevitably about kinship ties and the focus of production within these groups (for the most part) showed the importance of the gifting of tivaivai to one’s children and kin in the maintaining and making conjoinment, and the version of mutuality as economy that this entailed.

5 CHAPTER OUTLINE

In each of my subsequent chapters, I deal with the various ways tivaivai functions as the elite form of social valuable, which effectively materialises key values for most Cook Islanders, and in doing so frames the structural parameters of value for Cook Islanders, in a version of economy which is more broadly construed (Gudeman 2001, 2008). Chapter Two is historical, Chapters Three to Six look at specific ceremonial events, and Chapter Seven at the funding behind Va’ine tini events and the sale of tivaivai. Each chapter also examines various aspects to do with Cook Islanders’ ways of negotiating, managing, mitigating, or succumbing to the larger hegemonic forces that exist in the New Zealand political economy.
In Chapter Two, I look at the history of the supplanting of indigenous textiles by tivaivai and show how this was part of a much wider process of change that was as much about Cook Islanders’ subaltern response to global forces, and the way the parameters of value changed accordingly, as it was about politics, and colonial and missionary agendas. I locate this history in the debates in anthropology about the materiality and the agency of objects. This foreshadows my argument in the rest of this thesis that there is more going on with tivaivai and what people do with them in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy than previously researched, and that the complexity, contradictions, burdens, and opportunities of the Cook Islands ceremonial economy are multifaceted and dynamic.

Chapters Three through Six deal with specific ceremonial events where tivaivai feature in various guises as gifts, decoration of the venue, or as adornment. Chapters Three and Four describe and analyse a series of ‘o’ora (public gifting ceremony) where specific tivaivai were gifted, Chapter Three analyses the gifting of tivaivai during wedding ‘o’ora and looks at the changing parameters of the way tivaivai manifests the ideology of mothering, and being a daughter and/or woman. Chapter Four examines three ‘o’ora that featured the gifting of singularised (Kopytoff 1986) tivaivai at non-kin events: one where a tivaivai was presented to a departing church minister, and the other two were separate events where single tivaivai were presented to Samoan New Zealand police officers. This chapter looks at the parameters of the negotiation of prestige as mana via tivaivai as the access to and axis of prestige for Cook Islands women, as value was extracted through the process of the circulation of tivaivai.

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven look at the connections between tivaivai and money. Chapters Five and Six look at the way tivaivai dignify the gifting of money. Chapter Five looks at the haircutting ceremony as a rite of passage that entails the sometimes significant gifting of envelope wrapped money. I analyse how this is framed, and how this gifting draws individuals and communities together through reciprocity and obligation in a Maussian (1990 [1925]) sense. The way money has been incorporated into gifting at haircuttings in a way that compliments the ritual processes of the event is a diasporic adaptation and a product of the particular Cook Islands version of the dialectical tension between the realms of mutuality and market, and the various demands on New Zealand Cook Islanders’ finances and their desires to remain connected as Cook Islanders in New Zealand. Chapter Six looks at funerary process and the potency of tivaivai around death.
From the wrapping of bodies to commit them to the grave as the ultimate statement about *aro’a*, as in love (or not), to the gifting of money through the funerary process, including the unveiling of the gravestone. This chapter looks at the way the ritual complex operates to manage death through the gifting of *tivaivai* and lesser textiles, envelope wrapped money and food and how this works to bury an individual in the Cook Islands way, perpetuate conjoinment amongst the living, and between the living and the deceased, as well as manage the financial pressures around death.

Chapter Seven looks at the ways Cook Islands women manage the hegemony and opportunities of the realm of market when dealing with *tivaivai*. The first half of the chapter looks at the sale of a singularised (Kopytoff 1986) *tivaivai* that was sold for NZ$NZ10,000 in a way that mitigated the debasement of the ideology of *tivaivai*. The second half of the chapter examines the way the Enuamanu Va’ine tini negotiated the receipt and use of funding to commercially develop their handicraft production, whilst avoiding selling their *tivaivai* proper. Chapter Eight is my conclusion.

6 CONCLUSION

This thesis is an analysis of the range of meanings of value as Cook Islands women make and/or use *tivaivai* in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in translocal and transnational networks. This thesis looks at the implications of the extent of this ceremonial economy as part of Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) expanded notion of economy, and the role that *tivaivai* plays in this.

In this introductory chapter I have outlined how *tivaivai*, as the paramount form of wealth and the specific weighted category of valuable that is designated as the semiotic media of value, have come to be iconic valuables that are an indexical symbol of the structural properties of the Cook Islands system of social relations (cf. Turner 2008: 50). *Tivaivai* are a model of and model for social relationships and action, and this is how they express specific notions that are fundamental to the way Cook Islands women experience the world and exist in the world, hence, women say “you are not a women without *tivaivai*”. *Tivaivai* as valuables, materialise the key values of kinship and *aro’a* which orientate Cook Islanders to varying degrees (depending on how much individuals choose to belong to Cook Islands ‘communities’), and both valuables and values are refractions of the structural framework of value that prevails for Cook Islanders. The traffic in and use of *tivaivai* is therefore also the access to and axis of prestige as *mana* for Cook Islands women.
As semiotic media of value, *tivaivai* also facilitate transformations in people and objects, including money, at events in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. This is the institutional frame within which these transformations take place and *tivaivai* are the foundation of the ritual complex that elicits the transformations in people and valuables. Together, they effectively constitute “the complementary components of a total system of communication and transaction of value” (Turner 2006b: 20).

This chapter has provided background information on Cook Islanders in New Zealand and the importance of the Cook Islands ceremonial economy as a prelude to my subsequent focus in this thesis on the gifting and use of *tivaivai* and the other lesser valuables, including envelope wrapped money as part of a ritual complex that is deployed in ceremonial events. The next chapter gives the historical perspective on the emergence of *tivaivai* as the cloth of ceremony and muliebrity in the Cook Islands through the colonial period, and how *tivaivai* came to be semiotic media of value. It also establishes the particular stance on materiality that anchors this thesis.
CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF TIVAIVAI AND THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF OBJECTS

1 INTRODUCTION

With the arrival of the missionaries in 1821, first to Aitutaki and then to Rarotonga, massive changes began to take place across Cook Islands society. The emergence of tivaivai as the textiles of social process was part of these changes, to the extent that by the 1890s tivaivai were being valued (Herda 2010, 2011) in such a way that prefigured the scope of the roles that tivaivai perform today. This excerpt from an ‘ūtē31 (celebratory song), describes one composer’s version of the missionary influence and the volition of the Cook Islands women, that culminated in the change from tapa to tivaivai.

Men: Bang...bang...
As the women work
Morning, noon till evening

Tane: Tukituki... Pakakina
Te rave a Māmā
Popongi, avatea, aiai e

This is too noisy for the missionaries
Try and find other ways

Men: Abandon tapa making

Tane: Takore iatu te maani tapa e

To avoid noisy environment
Abandon tapa making
To avoid noisy environment
Ladies...young girls
This is a better choice for you
You will not get blisters
Simply sit down
As you chat away with others
Just quietly stitch away with your needle
This is the introduction of tivaivai
In Takitumu
A foreign art has become ours
A great effort from our women folks
Mastered in Takitumu
The Paku Onu...
The Taorei...

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31 This ‘ūtē was composed by Mauri Toa and performed by the Vaka Takitumu Dance Team at the Constitution Celebrations on Rarotonga on the 30th of July, 2007. A copy of this ‘ūtē and accompanying photographs of the performance was featured on a poster displayed at the Cook Islands Museum and Library in Avarua, in December 2007. The words were sung for the most part by the women, the male parts are indicated. The text is as per the poster I saw at the museum in December 2007.
Tataura...and tīvaivai Manu
A foreign art has become ours
A great effort from our women folks

Men: Je-ho-va
    Je-ho-va

Tane: Ti-eo-va
    Ti-eo-va

The words "a foreign art has become ours" is a refrain that is not just about acculturation and the imposition of a foreign technology, but also about the coveting of a textile form that spoke to, and elaborated Cook Islands ways of seeing the world. As Thomas argues, such "investments may be in strategies that neither collude nor resist global relations" (2000: 208), but given that tīvaivai are now made instead of tapa and mats suggests that "quilts replaced cloth, and became valuable indigenous things because they took on the values that cloth once possessed" (Thomas 2000: 209). Rather than invention of tradition (Hobsbawn 1983), it is invention of culture in Wagner's (1975) sense.

Teaiwa asserts that "the majority of social changes taking place in the Pacific are being analysed as movement from being more Pacific to less Pacific, less European to more European, less modern to more modern, more exotic to more familiar" (Teaiwa 2006: 75). This chapter is about how the adoption of tīvaivai through the colonial period, and by inference, the way tīvaivai are being made and used in the current environment, is not less Pacific, nor a European version of modernity, but sacra from the base (Gudeman 2001, 2008) that is about Cook Islands ways of seeing and being in the world. I have heard non-Cook Islanders blatantly call tīvaivai "not real Pacific arts", others have more softly described the textiles as "hybrid". This latter term "masquerades as a solely cultural descriptor... where, crucially, culture is often represented as autonomous from any political or social determination" (Coombes and Brah 2000: 2; cf. Thomas 1996: 9). It also evokes, in some form or another, a positive or negative derivation from a previous whole into

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32 The notion of the invention of tradition versus the invention of culture has been a hallmark of the postmodern era in social science analysis (Linnekin 1992: 249). As Linnekin notes, in the 1980s several anthropologists working independently began to view ‘culture’ as in tradition or kastom as something that was ‘produced’ for various reasons (for example Keesing and Tonkinson 1982, Linnekin 1983 and Hanson 1989). The theoretical musings of these scholars were more in line with Roy Wagner’s theoretical stance from his paradigm shifting volume, The Invention of Culture (1975), which tackled the whole notion of the way all cultures change through time, as well as the way anthropologists approach the ethnographic process. His use of the term “invention” was not to imply de novo invention or lack of continuity with the past. However, this was the intent of Hobsbawn’s (1983) introduction in the edited volume The Invention of Tradition (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983) which inevitably sparked a debate in scholarship and the popular media because of the implications of the particular tone it set.
something that is at best a mixture, creolized, or a syncretism, or at worst, this list of forms cast in a negative light, or something that is contaminated, watered down, a generally less pure form of what has gone before (cf. Kapchan and Strong 1999). My intent is to understand what sewing and tivaivai represented for Cook Islands women during the colonial period, and what the textiles enabled especially commoner women to do. To avoid the perils of hybridity and heed the cautions of Teaiwa, my mode of analysis needs to frame tivaivai as objects in a way that refutes:

[Essentialist ethnic and cultural typifications [whereby] Indigenous artefacts that incorporate western materials... attest to cultural traffic that belies the stability of cultural boundaries, while their vigour and apparent subversive mimicry also challenge those who expect cultural change to result in mere acculturation or westernisation. [Thomas 2000: 198-199]

The first part of this chapter analyses the adoption of tivaivai through the colonial period as the result of the concatenation of responses to external and internal processes. The second part deals more with my analytical approach to the analysis of tivaivai in the context of history as per the content of this chapter, but also with reference to the rest of this thesis. With Turner’s (2006a, 2006b, 2008) framework of the relationship among value, values, and valuables as a reference point, I locate the adoption of tivaivai in terms of changes in values and the structural parameters of value, as materialised in the new valuables. This perspective offers not only different versions of history but also proffers a particular analytical approach to materiality and the anthropology of objects, whereby “[a]rtefacts such as... tivaevae [sic] can not only reveal the fissures and contradictions in the language of identity, they also suggest practices and histories that lie entirely beyond it” (Thomas 2000: 214). This chapter is about some of those histories, and my subsequent chapters, are about the practices.

33 A case in point is Young and Addo's (2007) introduction in the Pacific Arts Association (PAA) festschrift volume dedicated to Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk, entitled Hybrid Textiles: Pragmatic Creativity and Authentic Innovation in Pacific Cloth (Addo, Leslie, and Herda 2007). Their use of the terms “pragmatic creativity” and “hybrid”, I think are problematic. The introduction is well written, laudable, and a valid attempt to move beyond the now tedious but still powerful debates that have raged around “authenticity”, “invention of tradition” and hybridity in the last 30 years, but their argument still bears the spectra of the tenets that they are trying to distance themselves from. The general stance of their argument is an implicit acquiescence to the notion of hybridity, because their very use of the word implies something that has come from something more pure. Their strong rhetoric seemingly situates their analysis in a valid framework, but because it moves off from a theoretically murky place, ultimately their stance is stymied by the old parameters. They note, “We argue that pragmatic creativity – as a socially sanctioned, culturally embedded process – allows us to recognize these hybrid textile products [as detailed in the PAA volume in the various articles contained therein] as authentic innovations” (Young and Addo 2007: 14). Their terms of reference curtail their ability to move beyond the parameters of the same old debate. As Thomas notes, “[h]ybridity is almost a good idea, but not quite” (1996: 9).
THE HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF TIVAIVAI

Before tivaivai became the cloth of ceremony and prestige in the Cook Islands, woven mats and tapa cloth were used for ritual. The arrival of the missionaries in Aitutaki in 1821 was the beginning of a process that changed the social nexus, and by the late 1800s, tivaivai were being valued, and possibly beginning to eclipse indigenous textiles as the cloth of ceremony and ritual. The history of the process of the missionary conversion of Cook Islanders is mirrored in the conversion of their textile system from that made from locally grown fibres into the cloth fabric of tivaivai, but how this happened was a process that was about the changes in the parameters of value, values, and therefore what was considered valuables.

Cloth in the pre-contact and early contact period

The record of how and why bark cloth and mats were used for clothing and in ceremonial processes in pre-contact times in the Cook Islands is sketchy. The written accounts made by missionaries and others of life before the contact period (e.g. Gill 1982) are imbued with particular versions of history. Other works like Buck’s (Te Rangi Hiroa) corpus of literature on the material culture of the Cook Islands (1927, 1932a, 1932b, 1944, 1971, 1993), are an exhaustive description of “native” artefacts, including cloth, but with a sense of salvage anthropology about it. In his analysis of material culture on Aitutaki for example, he records the forms, types, and methods of production of bark cloth and mats at the time of his field research in 1926 (Buck 1927: 76-162). However, he gives scarce written space to the uses of these textiles, and noted that little tapa was made in Aitutaki “now” (Buck 1927: 76). Kooijman (1972) does not consider Cook Islands textiles in his record of tapa in Polynesia, but more recent publications have sought to record the ancient knowledge and lore around the production of tapa in Atiu at least (Teiotu 2007). Bark cloth ponchos were worn by those in the Southern Cooks in pre-contact times (Küchler 2003; Thomas 1999). But Neich and Prendegrast (1997: 75) note that on the atolls, only fine mats were made while the volcanic islands had several types of bark cloth. They write about a special thick white tapa cloth called tikoru, which they say was made by men (but they do

34 The section on house construction details the use of mats in this context (Buck 1927: 1-38), and of the seven types of bark cloth that he discusses, he mentions the use of only one type, namely the hapaha which he noted as “the correct cloth to spread over a mother after child-birth” (Buck 1927: 81).

35 As an aside, Buck does not mention in any of the weighty tomes that he produced on the material culture of the Cook Islands (1927, 1932a, 1932b, 1944, 1971, 1993), the existence of, let alone the uses of tivaivai. This is despite the fact that tivaivai would have been well and truly established as the textiles of ceremony by the 1920s (cf. Herda 2011).
not cite any reference for this assertion). This cloth was used as a covering for the images of gods and was also worn by chiefs and priests (1997: 75) in Mangaia. Neich and Prendergrast (1997: 75) note that the Rarotongan staff gods were considered very sacred, and were the focus of religious intent in pre-contact Rarotonga.

These sacred *tapu* objects, which Sissons (2007) calls *ki’iki’i* (cf. Durrant 2010), were elaborately carved poles up to 20 feet long and some four to six inches in diameter. The staff gods were wrapped in many metres of bark cloth which bulked their circumference out to some six to nine feet\(^\text{36}\) (Sissons 2007: 52-53; cf. Küchler and Eimke 2009: 24). Sissons notes that the wrapping and re-wrapping of staff gods was the jurisdiction of priests (also called *ta’unga*). If the priests perceived that the gods were displeased, the recourse was to clean out the reliquary, the *‘are atua* (god houses), where the staff gods were kept on the *marae* (ceremonial areas associated with the pre-contact chiefly and religious system). In order to appease the offended deities, new staff gods were made and wrapped with freshly made bark cloth (Pitman Journals, 1833: 207, cited in Sissons 2007: 53-54). Such was the power of cloth, that the act of wrapping and re-wrapping “restored or renewed” the *mana* of the deity (Sissons 2007: 54; cf. Gell 1993: 89). In her discussion about the god houses and god figures from Tahiti and the Tuamotus, which she called “containers of divinity”, Kaeppler goes so far as to say that sacred objects in this region of Polynesia, the staff gods of Rarotonga included, were “activated” (2007: 120) by wrapping.

Sissons notes how the construction and consecrating of the god house required an elaborate ritual process which involved cloth (2007: 53). Siikala cites an account by the missionary William Gill, who conveys a conversation he had with Tinomana Ariki\(^\text{37}\) about these houses:

> The principal things of importance were the posts of the house... when prepared these posts were brought, with great ceremony, to the spot of the *marae*. Wide and deep pits were then dug into which native cloth and other articles were thrown. The posts were erected by the priest, and placed with great care on those articles while the assembled crowd would

\(^{36}\) See Babadzan (2003) for an analysis of the analogous religious adoration of staff gods in Tahiti.

\(^{37}\) Rarotonga at the time of the arrival of the missionaries was divided into three districts, known as *vaka* (canoe) and each district had particular *ariki* (paramount chief) titles. The Te Au-o-Tonga district is presided over by the Makea ariki, to the west of this *vaka* lies Puakura which is ruled by Tinomana Ariki and is based roughly on the current village of Aorangi. In the third district, Takitumu, two *ariki*, Pa and Kainuku hold sway. This structure remains in place today, albeit as a part of the contemporary political structure.
shout the name of the god to whom the marae was dedicated. [Siikala 1991: 118]

What is of interest to me in this passage is the fact that cloth was used in such a sacred and important event as the consecration of an ‘are atua (god house). Likewise, Sissons cites old Rarotongan land court records which indicated that the process of conferring a new ariki (paramount chief) title was ritually achieved through the wrapping of the ariki with a maro, a named loin cloth made out of bark cloth. And that after this part of the ceremony, the newly constructed ‘are ariki (new chiefly house or palace) was also wrapped by women with bark cloth to cement the mana, in a process that mediated between the sacred world of the gods (atua) and the profane world of humans (Sissons 2007: 55). The fact that it was women and the cloth they made which were charged with this sacred capacity is a point I will return to below. Papeiha, the Tahitian missionary wrote of a ceremony that he witnessed in Aitutaki in 1822 in which wrapping with bark cloth featured prominently, “The people clothe themselves with the finest of their cloth and make a tour round the island, before they set out they go to the marae and cover the kings [ariki] with cloth in abundance” (Williams n.d.[a]: 14, cited in Sissons 2007: 56).

**Wrapping and the arrival of Christianity**

The wrapping with indigenous cloth was used to herald the new God and to decommission the previous one with the unwrapping of and re-use of the tapa cloth that held them (cf. Gell 1993: 89). Sissons recounts how new churches, known as ‘are pure, effectively replaced the ‘are atua, the god-house as Christianity began to take hold in Rarotonga in the 1820s. In recounting this change, he notes that the posts remained a strong feature of the new churches, suggesting “that people were consciously incorporating elements of the ‘are atua (god houses) into the new structures” (Sissons 2007: 52). Wrapping was used to shroud the pillars of the new churches; wrapping was clearly a Rarotongan way of treating a sacred object, of making something sacred, of preserving sacredness (cf. Gell 1993). The missionary Pitman noted in his writings on the construction of the first church in Rarotonga: “It was agreed that the rafters of the church should be covered with the cloth from two of the vaerua kino [staff gods] or idols which they formerly worshipped.” (Pitman Journals 1827: 16, cited in Sissons 2007: 53). Similarly, the missionary William Gill wrote that converts requested that “some of their former ‘autiki’ or carved gods [staff gods] were stripped of their sacred bark cloth and
hung from the rafters [of the new Christian churches)” (Gill 1871: 14-15, cited in Sissons 2007: 53). Sissons speculates that the wrapping of the new churches’ rafters with the erstwhile sacred bark cloth was a way of “charging... the buildings with life-giving mana” (2007: 54).

Cloth clearly held a central role in the process of making sacred, of exalting and honouring deities and chiefs alike, and it is this process of wrapping and the association with the sacred that is relevant here. Hammond (1986a) linked the past with the present by arguing that there is resonance with the production of bark cloth (the layering in particular) and the design of tivaivai (especially with taorei), Rongokea (1992, 2001) does the same. And while there are obvious correlates, it seems to me that it is in the wrapping that was done with the bark cloth where the more palpable resonance lies (cf. Küchler and Eimke 2009: 6). Because when indigenous cloth was succeeded by tivaivai, what persisted was the mechanism and potency of wrapping. When tivaivai are gifted in events in South Auckland now, they are given in such a way that the tivaivai are literally made to wrap the recipient of the textile. At a wedding ‘o’ora (gifting ceremony) the bride and groom are engulfed, wrapped in as many tivaivai as can be amassed (see Chapter Three); similarly when a hall is decorated for a haircutting or other events, the effect is to wrap the space in tivaivai (see Chapters Four and Five); and sometimes bodies and/or coffins are wrapped in tivaivai at burial, and multiple layers of textile cloth are used to shroud coffins at an unveiling, including tivaivai (see Chapter Six). Kaeppler (1979: 189) identified the connection between Hawaiian quilting and the indigenous textile traditions, inferring that in the Cooks as well, the new textiles were able to work in an elaborated format of the old. Thomas contends that this suggests “that quilts replaced cloth, and became valuable indigenous things because they took on the values that cloth once possessed” (2000: 209, emphasis added). The production, use and overall importance of tivaivai as the highest ceremonial valuable in the contemporary Cook Islands ceremonial economy has resonance with, and is connected to the pre-eminence and ascendancy of indigenous cloth during pre-contact times because both types of textiles were used to wrap in order to sanctify, to honour, and to cherish. Just as wrapping was a potent mechanism with indigenous cloth, wrapping the new God with indigenous cloth continued to be so in the colonial era, and when the form of cloth changed, the potency of wrapping has continued to persist.

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38 This has resonance with the contemporary practice of the withholding of tivaivai to children who have not behaved. In this instance, being unwrapped, or not wrapping at all as the case may be, is to dishonour and to specifically not honour (see Chapter Three).
The sanctity of woman and their cloth

The fact that the articles used to wrap and honour were almost exclusively made by women in the pre-contact era (Sissons 2007) - as they are now - is significant. In an attempt to construct a sense of why women were so important to the structure of power in pre-Christian times, and why ultimately, tivaiva'i persist as important elite wealth, Küchler (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27) draws upon the ethnographic work of Siikala (1991) in Ngaputoru, and Valeri (1985) in Hawai‘i. Küchler notes that both right-through-descent and effective alliances were required for chiefly succession (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27). But that the alliances created through marriage tended to take precedence because of the negotiated, on-the-ground alliances that had to take place long before succession occurred. These were created by the marriage ties reckoned through women because the three islands gave women to each other for marriage and alliances. Ma’uke gave women to Ātiu in exchange for access to the mana (here, divine power) that the ariki titles of Ātiu manifested. Oral histories explicitly tell how the female children of Ma’uke were adopted by families in Miti‘āro as a tribute for support in warfare (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 26), and the female children of these women returned to Ma’uke again as wives. As Küchler notes, the three islands maintained “an asymmetrical and yet transitive” set of relationships that made them reliant on each other via “the movement of women in exchange for the chiefly titles, which both Ma’uke and Miti‘āro are granted by Ātiu” (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 26). Küchler notes that on Ma’uke:

[T]he small size of the population led to descent being reckoned at once through an older and a younger brother, creating an optative system in which chiefly succession and continuity of the tribe depend upon the mediating role of women. The ngati or tribe is thus structured by interlocking fields of relations created through the movement of women in marriage between islands. [Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27]

She adds that myths that tell the history of a tribe whereby the same hierarchical structure is utilized, “at the base of which lies the incompatible relations between divine authority and human authority combined in the office of chiefly power” (2009: 27) are relevant. Küchler (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27) makes the point (after Siikala 1991) that the introduction of Christianity “changed the triangular and hierarchical structure of

39 Küchler and Eimke (2009) is a co-authored volume, but there is a clear distinction between who wrote what in the books I have referenced the relevant author in this way throughout this thesis in this way.

40 Ngaputoru is the triumvirate of islands in the southern Cooks: Ātiu, Ma’uke, and Miti‘āro.

41 Küchler is writing about the teina/tuakana (junior/senior) system but she does not name this explicitly.
cosmology and society forever” and the configuration of the church congregation on the basis of gender, where men and women faced each other, equal in the eyes of God, “nearly provoked the breakdown of the traditional exchange system and its concomitant social order, which depended upon the unequal relations between wife-givers and givers of divine power” (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27). It seems to me that what Küchler is implying is that as women were exchanged through marriage and as adopted children, they brought with them a specific quality of sanctity which by implication was inherent in the cloth that they made and used.

Küchler critiques Siikala for not explaining what transpired in Cook Islands society whereby “the exchange-based relations continued to inform the flow of power and of wealth”, she notes that:

[B]y not mentioning, let alone examining women’s production of tivaivai for exchange, he arguably missed an important key to understanding the relation between conversion and the reorganisation of society... both the material and the social history of the tivaivai bring to light the transposition of the social nexus, which consisted of the exchange of divine power for human aspiration, onto a material nexus, composed of the harnessing of uncut, imported cloth and the imposition of creative agency which transforms this cloth into memorable patterns that can be given away to underwrite relations of allegiance and friendship as much as relations of kinship. [Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27]

This is an important point, but quite what the substance of both the social and material nexus are, Küchler leaves undefined, and instead relies on an esoteric analysis of fabric itself, and the agency of cloth that is Gell (1998) derived. The shortfalls of Gell (1998) and the particular form of agency that he subscribes to in particular, I will return to later in this chapter.

In my experience, via the range of ceremonial events I watched and participated in, certain women in particular retain that lingering sacredness, and what they produce as women, as in tivaivai, is mandated with the capacity to mediate between the sacred and the profane, particularly in funerary rituals. But such process is more about the structural parameters of the relationship among value, values and what materialises these as valuables. In Rasmussen’s thesis (1995), under his discussion of ‘The Characteristics of Women’ he notes that while women are considered teina (junior) to the tuakana (senior) status of males, as is the way with the teina/tuakana ordering, the system provides
provision for the elevation of the *teina* under certain conditions and for specific purposes. He notes that in Tongareva ways of seeing the world, the woman’s body is considered:

[E]xtremely *tapu* (sacred, sanctity), so much so that any man who strikes a woman on any part of the head commits an almost unforgiveable crime... During conflicts when fights take place, the moment a woman intervenes and cuddles one of the fighters the fight ceases immediately, especially if the woman is a relative of the fighter... This observation of *tapu* (sacred, sanctity) regarding women in situations of conflicts continues today among Tongareva people in South Auckland and wherever they live. [Rasmussen 1995: 47-48]

**The Emergence of Tivaivai**

The emergence of *tivaivai* was powered by duel processes: a local response to the regional changes that were sweeping eastern Polynesia through the 1800s and early 1900s, and internal power machinations coupled with the manifestation of missionary agendas in the Cook Islands which included the particular version of the accompanying cult of domesticity that came with missionary zeal. These processes brought about changes in the social nexus that Küchler (Küchler and Eimke 2009) and Sissions (2007, see below) write about, but what those changes were, amounted to changes in the general parameters of value, and specifically to changes in the way kinship and *aro’a* as values were done, and materialised as valuables.

**Tivaivai as part of a northern and eastern Polynesian tradition**

*Tivaivai* are effectively a geographically distinct part of a wider quilt making tradition in eastern and northern Polynesia where women from Hawai’i, the Tahitian islands, and Rurutu in the Austral Islands have been creating and using quilt textiles for well over 100 years (Hammond 1986a: 2; Herda 2011). As colonisation and Christianity spread across the Pacific in the 1800s, the effect was dramatic. As Schneider notes, the political and economic landscape “in great trans-regional systems of interactions” often impact on the form and function of material culture (1987: 409), inferring that cloth can reflect political change. However, the reaction to the colonial intrusion and Christianity in particular in Polynesia was by no means uniform, to the extent that the realms in which textiles function have expanded (or contracted as the case may be) across the Pacific in the contemporary environment.

In a discussion of the massive destruction of religious iconography during the roll-out of Christianity across eastern Polynesia, Sissons (2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, n.d.)
asserts that a “regional event” (Sissons 2008b) took place. Sissons explicitly links what was happening in one island group to the others - effectively highlighting the influence of neighbours across the region, and it would seem that a similar process happened with quilting techniques. Hau’ofa’s (1993) notion of the inherent connectedness of the Pacific islands by virtue of the sea applies just as well historically as it does now. Sissons argues that one iconoclasm “sparked” another (Sissons 2008b). Similarly, it could be argued that the uptake of quilting in Tahiti in particular, was influential in the uptake in the Cooks (Herda 2010), but the influence of Hawai’i has been highlighted as well (Thomas 2000: 210).42

In the wake of colonisation, the west-lying neighbouring islands of the Cooks retained a semblance of the form at least of ceremonial textiles from pre-contact times, whereby the western islands retained bark cloth, and the eastern ones abandoned it, in lieu of quilts. But the west – bark cloth, east – quilts dichotomy is too simplistic, in “both places shifts of a more diverse pattern have actually taken place, involving continuity in some domains, discontinuity in others, and new spheres of circulation” (Thomas 2000: 202; cf. Thomas 1991). In Samoa for example, ‘ie tōga (fine mats) remain “the objects of highest ceremonial value to the Samoans. They still ‘outrank’ all other goods, including money, and dignify the exchange of other goods and services” (Schoeffel 1999: 119).43 An analogous process happened in Tonga, after colonial intrusion and the Tongan constitution of 1875 (Herda 1999; Horan 1997; Kaeppler 1999). Tongan textiles were effectively democratised and became an object that commoner women were able to exchange in pursuit of prestige and to fulfil obligations, resulting in textiles, namely mats (fala and kie) and bark cloth (ngatu) which are a form of koloa (Tongan women’s wealth), and are being made arguably, in increasing amounts in the current environment (Addo 2004; Horan 1997, 2002; 42 Thomas contends that writing on the Cooks and Tahiti makes the assumption that the quilting traditions established there were missionary derived, but he notes “whereas it seems more probable that they were stimulated by contact with Hawaiians; while the English missionary wives certainly encouraged needlework to the same degree as the Americans, they did not bring nearly so developed a quilting tradition with them” (2000: 210).

43 What passes for a fine mat in the current environment is a far cry from what fine mats were in the pre-contact era, the ‘ie tōga (fine mats) in the past had a texture like silky linen, so fine were the pandanus fibres that were used to plait it, and a single fine mat could take months, even years to make (Schoeffel 1999: 118). These were the types of mats that were exchanged with Tongans and became the kie hingoa, the named mats that still anchor the exalted value of mats in Tongan cosmology today (Herda 1999; Kaeppler 1999; Schoeffel 1999: 119). But the fine mats that are coveted today and used in the extensive exchanges that constitute Fa’a Samoa (The Samoan Way) processes are made in a few weeks, rather than months and months (Schoeffel 1999: 118).
In more recent years, quilts have begun to feature as a lesser version of traditional Tongan cloth wealth in the contemporary environment (Herda 1999, 2000).

In Hawai‘i, a quilted quilt form, initially patchwork and then more universally an appliqué form known as *kapa lau*, rapidly supplanted native cloth after missionaries arrived (Brandon 1989; Brandon and Woodard 2004; Hammond 1986a; Herda 2007; Jones 1973; Kamehiro 2007; Serrao and Serrao 1997). The introduction of quilting techniques more than likely had a chiefly route. According to historical documentation (Hammond 1986a: 29), elite women were being taught patchwork techniques by missionary women in the first half of the nineteenth century. The missionaries initially taught quilting to the royal women as a strategy to influence commoners, however because women of rank had always directed the creation of fine bark cloth and gained prestige by doing so, it was more than likely that the chiefly women assumed that they should be the first to learn quilting anyway (Hammond 1986a: 30).

Tahitian women took to patchwork and later appliqué quilts too. Hammond notes that on the 8th of January 1858, M.G. Cuzent attended a Tahitian wedding and recorded seeing piecework *tīfaifai* (Tahitian *tivaivai*) being used as decoration for the inside of the feast house (Cuzent 1860: 58-59, cited in Hammond 1986a: 31). Another missionary, Constance F. Cumming, who travelled to Tahiti with the Catholic Bishop of Samoa in 1877, also recorded the use of *tīfaifai* as decoration inside a Tahitian feast house. She noted “Ere long we were summoned to breakfast – a native feast in a native house, which was decorated in most original style, with large patchwork quilts. These are the joy and pride of the Tahitian women, and so artistic in design as to be really ornamental” (Cumming 1877, vol. 2: 3-4, cited in Hammond 1986a: 31). Cummings also wrote about the use of *tīfaifai* as bedspreads on the guests’ beds: “and such pretty coverlets of patchwork, really triumphs of needle-work. Those most in favour have crimson patterns on a white ground, but the designs are highly artistic” (Cumming 1877, vol. 1: 298-299, cited in Hammond 1986a: 31). Rurutuan women probably learnt the techniques from indigenous missionaries because no European missionaries were received there in the early contact years. The wives of Rurutuan ministers, who travelled along with their husbands to Tahiti for religious instruction in the latter part of the nineteenth century, were more than likely the ones who brought the techniques back to the islands. As I explain below, the wives’ instruction in needlework would have been seen as parallel and complimentary women’s knowledge for their husbands’ missionary endeavours (Hammond 1986a: 31).
The emergence of the styles of quilting

Given that there are two distinct styles of quilting in eastern Polynesia, namely the taorei patchwork form and the appliqué of manu and tātāura, it is likely that patchwork was the first style used because this is what the first European and American women to arrive in the region were doing. The oldest historical photos that exist and the earliest writers’ accounts record the appearance of the patchwork style in the first phase of the eastern Polynesian quilting tradition. Linguistically, the Tahitian term ‘tīfaiai’ means to patch repeatedly (Hammond 1986a: 30), as does the equivalent Rarotongan term, tīvae, which reference the earliest style of quilting. Also, the term ‘orei, as in taorei, means handkerchief (Buse and Taringa 1995: 501) which is a reference to the small squares that are sewn together in the construction of most tivaivai taorei.

As to the origins of the appliqué technique, Hammond notes that in all likelihood, the appliqué technique was an innovation by Hawaiian women (1986a: 39) because appliqué quilts appeared early in the history of Hawaiian quilting, and grew so rapidly in importance that they supplanted the piecework style. Jones notes that appliqué quilts first appeared in Hawai‘i in 1858 at the first birthday celebration of the first son of Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma, citing the importance of the occasion as the driver of innovation (1995 [1973]: 9). She also cites the presence of two North American women who taught sewing in girls’ schools in the first half of the nineteenth century in Hawai‘i as contributing to the development of the appliqué quilts. Hammond contends that although the method of cutting an overall design from a single piece of fabric is unique to Polynesia, the Hawaiians were more than likely influenced by small Western appliqué designs created in a similar manner. American appliqué quilts which date to the period between 1836 and 1858, Jones’ proposed dates for the origin of the Hawaiian quilt, show striking similarities with Hawaiian appliqué quilts in the use of the four-way symmetry and the overall design arrangements (Hammond 1986a: 41-42).

Hammond draws links between the Hawaiian and the Tahitian appliqué traditions. She contends that the Hawaiian article “almost certainly had a direct influence on the origin and development of Society Islands appliqué tīfaiai” (1986a: 42). She cites historical documentation to support this, and shows a photograph taken in 1885 of Queen Marua

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44 Herda details a similar innovation that happened in Tonga, here puff quilts were used as ritual textiles for the first time in at the title investiture of the Tu‘i Lakepa in 1993 (1999: 163).
(Hammond 1986a: 76), the Tahitian monarch, with the regal lady dressed in a Victorian style dress and seated in front of a *tīfaifai*.\(^{45}\) Given the proximity of the Cooks to the Tahitian islands, the influence of Tahitian trends on the Cooks is very relevant (Herda 2010, 2011). In my own fieldwork, women often spoke of genealogical connections to Tahiti and talked of on-going connections in the current environment. The Tahitian *tīfaifai* are distinctive from Cook Islands *tivaivai manu* in that they generally feature a border, and I would hear women in the *Va’ine tini* I was connected to in South Auckland talk in terms of the “Tahitian style” when they occasionally opted for borders on their *tivaivai*, so the links with Tahiti have more than likely been long and enduring for Cook Islanders.

Hammond’s dates for the elevation of *tivaivai* as the paramount form of wealth in the Cook Islands are too recent. The oldest *tivaivai* she came across during her year-long research around the eastern Pacific in 1977, dated from 1950 and closely resembled *tīfaifai* which she cited as evidence of the traffic in designs and techniques, and the movement of finished textiles that doubtless had taken place between the island groups. Hammond indicates that Cook Islands appliqué *tivaivai* “probably originated from a Society Islands source over thirty years ago” (1986a: 47), meaning the 1950s. But Herda puts the date somewhere in the late 1880s or 1890s (2010, 2011). Also, documentation cited by Scott (1991) notes that *tivaivai* were being valued as early as the 1890s. In his history of the Cook Islands, Scott wrote about the seafaring nature of Cook Islanders and he detailed the fate of one particular vessel, the sailing ship *Takitumu*. This vessel was a fast, robust, and well-built two-mastered schooner of some 97 tons, the building of which was begun in 1885 in Ngatangiia, a district of Rarotonga. When the British resident, Fredrick Moss, arrived in 1891 the framing of the ship was near completion. In 1895, the Ngatangiia ship owners decided to take the vessel on a “leisurely” *tere* party, “a traditional Polynesian goodwill tour [travelling or touring party]” (Scott 1991: 24). Scott notes that the vessel was crowded with people and laden with gifts. The ship left Rarotonga bound first for Mangaia south of Rarotonga, with plans to tour the other outer islands, but got no further. Scott records the writings of Charlie Cowan, a small boy when the ship sailed, who had published an account of the 1895 voyage in the Maori-language magazine *Tumu Korero* in 1953:

While on the ocean the ship struck a storm; suspicion was aroused that there might be a ‘Jonah’ aboard. In order to get rid of this bad omen all

\(^{45}\) Hammond speculates that the textile could be a *kapa lau* from Hawaii (1986a: 42-44). However, while the textile has the hallmarks of Hawaiian design, I wonder whether or not Tahitian women would have let anything other than their own textiles adorn their queen.
luxuries were ordered by the head of the party to be collected. Reluctantly, owners of earrings, rings, pareu, tīvaevae [sic] and others were gathered and [their possessions] thrown overboard, but that did not stop the angry wind and rough sea. Difference of opinion now came into consideration. The head of the party suggested going back to Rarotonga but the captain, determined to keep off shame, kept going forward until Mangaia was reached. That he did, and they at last reached their landing after many days at sea. [cited in Scott 1991: 25]

The ship eventually returned to Rarotonga, without its “treasure” of tīvaivai and other valuables. Evidence at least, that by 1895 tīvaivai were being coveted as valuables.

A photograph taken in Rarotonga and dated 1926, a copy of which was found by Phyllis Herda at Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, shows a tīvaivai being presented to the New Zealand governor of the time. The photograph attests to the fact that clearly by this date, tīvaivai had attained sufficient status to be presented to such an illustrious official (Herda 2010, 2011). Herda has also seen a tīvaivai made circa 1918, one purported to have been made circa 1908, and photographs of tīvaivai taken in the Cooks in the 1890s (personal correspondence). While establishing the exact date of the uptake of tīvaivai techniques is beyond the scope of this thesis, looking at the implications of this process is very relevant.

**Christianity and the cult of domesticity in the Cook Islands**

The history of the changing use of indigenous textiles and the uptake of Western derived textiles like tīvaivai “is intimately linked to the process of conversion to Christianity” (Thomas 2000: 211). While the influence of what was happening in Tahiti and Hawai‘i during the 1800s was important for the emergence of tīvaivai, the focus on the teaching of sewing was clearly a missionary led process. Of equal relevance was the fact that missionary zeal and evangelism were not confined to the saving of souls (cf. Colchester 2003; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; Douglas 1999; Eves 1996; Jolly and Macintyre 1989). The conversion process was concerned with “bringing the wider pattern of social life into some sort of conformity with English Christian ideas of marriage and familial life” (Thomas 2000: 211). Hence, the social habits that ordered work, how people lived and with whom, gender roles along with clothing, cloth and the interiors of houses were converted as well (Thomas 2000: 203). The ideology that was part and parcel of the missionary agenda encompassed the conversion to a form of domesticity that created “the space of the house [as the] site for the controlled use of the body and an arena in which temptation was
absent” (Eves 1996: 117). To that end, sewing was seen as a way to control hands and body (Eves 1996: 113; cf. Weber 2009).

The inference in Hammond’s accounts (1981, 1986a, 1986b) is that the technology of *tivaivai* was one imposed on the islanders as they were converted, the process being essentially a passive one. Her use of Graburn’s (1976) notion of arts of acculturation (see Hammond 1981 in particular) is indicative of this, and a product of the era in anthropology that Hammond was writing in. But as Douglas notes there was more to the assumption of the technology of sewing than merely indigenous supplication:

It is reasonable to assume that missionary motivations and meanings were not those of the indigenous women of whom they wrote. Like many feminists and anthropologists, I struggle to allow that domestication generally and sewing in particular might have been appropriated by indigenous women as desirable or even liberating. Yet read provocatively and reflexively, mission texts Pacific-wide disclose insistent traces of female volition and ‘delight’ in sewing, beyond the possibilities of coercion (non-existent in the early stages of most missions and limited thereafter unless enforced by hegemonic local authorities or state power) or mystification (an outmoded ideological construct which my own ideology finds belittling and insulting). Sewing [therefore] looks very like a serendipitous arena of conjunction between indigenous female interests and desires and missionary insistence on the virtue and necessity of ‘employment’ for punitively ‘idle’ hands. [1999: 120]

**What Tivaivai Meant to Cook Islands Women**

When I interviewed the late Dorice Reid, Te Tika Mata’iapo (head of the chiefly council on Rarotonga) in April 2001, she told me that for her grandmother and mother, “[t]o have a substantial home you had to have *tivaivai*, you had to have embroidered tablecloths or cushions... to have things embroidered was to have a substantial home”. This was part of the adage, “you are not a woman without *tivaivai*”. I asked her why women pursued *tivaivai* with such zeal, these laboured over quilts that are ostensibly bedspreads. She replied:

*Tivaivai* was doubly important because it went on the bed... and the bed of course was in the communal area. That communal area that was always so important... in those days, and maybe a little bit these days, there wasn’t much furniture in the house. Even the bed would be inside the lounge, and maybe with a settee of some nature, or chairs of some nature, but the bed was the piece of furniture in the house. There wasn’t anything else ...I mean, in the olden days there were no walls, you had one room where there were the beds and maybe somewhere to sit. If you were from a substantial home, you may even have had a single chair in the room, but
the bed was the focal point of the house. [Dorice Reid, personal interview, Rarotonga, May 2001, emphasis in original]

_Tivaivai_ made the bed beautiful. Some of the older Māmās I know both in the Cooks and in Auckland, spoke of how _tivaivai_ were about “luxury”, and that having _tivaivai_ on their beds made them feel like they lived in a luxurious home and that they were “wealthy”. In 1957, Beaglehole reported that in a typical Cook Islands house, “The bed is very often very elaborately dressed with fancy pillow cases, embroidered coverings, and padded quilts” (1957: 160). But there was no mention of the status of such quilts, or how women felt about their homes so arrayed. The focus on the decoration of the bed may well have been about the Christian sanitising/avoidance of the sexual connotations of the bed (cf. Eves 1996), but it was also about the display of spectacular industry as per the Protestant work ethic that was delivered with the Christian doctrines (cf. Weber 2009).

Like Māmā Dorice, the Te Tika Mata’iapo, Thomas too dwells upon the duality of _tivaivai_, he notes “The value of _tivaevae_ [sic], I suggest, inhered in their doubleness, they were things that mobilized certain precedents, on the one hand, but possessed novelty and distinctiveness on the other” (Thomas 2000: 209; cf. Baddeley 1978). Those precedents I argue had to do with how cloth operated in Cook Islands ways of doing things, the process of wrapping that women (for the most part) made them for, and was also a legacy of the importance of the role that cloth had performed. But the distinctiveness, I speculate, is about the particular display of industry that _tivaivai_ took to make. While _tapa_ and mats were very labour intensive to make as well, by using a cloth that was sanctioned by the missionaries, women’s industry coalesced with the Protestant work ethic that was being preached by the new religion (cf. Weber 2009). For commoner women to labour at sewing in such a way was laudable under the new regime (Eves 1996; Parker 1984), such sewing and the expert execution of it became a hallmark of esteem and eventually an axis of prestige and ultimately the materialisation of the new set of values that the Cook Islands

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46 In some parts of the outer islands in particular, an institution called the _tutaka_ is still enacted (Rongokea 2001: 13). A _tutaka_ is a form of health inspection that has come to include the inspection of the interior of the house – suitably arrayed with preferably new _tivaivai_, embroidered tablecloths, and pillowcases to display a woman’s industry. When I was on Ātiu in 1999, _tutaka_ were held every six months. A committee made up of the heads of the various island _Va’ine tini_, health officials, and other dignitaries went to all the houses on the island looking for tidiness and order. One of the Māmās told me that they were trying to get rid of water lying around to prevent mosquitoes breeding. _Tutaka_ were begun by Sir Tom Davis in 1946 when he was head of medical services in the Cook islands (Rongokea 2001: 13), and on the islands that still do _tutaka_, have become aligned with the twice yearly _Va’ine tini_ shows where women showcase their craft production from the previous six months. As Rongokea notes (2001: 13), “[o]n the outer islands... the _tutaka_ is still considered an occasion worth creative preparation.”
version of Christianity embraced. Cook Islanders’ values were changed, so what they valued, what came to constitute valuables in the new social milieu, changed as well. What passed for proper in the domestic realm, what became coveted by women, and the form of female competition that ensued in the wake of the introduction of tivaivai and the realm of sewing that this revealed was profound. But such changes were part of a whole changing social nexus. As Thomas notes, what tivaivai did for “domesticity” through the colonial period, was not merely of the order of just an expression of a new context, rather they were “technologies that created that context anew” (2000: 213). I argue that in a way, tivaivai are still doing this. The way conventions and values around how tivaivai are perceived and used are being elaborated in the New Zealand Cook Islands community in particular, are a response to the constraints and opportunities of the wider political economy that New Zealand Cook Islanders live in. But how tivaivai as material objects are viewed is important and has considerable bearing on how these can be recognised and therefore analysed.

3 OBJECTS, VALUE, AND HISTORY

Analytically, some things matter, and a great deal more than other things (Miller 1998). How history and processes of change are materialised is important, and how this has played out in readings of Cook Islands history and in the anthropology of objects, is the focus of this part of this chapter.

Appadurai to Turner

Appadurai’s (1986) notion of a “social life of things” held the promise of bringing together the politics of exchange with a focus on the objects of exchange themselves, seemingly animating objects back into the context of relationships with human actors. Appadurai (1986: 4) asserted that by following the paths through which objects are exchanged we open windows that offer “glimpses of the way in which desire and demand, reciprocal sacrifice and power interact to create economic value in specific social situations”. His notion of economic value was broadly construed as was his notion of what a commodity was, the latter being a state, a phase in the life of any object. He contended that even if the Western analytical approach to the nature of things derived no meaning apart from those with which human transactions, attributions, and motivations endow them, the anthropological problem remained that this formal truth did nothing to illuminate the objects themselves (1986: 5). Therefore, for objects of wealth (such as tivaivai) the nature of their meanings and by association the nature of the ceremonial
arenas that they circulate in, are inscribed in the forms of objects, their uses, and trajectories. Appadurai asserted that it follows that:

It is only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things. Thus, even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context. [1986: 5, emphasis in original]

Appadurai effectively embraced a kind of “methodological fetishism” (Eiss 2008: 88), but in the process, usefully did away with Gregory’s (1982) distinction between the gift and the commodity. Appadurai’s perspectives also facilitated the exploration of how capitalism and commodities can coalesce with other indigenous social forms of commoditisation (cf. Horan 1997) and elicited a whole raft of literature on materiality and the object that brought objects back into view, so to speak (cf. Strathern 1990). But there were problems with Appadurai. Comaroff and Comaroff (1990) mounted an early critique of Appadurai’s notions (see also Strathern 1992: 171-172 and Comaroff and Comaroff 1992). The Comaroffs’ stance was born out of their analysis of cattle amongst the Tswana of South Africa and the impact of colonisation and capitalism on the indigenous system. They countered that by:

[T]reating all goods as though they were like objects in Maussian gift exchange, Appadurai neglects the mechanism through which, in a single movement, (surplus) value is generated, appropriated, and naturalised; through which, by means of some objects, particular forms of consciousness and inequality are shaped and reproduced. Goods may indeed come to signify “regimes of value” as he says (1986: 4). But both cattle and money are particular sorts of goods, with a peculiar aptitude for abstracting and congealing wealth, for making and breaking meaningful associations, and for permitting some human beings to live off the backs of others. And all this without disclosing quite how or why any of these things should, or do, happen. [Comaroff and Comaroff 1990:211, emphasis in original]

Cattle and money were particular, special objects that effectively manifested intrinsic parameters of value for the Tswana (Comaroff and Comaroff 1990: 195). Cattle were “prime media for the creation and representation of value in a material economy of persons and a social economy of things” (Comaroff and Comaroff 1990: 195). Cattle then had a particular historical salience, the corollary being “that the transformation in any society should be revealed by the changing relations of persons to [specific] objects within
The notion of history in Appadurai’s formulations was very prescribed and curtailing. Here, history became “the sum total of the acts of exchange through which objects are valued, across different ‘regimes of value’ in the course of their ‘lives’” (Eiss 2008: 88; cf. Graeber 2001: 33). Appadurai’s (1986) perspective and the focus on objects and exchange is important, but it effectively “excludes from view the way in which those objects come into being, as well as the wider social context with in which they are subjected to valorization” (Eiss 2008: 89), including wider global processes. Likewise, the history of colonisation, Christianity, and tivaivai for Cook Islanders have specific histories that are as much about changes in the structural parameters of value as they are about missionary agendas and global processes. What the differences between Appadurai and the Comaroffs’ perspectives highlight is that a focus on the object is important, but the type of focus is even more so, it needs to be “supra-individual” (Morphy 2009: 20). What the material object is a manifestation of and how this came about in terms of value, values and valuables is significant and implies a particular mechanism of analysis.

The agency of objects in Cook Islands history

The adoption of tivaivai was part of a process of “re-domestication” (Sissons 2006) that ensued as Christianity was rolled out. That process was quite specific and all encompassing in the Cook Islands, and there were clear material – literally and figuratively - manifestations of the massive re-ordering of the way politics and power interfaced with religiosity, and also the way the domestic sphere operated. Sissons’ materially focused rendering and analysis of the conversion process in Rarotonga and the rest of eastern Polynesia (2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, n.d.) gives a more contextualised sense of the mode of the multifaceted conversion process and the dialectic between objects and people. Sissons’ analysis is useful; firstly, because it deals with the “technologies that created that context anew” (Thomas 2000: 213) and infers a particular analytical focus on objects and materiality; and secondly, because it looks at the nature of the change that the uptake of tivaivai was part of. But that Sissons does not quite go far enough, I will elaborate on at the end of this section.

47The Comaroffs noted that the focus of their paper was not just about the commodity as a historical construct, they were also interested in taking “Marx’s account as a general model for analyzing relations among people and goods; as the basis, that is for, exploring the production and representation of value in all societies (Turner n.d.)” (1990: 192) The Turner article cited was Marx’s Concepts of Structure and the Structure of Marx’s Model of Capital Production: An Anthropological Re-reading of Capital, and was noted in the article reference list as being an unpublished manuscript in the authors’ file.
Sissons contends that the beginning of Christianity in the Cook Islands heralded by the iconoclastic events that I referenced earlier, was part of a process of “re-domestication” that issued in a “new visions of humanity” (2006: 143). He argues that this re-domestication brought about a re-materialising process which was as broad as it was dramatic, and effectively “materialized a radically transformed social field” (Sissons 2007: 49). Hence, the Christianising process in Rarotonga of which tivaivai was part of, “was as much a material process of indigenization as it was a local appropriation of foreign ideas” (Sissons 2007: 47). By the time Papeiha, a London Missionary Society evangelist from Ra’iatea in the Society Islands had arrived in Aitutaki in 1821 to spend 22 months attempting to convert the islanders, dramatic events had transpired on Tahiti and Hawai’i48 which Sissons argues influenced subsequent events in both Aitutaki and Rarotonga.

_Marae_ were destroyed on Aitutaki in the wake of conversion, a similar process transpired in one of the districts of Rarotonga after Papeiha arrived in 1824, which lead to internal political fractioning on Rarotonga. Prior to Papeiha’s arrival, the three districts had been at war (Sissons 2007: 51) for the previous seven years, and while Takitumu had emerged the winner, internal power jostling within the districts were suppressed. Sissons notes that it was the two defeated districts (vaka), Te Au-o-Tonga along with Puaikura who first torched their _marae_ and disposed of the previously sacred staff gods. And while Takitumu eventually incinerated their sacred pagan edifices and idols, many of the _mata’iapo_49 (chiefs) of the various districts did not concur with the actions of the _ariki_.

48 In Tahiti in 1816, all the _marae_ (ritual enclosures where offerings were made to ancestral deities) on the island were destroyed, torched to oblivion to make way for the new churches. By the following year, some 70 new Christian churches had been erected to replace the _marae_ (Sissons 2008a: 321). The link between ritual and religious control, secular power, and land was well established in Tahiti prior to the arrival of the missionaries. In the years leading up to the iconoclasm of the _marae_ structures in 1816, Pomare and his allies had been attempting to consolidate power via the manipulation of the residence of deity poles in various _marae_. In 1812, he publicly abandoned the previous focus of local religious attention, the god ‘Oro, and converted to Christianity. Effectively, ‘Oro and his _marae_ were replaced by the Christian God and an enormous church (Sissons 2008a: 325). Sissons argues that Pomare manipulated the power structure by destroying the old architecture associated with the previous religious order and replaced it with another, namely churches, which effectively “materialised a transformed political field, more integrated than it had been previously” (Sissons 2008a: 321). And the scale of his re-materialising was extreme: On Tuesday, the 11th of May 1819, some 5000-6000 newly converted Christians assembled in their best (European) clothes in the huge newly constructed chapel built under the direction of the high chief Pomare. According to missionary accounts, this church was 712 feet long and 54 feet wide, bigger by some 200 feet than the largest church in England at the time, Winchester Cathedral. It was the largest building in Oceania and one of the biggest churches in the world (Sissons 2008a: 320). An analogous process happened in Hawai’i (Sissons n.d.).

49 The late Dorice Reid, Te Tika Mata’iapo described the relationship between _ariki_ and _mata’iapo_ in this way to me: she said that the _Ariki_ are the paramount chiefs of the _vaka_, the _mata’iapo_ are the chiefs of villages within the districts, and _rangitira_ in turn answer to the _mata’iapo_ (cf. Sissons 2007).
The inland marae of the Takitumu district became a stronghold for the resistance movement against the intrusion of Christianity and in effect the power of the ariki. The titles and their powerbases had traditionally been associated with the marae, but with the arrival of the missionary Papeiha, marae were destroyed, god-houses which held the old idols were burnt, and the building of churches begun - thereby strengthening the power of the ariki and undermining that of the mata’iapo and their rangitira.

Missionaries had recorded that the setting fire to, and destruction of one's enemy's marae and god-houses, was a common act of warfare because such obliteration destroyed the source of the enemy's mana. But this would-be self imposed destruction was a calculated and politically motivated act. Sissons argues that the Rarotongan leaders had learnt of the events that had taken place in Tahiti including Pomare's edifice building, and sought to emulate his construction and his assumption of power. Some 3000 of the estimated 6000-7000 population of Rarotonga at the time had moved to Avarua to construct a new settlement and large church, other districts began similar building projects. Sissons contends that the construction of these churches and the large settlement "materialized a new social order centred on the three district chiefs and their privileged relationship to the Christian God" (2006: 143). Where before, the relationship of the ariki to the mata’iapo and their subordinates, the rangitira, was seen as one of "first among equals", by aligning themselves with the new social order, ariki became central to the ritual and political structure that effectively excluded the mata’iapo. Out and out war ensued between the ariki and a group of mata’iapo, which “amounted to a mass re-domestication, a conflict between two visions of Rarotongan society, one utopian the other conservative, [which] was given dramatic spatial and architectural form” (Sissons 2006: 143). Sissons’ account of this history shows how important the dialectic among people, objects, and power was. It also reveals that what happened in Rarotonga was far from a process of merely colonial intrusion or usurpation. The manoeuvring that was subsequently enacted by the different factions was intense, highly political, and effectively harnessed the colonial appearance and I would argue appearances (as in how peoples’ houses looked and what they decorated them with), for local political interests.

However, by 1833, there were only 88 baptised adults on the island and by 1843, this number had only grown to 722 (2007: 59). As Sissons notes, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that “the social field of the church became more dominant in Rarotonga” (2007: 59), ariki power was consolidated vis-à-vis the mata’iapo which
culminated with the establishment of the ariki-led government in 1891. It is likely that tivaivai came to the fore during this latter half of the 19th century as well. With the arrival of Christianity, and the social and political machinations that accompanied it, Sissons process of “re-domestication”50 essentially involved a process of re-valuing of power structures, of temporal and spatial locations, of deities and allegiances, and I argue that it also involved a re-valuing of material wealth. Sissons notes that “Sahlins is right to insist that Polynesian histories – or any other histories, for that matter – are culturally organised. Only, we need to add that this culture is also material” (2008a: 330), sometimes literally material; Sissons’ focus is the architectural landscape, mine is cloth, but they both changed within the same socio-cultural nexus.

The adoption of quilting and the formation of tivaivai as an important domestic pursuit is what went on within and around the new structures, the domestic bit of the domestication process if you will. And because there was a change in values, there was a change in what was valued, marae gave way to churches, staff gods to the Christian God, a first among equals power structure gave way to a more linear structure that devolved more power to the ariki, and eventually, tapa cloth especially gave way to tivaivai. Sissons is intent on showing that the dramatic new architecture erected in Rarotonga as part of the power machinations "assumed significance in terms of a wider process of re-domestication that Wilson left unexamined" (Sissons 2006: 144). Such a process of domestication entailed amongst other things, a re-ordering of the social structures as they were manifested, this also involved a “transformation of this social visibility as new social structures are objectified and externalised” (2006: 144). He contends that as Rarotongans, dressed in their new clothes, assembled in their newly built church “a different society was enacted in the presence of the ariki”. I would go further and add that along with the new clothes, new churches, new ministers, and new power structures, what was created through that re-

50 Sissons’ notion of domestication is derived from the work of Peter Wilson (1988). Wilson’s main thesis was basically a cultural evolutionary one, whereby ‘development’ was brought about through domestication as the social and cultural consequences of permanent settlement. Sissons picked up on the material aspects of Wilson’s argument, and contended that domestication was about the construction of the built environment, and the house in particular (Sissons 2006: 139), and he argues, using Rarotonga as a case in point, that domestication creates the basis of the emergence of power structures (Sissons 2006: 144). Sissons extends this notion by looking at the extra-ordinary church building that occurred in Rarotonga in the 1820s, after the swift and dramatic destruction of marae. Sisson’s elaboration of Wilson’s contentions are based on the notion that after the initial process of domestication which Wilson was concerned with, subsequent radical social transformations and change would in turn entail “forms of re-domestication impelled by visions of a new social order” (Sissons 2006: 142). He notes, “[t]hese re-domestications were motivated by visions of radically new social relations between leaders and people and between people themselves. These also involved new understandings of human nature. The realisation of these visions and understandings required new architectural forms and new patterns of settlement.” (Sissons 2006: 144).
domestication process was a new set of values, which manifested (and materialised – literally) a new set of valuables (cf. Turner 2006b, 2008 and Graeber 2001).

Following Gell’s notion of objects and agency (1998), Sissons couches his analysis of the fall of marae and the rise of churches on Rarotonga in terms of structures mediating social relationships (Sissons 2007: 48). Sissons critiques Gell’s notion of the agency of objects (1998), whereby the dynamic is effectively confined between the object and the observer, instead Sissons sees churches and marae as complex “art objects” that operate as “materializations of competing social fields” (Sissons 2007: 48). Essentially, Sissons does not think Gell went far enough, that he identified only a part of what particular objects like marae and churches in the Rarotongan context constituted. Sissons argues that the Rarotongan churches were more than just indexes of agency, they were instead “materializations of social fields that were animated – reproduced and transformed – by complex and sometimes contradictory forms of agency” (Sissons 2007: 48).

Sissons moved beyond Gell’s (1998) notion of merely indexes of agency by widening his focus to a more encompassing idea of objects being materializations of social relations.51 Sissons (2007: 61-62) notes:

Building a comparative analysis, as Gell proposed, on notions of shared forms of consciousness or power, mistakenly assumes material culture to be merely an expression of human subjectivity – an expression of a subjective essence that precedes material forms. Instead, we need to recognise that subjectivity and objectivity are dialectically related; subjects who construct objects, whether these are large churches, marae or meeting houses [or tivaivai] are also constructed by them. More than this, in constructing their objects, subjects are also building relationships with each other, materializing social fields within which their subjectivity and intentionality is formed.

In his critique of Gell (1998), Morphy makes a similar point, he notes that “People act in relation to objects as a part of a history of relating to objects, a history that is supra-individual yet reproduced through individual action” (2009: 20). Gell’s “agency” is a two-dimensional scheme compared to a social field that is amplified in complexity into something more dimensioned. But ‘something’ is the operative word, because what constitutes Sisson’s formulation of a social field is problematic too. His concept of a “social

51 Others go too far the other way affording too much agency to the object alone (Henare et al. 2007 are a case in point).
field” is one derived in part from the Bourdieurian notion of the importance of material structures and constructions in consciousness (and un-consciousness), he notes:

Bourdieu suggested that when accounting for the endurance of social relations we need to consider the unconscious embodiment of conceptual and practical structures in relation to the agency of material forms. Material forms are both objectifications of conceptual and practical schemes and ‘structuring structures’ that actively contribute to the endurance and transformation of these schemes. [Sissons 2007: 49]

And as Bourdieu notes, “Through the intermediary of the divisions and hierarchies it sets up between things, persons and practices, this tangible classifying system continuously inculcates and reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying arbitrary provisions of this culture” (Bourdieu 1977: 89). But there is a sense that this classifying system, is somehow floating in space, disconnected from how things are operating.

So much rests on what a social field is. My criticism of Sissons is this; he too did not quite go far enough. His re-working of Wilson’s (1988) notion of domestication as re-domestication in times of major change (Sissons 2006) is productive, and his focus on the rematerializing process therein as what is entailed is even provocative, but his notion of social fields as opposed to mere agency, while analytically useful, glosses over the more fundamental realm of values and value. The historical machinations that took place in Rarotonga were, I contend, a process of the changing of values, and the framing of Sissons’ social field formation in this way is perhaps the missing piece in the puzzle. So the historical processes that occurred when Christianity moved in and brought about particular material transformations, marae to churches and tapa and mats to tivaivai, were not just about the agency of art objects (Gell 1998), the formation of social fields and the rematerializing inherent therein (Sissons 2006, 2007, 2008b), but is also about the reframing and reconstituting of what is valued and how values are shaped and expressed (Graeber 2001; Turner 2008). Sissons is right when he says that “Whether buildings and fences are made of wood, stone or concrete.... becomes a matter of considerable historical importance” (Sissons 2006: 145). But I argue that this is so because they are a materialisation of values and value, and the material qualities of the specific objects of history help to define that history (Comaroff and Comaroff 1990; Eiss 2008). Such a process of analysis contends with what Morphy (2009: 22) calls “abstract structures”, he notes:
The problem of trying to avoid the inevitability of the supra-individual is that theorists substitute for it agency in material culture objects, affordances to the environment or embodiment in humans, or invent processes like ‘structuration’ and ‘habitus’ and hope that no one notices that the abstract structures and albeit ‘fuzzy’ boundaries that they imply remain largely unexamined.

Gell’s “agency” (1998), and what Sisson’s (2007) is edging towards in his analysis of material manifestations and history, are about the relationship between valuables, as materialisations of values and the broader structural parameters of value.

4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has detailed pieces of histories; histories that intertwine and have to do with tivaivai, colonialism, value, and the anthropology of objects. The history of how tivaivai came to be semiotic media of value for Cook Islanders has to do with their materiality. With the arrival of the missionaries to the islands in 1821, conversion for women included the focus on the production of sewn items as the means to being a good Christian woman, being appropriate, and as a mode of paying homage to God. As Cook Islanders converted to Christianity in line with the missionaries’ agendas as well as for their own reasons, and in the midst of other major socio-political changes, indigenous textiles previously used for ritual and honouring began to be supplanted by tivaivai in the 1890s and early 1900s. What persisted was the importance of the production of textiles by women, and the capacity of textiles to wrap in ritual ceremony – literally and figuratively.

That value is inherently temporal, and tivaivai clearly a legacy of the colonial history of the Pacific generally and the Cook Islands in particular, makes the analysis of history important, but what is equally defining is the way those histories are configured and understood from an analytical point of view. Historically, notions like hybridity and the mere agency of objects elide complexities, and subaltern strategies to manage, survive, and negotiate with, can be overlooked. As Miller (2005: 38) notes, anthropological analysis is the most efficacious when the emphasis has been on “what makes people rather than on what people make: on the frame rather than what’s inside them.” He says that:

It is not just that objects can be agents; it is that practices and their relationships create the appearance of both subjects and objects through the dialectics of objectification, and we need to be able to document how people internalize and then externalize the normative. In short, we need to show how the things that people make, make people. [Miller 2005: 38]
When Cook Islands women began to make tivaivai and elevated the textiles to the paramount form of wealth and the material means of conjoinment and connection that expressed fundamental kinship links and who they were as women, they were not being less Pacific or more European, they were assuming a Cook Islands version of modernity that remained familiar to Cook Islanders, and any familiarity that outsiders recognised was more coincidence and veneer than about missionary conquest. But that the agency of tivaivai is more about the relationship among value, values, and valuables for Cook Islanders, than it is about the object itself, is a historical construct.

Just as the adoption of tivaivai was not merely a process of imposition, although there were elements of this, how tivaivai operates in the diaspora now is more complex and strategies to do with tivaivai; how it is used, how it dignifies the gifting of cash money, and how cultural processes have diverged and accommodated practical contingencies in the migrant context has the hint of the aforementioned subaltern strategy. In this thesis I argue that tivaivai are still technologies that are creating the context anew (cf. Thomas 2000: 213), and as Cook Islanders are melding and responding to contingencies and opportunities, imposed or offered by their lives in New Zealand, tivaivai are creating this context anew. This is what the next chapters are about.
CHAPTER THREE

TIVAIVAI AS THE GIFT IN THE WEDDING ‘O’ORA

1 INTRODUCTION

The first time I saw an ‘o’ora (gifting ceremony) was at the large wedding reception of the son of Māmā Kura, a woman from one of the Va’ine tini I had become a member of in Auckland. The wedding was in April 2000, just weeks after I had joined the group and was the first big Cook Islands event I had been to. The ‘o’ora consisted of the heaping and wrapping of large quantities of lesser textiles and then tivaivai on the seated newlyweds by wave after wave of Māmā Kura’s kin. The couple appeared wrapped and encased in textiles as materialised aro’a. As I watched that first ‘o’ora, I got a sense of the cogent and potent transformative power of tivaivai, and the value and values they materialise as the textiles were gifted with charged ceremony and high performance to the son and new (Samoan) daughter-in-law, while Māmā Kura stood to one side, but remained visible to the audience. The salience that the array of worked upon fabric manifested, as tivaivai reigned supreme over a hierarchy of textiles was profound, and the role that textiles played per se was literally unfolded in front of me. It seemed to me that the presentation process of the ‘o’ora was an explicit definitive form of statement about the relationship between Māmā Kura and her son, as well as her new daughter-in-law. That her only child was being publically cherished and honoured was clear, and that he was made fully adult in the wake of the ostentatious and very public gifting of the textiles, and his choice of bride sanctioned, were powerfully conveyed via the public display of ‘mothering’.

Māmā Kura’s ability to mother and the quality and quantity of her love for her son was encapsulated by the sheer abundance of textiles. But what was also being trumpeted was who she was as a mother and as a Cook Islands woman, as these identities and the values inherent in these, were literally materialised in front of a crowd of some 600 guests, especially by the presentation of tivaivai. This conferred a significant amount of prestige for Māmā Kura. That pile of textiles was also about Māmā Kura’s network of relationships, as demonstrated by the tivaivai that the women from the Va’ine tini gave to Māmā Kura and the ‘o’ora, and the myriad other textile gifts given to Māmā Kura for the ‘o’ora. I watched Māmā Kura as the ‘o’ora unfurled, and as the crowd cheered and the Cook Islands

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52 This name is a pseudonym.
drumming music reached a crescendo, she seemed to stand taller and taller as the ‘o’ora culminated. I had the sense that this was an important event for her son, but one of the most defining moments in Māmā Kura’s life.

Whilst tivaivai can be gifted privately, or more discretely, for the most part they are presented in the most ostentatious and overt way as a very public gift in a presentation process called the ‘o’ora. In other words, tivaivai do the most work when they are presented publically (cf. Mauss 1990 [1925]). According to the dictionary, the verb form of the word ‘o’ora, means to “spread out, unfold, unfurl” and as a noun, denotes the clear association that ‘o’ora have had with weddings, being defined as “Dowry, mats, tapa, etc. displayed and presented after a wedding ceremony” (Buse and Taringa 1995: 286).

However, not only has the context that ‘o’ora appear in expanded (see Chapter Four), what has also changed is the way the wedding ‘o’ora is configured: to whom a wedding ‘o’ora is done, and how, and most especially why, have all changed. I argue that this is a consequence of the way the New Zealand Cook Islands population in particular manages the Cook Islands version of the dialectical tension between the realms of mutuality and market (Gudeman 2008). That tension has brought about changes in the way values are manifested, and therefore in what is considered valuables, especially for the now several generations of New Zealand born Cook Islanders.

The fact that Māmā Kura was performing an ‘o’ora for her son was indicative of this. While women have been giving their sons tivaivai at their weddings possibly since tivaivai were first coveted, even doing ‘o’ora for them, previously it was generally considered that a woman and her daughter would perform an ‘o’ora at the daughter’s wedding on the new son-in-law/husband. This was a way to gift the appropriate interior adornments for the inside of the new marital home, and to demonstrate the new wife’s capacity to fulfil her new role. Many of the older women I talked to in the various Va’ine tini in Auckland told me how when they were married in the 1950s, 1960s and the 1970s and for some, the 1980s, either in the islands, or in New Zealand, they had a pile of tivaivai they themselves had sewn which they gave to their new husband and to their new household at their wedding ‘o’ora. The older women in the Va’ine tini talked at length about how when they were young women and being taught to sew, the emphasis was on having a store of tivaivai themselves when they married and to have as a married woman. Such a store of tivaivai was demonstrative of a woman’s industry and skill, and her essential value as a woman and potential wife. One woman who I met on Rarotonga, but who lived in South Auckland,
told me she had schooled her sons in the wisdom of choosing a wife who could “hold a needle and wash your underpants”, meaning make *tivaivai* and keep a good home. But the daughters of this same woman did not have time to make *tivaivai* because of their busy New Zealand based lives, nor were they that interested. That difference between rhetoric and reality is revealing.

In New Zealand, Australia, and the Cook Islands, fewer younger women actually make *tivaivai* now, let alone have them to give to their prospective husbands on their wedding day. For newly married couples, both the new spouses work to acquire a home or maintain rental accommodation, but many end up living with parents or extended family because it costs too much to live separately. The more prosaic function of the ‘*o’ora* to provide for the interior of the house, as well as the means to show muliebrity, is part of a version of domesticity that does not have much resonance in the current era for younger women at least. The wedding ‘*o’ora* is now more often about the allotment from the base (Gudeman 2001: 18) of *tivaivai* as heirlooms. For this reason mothers now ‘*o’ora* both their sons and daughters, to pass on *tivaivai* to keep them within their families. My sense is that an ‘*o’ora* is now performed for a child, rather than on a new son-in-law/husband, which is indicative of the changes in the function of the ‘*o’ora*.

This chapter is about the implications of these changes in the way the wedding ‘*o’ora* is done. I describe a particular wedding ‘*o’ora* performed by Māmā Tirata Bailey for her daughter Marie at her wedding in Sydney in 2001, the preparations for which I had watched Māmā Tirata’s assiduously attend to over an almost two year period. With reference to this and other wedding ‘*o’ora* as well, I look at what *tivaivai* are to women as

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53 I heard about wedding ‘*o’ora* where both mothers did ‘*o’ora* for their children and the new spouse.
daughters and mothers/grandmothers/aunties\textsuperscript{54} via the display of domestic \textit{aro’a} as \textit{tivaivai} are effectively allocated from the base within a family as a community (Gudeman 2001) during an ‘\textit{o’ora}. But the mother performing an ‘\textit{o’ora} has the opportunity to be a proper Cook Islander woman as well. The display of public \textit{aro’a} that occurs via the reciprocity and exchange that is enacted in various ways between communities (Gudeman 2001) in the ‘\textit{o’ora} has the potential to accrue the mother prestige.

2 \textbf{THE ‘O’ORA AT MĀMĀ TIRATA’S DAUGHTER’S WEDDING IN SYDNEY}

Māmā Tirata did an ‘\textit{o’ora} for her youngest daughter Marie, and new son-in-law, Sam, at their wedding in Sydney on the 26\textsuperscript{th} of August 2001.\textsuperscript{55} The ‘\textit{o’ora} was a spectacular, joyous, and very public performance, which culminated in the presentation and wrapping of seven \textit{tivaivai} over the married couple. Five of these \textit{tivaivai} Māmā Tirata had made herself, the other two were ones she had been given. Referencing the way it was for her as a young woman getting married in the 1950s, Māmā Tirata said that “daughters and their mothers are meant to ‘\textit{o’ora} the new husband [and son-in-law]... the husband provides the house and the wife the things to put in it” (cf. Anson Grieve Productions 1996). But this is not how it was at her own daughter’s ‘\textit{o’ora}. Marie had not made any \textit{tivaivai}; this ‘\textit{o’ora} had a different set of value parameters that reflected contemporary Australian and New Zealand Cook Islanders’ lives.

\textsuperscript{54} The ‘mother’ relationship encompasses that which exists between a mother and her biological child, but in the Cook Islands context it equally applies to a woman and her ‘feeding child’ (\textit{tamariki ʾāngai}), which is an adopted child (Baddeley 1982); a grandmother and her grandchildren; or a woman who is of the parent or grandparent generation who is linked to the child either genealogically (as an aunt) and/or through naming (Crocombe and Rere 1959). My point is that the process of being a mother includes the use (and maybe production) of \textit{tivaivai} in gifting to the range of one’s ‘children’. One of the sons of a woman I knew in a \textit{Va’ine tini} in Auckland lived as an \textit{akava’ine} (literally “behave like a woman” (Buse and Taringa 1995: 51)) or \textit{lælæ} (cf. Alexeyeff 2009: 111), terms used to refer to men who choose to live as a woman, and are analogous to the Samoan \textit{fa’aafafine}. This particular man, who lived in the islands, had adopted a boy at birth as his feeding child and had raised him as his son. He operated as his son’s mother in the sense that he made and presented \textit{tivaivai} to him at his haircutting in Auckland in July 2001. The haircutting was organised by the man, his mother and a number of his aunties who were all members of the \textit{Va’ine tini}. As an ‘\textit{akava’ine} this man belonged to and helped run the \textit{Va’ine tini} in his village in the islands. He sewed the designated programme each year so he not only operated as a ‘mother’, but also as a ‘woman’. When and if his son ever married, he intended to ‘\textit{o’ora} him too. I also met a Cook Islands Roman Catholic nun at one of \textit{Va’ine tini}. She was retired and regularly came to the group, I asked her why she was making \textit{tivaivai}; her reply helped me understand the aunty role more, she said, “I need to give \textit{tivaivai} too!”

\textsuperscript{55} I first heard about this wedding and the ‘\textit{o’ora} that Māmā Tirata was planning almost two years before when I first went to see her in Titikaveka on Rarotonga in November 1999. As she sat tacking the yellow on turquoise \textit{tivaivai} manu, Māmā Tirata described another \textit{manu} that she was making for Marie’s ‘\textit{o’ora}, a maroon on black coco pod pattern using satin fabric which she was making by machine, which she told me was an innovation.
The wedding and ‘ō’ora

The wedding was to take place in Sydney because the couple lived there with their two small children, a son aged five and a daughter aged three. Marie had been born in Sydney and had grown up there and in Auckland and had spent time in Aitutaki, and Sam, while Cook Islands born, had settled in Sydney and met Marie there. I too was invited to the wedding along with around 150 friends and family from Australia, New Zealand and the Cooks, but as I came to realise, I was more Māmā Tirata’s guest rather than Marie and Sam’s, the implications of which became clearer as I came to understand what was going on in the ‘ō’ora.

The wedding itself took place at the Nurrogingige Reserve, a large flora and fauna sanctuary some 50 km out of Sydney. The couple had chosen to stage the ceremony in the Bungurrabee Pavilion which was in the New Zealand and Pacific part of the reserve as per their origins. The bride was suitably late and arrived looking luminous and radiant in a flowing white dress with a tiara and a veil spilling out the back. The groom looked nervous and handsome in his smart black suit; the two bridesmaids were lovely if a little cold, in pink sleeveless dresses, and the groomsmen youthfully awkward in their formal attire. A veritable drought-ending thunder storm erupted as the guests arrived and the ceremony got underway, but the audience sheltered under the pavilion, as the short but lovely ceremony was concluded.

After the formal photographs, the guests reconvened some hours later for the reception which was held in the early evening in a draughty church-like building in the grounds of the hospital in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta where Marie worked as an administration assistant. It was meant to be the end of winter but it was bitterly cold, and as the rain continued to pelt down outside, family and friends gathered to celebrate the wedding with the couple. Eventually, the plates were cleared away from the meagre meal of lacklustre food: the wedding up to that point had been a lovely but unremarkable papa’ā type affair. But I sensed a perceivable change in the atmosphere as the largely Cook Islander crowd of guests anticipated the ‘ō’ora that was about to begin as the sedate papa’ā styled wedding rapidly became a full blown Cook Islands affair.
Māmā Vaerua and Māmā Tangi who had both come from Auckland for the wedding, were organising the actual sequence and execution of the ‘o’ora for Māmā Tirata. Having assembled all the textiles prior to the event, it seemed to me that Māmā Tirata saw her job that early evening as basking in the display of her own wealth - from the array of textiles to the gathering of her extended family. At the designated time, Māmā Tangi along with Māmā Vaerua organised the placing of two chairs on mats at the front of the hall between the head table and the crowd for the bride and groom to sit on. As instructed by Māmā Tirata, they had the chairs draped with a maroon pepe (butterfly) tivaivai manu in the veru style made by Māmā Tirata. Unlike other weddings and events I attended, Māmā Tirata had chosen to keep the decoration of the venue to a minimum. Behind the head table, framing many of the subsequent photographs that now exist to memorialise the event, were just two tivaivai. Both these were designed, cut, and made by Māmā Tirata, one was a white-on-blue tiare Māori tivaivai manu and the other, a veru styled white-on-green mātirīta (chrysanthemum) tivaivai manu with various coloured inserts. The judicious inclusion of the two veru style tivaivai manu in particular on the chair and behind the head table, was not by coincidence, they were special innovative tivaivai that signified Māmā Tirata’s status as a ta’unga of renown.

Once the chairs were set up, I went with Māmā Vaerua and Māmā Tangi to the back of the hall where all the ‘o’ora textiles had been delivered prior to the start of the reception. Māmā Tirata came to check on things; to make sure that all the textiles were assembled over the stage steps and the trestle tables in the order she wanted them presented in, and she instructed Māmā Vaerua and Māmā Tangi as to which items were to go last in particular. Then she went and sat up the front of the hall, several meters to one side of the hall where all the ‘o’ora textiles had been delivered prior to the start of the reception. Māmā Tirata came to check on things; to make sure that all the textiles were assembled over the stage steps and the trestle tables in the order she wanted them presented in, and she instructed Māmā Vaerua and Māmā Tangi as to which items were to go last in particular. Then she went and sat up the front of the hall, several meters to one side of the

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56 Māmā Tangi came with her husband and there were at least eight other people that I knew of who had come from New Zealand for the wedding.

57 I saw three wedding ‘o’ora and heard about many others in the course of my fieldwork. None of the mothers of the children who were the focus of the ‘o’ora took part in the actual presentation process.

58 This tivaivai and the chrysanthemum one hanging behind the bridal table were only the second and third types of this style of tivaivai that I had seen. Māmā Tirata had shown me these tivaivai before the wedding and she called the technique veru, which she translated as “shattered”. The tivaivai were essentially tivaivai manu but the pattern creation was the reverse of the normal manu; with this tivaivai the pattem is actually cut out and different coloured fabrics were placed behind the cut outs to bring them into relief and create the contrast. The first tivaivai I had seen done in this style was another cut by Māmā Tirata and owned and sewn by Māmā Vaerua in Auckland at the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini presentation of the police logo tivaivai to Officer Tua at the beginning of August 2001 (see Chapter Four). I have not seen any other tivaivai like these since. These tivaivai were an innovation and marked Māmā Tirata as a creative ta’unga.
couple in what was a highly visible position. She did not sit with her husband Bill - she sat on her own for all to see.

Figure 3: The chairs for the ‘o’ora being wrapped in a veru style tivaivai manu.

The music began. Loud and pounding rhythmic Cook Islands drumming filled the hall with ‘Cook Islandness’ that heralded the particular display of value, values, and valuables that was about to unfold – literally. Marie’s six siblings and all but one of their partners, the 15 grandchildren, as well as other kin and friends of the Bailey family, including me, assembled at the back of the hall. As the drumming intensified, wave after wave of family and friends were sent down the hall to the seated couple by Māmā Vaerua and Māmā Tangi. The Bailey brothers and sisters and their children took up Māmā Tirata’s contributions as the ‘o’ora procession unfolded. A proportion of the textiles had been given by others to Māmā Tirata for the ‘o’ora, and while there was general mayhem as waves of people proceeded up the hall with textiles, women kin in particular made sure they were part of the presenting party for their particular gift. Each group paraded through the cheering crowd holding aloft and displaying for all to see the array of textiles that Māmā Tirata had amassed through her own hard work, her own and Bill’s financial resources, and through gifts from others. Many of the adults and the children taking the textiles up to the couple were dancing as they moved from the back of the hall to the front, and when the older Māmās began dancing like young girls, seductively gyrating their hips in time to the drumming, there was a great response from the crowd. People laughed and clapped and
cheered. The incongruous mix of older women and the nubility implied by holding the tivaivai aloft and dancing with the best man in particular, referencing the marriage bed, never failed to send people into paroxysms of laughter.\footnote{Such antics outside of the ritual would be frowned upon and considered inappropriate, but within the context of the ‘o’ora they were considered very funny (cf. V. Turner 1969, 1974).}

![Figure 4: The married couple and their daughter at the end of the ‘o’ora with textiles piled on top of them. Note Māmā Tirata’s position in the foreground.](image)

The hierarchy of textiles prevailed in the order of gifting. Lesser textiles came first: tea towels and towels were presented in the first wave of gifting. These were held aloft by the smaller children, carried the length of the hall, and draped over the couple. Bath towels were presented in the same way. Then came blankets, beginning with a series of large mink blankets.\footnote{Mink blankets are made from a thick plush velvet-like 100\% polyester material. They come in varying sizes and are warm, they are cheaper to buy than woollen blankets, but cost up to about $NZ200 for the largest size.} Fifteen or so blowsheets were presented, then some pāreu and commercially made bedspreads were taken up, including a pink synthetic satin made-in-China one, another cream one like it, as well as several ‘au’iri pāreu bedspreads (machine made bedspreads made with island-style fabric) with matching pillowcases that Māmā Tirata had made. Finally, the most elite textiles, the tivaivai were gifted. Seven were presented in all, along with a pink cotton crocheted bedspread made by Māmā Tirata’s mother. The last tivaivai was a rose tivaivai taorei designed and made by Māmā Tirata. Marie, Sam and their daughter, who insisted on sitting on her father’s knee because she was a little
overwhelmed by all the noise, were rapidly engulfed and wrapped in a mountain of textiles.

**Concrete media of circulation and the order of the textiles in the ‘o’ora**

The mounding of the textiles was very important because it demonstrated the *aro’a* that Māmā Tirata had for her daughter and new son-in-law. The order of the textiles was salient and the volume important. The specific *tivaivai* in particular that Māmā Tirata chose to give to Marie were critical, because they were an explicit statement about the relationship between her and her daughter, their wider kin network, and they were also a statement about herself to the attending audience. They were a pronouncement of value as expressed in the circulation of value and values by the gifting of valuables. Māmā Tirata deliberated long and hard over what to give during the ‘o’ora. She had been thinking about it for months before the event, and she told me that the night she arrived in Sydney, “I went to bed really late and I got up really early because I was thinking about the ‘o’ora too much”. When I arrived in Sydney a couple of days later, I was able to watch the rest of the selection process.

I stayed with Māmā Tirata, her husband Bill, and their daughter Cinata and her family in their house in the Sydney suburb of Merrylands for three days before the wedding. Not long after I arrived, Māmā Tirata decided to unpack the contents of the three glory boxes she had in the house for a second time. The boxes were large prominent pieces of furniture in the house and contained textiles she had made and collected over the years she had lived or been in Sydney (she had other glory boxes in Auckland for the same purpose). Two flanked either side of the doorway in the living room, and the other resided in her grandsons’ bedroom. Māmā Tirata unpacked the living room boxes purposefully. She still had not settled on the complete array of textiles she was going to include in the ‘o’ora at the wedding on Sunday and she wanted to show me certain textiles. As she unpacked, she put aside certain articles that she had made or bought previously. These she had me place in the portable cot of her 10-month old granddaughter, which she had

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61 The house in Merrylands was owned by Māmā Tirata and her husband Bill. Their nine children were born there, one had died at nine months, but the others were reared there, and for periods in Auckland and Aitutaki. At the time of the wedding, Māmā Tirata, Bill, their daughter Teremoana and her son Germaine lived in Auckland. The Merrylands house was now home to Tirata and Bill’s second to oldest daughter, Cinata, along with her husband and their five children: three sons ranging in ages from 12-8, and two younger daughters, aged 3 and 10 months.
commandeered as the repository for the ‘o’ora gifts, and set up in the corner of the living room.

From one of the boxes, out from underneath piles of table cloths with various levels of embroidery, pillow cases and cushion cases, tie-dyed sheets, and blow sheets, she unearthed a particular tivaivai that she was looking for. This tivaivai was a lamp shade pattern, pink on yellow tivaivai manu with yellow and pink variegated cotton embroidery. As she pulled it out to show me, she said “now this one is special... it has mum in it”. She said that she and her mother had made it together. Māmā Tirata’s mother, Māmā Rongo, was a well known tivaivai maker who had also lived in New Zealand for a good part of her life. There was a large photograph of Māmā Rongo and her husband, Māmā Tirata’s father, on the wall above us as we sat on the floor with the contents of the glory box strewn across the living room in the Merrylands house, seemingly overseeing what we were doing. Māmā Tirata said it was taken in New Zealand in the 1950s and had been a present to her parents at their 60th wedding anniversary. She said that as a child, her mother would not let her sit idle, she had to be sewing if she was not doing homework. Previously, Māmā Tirata had told me that she was the only one of her sisters who did tivaivai, and that she was not given any tivaivai by her mother as a way to keep her sewing. I asked her if she was going to give this particular tivaivai to Marie, she laughed and said no, she said that she wanted to keep it for herself. Consciously or not, she had shown me this tivaivai for a reason, because as it transpired, she ended up giving this tivaivai at the ‘o’ora.

At the back of the hall, a short while before the ‘o’ora was to begin, when Māmā Tirata was instructing Māmā Tangi and Māmā Vaerua on the order of the ‘o’ora, I asked her why she had decided to give the lampshade tivaivai after all. In reply, she just laughed and said she had wanted to. But it seemed to me that that particular tivaivai was important and weighted because it linked Māmā Rongo, Māmā Tirata, and Marie. Māmā Tirata would not be drawn on why, but the link was there, and it was there for others to see when the tivaivai was presented because what got presented got talked about, what got presented were specific textiles that in one way or another, spoke about the honour that Māmā Tirata was bestowing on her daughter, and the love she had for her daughter. But they were also about her, the type, quality and eliteness of the textiles inferred on the quality of the love Māmā Tirata had for her daughter, as well as the prestige that she claimed as a ta’unga and a woman of profile in the Cook Islands community (in New Zealand, the Cooks and in
Australia). Those specific textiles were public statements and operated as “semiotic media” (Turner 2008: 49), or as Graeber calls them, “concrete media of circulation” (2001: 75).

Semiotic media are the specific valuables that carry value (Turner 2006b: 5-13; cf. Graeber 2001: 75), and have specific defining characteristics, so the sequence of textiles presented during the course of the ‘o’ora was not by chance. The order, type, provenance and production, as well as quantity of the various textiles given were very specific and Māmā Tirata gave this considerable thought. Tivaivai, as a valuable, are a “measure of value” whereby their gifting in the public domain as in an ‘o’ora serves “to mark a contrast between a greater or lesser degree... of the particular valued quality” (Graeber 2001: 75; cf. Turner 2008: 49-51). To be given tivaivai is significant in the first place, because tivaivai are the recognisable primary currency of social relationships in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, in Gudeman’s terms, they are the principal material wealth allocated from the base (Gudeman 2001, 2008), to give taorei or a special tātāura is considered the most significant.

**Ranked order of the tivaivai and other textiles gifted in the ‘o’ora**

All the tivaivai along with a crocheted bedspread made by Māmā Tirata’s mother, were the last items to be presented during the ‘o’ora. There were seven tivaivai given in all during the ‘o’ora, the first was a machine made pink and pale blue ‘drunkards path’ pattern tivaivai taorei. Then came the machine made maroon on black satin tivaivai manu bedspread which was striking and modern in its innovation. The next tivaivai was a handmade blue and white manu, followed by a handmade purple on white fan shaped tivaivai manu, a pattern that featured an inordinate amount of sewing. The next tivaivai

62 That ranking and weighing up of relationships in terms of tivaivai and their ranked order was made apparent to me when Dr. Phyllis Herda, one of my doctoral supervisors, had her daughter Rose. Māmā Tirata, who had got to know Phyllis through me and my fieldwork in Auckland, gave Phyllis a cot sized tivaivai manu as a gift when her daughter was born. When my oldest son Tom was born some two years later, Māmā Tirata made and gifted to me a cot sized tivaivai taorei. This was a more elite textile in ranked order, as befitted my on-going relationship with Māmā Tirata, but it also implied more obligation on my part. The implicit relationship that I was enmeshed in with Māmā Tirata was one where she was giving me insights into her tivaivai world, but my obligation was to write of her in a way that represented and enhanced her prestige.

63 A woman I know whose mother-in-law lives with her (along with the woman’s son and the couple’s children) told me about how her mother-in-law, who is an excellent tivaivai maker, had an especially beautiful tivaivai tātāura put away. The woman I knew was hoping that her mother-in-law would gift this tivaivai to her youngest son at his fifth birthday. However, my friend explained to me how peeved she was when she saw that her mother-in-law had decided to gift the tivaivai to another grandson from one of her husband’s siblings who was the namesake of the mother-in-law’s father. This boy was given better tivaivai than my friend’s son because of the other’s name association. Another woman made a special tivaivai taorei for her nephew’s (sister’s son) haircutting, the boy was her husband’s namesake so he warranted the specialness of a taorei.
was a dark green-on-white breadfruit *tivaivai manu* with matching pillow cases which were cut by Māmā Tirata, and sewn and gifted to Māmā Tirata and the *‘o’ora* by Māmā Vaerua (I discuss the implications of this gift below). Then came the pink on yellow lampshade *tivaivai manu* that Māmā Tirata had made with her mother, which effectively put Marie’s and Māmā Tirata’s *tivaivai* pedigree on display. The next textile presented referenced this as well, it was a pink cotton crocheted bedspread made by Māmā Rongo, and the last *tivaivai* was a handmade rose pattern *tivaivai taorei*. This was made by Māmā Tirata and was her own pattern. Finally there were various pillows and a table cloth heaped on top, having been left behind in the general melee of the *‘o’ora*. But the ranked order was there, plain to see (cf. Turner 2006b, 2008: 49-51).

*Tivaivai* operate as a measure of value, whereby the inclusion of certain types of *tivaivai* along with specific associated textiles like those made by Māmā Rongo, and the volume of textiles are very important (cf. Graeber 2001: 75). The sequence of textiles was contrived and specific to indicate the worth and weight of the relationships being wrapped and adorned. This infers proportionality, the last *tivaivai* in the *‘o’ora*, the *taorei*, took the greatest amount of time to sew, was considered the most difficult to sew, and was weighted accordingly, and this in turn inferred the creativity inherent in the textiles and on Māmā Tirata and her prowess as a *ta’unganga*. The assembled crowd of guests recognised the weight of the textiles and the *tivaivai* being presented. Such salient, specific valuables operate as “media of value”, for the audience at the wedding, in as much as those *tivaivai* in particular were a materialised form of values and therefore signified Cook Islands value.

Graeber notes:

[I]t is not enough for tokens of value to provide a way of contrasting levels of value; they have to be material objects, or material performances, which either bring those values into being in a way that they are - at least potentially - perceptible to a larger audience (this audience, from the actor’s point of view, more or less constitutes “society’), or are translatable into things that do. [2001: 75-76; cf. Turner 2006b: 15-17]

In the wedding *‘o’ora*, the most exalted form of valuable is being moved in adherence with the specific core Cook Islands values, and this gifting evokes, and takes place within, the structural relational parameters of the more general notion of value (Turner 2008; cf. Graeber 2001). The circulation of value created by the performance of the *‘o’ora*, along

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64 Some women consider crochet bedspreads to be important elite textiles. Others dismiss them, so in this context, Māmā Tirata’s decision to gift this bedspread of her mother’s as the penultimate textiles was indicative of the value she had for the textiles and for her own daughter.
with the sequence of ranked textiles, the specific choices of *tivaivai*, and the volume of textiles, as well as the decoration of the hall and chairs that the couple sat on for the ‘o’ora with specific *tivaivai*, created the ritual context that had transformative and generative potency. In the receiving of *tivaivai* and other textiles, Maire was ritually transformed, and by the gifting of *tivaivai* in particular made by her and others, so too was Māmā Tirata. The nature of these transformations and the changes that they represent in the contemporary environment, are the subject of the next section.

3 RECEIVING *TIVAIVAI*: GROWING THE CHILD AND DOMESTIC *ARO’A*

The day after the wedding, I was sitting in the living room of the Bailey family home in the Sydney suburb of Merrylands with Māmā Tirata, Marie, Māmā Tirata’s other daughters, Galena, Cinata and Teremoana, as well as other female relatives. We were all having a cup of tea and talking about the ‘o’ora, the wedding and the events of the last few days. Marie was tired but elated, she talked about how she really enjoyed the ‘o’ora, and how much it had meant to her. She became quite emotional, and wanting to express her thanks and gratitude to her mother for the wedding and the ‘o’ora, she turned to Māmā Tirata and said “Mum, you have given me everything”. What this “everything” meant was about the valuables she had received in the ‘o’ora, especially the seven *tivaivai* that Māmā Tirata had presented her with, but it was also about a more intangible Cook Islands notion of value that she had been honoured with in the process. Her relationship with her mother was underlined and publicly accentuated, her genealogical connections were made visible by specific *tivaivai* and other textile gifts and the people who assembled to celebrate her wedding, and her choice of spouse sanctioned. What was also happening was that Marie was being grown into a Cook Islands woman, but this was a different ameliorated version of muliebrity than her mother subscribed to. Because what the phrase “you are not a woman without *tivaivai*” meant for Māmā Tirata was different for her daughter.

Growing of the child in a changing Cook Islands way

In the Cook Island way of doing things, an adult is one who gifts, and has gifting obligations to their near and distant kin. It seems to me that the gifting of and/or wrapping and adorning with *tivaivai*, of an individual child, either female or male, done at significant life events though the growing years – first birthday (or fifth birthday, depending on the family), haircutting, 21st birthday, graduation, and wedding, effectively progressively grows the child in a particular male or female Cook Islands way. Such events are rites of
passage rituals, and the wrapping of the individual transitions them from one phase of life to the next (cf. V. Turner 1969, 1974 and Myerhoff 1982). During the process of the ‘o’ora, Marie was being wrapped in the trappings of female adulthood, with materialised connections to her mother and to her wider kin network through her mother. To receive tivaivai as a child as Marie did, is potentially part of a cyclical process inherent in growing the child because Marie then became a mother who in turn could gift to her child (cf. Küchler 2005b: 188). Where before, that mother would be one who made tivaivai, the Cook Islands version of mother is now different.65 Marie had not made any tivaivai, nor was she very interested in them, but after the ‘o’ora, she had tivaivai and other textiles to hand onto her own children. But the fact that she was so moved by the receiving of tivaivai and the other textiles from her mother through the ‘o’ora, showed that tivaivai were relevant in a different way to her.

When the older Māmās intoned, “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, they mean a range of things: that you need tivaivai to give to your children, relatives, friends, and husband, especially on your wedding day; that you need to make tivaivai to show your muliebrity; that you have tivaivai to decorate your home. But because Maire had not made any tivaivai, and she was somewhat ambivalent about the ‘o’ora before the wedding as well, she could only become such a woman – if she wanted to be - by being gifted tivaivai, so the receiving of tivaivai, as well as the desire to be given them, is now even more important. This is a reality of the fact that most Cook Islanders live in New Zealand, and it is this that really defines the wedding ‘o’ora done for one’s child now, because young women like Marie can choose how Cook Islands they want to be.

Marie’s changing responses to the ‘o’ora, and being given valuables

Māmā Tirata told me during the days before the wedding in Sydney, that Marie had called her from Sydney just the day before she left Auckland – some six days before the

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65 The generational difference about perceptions of tivaivai and mothering was starkly made clear to me one day at a Va’ine tini meeting. Two young women, one of them heavily pregnant, and both with snotty toddlers in tow, appeared at the door of the hall where the Va’ine tini session was being held. The young women had been dispatched from the Family Centre to the Va’ine tini group to learn tivaivai effectively as a way to learn how to parent. Family Centres are set up all over New Zealand to help new mothers cope with the demands of motherhood. That the young women seemed a little bewildered by their translocation may have been to do with the austere reception that they got from the Māmās (saying you want to make tivaivai is different than actually making one). But it may also been because as more than likely New Zealand born Cook Islanders, the two young women may not have had enough exposure to tivaivai and the values that they encapsulate for the older generation at least, to have understood what it was they were meant to learn by being sent to make tivaivai. Making tivaivai at that time in the young women’s lives was unlikely to help them with the pressures they were experiencing anyway.
At the wedding - to ask her if she would do an ‘o’ora for her! When Māmā Tirata told me this she was laughing with incredulity and exasperation. She knew that I was aware of the months and months that she had spent planning the ‘o’ora, but she was still flabbergasted at Marie’s nonchalance towards the ‘o’ora. Clearly the ‘o’ora meant something different to Marie than it did to Māmā Tirata, but the fact that Marie wanted to receive tivaivai in particular, and be seen doing so publicly, was “better than nothing” from Māmā Tirata’s point of view. One of the visitors to the Merrylands house in the days before the wedding told me that many of the younger women and not so young women think that tivaivai are “FOB-y things”. When I asked what “FOB-y” meant she said “fresh off the boat things, coconut things”. She said her daughter had told her, “why should we cut the kaka’u [fabric] when the papa’ā have already done it?” This phrase became somewhat of a refrain throughout my fieldwork as I heard a number of younger women repeat something similar, and older women expressed this sentiment as a lament for a time that seemed to have passed. But that younger women are still coveting tivaivai and other textiles in different ways, and for different reasons than their mother’s was revealed in Marie’s response to the ‘o’ora performed by her mother and the way her attitude changed towards the ‘o’ora and what she received as the process unfolded.

This intergenerational difference is part of Cook Islander society, but the way it is expressed is changing. So many of the older Māmās told me about how they were just not interested in tivaivai when they were young. They told me stories of how they so disliked being made to learn to sew and embroider, but when they got older, got married, had children, came to love and covet the textiles. Looking over some of the textiles being readied by Māmā Tirata for the ‘o’ora the day before the wedding, Marie expressed distain at some of the more glitzy ones. She grimaced at the made-in-China satin bedspreads and wondered at the point of the blowsheets. But her statement after the event to the effect that she considered that her mother had given her “everything” was about her changing attitudes towards the textiles, but it was perhaps also more about the importance of value and being given value in the form of tivaivai and other textiles than the actual articles. Māmā Tirata gave Marie “everything” because she gave her tivaivai and because of this she was seen to be honoured, made appropriate, and made a woman proper in the course of the ‘o’ora. Not all younger women feel this way, this was revealed in a range of responses I got or heard about when I asked older women about younger women’s attitudes to tivaivai. I asked a number of younger people about how they felt about tivaivai and the wedding.
‘o’ora, why the women did or didn’t make tivaivai, and how they felt about wedding ‘o’ora. Their response represented a spectrum of perspectives.

Younger women’s ambivalence towards tivaivai and the wedding ‘o’ora

The younger people I talked to or heard about, were for the most part, all born in New Zealand or Australia, and had lived their lives in these countries with maybe intermittent (or longer) visits to the islands (or not), but most had grown up with the traffic of visiting relatives through their homes, and with parents or other relatives attending Cook Islands events. I asked Māmā Tirata’s second to oldest daughter Cinata who lived in the Merrylands house if she made tivaivai. She said she just didn’t have time, she said that she loved the island textiles and even put tivaivai that her mother had given her on her beds in the summer time when she felt so inclined. I asked her if she was going to ‘o’ora her children when they got married, and she was emphatic in her reply; “Of course!” She said she was saving all the things her mother had given her so she could pass them on to her children, all of whom assumed that that was what mothers did.

During the three days I spent in the Merrylands house with Cinata’s family before the wedding I noticed that while nobody else in the household, aside from Māmā Tirata and I, seemed to be particularly interested in the ‘o’ora, it was nonetheless an omnipresent part of the build up to the wedding. On the Friday morning, two days before the wedding, Māmā Tirata, her daughters Teremoana and Cinata, and Cinata’s five children, and I were sitting in the kitchen just after breakfast. One of the kids pulled out the pile of family photos and began to look through them. Along with the requisite bridal couple photos, there were ones of the various other ‘o’ora staged by Māmā Tirata for her four other children who had married. It was as if for this family at least, the wedding ‘o’ora and tivaivai were a normal part of life, and an essential component of the wedding. The acculturation inherent for those grandchildren as they looked at those photos with their mother, their grandmother, their aunt (and the would-be anthropologist), seeing ‘o’ora after ‘o’ora and the essential form of mothering and cherishing, as well as essential Cook Islandness that this represented, was patent. Those children, did not speak Cook Islands

66 There was also a photograph of Māmā Tirata’s mother lying in state in her coffin with a tivaivai draped over her.

67 Māmā Tirata had performed an ‘o’ora for her oldest son when he married a papa’ā woman some ten years or so before, and was surprised when her next son announcing he was getting married, also asked for an ‘o’ora. She told me that she had intended to ‘o’ora only her oldest son and her daughters at their weddings, but ended up doing ‘o’ora for all of them.
Māori but both the girls and boys were growing up assuming that they would have an ‘o’ora at their weddings. They were learning about the power of ritual, and about how Cook Islands value was expressed, and that they wanted to be so honoured too.

There were a number of younger women in their late 20s, early 30s in the Va’ine tini that I belonged to in Auckland who were becoming prolific tivaivai makers. I arrived at the Tiare Māori Group one day to find one young woman busy teaching three or four of the older women some new embroidery stitches. She was in her mid-20s and had two small children. I meet a number of younger women in the Cook Islands who were ambitious ta’unga in the making. Other younger women I spoke to said that they did not have time to make tivaivai. Va’ine from the cycle hire place across the road from where I was staying on Rarotonga on my first trip there, said just this. She was in her early 40s and I asked her if she made tivaivai. She said quite flatly, that they were “a waste of time”, she said she had lots and that she could make them but she couldn’t be bothered anymore because she could not see the point. Her off-handedness prompted me to ask if she was going to sell her tivaivai, but her response was a surprise. She said “Oh no!”, and her face had a look of affronted antipathy on it. She declared that she was going to give them to her children when they married. She said that she had tried to give some tivaivai to her son when he married a papa’ā woman, but the son said no to them because he thought his wife would not know how to look after them. The son said to give them to his sister. To this woman, making tivaivai was no longer so important, but gifting them remained paramount for her as a mother. Another woman I met on Mangaia who moved routinely between the islands and New Zealand said she didn’t want to make tivaivai either. Her mother was a well-known tivaivai maker and ta’unga, but she said that while she didn’t want to make them, she still really wanted them to give to her young children. She said to me, half asking, half declaring to herself “Isn’t that funny?!”

At the reception of the wedding of Māmā Kura’s son I described in the opening frames of this chapter, I sat next to a young New Zealand born Cook Islands woman during the feast. The young woman, I will call her Carol, was in her late 20s, and by way of conversation, I asked her what she thought of the wedding and the ‘o’ora. She revealed that she had got married the day before! I was surprised, I asked her if she had had a big wedding like the one we were at, and more specifically if her mother had done an ‘o’ora for

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68 Pseudonym.
her. Her reply was telling. She said that she and her new husband had decided not to “wait” until her mother had collected all the textiles and *tivaivai* necessary for an *’o’ora*. She said she was the youngest of nine and her new husband, the oldest of four, and she said they had decided that it was easier to get married quietly with just their parents and no siblings. I asked her how she felt seeing all the pomp and ceremony of Māmā Kura’s son’s wedding, did she regret opting for the quieter - and cheaper - option? She stressed the fact that she and her husband were quite happy the way they had done it, he was not with her that afternoon because he was at home preparing a barbeque which they were having that evening for his brother and sisters to “break the news to them” that they were now married. Carol seemed a little agitated about the processes of telling all the siblings about what had happened. I asked Carol if she had got any *tivaivai* for her wedding. She said she had not because she and her husband had decided to do it on the quiet. I asked her how she felt about that, she seemed unconcerned, but she did say that she would have quite liked to have got some. Her reaction was not along the lines of ‘I don’t want any *tivaivai*,’ or ‘I don’t need any’ rather it was more pragmatic. She talked at length about how she had a good job working for a shipping firm, how she had a great car and really enjoyed being able to do her own thing. Carol’s mother was sitting across the table from us as Carol explained how she had married, and while Carol seemed to be articulating a specific set of choices she had made, her mother was silent on the matter. I did wonder if there was more to the story.

It was only later in my fieldwork that I heard about situations where the mother will not let the daughter get married in the Cook Islands way as in not have an *’o’ora* and be honoured with the wrapping of *tivaivai*, because she does not like the daughter’s partner. In these instances, the mother refuses to give *tivaivai* and do an *’o’ora* for her child so they cannot be married publicly. Even if the couple are civilly married in the eyes of New Zealand law, without the public honouring that is conferred with *tivaivai* and an *’o’ora*, their marriage is not complete. Also, I have heard of a number of situations in which parents have refused to allow their children to have a big party and *’o’ora* ceremony when they turn 21. If the child has not behaved well, has not achieved at school or a girl has already had a child, the parents will deny their child (and themselves) the public honouring.69 *Tivaivai* display and represent mother love, but they are also a medium of potential power and control.

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69 I met a woman in the islands whose daughter had been expelled from school at the age of 17 because she was pregnant. But the mother was intending to stage a ‘21st’ for her daughter and *’o’ora* her before the baby
But tivaivai are only a medium of power and control in this way when they are desired. I caught a glimpse of the implications of this when, during the course of my fieldwork I was told about situations where tivaivai were explicitly not cherished nor wanted. One younger woman I spoke to said that her mother had given her brother a tivaivai, the younger woman said “but he just threw it away... he forgot to pack it or something” and her mother was furious. I would speculate that for the woman who gave the tivaivai, for it to be just forgotten in this way was tantamount to, if not forgetting the relationship with the mother, to relegating it in importance. While the object was important, it was the relationship that it materialises that was so much more so. Another older woman told me about when she had asked her granddaughter what sort of tivaivai she wanted for her 21st, the granddaughter had replied that she didn’t want a tivaivai, she wanted a “blowsheet with the Coruba Rum logo on it”. The grandmother was bemused and crestfallen.

In another instance, I went to pick up a woman I will call Māmā Tere one day from her home in South Auckland to take her to the regular Va’ine tini meeting. I had arrived early because she wanted to show me some of her tivaivai and her house. Her home, which she shared with one of her daughters (she had eight children) and the daughter’s husband, was elegant and comfortable. I commented on the neutral papa’ā scheme of the interior, and she said that her daughter did not like “the island things” and preferred the way papa’ā decorated. She told me that she had suggested to her daughter that she decorate her part of the house with her “tivaivai and things” and the daughter do her part with her things, but the daughter said it wouldn’t work. I asked her if she had done an ‘o’ora for this daughter when she married. Māmā Tere sat down on her bed and proceeded to tell me how she had made ten or so tivaivai for this particular daughter and had done an ‘o’ora in the “islands style” at her wedding. But not long after the wedding, the daughter had come to see Māmā Tere with all the tivaivai and other textiles she had been given by her mother, saying that she did not want them. Māmā Tere had said that she would look after the textiles for her until was born. Others told me that this was frowned upon because it was considered that the mother was just after prestige. The woman was being considerably maligned by gossip.

A woman I know had a son who had married a papa’ā woman. Sometime after the couple were married, the woman visited them at their house. She walked in and was horrified to see that one of the tivaivai taorei she had given them during their ‘o’ora was being used as a mat on the floor. She described to me several times how a couch was sitting on top of the tivaivai and how she marched over, removed the furniture, scooped up the tivaivai and left. Her son begged her to give the tivaivai back, but she refused.

Pseudonym.
she wanted them but the daughter said that she would never want them. Māmā Tere said that this had made her very sad; she added that that was the way of children these days.72 The daughter’s values were different to her mother’s, so what constituted valuables were different too. The breakdown of that format for relationships is not uncommon in either the migrant contexts or in the islands, but as Marie’s changing responses to the thought of her ‘o’ora and the actual performance of it showed, it is by no means universal.

**Reciprocity and connectedness**

As Māmā Tirata literally had textiles heaped upon her daughter and new son-in-law, she was physically heaping and wrapping them in love, as in *aro’a*. But what was required in return? When Marie told her mother in the aftermath, that she had given her “everything”, this was I argue, about the shape of reciprocity inherent in the performance. From Marie’s perspective, she was being cherished and loved and made appropriate in the most sanctioned way, ostentatiously, elaborately and with volume as evidenced in the pile of textiles at the end of the ‘o’ora. She in turn was showing that she loved her mother in the way that daughters should, by accepting, and theoretically cherishing the extent of her mother’s production. She was also showing Māmā Tirata to be the right sort of mother and revealing the nature of the on-going relationship with her mother.

To cherish the *tivaivai* you are given is to honour the relationship you have with the giver, and the implications of this are huge. These range from connectivity with close kin to political affiliations and alliances, as those a woman gifts *tivaivai* to operate in their daily lives – in the islands, in Auckland, as New Zealand Cook Islanders and as participants in the wider capitalist economy. How these other layers of context operate after the allocation of base via *aro’a* plays out in other public ways was evidenced in what Wilkie Rasmussen had to say about his relationship with his feeding mother. He considered her the one person in his life that he would always defer to (person communication, see also Rasmussen 1995). She is in the grandparent generation to him, and while she reared him as her beloved son, she was genealogically *tuakana* (senior) to him, so her support lent considerable weight to

72 A number of women I spoke to over the course of my fieldwork talked about looking after *tivaivai* for their children. Such *tivaivai* would have been given in the various ceremonial context but then the maker had generally offered to “look after” them while the young person was off travelling, but the implication was that the textiles would eventually be returned to the recipient when they were ready to settle down and have their own family, and eventually the textiles would at least be cherished in the way they were given. Few children were as unequivocal as Māmā Tere’s daughter about not wanting the *tivaivai*. 
his political career, and effectively sanctioned his aspirations. When I pointed out that one of the ways she publicly broadcast that support was to gift him *tivaivai* at specific times in his life, his reply was telling. When I interviewed him, I asked him:

Jane: Reciprocity is a big thing, the recording of who gets what is done to the nth degree so that reciprocity can be done in kind, but when you are given *tivaivai* what does the woman expect to get back? Like when you were given *tivaivai* by your feeding mother who was the one woman that you defer to really, what’s the reciprocity there?

Wilkie: Funny you ask that, I’ve always thought that she wasn’t expecting anything back; and I’ve always thought that she gave it out of love, out of *aro’a*, ... But I also knew she gave it out of the need for her to be seen as a good mother, a good woman; or she also gave it out of the need to be recognized that she is acknowledging me, therefore giving me status in the eyes of everyone else watching. [Wilkie Rasmussen, interview 10 August 2010]

This amounts to the allocation of the base and the accesses to and the axis of prestige as honour and power that accompanies this. He added,

So I don’t think there’s any expectation of money back, but I know there’s an expectation of continuity. Continuity of a relationship, continuity of expressing that love and respect for her, and that sort of thing. But you can go further and say well you become obliged for life basically in a way, so when she rings up and says come and drive me to the supermarket, or come and take me to do [the] shopping, you are obliged to. You can’t say no even though you might have something else to do, this becomes as priority so you take her, that sort of thing. And I’ve seen that behaviour in many people. So I think it’s just a sanctioning of who we are. I’ve never expected anyone to kind, kind of expect something back in return, something physical back in return. [Wilkie Rasmussen, interview 10 August 2010]

The kind of connection that Rasmussen is talking about is the domestic *aro’a* that binds a family together, and it is this form of *aro’a* that is on display during a wedding ‘*o’ora*. Domestic *aro’a* is the love which (ideally) exists between a mother and her child, but which is different than the more general *aro’a* expressed in other contexts, including other forms of gifting that take place in the wedding ‘*o’ora* or in non-wedding/non-life cycle gifting.

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73 At the time of our discussion in August 2010, Rasmussen was Finance Minister and acting Prime Minister of the Cook Islands. After finishing his Masters at the University of Auckland, he was High Commissioner for the Cook Islands in Wellington for a term and eventually stood for election on his home island of Tongareva. He was duly elected and has held various political and diplomatic posts as his party has moved between being the opposition and being in power.
events, which I designate as public aro’a. The public gifting of tivaivai in the wedding ‘o’ora effectively connects and binds the mother and child together, and transforms both because of the potent circulation of value: it grows the child, but it also grows the mother. How the latter plays out with regard to reciprocity between communities and the accruing of prestige via the display of public aro’a is the subject of the next section.

4 GIVING TIVAIVAI: PUBLIC ARO’A, RECIPROCITY, AND MANA

In the public context of a wedding ‘o’ora, the gifting and use of tivaivai as concrete media of circulation generates traffic in value which in turn creates access to prestige and the axis of prestige. What impelled Māmā Tirata to perform the ‘o’ora and gift in the way she did, and what made Marie feel like Māmā Tirata had given her “everything” was about the way value operates in the mutuality realm of Cook Islander society. The performance of the ‘o’ora was enjoined by core Cook Islander values and the parameters of the way that value is trafficked in Cook Islander ways of seeing the world. As I watched Māmā Tirata ‘o’ora her daughter and new son-in-law at their wedding, I watched a set of actions that articulated value as material wealth. The values of love and connection as honour and prestige were bestowed. These values were literally distilled in the 25 minutes or so that it took to perform the ‘o’ora. As each textile was mounded on top of the couple, Māmā Tirata was publicly wrapping her loved ones in the presence of her extended family in a fabricised love. Just as Māmā Tirata’s mother had done an ‘o’ora for her, she was now doing an ‘o’ora for her daughter, thereby completing the cycle of generations and theoretically setting a new cycle in motion. The attaining of this complete cycle was imbued with prestige for Māmā Tirata, as was the performance of the ‘o’ora, but the display of how she was linked to her extended kin network was important too.

The way Māmā Tirata chose to decorate the hall was also about the circulation of value and the accruing of prestige. Her use of the two veru tivaivai, one behind the bridal table, and the other on the chair that the couple sat on, was not by chance. The veru (shattered) type of tivaivai was unusual and therefore special, and because of this, they demonstrated her prowess as a ta’unga and innovator of things tivaivai, an aspect of ta’unga status that I came across time and time again. From the array of tivaivai she chose to give, including the black and maroon satin tivaivai manu and the tivaivai that she and her mother had made together which emphasised her lineage with that exalted woman, all effectively combined to broadcast her appropriate femaleness and innovative skill. No announcement was made about what came from whom, but women knew, they talked,
they identified, they recognised, and Māmā Tirata gained prestige as mana. Turner (2008: 49) contends that when the extraction of surplus is done in capitalism, it is done in units of value. This is arguably what Māmā Tirata was doing too.\(^{74}\)

**Māmā Tirata and her networks of kin, friends, and associates**

Whilst the pile of textiles and the seven tivaivai, were a physical manifestation of the love that Māmā Tirata had for her daughter, and the worthiness of Marie as a daughter, it was also demonstrative of the network of social relations that constituted Māmā Tirata’s involvement in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. The textile gifts that were given to Māmā Tirata for the ‘o’ora, ostensibly for Marie, were indicative of the network of relationships that Māmā Tirata belonged to. In other words, that pile of textiles crowned with tivaivai indexed both the aro’a inherent within the Bailey family, as in the domestic aro’a that bound Māmā Tirata and Marie together, but also the public aro’a that connected Māmā Tirata in particular to other communities within the realm of mutuality.

Marie’s wedding ‘o’ora was an event that was so planned, so worked on, and was a significant ritual for Māmā Tirata who had been organising it for almost two years. By performing the ‘o’ora, Māmā Tirata’s intention was to honour her daughter and new son-in-law as she ritually and publicly demonstrated her love for her eighth child and new son-in-law by wrapping the newlyweds in a plethora of salient, valued textiles, and finally tivaivai that she had made and garnered. But she had another intention as well, one that was culturally sanctioned (cf. Yan 2005). I asked Māmā Tirata during the time of the build up to the wedding in Auckland why she was going to ‘o’ora her daughter, she said “because I love her... [and] because it is the Cook Islands way”.\(^{75}\) To show her daughter that she was loved and to do the Cook Islands way was simultaneously about operating within and in accordance with key Cook Islands values which order behaviour by prescribing specific behaviours. But what doing the Cook Islands way was also about for Māmā Tirata was the process of negotiation and accruing of prestige within the perceived culturally constructed hierarchies that the ‘o’ora allowed her to do.

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\(^{74}\) The mechanics of this process I look at with greater detail in Chapter Four, where I detail two other non-kin and a religious ‘o’ora that Māmā Tirata cut tivaivai for and was heavily involved in.

\(^{75}\) When my sister got married in February 2001, Māmā Tirata insisted that I give her a gift of two embroidered pillowcases which she gave me for the purpose. She could not conceive of my sister marrying without being given a gift of this kind, but what was significant was that she gave me the gift to give to my sister. She thought it equally important that the gift should come from me. My sister was completely baffled by the gift.
The display of exemplary mothering by Māmā Tirata that was inherent in the performance of the ‘o’ora was the basis for the exposition and elaboration of prestige for Māmā Tirata as a Cook Islands woman, and ta’unga of tivaivai. In other words, the ‘o’ora was as much about Māmā Tirata as it was about Marie in that there were two types of gifting processes happening during the ‘o’ora. These represented the maintenance of two different sets of relationships: those between Marie and Māmā Tirata, and those between Māmā Tirata and her wider network of kin, friends, and associates. In true Maussian (1990 [1925]) fashion, the gift – in one form or another – brought them all together, but in different ways. The staging of the ‘o’ora was a gifting process done ostensibly by Māmā Tirata to her daughter and new son-in-law, and it was clear that it was she who was gifting the mass of textiles, which effectively underlined and accentuated the mother-daughter relationship. But whilst many of the textiles given were ones made or brought by Māmā Tirata, some were actually gifts from others in her kin network or from others like me whom she treated like kin, and other gifts were brought with money that had come from others as gifts. Hence, there were multiple levels of gifting, and counter-gifting operating and two realms of relevant forms of reciprocity at play.

By being a good daughter, good enough to have an ‘o’ora done for her, Marie was essentially giving Māmā Tirata the opportunity to circulate value, values, and valuables which gave her access to prestige as mana via the performance of the o’ora. This was very important to Māmā Tirata; by performing the ‘o’ora she could display the kin and other networks that she operated in, because the ‘o’ora was also about reciprocity and exchange between communities in the realm of mutuality (Gudeman 2001, 2008). The ‘o’ora was the public moment so to speak, in a process of social relations that Māmā Tirata was a part of. This live matrix of relationships was complex, intricate, and widely encompassing and the honour and prestige being bestowed was a process that was as much about Māmā Tirata as it was about her daughter and new son-in-law.

The kin networks

The portable cot in the living room was where Māmā Tirata stockpiled the textiles she had amassed for the ‘o’ora, the ones she had made or brought. But it was also where other gifts from groups and individuals were placed. Over the several days I was staying in the Merrylands house prior to the wedding, there was a constant stream of visitors through the house, generally kin in one form or another – and most brought textiles gifts, which were placed in the portable cot. As I watched people come and go, and the pile of
textiles mount as more were added to the cot, I realised that this repository was as much about Māmā Tirata’s network of kin and associates that stretched across the Tasman to New Zealand, around Australia, and to the Cooks and the US, as it was about her relationship with her daughter. It was about return reciprocity of gifts that Māmā Tirata had given to others in her network of kin and associates. It was another layer of gifting, and was of enormous significance to Māmā Tirata and very visible in the household.76 While I only heard some of the stories of who was connected to what, overall I got a sense of the multiplicity of the inherent connections and their convoluted ties with all aspects of Māmā Tirata’s life.

In the flurry at the back of the hall prior to the start of the ‘o’ora, I talked to a number of people who were holding textiles who were not Māmā Tirata’s immediate family (as in her children, their partners, and their children). Whilst Māmā Tangi and Māmā Vaerua were directing the proceedings, it became apparent to me that specific gifts given to Māmā Tirata for the ‘o’ora by people attending the wedding were to be presented by them. Many of these gifts I had seen being given at the Merrylands house in the days before the wedding, and the givers wanted to be seen publicly presenting the textiles at the event to Marie and her new husband. The obligation that they had fulfilled or created by giving to Māmā Tirata prior to the event was now being displayed for the collective audience to see as well. I asked one woman about the large green and white double ply mink blanket and several pāreu that she and her daughters were holding. The woman was a cousin of Māmā Tirata’s. The mink blanket was plush and heavy; another woman (who was impressed by the gift) told me it was worth about $NZ160. The cousin’s son was in the hospital that Marie worked in. The day after the wedding, Māmā Tirata told me that this son had previously recognised Marie at the hospital, but Marie had not got around to speaking to him - possibly not what the cousin had hoped for. I was surprised to see the minister who had conducted the service milling around in the back area of the hall before the ‘o’ora as well, because I had only ever seen ministers being the recipients of textiles gifts. But as a relative of Māmā Tirata’s, the minister and his family took part in the ‘o’ora, and gifted a double-ply mink blanket too. They carried this aloft up the length of the hall

76 For the two nights I stayed in the house, chaos tended to ensue around bedtime because of the extras that turned up (mostly cousins), so there was inevitably a scramble to find enough pillows and blankets to sleep with. Twice I saw young boys go to the ‘o’ora pile in the portacot in the living room to take mink blankets etc, and both times Māmā Tirata sternly and loudly told all near to leave the things where they were, saying “those are for the ‘o’ora”.

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and wrapped it around the newly married couple in another layer of relationship that was about the maintenance of an obligation and relationship that was inherent.

**Māmā Vaerua’s Gift**

Contrary to what Māmā Vaerua told me she was going to give at the wedding (see below), she ended up giving a *tivaivai*, the dark green-on-white leaf *tivaivai manu*. If the mink blanket had been a significant gift, this was much more so, and referenced for the most part, the weight of the relationship between Māmā Tirata and Māmā Vaerua. Māmā Vaerua said she was “moved” to give better and more spectacularly, because of her love for Māmā Tirata. Māmā Tirata had given her *tivaivai* for the ‘*ō*ora’ she had done for her children, the two women were also kin and shared a grandchild in common. They were also friends, so it was to aid Māmā Tirata in her performance in staging the ‘*ō*ora’, and acknowledged Māmā Tirata’s input into things *tivaivai* in her life; for rides to the Va’ine tini meeting, to cutting of *tivaivai*, so the *tivaivai* was given in service of the multifaceted relationship that the two women had. The gift was ultimately given to Marie, but Māmā Vaerua gave it first and foremost to Māmā Tirata in acknowledgment for obligations they had between them and this was registered publicly. When the *tivaivai* that Māmā Vaerua had made and gifted was to be presented during the ‘*ō*ora’, she and Māmā Tangi left their post at the back of the hall and paraded up with it. As she began dancing seductively under the *tivaivai* in front of the couple, there was much joy, laughter and whooping from the crowd as Māmā Vaerua who was in her early 70s at the time, swayed her hips like a girl and proceeded to ham it up for the crowd, having a wonderful time. She then helped wrap her *tivaivai* around the couple.77

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77 Māmā Vaerua had come to live in New Zealand as an 18 year old towards the end of the Second World War and she had lived here ever since. She had married a Cook Islands man from Rarotonga, and together they worked and raised all their children here. She spoke fluent Rarotongan and Aitutakian, and spoke English eloquently. Māmā Tirata always referred to Māmā Vaerua as ‘Aunty Vaerua’, denoting the genealogical relationship they had, because Māmā Vaerua was *tuakana* to Māmā Tirata and all the other women in the Va’ine tini. But by virtue of Māmā Tirata’s acknowledged status as a *ta‘unga* of some renown, Māmā Vaerua deferred to her in the context of the group in regard to design of *tivaivai* and management of the production of *tivaivai*, but took a more patron like role in the management of the Va’ine tini itself. She would not accept any of the official positions in the group but felt it her role to question and challenge some of Māmā Tirata’s decisions. She was one of the only women who could. She was looked up to by most of the women in the Va’ine tini and conducted herself not so much as a leader but one who had the right to question the leadership of the group.
Figure 5: Māmā Vaerua (right) with Māmā Tangi, holding the tivaivai manu she gave during the ō’ora at the back of the hall before the ō’ora.

The non-kin networks

The presence of an Australian papa’ā woman called Trish Hurst, a high profile interior designer and writer of magazine editorial on folk art and general interiors, was indicative of Māmā Tirata’s wider non-kin network. Hurst is based in Sydney and had written an article about Māmā Tirata in a glossy Australian lifestyle magazine in the mid-1990s and had brokered a sale of a tivaivai for her. Hurst was invited to the wedding because she had a long standing friendship with Māmā Tirata, but she also represented a network of relationships that went beyond Cook Islands kinship links, and inferred on Māmā Tirata as a woman of standing and therefore was prestigious. I fell into the same category. It was not lost upon Māmā Tirata that as a researcher and PhD student, I had the capacity to write about her and enhance her profile through academic channels.78 But her

78 I took the opportunity to make good this implicit arrangement that Māmā Tirata and I had, especially after her gift to me of the cot sized tivaivai taorei when my oldest son, Tom, was born in 2002. In August 2010, I presented a paper at the Pacific Arts Association Symposium which happened to be held in Rarotonga that year. It was a prestigious conference, and duly noted in the Rarotongan press and sanctioned by the
collecting up of me was not just a calculated process, from my perspective there was genuine affection and aro'a on both our parts.

It had been Māmā Tirata who had invited me to the wedding. Whilst I had met her New Zealand based family, I had not met the bride-to-be before arriving in Sydney, and in choosing a gift to give for the wedding (as was my papa'iā way of doing things), I assumed that I needed to buy for the couple. Prior to leaving Auckland for the wedding in Sydney, I asked Māmā Vaerua what she was giving as a gift, and what would be appropriate for me to give. At the time she said she was giving some pillow cases and said that I should give “something for the ‘o’ora as well”. I did not really understand why until I got to Sydney. I had a pāreu and a set of pillow cases that I got in the Cooks, which seemed appropriate, so I gave these along with a blowsheet I had helped make at one of the other Va’ine tini in South Auckland. When I got to the house in Sydney, I gave these to Māmā Tirata and they were added to the portacot in the living room and I realised that while my gift would be given to the couple, first and foremost I was giving them to Māmā Tirata. It was my relationship with her that was being acknowledged with the gift, I was also contributing to the ‘o’ora which made Māmā Tirata look appropriate because of the relationships inherent as well as the added volume of textiles. This is what women did to service obligations, but it was also what they did as friends and kin.

Māmā Tirata had a public profile and was a warranted Justice of the Peace (JP) in both New Zealand and Australia, an accolade of which she was justly proud. I asked her once why she was a JP in New Zealand and she replied that she “knew lots of people”, which was a reflection of her status as a ta’unga in tivaivai that gave her the capacity to manoeuvre in the Cook Islands community and beyond. Gifts for the ‘o’ora came her way as a consequence of this too. Prior to leaving Auckland for the wedding, she had asked me to carry in my luggage a Chinese machine-made pink nylon satin bedspread and a 1.5 square

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79 When I got back to Auckland the following week after the wedding in Sydney, I went to the weekly Wednesday meeting of the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini. The first thing Māmā Mere asked me when she saw me was, “Did you give your tivaivai to Tirata for the ‘o’ora?”. She said that there was a rumour going round that I had given it. When I told her that I hadn’t, she said that that was good, but it was almost as if she was relieved about this. Then I asked if I should have given the tivaivai, she said no, Māmā Mere would not tell me who had started the rumour, but it seemed to me that it would not have been appropriate for me to have given a gift of that magnitude. Why? And this is a big question. It seemed to me that my relationship with Māmā Tirata did not warrant a gift of such weight at that point, but also I had not had a child nor had I got married, events which effectively transition a ‘girl’ from girlhood to womanhood and/or motherhood.
metre sized plaited Tuvaluan mat. Both these textiles had been given to Māmā Tirata by individuals in Auckland for whom she had done JP work.

Figure 6: Māmā Tirata in Auckland before leaving for Sydney, sitting on the bed in her house with the pink Chinese quilt in the foreground and the mat in the background.

The individuals thanked her for the services provided by a gift of textiles.\footnote{80} My sense was that the preparations for the ‘o’ora were such a prominent part of her life in the months leading up to the wedding, that other Pacific peoples in particular would have been aware what an appropriate gift would have constituted\footnote{81} at that time for her.

\footnote{80} Whilst JP work in New Zealand is enshrined as a free service for the most part, Māmā Tirata extended her role as a JP over and beyond the normal (pakeha/papa’a) ways of doing things. Her profile as a JP was fused with her profile in the Cook Islands community and she was active in helping people in and out of contractual binds, and other legal matters. I went (as her driver) on several occasions to meetings with her where she advised others on legal matters, often to do with land in the islands. Generally she would have some genealogical connection with the people, although not necessarily claims on the land in question. Such work is reciprocated in the Cook Islands way with a rimu aro’a (a thank you gift). She did general JP work for the wider Pacific Islands and South Auckland community on a regular basis.

\footnote{81} Māmā Tirata was adept at managing the “cascading” (Gudeman 2008: 23) of money into the realm of mutuality that she operated in, as in being a ta’unga and a JP. She had ways of establishing how and what she
The varied financial machinations and the calling in of obligations due

Five days before the wedding I went around to Māmā Tirata’s house in Auckland to see how preparations were going for the wedding. Māmā Tirata’s bedroom was a riot of boxes full of textiles, half unpacked. There were piles of pillow cases, pāre, and tivaivai in various states of completion; this was a woman who had multiple sewing projects on the go at any one time. She was on the sewing machine finishing the black and maroon satin tivaivai she had told me about when I first meet her almost two years before. As she sewed she talked about how she and Bill were financing the ‘o’ora and the wedding. She said that a relative in the US had said that he would pay for the wedding but then said no. Over the last year or so, she had been negotiating to sell a piece of land on Aitutaki. Māmā Tirata had been to family meetings in Rarotonga and in Aitutaki in 1999 and 2000 and $NZ50,000.00/acre had been agreed on. But for some reason, most of the family had withdrawn their support of the deal. The investors only brought four acres and said that they didn’t need Māmā Tirata’s piece. Her cousin, another investor, had offered to buy the land for $NZ25,000 and had $NZ3000 to give her up front. She had given-in in the last week and decided to collect the money, thinking it would be $NZ50,000, having forgotten that her cousin’s offer amounted to half of this sum. When she came to sign for the receipt of the $NZ3000, she was appalled to discover that she was due only the balance on $NZ25,000. She said her cousin in Rarotonga should have offered her $NZ47,000. These negotiations were not conducted because of the financial demands of the wedding, but they were certainly given added impetus by it and the reality of getting herself and Bill, one of her

required in exchange for her services in the various roles she played. When other women asked her to cut a tivaivai for them, she would demure about what was required in return, but I heard other women say that $NZ60 was her rate. Some women found this offensive, and other ta’unga who I got to know were quite vocal about not accepting money for their cutting services, however, for all ta’unga the system worked in such a way that some kind of contribution from the recipient was appropriate. After Māmā Tirata had cut my tivaivai, she avoided my direct questions about what I should give in return. However, an opportunity arose one day for me to make good on my obligation. I was driving Māmā Tirata and her then 10 year old grandson home. The boy had been pestering his grandmother for days about getting a small game console, so as we drove along Karangahape Road in central Auckland, Māmā Tirata asked me if we could stop at an electronics shop that was on our way. We did and I found myself at the counter of the shop with Māmā Tirata and her grandson who was rapturously clutching a $NZ55 dollar game console in his hand that needed to be paid for. Nothing was said but it became apparent that it was I who was to pay for the console. It dawned on me that Māmā Tirata had implicitly and serenely engineered a situation whereby I could reciprocate for the gift of her cutting services.

82 The tivaivai was two thirds done; she explained that Marie had really wanted a black satin tivaivai so she had cut a coco pod and leaf pattern out of the maroon satin and she was in the process of finishing off the sewing of this pattern onto the black satin backing fabric. She said it was a shocking thing to sew because the satin was so slippery.
daughters and a grandson to Sydney and back as well as assembling the textiles, and paying for the wedding.

The outcome of the land sale was never made clear, but I got a sense of the mode of money acquisition that ensued to cover the requisite expenses in the days prior to leaving Auckland. Māmā Tirata said that she was calling in money from various sources to help her get the ‘o’ora together. In the week before the wedding, I went to pick up $NZ200 from Aunty Vaerua for her. The day before Māmā Tirata and family left Auckland, (and four days before the wedding), I took Māmā Tirata to Ponsonby via her niece’s house to pick up some more money. She told me that the niece had been thrown out by her mother and Māmā Tirata helped her get a house. The niece had got herself into all sorts of trouble by putting a bed on hire purchase, and had got behind in her payments. Tirata said, “Cook Islands people don’t know about contracts”. The niece had not long been in New Zealand from the Cooks, and I gathered that the money from the niece was a “contribution” to the wedding. The next stop was the drycleaners just off Ponsonby Rd by her Seventh Day Adventist church. In the boot of my car were two tivaivai ultimately bound for Sydney. Māmā Tirata had an arrangement with the drycleaners whereby they pressed her tivaivai for free; I think this set-up had been cemented some years before by a gift of a tivaivai to the drycleaner.83 The final stop was the travel agents to pay for the tickets to Australia, hence the collecting of money from various sources.

In June 2001, two months before the wedding, at one of the weekly Wednesday sessions Māmā Tirata had cut a rather beautiful red hibiscus on white tivaivai manu. She told me later that this tivaivai was to be for Marie’s ‘o’ora. However, a cousin of hers, who was turning 60, had come to visit and he had asked for a tivaivai. When she related this story to me she said “he didn’t ask for the moon or the stars, he asked for a tivaivai”. She said “he was really touched by the tivaivai he had seen in Rarotonga”. She then said that her cousin had told her she was in the “wrong business” - or at least the wrong end of the business - because he told her about the tivaivai that was sold in Rarotonga for $NZ10,000.84 She said that her cousin had asked her for the red and white tivaivai manu and even though she had made the tivaivai for Marie’s ‘o’ora, she said she felt that she

83 The cost of having a tivaivai pressed professionally at a drycleaners at the time was in the vicinity of $NZ20.

84 This was a tivaivai sold by Māmā Vereara Maeva to the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa in Rarotonga in April 2001. I detail the sale of this tivaivai in Chapter Seven.
“couldn’t say no to him”. Quite what he gave in return for the *tivaivai* was not explicitly stated but her reference to the sale of the *tivaivai* in Rarotonga signalled that a cash gift had been given.\(^{85}\) Her reference to the moon and stars in relation to the *tivaivai* indicated the weight, as in importance of the gift she had given her cousin and what the sum of money she was given in reply was in the vicinity of. After she had told me all this, I expressed the fact that it was a lovely *tivaivai* and it was a shame she would not have it for the ‘*o’ora*, to which she replied, “I can make another one” and laughed.

5 CONCLUSION

Wedding ‘*o’ora* have changed, they have always been about conjoining people but how this is done, and which relationships are now the focus of the wedding ‘*o’ora* is different in the contemporary environment. The ‘*o’ora* that both Māmā Tirata and Māmā Kura performed for their children effectively allocated *tivaivai* and the range of textile valuables that were wrapped around the two married couples, as heirlooms to be cherished. The parameters of value and gifting that Māmā Tirata in particular was working within were a contemporary structure and process that facilitated the allotment of sacra from the base in a way that brought a modern New Zealand-Australian Cook Islands family together.

Māmā Tirata’s daughter Marie had made no *tivaivai*, nor was she particularly interested in doing so because her femaleness was not defined in that way. Marie had also asked her mother to ‘*o’ora* her merely days before her wedding. The ‘*o’ora* Māmā Tirata performed for her daughter adhered explicitly to the values expressed in the statement “you are not a woman without *tivaivai*” as this applied to herself as a mother, but was different for Marie as a young woman becoming a Cook Islands ‘mother’ and ‘woman’. The version of Cook Islands womanhood and motherhood that Marie was transitioned into via the wedding and the ‘*o’ora* as a rite of passage, involved *tivaivai* but not to the degree that *tivaivai* operated in her mother’s life. However, Marie was so moved by the experience of the ‘*o’ora* that she considered that her mother had given her “everything”. I argue that this “everything” was really all about value. That Marie was somewhat ambivalent about what she had received was a particular version of Turner’s notion that the fetishising of semiotic media like *tivaivai* obscures the true nature of value (2008: 54), the same was apparent with Māmā Tere’s daughter.

\(^{85}\) The going rate at the time in Auckland for the sale of a *tivaivai manu* of that caliber was around $NZ800.
In the wedding ‘o’ora, the particular version of the ritual complex being deployed reveals the link between the hierarchy of textiles and the weight of relationships being honoured through gifting and reciprocity. The overt display of the quality and quantity of mothering achieved by both Māmā Tirata and Māmā Kura, was materialised in the sheer volume of textiles they amassed and presented at each ‘o’ora, and this was a source of prestige as mana for both women, as was the display of textile gifts that they had been given by others for the ‘o’ora. For Māmā Tirata, the wedding ‘o’ora for her daughter was a serious status arena. The 25 minutes of the ‘o’ora represented almost two years of planning and preparation, and that it clearly meant something different to her than it did to Marie was in part generational. But it was also about the different version of Cook Islands value being manifested by younger New Zealand and Australia born Cook Islanders. It was also about different parameters to do with prestige.

While the wedding ‘o’ora would always have had an element of prestige associated with it, this had potentially become amplified in the diaspora. Not all Cook Islands women in New Zealand and Australia have the inclination, or the financial means to ‘o’ora their children, but for those that do, the wedding ‘o’ora strikes a balance between honouring their own child, and accruing prestige and honour themselves by being seen to be able to traffic in value that an ‘o’ora allows a mother to do, from the choice of tivaivai gifted to the display of gifts they themselves received to stage the ‘o’ora. In the next chapter, I look at three other ‘o’ora, two non-kin events and a religious ‘o’ora to a minister. All of these events feature the ‘o’ora of specific singularised tivaivai that Māmā Tirata designed and cut. That each of these events was about the accruing of prestige as mana for Māmā Tirata in one way or another, is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

*TIVAIVAI AS THE ACCESS TO AND AXIS OF PRESTIGE AS MANA*

1 INTRODUCTION

In July of 2000 the Ponsonby Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, of which Māmā Tirata and her family were very active members, hosted a visiting Afro-American minister and his wife for three weeks. Minister Phillip Tyrone and his wife, who were from Alabama, were there to conduct a ministry crusade at the church. Māmā Tirata told me that she and the other Cook Islands women in the church had decided to make the couple a *tivaivai* which they were going to gift to them in an ‘o’ora at an event to mark their departure at the end of the three weeks. A *tivaivai* was considered the appropriate gift to give. As the paramount form of the expression of both domestic and public *aro’a*, the women created that particular *tivaivai* literally as the materialisation of their religious devotion. The *tivaivai* materialised religious value in other words.

A number of the women in the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, including Māmā Tirata, were also members of the Ponsonby SDA Church so throughout that July, I heard reports of the progress of the *tivaivai* at the Wednesday meetings of the Tiare Māori group. The seven or so women were working literally night and day for the three weeks to complete the sewing on the *tivaivai*. That there was a certain zealoussness and alacrity in the way they went about their sewing of this particular *tivaivai* was apparent in their commitment to the work. Their work schedule was gruelling, and this was conveyed when the women talked proudly about how they were fitting the onerous amounts of sewing around their usual routines. The way the women were working, as well as the time frame within which they were doing so, was important. This was at once about the substance of religious devotion and prestige for them and inferred on the degree of honour they were bestowing on the minister as the recipient.

The Cook Islands realm of mutuality is manifested in three general domains which correspond to kinship, non-kinship, and religious Cook Islands ceremonial economy events. In all three domains, *tivaivai*, as paramount valuables, materialise values and the more general parameters of value, but the outcomes and what is “gained” (Guyer 2004) in each domain differs somewhat. In the previous chapter I looked at wedding ‘o’ora as kinship events. In the ‘o’ora that both Māmā Tirata and Māmā Kura staged, there was more
or less a balance between the maintenance of integral relationships within the family as a community via allotment of the base and the display of domestic aro’a, and between communities through reciprocity and the exercising of public aro’a, with the acquisition and accruing of prestige. The focus of this chapter is the mechanisms of the negotiation and accruing of prestige, and how the balance between the display of aro’a and prestige is maintained or skewed: first in a religious ‘o’ora event where the tivaivai I describe above was presented, and then in two non-kinship public community events where singularised (Kopytoff 1986) tivaivai, bearing the logo of the New Zealand Police, were presented during ‘o’ora in South Auckland. The first was to a Samoan junior police officer at a smaller event, and the second to another more senior (also Samoan) police officer at a bigger event. The pursuit of prestige is modulated (or should be) in kinship events like the wedding ‘o’ora, via the emphasis on the rite of passage that the event is about, and the maintenance of the close kin relationship that is the focus of the event. In the religious event, prestige is similarly coupled, but in this context to religious process and devotion as the way aro’a is expressed. But at the non-kinship events I analyse in this chapter, prestige is pursued with only a veneer of restraint in the ‘o’ora for the police officers. All three events involved the production of singularised (Kopytoff 1986) tivaivai which were all cut by Māmā Tirata Bailey. With reference to the last chapter, which looked at the wedding ‘o’ora that Māmā Tirata did for her daughter, here I chart the process of her negotiations and accruing of prestige, and the way this was perceived in the wider context of Cook Islands ways of doing value.

2 ARO’A, VALUE AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF: THE MINISTER’S ‘O’ORA.

During the period of three weeks when the women were sewing the tivaivai, and attending the crusade at the church, the women saw the work they were doing on the tivaivai as an extension of the devotion they were enacting in the crusade. The women were meeting in each other’s homes and sewing together, often around the clock, the motivation for the unrelenting sewing was essentially a spiritual homage to their God. Māmā Tirata had cut the pattern for the tivaivai manu and helped tack (tāmoumou) the tivaivai, she was doing some of the sewing, but most was being done by the other women. For all the Māmās involved, this tivaivai was all about homage and faith, it was a tribute, and a form of worship that literally materialised Māmā Tirata’s and the other Māmās’ veneration of their God in a more egalitarian way. The tivaivai was for their minister, God’s representative on earth, so all forms of contribution to the production of the tivaivai
amouned to the work of aro’a as adulation, and the Māmās were doing it with fervour and intensity. Surfacing in the women’s actions and strenuous work regime were the vestiges of the cult of domesticity and the display of overt industry as religious adulation (cf. Weber 2009).

The Event

On the day of the ‘o’ora, the event got underway at around midday, with introductory speeches and then a kaikai (feast). There were around 80 people at the event; the minister and his wife, invited guests, including me and one of my doctoral supervisors, Dr Phyllis Herda, and the Pacific islander congregation of the Ponsonby SDA church. At the conclusion of the feast, preparations were made for the ‘o’ora. Women placed a plain woven mat on the ground, and then a more decorated mat was placed on top, followed by two chairs. The minister and his wife were invited to sit on the chairs and the ‘o’ora began. There was no drumming or dancing, and the atmosphere of the event was more reverend and contemplative because the ‘o’ora was about the church Va’ine tini women and the rest of the congregation giving thanks to the minister and his wife for their ministry and farewelling them. The first gifts to be presented were two blowsheets. These had been gifted by Māmā No’otu, the president of the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini. She had done some of the sewing on the tivaivai and while she was a SDA, she was not a member of that particular SDA church, but she and her husband were invited guests. The women who had worked on the tivaivai did the presentation of the two blowsheets and then they presented the laboured over tivaivai manu.

As with the wedding ‘o’ora, Māmā Tirata was not part of the presenting party for the tivaivai. The other women all held part of the perimeter of the tivaivai, and holding it aloft, they processed from the back of the hall to the front where the minister and his wife were seated. The women placed the tivaivai reverently over the couple’s legs, and I watched as several of the women carefully attended to the arranging of the edges of the tivaivai as it draped on the floor. They addressed their task with obeisance and dedication as they made the tivaivai adorn the minister and his wife just so. Like the wedding ‘o’ora, the couple appeared wrapped and adorned in the tivaivai as they sat throne like accepting the gifts from the parishioners of the church. The pillows that Māmā Tirata had cut and which were sewn by the other Māmās to accompany the tivaivai, were propped at the minister’s feet. While the usual order of the hierarchy of textiles was maintained initially with the gifting of the textiles from the church Va’ine tini, with lesser textiles first followed by the tivaivai.
Individuals from other “departments” of the church then gave textile and non-textiles gifts which were laid at the ministers’ feet. These subsequent gifts were positioned in such a way so that did not obscure the singularised tivaivai. In part, this format of gifting directed the prestige onto the minister and his wife as the focus of the ‘o’ora, but it also drew attention to the industry of Māmā Tirata and the other Māmās in the production of the tivaivai, and this was amplified in the subsequent speeches.

One of the women who had worked on the tivaivai, and her husband, then gave a blowsheet gift, and then the husband spoke in a joking way. The women spoke after him, she apologised for her husband and his manner because she herself was quite emotional at the thought of saying goodbye to the minister and his wife. She began to talk about how they had tried to get the children (the young adults) to come to the crusade. She said while she and the other “mothers” had been stitching the tivaivai, they were reminded about how they “stitch the family together and how the family is stitched together”. The woman said that the children would not come to the crusade, and she had to lead by example. She talked about how much the tivaivai meant to her and the other “mothers”, and now that they had finished the tivaivai for the minister, it was time “to begin to stitch the families back together”. The woman’s weaving together of the ideology of tivaivai and her church beliefs were poignant reflections, and were said in light of the fact that she was having trouble with teenagers in her family at the time; her grandchildren did not want to do the island way, nor the church way. Māmā Tirata did not speak, but a number of subsequent speakers acknowledged the work of the “mothers” to sew the tivaivai and it was mentioned several times that the tivaivai was started and finished in three weeks. Then the minister spoke. He replied that he and his wife were honoured to be presented with a tivaivai in this way and that where they came from, quilts were a way to cherish and honour too. He talked about how the Afro-American women of Alabama made quilts and that they used them to look after their families and to pay homage to God. The ‘o’ora was about honouring the minister and his wife, the women wrapped the much worked on tivaivai with arō’a, esteem and affection, over the laps of the minster and his wife as representatives of God.

The shape of the church congregation as a “community” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) was delineated and reinforced with the continual reference to the sewers as “mothers”. The tivaivai was being made and allocated by the women as “mothers” from the base (Gudeman 2001, 2008). As the women sewed they were being appropriate Cook Islands women and mothers, and the allocation of this most valued valuable was about showing
with the highest earthly valuables, the group’s aro’a within their family in and to the face of God. To honour God’s representative on earth in such a way was to honour God and be conjoined with him. This was what was wrapped in tivaivai along with the minister and his wife. Tivaivai were once again used to mark the most important relationships in the Cook Islands women’s lives, in this instance, with their minister. The women were allotting sacra from the base of their church community at once to a cherished “son” within the community, but also to a most honoured individual as the representative of the wider SDA church community. Like the wedding ‘o’ora, the actual gifting of the tivaivai was a balance between the maintenance of the ‘kin’ relationships and a prestige as mana that was connected to the overt display of faith and work ethic, and the vehicle for this was tivaivai.

In this event while Māmā Tirata’s prowess was on display and her ta’unga status notified, it was not the only featured skill. As the tivaivai was presented without Māmā Tirata, as in the wedding ‘o’ora, this marked her as the ta’unga of the tivaivai and she was mentioned in the speeches accordingly. However, her absence from the presentation group gave space for the other Māmās who had done most of the sewing to be associated with the tivaivai, and be connected to the value that the tivaivai materialised as well. As befitted the church context, the collective effort of the “mothers” was privileged as well, and accorded prestige. The value materialised in the tivaivai by Māmā Tirata and the other Māmās, as homage in the form of dedication and industry, was talked up by the successive speakers as they publicly mentioned the short time frame that the production of the tivaivai had been achieved in. This, supported by the communal harmony and cooperation implied by the accomplishment of the finished tivaivai, materialised the church values of hard work and homage in a Cook Islands way. The tivaivai as a valuable was the focus of value, because it attested to the makers’ commitment to, and faith in, God. Honour was bestowed and wrapped around the minister and his wife at the supplication of the congregation as was their religious process, but the makers of the tivaivai accrued prestige in the form of religious homage materialised, and being seen to be appropriate Cook Islands women and “mothers”. That this was in marked contrast to the two other ‘o’ora I look at in this chapter where Māmā Tirata featured prominently, reveals a great deal about prestige and the

86 I was shown another tivaivai taorei in the Cook Islands done by another church Va’ine tini for a departing minister. The rhetoric that suffused the showing of this tivaivai to me, was all about how it had taken “20 women to make in just three weeks”. I was left with no doubts about the work feat of the women involved, and this impression was an important part of the production of the gift. Another send-off for a minister that I heard about was scheduled to take place on Rarotonga in August of 2010. Some 600 women were planning to each make a tivaivai to gift in an ‘o’ora to a departing minister, once again a mass display of industry and communal commitment was planned as religious homage.
extraction of value in the non-kin, non-religious domain of value which is more a construct of the New Zealand migrant context.

3 THE EXTRACTION OF VALUE AS MANA AT THE POLICE TIVAIVAI ‘O’ORA

The Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, Māmā Tirata Bailey’s Aitutakian group met each week at the Metro Theatre on Massey Road in Mangere. In the road frontage part of the theatre, the New Zealand Police had set up a community constables’ office. In early July 2001, a Cook Islands woman who worked as an office person there suggested that Māmā Tirata and the Māmās make a tivaivai with the New Zealand Police logo on to be given as a gift to a departing constable who was going to Bougainville. Māmā Tirata thought it was a great idea and despite the fact that the New Zealand Police logo did not lend itself easily to reproduction in fabric, she was not at all fazed by the task. She went that afternoon to “Pam’s” (the fabric shop she generally brought all her azlin from) to procure the necessary fabric colours and lengths. She appeared at the Va’ine tini meeting the following week with the various pieces for the logo either cut or drawn onto fabric to create the composite tivaivai manu/tivaivai tātāura. She had sewn the base fabric together and done the edges so it was ready for the set of pieces to be tacked on. While she finished the cutting, the other women organised the stretching out and taping down of the white base fabric onto the floor of the theatre. Māmā Tirata then unfurled the pieces she had cut that comprised the logo of the New Zealand Police and set them out onto the base fabric. It took her a while to arrange the pieces of the logo because some were so fiddly and narrow, but once she had finished, the result was a convincing rendering of the New Zealand Police logo, and the Māmās and I tacked the tivaivai together.

Māmā Tirata decided that there was to be no embroidery on the tivaivai, and that the women were to do just a plain slip stitch (panapana) to sew the logo pattern onto the backing fabric. Unlike other regular Cook Islands tivaivai, the Police logo tivaivai did not have any lines of symmetry and had a border in the Tahitian style, but it was nonetheless a tivaivai because as the subsequent event shows, it and the second one like it, worked as tivaivai valuables. Sewing began, and most of the women in the group worked on the tivaivai in the following weeks, some took it home to work on, others worked on it at the Wednesday group sessions. Apart from the tacking, I only did a very small amount of sewing on the Police logo tivaivai, Māmā Tirata told me to keep working on my own tivaivai because she wanted me to finish it.

87 Both New Zealand Police logo tivaivai also bore resemblance to Hawaiian flag quilts (cf. Jones 1973).
Figure 7: The first police logo *tivaivai* (left) and my *tivaivai* (right) being sewn in the doorway to the Metro Theatre by Māmā Tu and Māmā Tangi.

Māmā Tirata had cut this *tivaivai* for me when I had first joined the group at the beginning of the previous year. At the time she told me “If you want to know about *tivaivai*, you have to sew one”. It would take me, with a lot of help from various Māmās, just over 18 months to sew, and the finished product promised to be beautiful. By the end of July, the actual sewing on the first Police logo *tivaivai* was almost completed, as was the sewing of my *tivaivai*. But the ceremonial context that the Police logo *tivaivai* was bound for was escalating.

The Police logo *tivaivai* was no longer to be a simple gift to a departing constable; the Police hierarchy had decided that the *tivaivai* would be presented to the new incoming community constable, a young Samoan policeman called Officer Tua. The presentation was to take place at an official community event and the *ʻoʻora* format would be used as per the public gifting of *tivaivai* generally. Quite what the other outgoing constable received as his parting gift subsequently, I did not hear, but the Police logo *tivaivai* and the context it was bound for, as well as the work it was to do, was growing in profile, importance, and weight, as the Community Constables’ office, the Mangere Police hierarchy, and Māmā Tirata and the women from the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini sought to make the most of the public event - in their own ways. By this stage, the occasion scheduled for Wednesday the 8th of August, had become a full blown community event designed to not only welcome the new community constable, but to celebrate the Mangere East community as well. The status arena that
ensued at this event, and a similar one a year later, revealed how the Cook Islands parameters of prestige have been elaborated in the New Zealand context. These were an amplified version of the negotiation and accruing of prestige that Māmā Tirata had achieved at her daughter’s wedding ‘o’ora, and that all the Māmās had been a party to during the ‘o’ora to the minister.

The first Police tivaivai ‘o’ora

The escalating nature of the first Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora event meant that there were to be 35 invited guests from various political bodies, including the Manukau City Council, and the various community boards, a representative from the sitting Member of Parliament for Mangere, Phillip Taito Field’s office, senior officers of the New Zealand Police, as well as representatives from the other Pacific peoples’ communities at the event. News of the event featured on Pacific Islands radio networks in the build up to advertise the event, and the general crowd was expected to reach around 300 people. The Māmās from the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, with the help of the office women from the constables office, and financial contributions from the New Zealand Police, were responsible for food and the decoration of the venue, as well as the construction of the Police logo tivaivai.

The day before the event

Late in the afternoon on the day before the ceremony, the Māmās assembled at the Metro Theatre to decorate it and do the set up. This involved bedecking the hall with tivaivai, setting up tables on the stage for the dignitaries to be served and eat at, and in front of the stage for the food for the general audience, and chairs had to be arrayed out in rows facing the stage for the crowd expected. Māmā Tirata, Māmā Va’erua, Māmā Tu and I arrived in my car at around 4.30. We had a hefty pile of tivaivai in the boot made by the three women, along with my now finished tivaivai. The hall was a hive of activity. Other women from the group had already arrived along with assorted family members to help with the work of setting up. There were little children running around, and the older people were seated in the audience area to watch the preparations. One younger man, who was a nephew of one of the Māmās, was sorting out ladders and hanging mechanisms to solve the logistical problem of hanging the tivaivai from the walls without marking the wall surface. Māmā Aumata’s teenage daughters and her husband were setting out the chairs. Other women were in the hall kitchen doing the preparation and cooking for the piles of
food required for the requisite feast that would feed the crowd and the dignitaries the next day.

When I walked into the hall, carrying an arm full of tīvaivai, including my own, visible on top of the pile, one of the Māmās said to me rather acidly, “I hope you are not going to put up your tīvaivai [as part of the decoration]!” The stated issue was that I was not a Cook Islander, but in reality it was about power issues within the group and Māmā Tirata’s subsequently successful “extraction of value” (Turner 2006b), the intricacies of which became clearer as the event unfolded the next day. The statement from the other Māmā created a difficult moment. Māmā Tirata dealt with it. She stepped in and gave unassailable directions about what was to happen. She was determined that this tīvaivai - that she had cut for me - would have its first public showing at the event. She was adamant and told the other woman so, and she decreed that not only was it to be hung, but it was to hang up behind the stage as a backdrop to the ‘o’ora, as one of the two most prominently displayed tīvaivai in the hall. The other woman was silenced by Māmā Tirata’s unequivocal stance and her actualising of her status in such an overt and forthright manner, so nothing more was said. I was mortified to unwittingly be the apparent focus of dissent. But then, as Māmā Tirata proceeded to get the women organised to sort out the rest of the tīvaivai to be hung, the moment passed. However, her own agendas continued to prevail, because the tīvaivai she chose to decorate the front part of the hall with were quite specific. Those tīvaivai, which numbered around fourteen, had all been cut by Māmā Tirata or bore her designs on them.88 Māmā Tirata gave instructions to those doing the hanging as to the order they were to be arrayed in the wing areas adjacent to the stage area and over the edge of the stage. She gave a great deal of thought to which tīvaivai should hang where.

Māmā Tirata also had say over the organisation of the decoration in the rest of the hall. Various other Pacific Islander community groups and Cook Islands Va‘ine tini were to be represented at the event with displays of their handicrafts as well. However, their apportioned section in the hall was small and relatively insignificant compared to that devoted to the labours of the Tiare Māori Va‘ine tini women. Māmā Tirata had effectively consigned these other groups to the back left hand corner of the hall away from the stage and all the ritual action.

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88 One of these tīvaivai, which was hung in the front left hand quarter of the hall, was the first of the three veru (“shattered” style) tīvaivai manu that had been made by Māmā Tirata that I saw, the other two featured as decoration at her daughter wedding reception and ‘o’ora.
As the hanging mechanisms went up around the hall, and the walls and the stage area were festooned with the Tiare Māori group's *tivaivai*, the venue was effectively wrapped with the women’s dazzling kaleidoscopic display of beautiful *tivaivai*. It became apparent to me that the women of the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini and their sewing, and especially the expertise of Māmā Tirata, were visually the stars of the show. An honourable, but incisive and prescribed form of Polynesian one up (wo)manship was unfolding as the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini *tivaivai* eclipsed the efforts of the other groups, and the skill and prowess of Māmā Tirata was put so overtly on display at the expense of all the other women present. When the crowd witnessed the subsequent ‘o’ora, when the special *tivaivai* cut by Māmā Tirata was gifted, it was with a backdrop of the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini *tivaivai*, stamped all over with Māmā Tirata’s prowess. The stage was being set, literally, for a status arena that was really all about Māmā Tirata (and the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini by
association) specifically, and more generally about Cook Islandness vis-à-vis the other represented Pacific identities.

**The day of the event**

On the day of the event, a group of the Māmās were back working hard in the kitchen from early in the morning to finish the preparation of the food for the crowd expected. The event was scheduled to get underway at 11 a.m. The hall quickly filled up, as the crowd, which for the most part was comprised of New Zealand Cook Islanders and other New Zealand Pacific peoples, filed into the hall. The pre-school children from the Mangere Kia Orana Punanga Reo (Cook Islands language nest) all attended; many of the children were related to the women in the *Va‘ine tini* anyway. There were many older people some with little children in tow, and younger women also with children. As the crowd arrived the display of the *Va‘ine tini*‘s (and Māmā Tirata’s) tivaivai was a magnificent sight.

The event began with a prayer from a Cook Islands minister, and then a set of speeches were made by the various dignitaries in attendance. They collectively spoke about their hopes for the community and how the leaders and the people of the community needed to work with the New Zealand Police to look after everyone in Mangere East. Then the feast was served. Plates of food were placed on the dignitaries’ tables on the stage, and the general audience helped themselves to the food placed on the tables in front of the stage. Once the debris of the feast was cleared away and tables removed, the stage was prepared for the ‘o’ora, and the presentation of the Police logo tivaivai to the young officer began.

Officer Tua was instructed to sit on a chair in the middle of the stage, the Cook Islands drumming music began, and he was adorned with a floral ‘*ei katu* (head wreath) made by the Tiare Māori *Va‘ine tini* Māmās and various neck ‘*ei* and equivalent neck adornments from the other represented Polynesian communities. As the Cook Islands drumming intensified, from behind the audience and to one side of the hall, six of the *Va‘ine tini* Māmās began to parade up the side of the hall and up onto the stage. They were holding aloft the tivaivai emblazoned with the New Zealand Police logo. Māmā Tirata was not amongst the six, but Māmā Vaerua who was the most genealogically senior woman in the group, was. The other women were the president of the group, the treasurer, the secretary, and two of the other women. The Māmās ascended the steps to the stage and
held the *tivaivai* over the young good looking officer’s head and began to dance, swaying their hips in a light hearted but slightly seductive way underneath it with him. The imagery of the bed was explicit and the crowd roared with laughter, and yelled and cheered as the officer got up and danced too. Then the Māmās displayed the *tivaivai* for the crowd by holding it upright so the audience could see some of the detail of the Police logo on the *tivaivai*.

![Figure 9: The Māmās displaying the Police logo *tivaivai* on the stage, with the officer left off to the side.](image)

What struck me about this was that Officer Tua was left momentarily to one side while the *tivaivai* took centre stage. The displaying of the *tivaivai* was overt and orchestrated, and the choreography for this part of the proceedings was Māmā Tirata’s idea. As the Cook Islands drummers continued to pound out their rhythm, the Māmās swayed their hips in time as they wrapped the *tivaivai* around Officer Tua’s body. They continued to dance, as did the officer, and some of the dignitaries danced as well. Then the Māmās removed the *tivaivai* from the officer’s waist so he could sit down and they laid it over his knees in the wrapping style of an *‘o’ora* and the speeches resumed.

**Māmā Tirata’s extraction of value as prestige and reflected honour**

In the aftermath of the performance of the rousing *‘o’ora* of the beautifully executed Police logo *tivaivai*, in that hall so heavily decorated, wrapped even, with splendid *tivaivai*,
that bore the essence of Māmā Tirata's skill, Māmā Tirata came to the stage to speak. With microphone in hand and crowned with a fragrant floral ‘ei katu (head wreath), she addressed the crowd. She said that instead of going to the casino, the Māmās were doing tivaivai. She said the group was teaching women about tivaivai, and that “we want our young Cook Islands women to learn, we want our culture to stay alive”. She lectured that young women these days think that “the ones [the bedspreads] in the shops are better”. As she gestured to reference the display of tivaivai, she talked about how tivaivai meant so much more. She spoke at length about the difficulties she had had reproducing the New Zealand Police logo in fabric and how hard it had been for her to cut the pieces and create the tivaivai because of the intricacies of the Police logo. She did not mention that the actual sewing of the tivaivai had been done by the other women in the group. This was how the status arena that this ‘o’ora was, worked. The other women acquiesced and while Māmā Tirata’s speech essentially drew attention to her skill and prowess as a ta‘unga at the expense of the other women in the Va‘ine tini, they were elevated by association, at the expense of the other women in the hall. Despite this, or maybe because of it, Māmā Tirata spoke charismatically and eloquently and her plea to other New Zealand Cook Islands women to embrace tivaivai was heartfelt.

One of the other women in the group, the same woman who spoke at the minister’s ‘o’ora, got up to speak next, she said “look around and see the tivaivai, they are an expression of our culture and our people”. And as you looked around at the tivaivai on the walls, as the backdrop, and the tivaivai adorning the young constable, the tivaivai were an expression of Cook Islandness, but they were also explicitly an expression of Māmā Tirata’s prowess and skill. The overall effect was an aggrandisement of all things tivaivai, of Cook Islandness vis-à-vis other Pacific identities, but also of who Māmā Tirata was, her skill as a tivaivai maker and a power broker generally, and also within the Va‘ine tini itself, because what the display of tivaivai was about was value. The public display of Cook Islands valuables in that context amounted to a display of Cook Islands materialised values, which created access to and the axis of the extraction of value as mana as in prestige and honour, for key players, and Māmā Tirata most of all.

I was sitting in the general audience as these speeches were being delivered and an older woman sitting on one side of me muttered with some chagrin and seemingly in reaction to Māmā Tirata’s speech, half to me and half to herself: “what is going to die is the Va‘ine tini, not the tivaivai”, which I took to be distain at Māmā Tirata’s performance and
enactment of Cook Islandsness. And on my other side, a younger woman in her 30s who was the daughter of one of the older Māmās from the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, leant over and said to me, “Mum is too impatient to teach me, I need to learn from someone else”. Both comments were responses to the circulation of value that was inherent in the actual gifting of the tāvai but also in the powerful, beautiful display of tāvai en masse, and the multi-layered performance by Māmā Tirata and the other Māmās, including the food, the dancing, and the flowers. The younger woman who was New Zealand born, was moved by the circulation of value to the extent that she wanted to learn to do tāvai too. The older woman responded out of annoyance, even jealousy of Māmā Tirata and her status.

This was also what the comment from the woman the day before questioning the hanging of my tāvai was about. While my tāvai was reasonably well sewn, in that context what was put on display had little to do with me. At the time, as a papa’ā and a researcher, I found it acutely embarrassing and uncomfortable not only to unwittingly be the focus of simmering dissent in the group, but to also have my sewing so publicly on display, but the moment of conflict was very revealing. What was being played out were a set of power issues within the group. The fact that my tāvai had been cut by Māmā Tirata, as had the other tāvai hung beside mine as a backdrop, was indicative of Māmā Tirata’s more or less blatant manoeuvring to showcase her skill in the limelight at an event that had been growing in prestige daily in the build up prior to the event. And the other woman didn’t like it, possibly because she felt that Māmā Tirata had overstepped the mark that determined how to be appropriate in going about gaining prestige as mana – an observable but seldom talked about reality.

Māmā Tirata was very proud of the fact that she had been involved in getting me, a papa’ā to actually finish a tāvai, and not just any tāvai either; the pattern was complex and the finished article rather magnificent because of this. She was intent on almost shaming other Cook Islands women who had not got around to sewing one into action – thereby elevating her prowess and prolific output of this essential measure of value vis-à-vis other Cook Islands women. Her association with me and her ability to get me, a papa’ā, to finish a tāvai showed the breadth of her command of things tāvai. But I was also the recipient of prestige via the value that I had generated by finishing my tāvai. Whilst Māmā Tirata basked in the display of her prowess as my tāvai hung so prominently on

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89 The other tāvai hung as a backdrop was one sewn by Māmā Tu but cut by Māmā Tirata, it was a magnificent yellow daffodil tāvai tātura.
the stage at the first Police tivaivai event, I was the papaʻā she had taught and “the papaʻā woman who had finished a tivaivai”. Whilst it was not lost upon me that I was collected up by her, her love of all things tivaivai was all encompassing and her generosity towards me and her embracing of my research were still as much about kindness as they were about the potential benefits for herself. She had cut a difficult and intricate patterned tivaivai tātāaura that required proficiency in embroidery and stamina to complete the large amount of sewing, she made it neither easy for me nor did she guarantee herself any accolades by setting such a task for me. Fittingly, my hard work (with help from various Māmās) was what reflected her prowess; the prestige in other words, was hard earned. That she should be the one to bask in the laudation of my tivaivai as the taʻunga who cut it at that first Police logo tivaivai event, was appropriate. The pattern was her own, and it was what made the tivaivai beautiful in the first place. But like the other women, I was elevated because of my association with her, vis-à-vis other women in the hall that day. Her engineering of this context was indicative of her skill at power brokering and manœuvring with the teina (junior) status (see below).

As Māmā Tirata and the other Māmā got up to address the crowd, what was being articulated via the speeches, the decoration and the gift of the tivaivai, was the ideology of tivaivai, and the centrality of the textiles to (in this instance) a stylised mothering, Cook Islands womanhood, Cook Islandness and being a Cook Islander in New Zealand. Given the context, it was also about the role of the values that tivaivai materialised in being a

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90 My experiences with Māmā Tirata and the other taʻunga in Auckland, notably Māmā Porio, were for the most part very positive. I was not beset with the raft of problems other papaʻā researchers have experienced (cf. MacAuley 2002).

91 The decoration with tivaivai was used in another context by the Police. The clear mandate that the Tiare Māori Māmās were given to adorn and wrap Police contexts with tivaivai to evoke particular values was made clear to me a couple of months after the first ʻoʻora event at an event in Otara on a late winter’s evening in October 2001. The Māmās from the Tiare Māori Vaʻine tini had been asked to supply and display tivaivai at a New Zealand Police recruitment drive aimed at getting more Pacific Islands women to join the New Zealand Police force. It was a Thursday evening, so Māmā Tirata had instructed the women to gather a set of tivaivai and transport themselves and their tivaivai to Otara at the appropriate time to help hang the tivaivai in the venue. The hall was a room connected to the main public library in the Otara town centre, I remember at the time being baffled as to why we had to traipse to Otara to hang tivaivai at an event which as it transpired, was attended by not a single potential female Cook Islander recruit. The women who did attend were Samoans and a few Tongans. Some ten or so tivaivai were hung around the room, and the effect was to preface the proceedings with manifestations of appropriate Cook Islands, (read Pacific Islands) femaleness. The Māmās and I ended up staying for the recruitment meeting, because we had to take the tivaivai down at the end of the night and take them home. So the room was effectively lined with tivaivai, and a band of senior ‘appropriate’ Pacific Islands women. Only after I began to understand the levels that tivaivai work on, and how they reference the ideological way that Cook Islands women talk about tivaivai did I understand how values were being articulated in that display to even non-Cook Islanders.
Bastion against the range of social issues in South Auckland. As Māmā Tirata stood there, laying claim overtly to the active creation of the material focus of the event, the Police logo tivaivai, surrounded by specific tivaivai she was associated with as a ta'unga, she was effectively emblematic of what it meant to be an appropriate Cook Islands woman. It seemed to me, and perhaps to those who voiced their dissent or support in one way or another, that if “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, how large a woman are you when you stand publicly at a high profile community event seemingly emblematic of what an appropriate New Zealand Cook Islands woman is? The overall effect of Māmā Tirata’s performance, as well as the ritual and passion of the ‘o’ora, including the dancing, the tivaivai decorated venue, the food and the floral ‘ei, was very powerful. Value was emerging to regulate a process that was ultimately about the creation of people; the crowd, Officer Tua and the New Zealand Police, Cook Islanders as a group, the Va’ine tini women and me, but most of all about Māmā Tirata.

**The second Police tivaivai ‘o’ora**

If Māmā Tirata’s ability to extract value at the first Police tivaivai ‘o’ora was patent, it was almost palpable at the second ‘o’ora at the bigger, grander event that featured the second Police logo tivaivai for the more senior officer just over a year later. The success of the first community event was heralded and the event was widely reported in the South Auckland media. The logo tivaivai went on display at Auckland Police Headquarters in Auckland City for several weeks after the event, to perpetuate the impression of the way the New Zealand Police were lauded in South Auckland by the community. The momentum that this positive publicity afforded the constabulary of South Auckland gave rise to the commissioning of a second Police logo tivaivai almost immediately after the first event. Because of the success of the event for Officer Tua, it was decided that a more senior Samoan policeman, Officer Alf Filipaina, would be honoured in a similar way. Officer Filipaina, was the Pacific Islands liaison officer for South Auckland, and his ‘o’ora was to be on a grander scale and at a bigger event. Māmā Tirata had cut the second tivaivai within a week or two of the first event, it had been tacked (tāmoumou) by the group, and the sewing completed a month or so later. However, it took a year for the forces and agendas that were at play to culminate in the staged event in September of 2002.

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92 Quite whose decision this was I never found out, but my sense was that it was made by the Police hierarchy in South Auckland.
The day of the event

This event was held in a much larger hall in Otara, again the venue was lined with tivaivai, some belonging to the women from the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, others to women from other groups. The Tiare Māori women did not do the food for this event because of the sheer numbers expected, nor did Māmā Tirata quite have the same say in the way the hall was decorated, but her skill at manoeuvring the value parameters were such that she still gained maximum prestige from the event. The luminaries of the south Auckland Pacific Islands communities were invited to the event, including the Samoan heavy weight boxer David Tua, amongst other sporting and political figures. There were tables set up around the perimeter of the hall which were covered in tivaivai, blowsheets, crocheted tablecloths, and pillow cases made by the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini and other groups. The audience of some 600 people assembled at midday, and the event began with speeches from the array of community dignitaries. Samoan and then Tongan dancers entertained the crowd, then the feast was provided. People ate their fill, and then at least a quarter of the assembled crowd left straight after – not quite what the organisers had hoped for. The ‘o’ora of the single tivaivai took place straight after the feast.

The actual presentation of the second tivaivai was much the same as the first. Officer Filipaina was seated on a chair in front of the audience and endowed with a floral ‘ei katu (head wreath) and multiple neck ‘ei given by the assorted island groups represented at the event. This time, Māmā Tirata got up to speak before the ‘o’ora. She wore a leaf ‘ei katu⁹³ (head wreath) and she spoke impassionedly about the tivaivai that was about to be presented. She described its construction and her primary role in the process, and she spoke about the importance of tivaivai. Again she did not mention the work put into the tivaivai by the other women. Then the Cook Islands drummers began to play hard and loud. Four women from the Va’ine tini, the president, the secretary, and Māmā Vaerua, and three other women who were high profile women in the Cook Islands community in Auckland, had assembled at the back of the hall and were holding the tivaivai between them. One of these women, Māmā Maui Bradbury, was a relative of Māmā Tirata’s, and had been the

⁹³ In the Cook Islands, the most elite form of ‘ei and ‘ei katu are made from maire (Polypodium sp.) leaves (Underhill-Sem 2001: 30), described by Buse and Taringa as a “scented fern” (1995: 213). This form of ‘ei is use to adorn dignitaries especially in the Cook Islands. While the leaf ‘ei katu that Māmā Tirata and the other Māmās wore that day were not made of maire (which does not grow in New Zealand), they were referencing this more elite form of adornment with the palm leaves they used.
head of the Westpac Bank in Avarua on Rarotonga for a number of years. Another woman, Māmā Anne Popongi, was an elected member of a community board for the Manukau City Council, the other woman I did not know but her seniority was apparent. These were elite women in the Cook Islands community, but also in the wider New Zealand financial and political environment. And while none of them were active members of the Va’ine tini, as in they never came to the weekly meeting, Māmā Tirata referred to them as members of her group, and there were seemingly no dissenters to this. These elite women clearly saw fit to be associated with the group and this particular event. Anne Popongi had been one of the dignitaries on the stage at the first event, but wanted to be more involved, more visible even at the second event. Such involvement was elevating for her and the other women, but it was equally so for Māmā Tirata as the maker of the tivaivai.

As the drumming music suffused the venue, the women paraded from the back of the hall to the front holding the second Police logo tivaivai manu aloft. The crowd cheered and clapped in time with the drumming. Officer Filipaina sat imposingly at the front of the hall; I wondered how he must have felt being the focus of the procession that was dancing towards him with full Cook Islands ceremony, egged on by the large crowd amid the noise and crowd euphoria. When the Māmās reached Officer Filipaina, they held the tivaivai over his head as he sat on the chair. The Māmās all danced saucily underneath the Police logo tivaivai, and while the others continued to hold the tivaivai aloft, Māmā Vaerua, as the most genealogically senior woman in the Va’ine tini, danced alone in front of Officer Filipaina and the crowd cheered. Officer Filipaina stood and danced with her and the other Māmās, and a number of other men and women got up from the audience to join the dance. As Filipaina stood under the tivaivai, another Cook Islands woman from another Va’ine tini group came and wrapped a tie-dye pāreu around his middle. Then the Tiare Māori women took the Police logo tivaivai and physically wrapped it around Officer Filipaina – over the top of the lesser pāreu textile, obscuring this gift from view, effectively completely trumping the lesser textile. The tivaivai was the more elite gift and Officer Filipaina was literally encased and wrapped in honour as the drumming reached a crescendo.

94 I first met Māmā Maui Bradbury in Rarotonga the first time I was there in 1999. She was at the Annual General Meeting of CIANGO (Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organizations) which was run by Māmā Vereara Maeva (see Chapter Seven). At the time Māmā Maui was head of the Westpac in Avarua. I spoke to her after the meeting and explained what I was doing in Rarotonga and what my research was about. She told me that she had only just started sewing tivaivai recently, and despite the fact that there was torrential rain pouring down outside the AGM venue, she insisted on retrieving her tivaivai sewing from her car so she could show me, such was her excitement at what she was achieving with her sewing.
Figure 10: Māmā Vaerua dancing in front of Officer Filipaina, as the other Māmās hold the logo *tivaivai* aloft.

Figure 11: Officer Filipaina being wrapped in the Police logo *tivaivai*.

The Māmās then unwrapped the *tivaivai* from him, and made him sit on the chair again. They then draped the *tivaivai* over his legs. He looked venerated, eminent even as he sat resplendent and wrapped in the logo *tivaivai*, and adorned with flower and other forms.
of ‘ei. Māmā Tirata, who had been standing off to the officer’s right hand side with the microphone in hand throughout the ‘o’ora, resumed her speech. Speaking mostly in English but with the occasional Cook Islands Māori word thrown in, as the ta’unga of the group. She reiterated the centrality of tivaivai in Cook Islands culture, and the effect was to elevate tivaivai above the textiles of the other Pacific island nation groups represented in the venue that day. Filipaina eventually got to speak. He talked about his police work and how the New Zealand Police were trying to work with the community, and how the community of South Auckland was a thriving vibrant place and the police’s role in fostering this. He thanked the assembled crowd for honouring him in this way and at the end of his speech, as he smoothed his hand across the tivaivai wrapped and draped over him; he said “this is what I really wanted”. A very public honouring indeed – for the officer, the tivaivai, the women of the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini, Cook Islandsness and ultimately, Māmā Tirata.

![Figure 12](image_url)

**Figure 12**: Māmā Tirata addressing the crowd as Officer Filipaina sits wrapped and adorned with the Police logo tivaivai.

4 THE CIRCULATION OF VALUE: THE ACCRUING OF MANA AND HONOUR

The way Māmā Tirata was able to gain prestige as mana through the process of the Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora events, as well as during the wedding ‘o’ora she did for her daughter, and via her part in the ‘o’ora for the minister, is about the relationship among value, values and valuables. It was the causative effects of the traffic of tivaivai and what
they materialised in ceremonial events as the display of the ritual complex that allowed Māmā Tirata to garner prestige. Before I analyse the processes inherent in the Police logo *tivaivai 'o'ora*, I need to look at the mechanics of extraction of value and how this actually works.

**The mechanism of extraction of value in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy**

The circulation of value happens in all Cook Islands ritual contexts. In all three ‘*o’ora* I look at in this chapter, and in the wedding ‘*o’ora* in the previous chapter (this also applies to the other event contexts I discuss in subsequent chapters), “value” was circulating, and values were being enacted and materialised as valuables were being exchanged in a series of multifaceted, multidimensional levels (cf. Turner 2006a, 2006b, 2008). The prominence of Māmā Tirata and the Va’ine tini women and their labours in the two New Zealand Police events, as crystallised in the singularised *tivaivai* that were presented to the two officers, along with the *tivaivai* decorated hall, were the obvious hallmarks of Cook Islandness that facilitated this circulation of value in these contexts. The gifting of *tivaivai* in both the wedding ‘*o’ora* and the ‘*o’ora* to the minister, conducted values in the same way. But the provision of the feasts at all the events (but particularly at the first Police logo *tivaivai* event because it was done by the Tiare Māori women), the proliferation of flower and leaf ‘*ei* and ‘*ei katu*, and the Cook Islands dancing (cf. Alexeyeff 2009b) were part of this circulation of Cook Islands value and the materialisation of this as values too, because these were all signifiers of Cook Islands muliebrity and appropriateness. Circulation as a more general form of “communication” (Turner 1989: 263) of value, as opposed to just the actual gifting or exchange of the *tivaivai* as a moment in the total process of social production, was occurring with the display of the textiles, the food, the dancing, and the flowers. These circulating media of value, where *tivaivai* were the most potent because they were the most elite expression of value, created the ritual complex.

The parameters of how value works in each of the three value domains, the kinship, the non-kinship, and the religious, as parts of the realm of mutuality (Gudeman 2001, 2008) for Cook Islanders, all operate in a similar way. While the same elements are present across the three value domains, what gets foregrounded and what gets backgrounded, and therefore, what is “gained” (Guyer 2004) are slightly different. In terms of the ethnographic contexts that I have been discussing in this chapter and the last, the gains for Māmā Tirata
in particular were different to an extent, but in each ‘o’ora, the core values of aro’a and the 
primacy of kinship were issued in one way or another.

Māmā Tirata’s daughter’s wedding ‘o’ora: The aro’a that connects a mother and 
child, as in domestic aro’a was writ large and literally displayed in the wedding ‘o’ora, and 
this facilitated the display of public aro’a because of the reciprocity being enacted between 
communities via the gifting that went on to Māmā Tirata before the event. It was this 
display and the extent of the gifts, along with the performance of the ‘o’ora, that generated 
honour for Marie the daughter, and prestige as mana for Māmā Tirata as the mother and 
the recipient of other gifts that represented obligations she had accrued. What Māmā 
Tirata gained from the staging of the wedding ‘o’ora and the traffic in value, values and 
valuables that she undertook, was a display of her appropriate mothering, her muliebrity, 
and her financial resources and network of obligations and connections in the diaspora. 
Māmā Tirata’s inherent ability to bring about this display and performance gave her 
prestige as mana, because she was doing all the right things that Cook Islanders 
ideologically consider appropriate. In other words, by putting her values of kinship on 
display in the ‘o’ora, by doing domestic aro’a as public mothering, which in turn invited 
others to enact public aro’a between their community and Māmā Tirata’s by gifting, Māmā 
Tirata was working within the structural parameters of value. So prestige was a 
consequence of this display of the maintenance of core kin relationships with her family as 
a community, and between other communities as reciprocity.

The ‘o’ora to the minister: In the ‘o’ora to the minister, the community from which 
the tivaivai was allocated from the base was the church congregation. The mother-child 
bond was evoked and connected to religious beliefs, via the use of the word “mothers” to 
talk about the women who made the tivaivai and to draw the church community together. 
The gain in this context was more egalitarian. Māmā Tirata and her status and skill as a 
ta’unga, were situated in the midst of the other Māmās’ skill at sewing, because what was 
displayed in the ‘o’ora was communally produced quantities of materialised homage to God 
as dogged commitment to work and industry. That this had been done with skill, quietude, 
and Christian feminine decorum, in a very tight time frame, was important and therefore 
prestigious. The Māmās had the opportunity via the ‘o’ora to publicly cherish the minister 
as a “son” so their exemplary mothering along with their commitment to their faith was on 
display too, and so they gained prestige as mana.
In each of these ‘o’ora, tivaivai were used to materialise the particular version of aro’a being expressed, as they were in the Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora. In each context, there was a version of mothering evoked, and traits of Cook Islands muliebrity featured from dancing to floral adornment, to Christian poise and commitment to work; all were there, the range was just backgrounded or foregrounded as the context required. But in all the ‘o’ora, the tivaivai in each context were effectively fetishised as the source of the value, and this was causative. As Turner (2008: 44) argues, circulation of value drives, powers even, other processes that are derived from the exposition of values and the materialising of these as valuables. Such processes have to do with the extraction of value in one form or another as power. In the Cook Islands ceremonial arena, this is about the acquisition and accruing of prestige.

To understand how the actualising of value takes place in contexts like this range of ‘o’ora, Turner details the relationship between the realm of ceremonial arena, value, valuables and values. He contends that the development of a public ritual realm, where the circulation of “symbolic tokens of value” takes place is “an essential concomitant of the development of the generalized forms of value that circulate within it” (Turner 2006b: 20). Hence, both the context as the institutional frame and the “circulating symbolic medium”, as in tivaivai”, constitute the complementary components of a total system of communication and transaction of social value” (Turner 2006b: 20). This is how religious homage is enacted in the ‘o’ora to the minister, the balance between relationship maintenance and prestige acquisition is done in the wedding ‘o’ora, and how what Turner (2006b: 20) calls “exploitation” brought about the claiming of value as mana by Māmā Tirata (and Officer Filipaina, see below) at the expense of others in a more overt status arena than the Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora events were. The dynamics of this I look at now.

**Extraction of Value in the Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora**

Officer Tua, and in turn Officer Filipaina, were literally wrapped in the skills of the Māmās as the tivaivai emblazoned with the Police logo were wrapped around their waists and then draped over their legs after they were seated. But while the individual officers and the gifting of the specific Police logo tivaivai were ostensibly the focus of both the events, there was a great deal more going on. There were different relationships being enacted and the layers of prestige associated with the display of these relationships were
complex processes of orchestrated extraction of value and manipulation inherent in the staging of the events, and this was all about prestige as mana.

The relationship between the New Zealand Police and the Mangere East community at the first event, and then the wider South Auckland Pacific peoples’ communities and the New Zealand Police at the second, were on display, as was the relationship between the Cook Islands community\(^95\) and other Pacific Islander communities. All involved veneers that referenced relational reciprocity but covered up (or not as the case may be) some form of prestige negotiation arena. While there was the pan-Pacific trumping going on, the same process was mirrored in the besting by the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini \(\text{vis-à-vis}\) the other Cook Islands Va’ine tini and Pacific Islands groups. This was also enacted on an individuals’ level as Māmā Tirata was exalted and aggrandised at the expense of the other women, (a similar process was happening for Officer Filipaina as well but with different outcomes).

The various layers of prestige extraction, besting, negotiating and accruing by groups and Māmā Tirata as an individual, were a consequence of the traffic in value that was created by the ritual complex displayed and enacted at the two Police logo tivaivai ‘o’ora events.

At both events, the officers were being honoured in a Cook Islands way amid the South Auckland collective, the relationship between the New Zealand Police and the Mangere East community in the first event and then the bigger South Auckland Pacific community in the second, were being literally and figuratively vested in elite and esteemed cloth wealth. The consequences of this in the two events were the same up to a point, but the prestige derived by Officer Filipaina at the second event was more explicit (see below). The role that the New Zealand Police generally, and the two officers specifically, did in dealing with frontline crisis management police work from issues to do with alcohol and drugs, to burglary and domestic violence, as well as police initiated community

\(^95\) The notion of the Cook Islands community is a fairly recent construct. Loomis (1991:46) has noted that the notion of ‘Cook Islands people’ did not exist before the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century. The Cook Islands are a conglomeration of what were the Hervey Islands and certain northern islands to facilitate the New Zealand colonial administration. The so-called Cook Islands community only came about when people came to NZ and the post-war Fraser Government began handing over welfare and housing problems to what was labelled as the ‘Cook Islands community’ (Loomis 1991:46; 1990). What is in fact the primary social reference point for most migrants’ and New Zealand born Cook Islanders’ allegiance, and the focus of their social processes is island (enua) groupings, extended kin groups and church congregations (Loomis 1991:48). The formation of enua organisations has been particularly important (Loomis 1991:46; 1993:234). The Manihiki, Atiu and Pukapuka enua all have multiple landholdings complete with buildings for communities events in various locations in New Zealand, Australia and in other Pacific islands like Tahiti. The Pukapuka enua have halls in Auckland, Hawkes Bay and Brisbane, and the head of the Pukapuka community in Auckland commented to Evelyn Marsters in a recent interview that “Auckland is the capital city of Pukapuka” (Marsters, personal correspondence July 2011).
development programmes, was consciously honoured by the South Auckland communities by the gifting of the specific tivaivai at the two events. The staging of both Police logo tivaivai events had the appearance of the communities giving, bestowing even, honour on the officers and the New Zealand Police, and there was genuine aro’a expressed by the gifts of the tivaivai. But the fact that both events were police initiated implied a degree of contrived artifice that had to do with the prestige component of the two events. But this was sanctioned within general Polynesian modes of prestige negotiation and accruing, that both Police logo tivaivai were commissioned by the police albeit at the prompting of a Cook Islander woman in the first instance, was part of the staging of the event, and that the various Pacific Islander groups and individuals made the most of this was appropriate Cook Islands and Polynesian process.

However, the difficulties that this reality posed for the Va’ine tini women were revealed in a series of discussions that took place in the weeks after the first tivaivai was commissioned as the women sewed the fiddly pieces of fabric onto the base to create the New Zealand Police logo in relief on the fabric. The issue of compensation for materials used and time spent in producing the two Police logo tivaivai inevitably came up. This series of discussions not only highlighted the difference between money in the realm of mutuality and the realm of market, but they were also about managing the new parameters of value that the events posed. A week or two before the big show for Officer Tua, when production of the Police tivaivai was all but complete, there was a discussion at the Wednesday meeting about whether the Police logo tivaivai was a “gift or not”. One of the women was quite worried and recalcitrant about it. The implication was that the New Zealand Police were buying the tivaivai from the women, but the momentum that the actual event was gathering and the Tiare Māori women’s involvement in it contradicted this. The out and out mercantile sale of tivaivai is a contested issue (see Chapter Seven), and in this instance any sense of buying a tivaivai imping on the integrity of the women - but also the police. I think the woman who voiced her concerns was aware of this disjuncture, and because she was oriented by Cook Islands conventions around gifting, she was adamant that if the tivaivai was being given as a gift to the police and Officer Tua, then the group was to get no money for it. But she was appeased by the consensus that a

96 The fabric for each tivaivai would have cost around $NZNZ100, Māmā Tirata usually ‘charged’ around $NZ60 for her cutting services, which was seen as a rima aro’a (literally ‘hand love’), the sense conveyed is of a gift rather than a payment, and then there were the hours that the women from the group put into tacking and then actually stitching the two tivaivai.
“donation”, a gift in other words, towards the production of the first and then the second tivaivai was completely acceptable. The issue was how the monetary offering was framed. But it seemed to me that what the Māmā was also saying was that it was important that it was a gift – for all concerned.

As the dictionary entry indicates, ‘o’ora have been definitionally about weddings (see Chapter Three), however, as one of the Māmās told me in Auckland in 2010, somewhat sardonically, “the ‘o’ora used to be just for weddings, now they use them for everything.” In other words, the conferring and gifting of the two New Zealand Police logoed tivaivai were wholly modern events. Not only did they take place in the non-kinship value domain, but they were also products of the transnational nature of the Pacific Islander communities in South Auckland and the relationship between Pacific peoples’ groups and the New Zealand Police. The rhetoric in the speeches at both events was all about togetherness. Symbolically, just as the officers were wrapped, the community was wrapped in its turn as the assembled crowds were contained in the halls lined with tivaivai, as the circulation of value transpired. It seemed to me that in commissioning the two special tivaivai, the New Zealand Police wanted to evoke the sense that the community were literally wrapping their hopes for their young people and their families in the safe keeping of the officers as the tivaivai were given, whereby to honour the officers in this way, was to be seen to entrust them with the safe keeping of their Pacific Islands communities. This was more apparent at the first event for Officer Tua, where the rhetoric of the speeches focused on togetherness, care, and the idea of the New Zealand Police and the Pacific communities working together towards common goals. However, it seemed to me that the efficacy of both the events was bringing the communities together in culturally sanctioned public ceremonies, but what was inevitably a concomitant of such events was the ensuing status arena. The rhetoric was about uniting the South Auckland communities and the New Zealand Police, and hopefully this was abetted, but that the reality was also about the aggrandisement of groups and specific individuals was patent.

This was most apparent at the second event which was perhaps a little more contrived. Looking with hindsight now, the second event for Officer Alf Filipaina could be viewed as a building block in his subsequent political career and his capacity to court the Pacific Islander vote. A year or so after the event, he was elected to the Manukau City Council, and was a sitting member for a number of years. Then, in 2010 with the restructuring of the multiple cities in the Auckland region into a single super city, Alf
Filipaina went on to be elected onto the Auckland super city council as one of two representatives for the Manukau ward, and one of the 20 councillors who along with the mayor, now oversee the running of local body politics in the greater Auckland area (Mangnall 2010).

Another consequence of the exposé of pan-Polynesian honouring was the trumping of Cook Islandsness over other Pacific Islander community identities. The circulation of value that transpired at both events was also about the triumph of Cook Islandsness over other forms of composite diasporic Pacific identities. At both Police tivaivai events, the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini’s collective identity as an Aitutakian group was over ridden by the composite Cook Islands label that differentiated the women from other Pacific peoples. The fact that this Cook Islands identity is a recent diasporic construct (cf. Crocombe 1994; Loomis 1990a, 1991, 1993; Macpherson 1996; Mitaera 1991) was part of the transnational nature of Cook Islanders lives as defined within the New Zealand political economy. The ritual events were about the exposition of Polynesian values generally, but Cook Islands value, values and valuables in particular. Here were the textiles of the Cook Islands given prominence of place amongst the communities of Pacific Islanders in South Auckland. The effect was that Cook Islands textiles, Cook Islands womanhood, and a stylised Cook Islands mothering were privileged above all others. Cook Islandness was exalted. Tivaivai, an ‘o’ora, Cook Islands floral ‘ei and ‘ei katu, and the dancing of the Māmās were privileged over other collective expressions of Pacific women’s wealth, but it was Māmā Tirata who arguably accrued the most value through the course of the two events.

Māmā Tirata and the consequences of her extraction of value

That the extraction of value by an individual like Māmā Tirata, vis-à-vis all the other women at the Police tivaivai events, created forms of conflict and to an extent, a disruption of social order (cf. Turner 2006b: 21), was inevitable. The women from the group did all the hours and hours of sewing, but it was Māmā Tirata who received the accolades, and the positioning of herself physically on the stages during the two Police tivaivai ‘o’ora facilitated this.\(^{97}\) Her choice of specific tivaivai to decorate the venues, as well as her talking up of her primary role in the production of the Police logo tivaivai explicitly during the speeches she made at each event, located her at the centre of, and as the instigator of, what was most valued by Cook Islanders. At the first Police tivaivai ‘o’ora event, this was

\(^{97}\) Māmā Tirata did the same thing during the ‘o’ora for her daughter at her wedding, and she did this in a more muted way in the ‘o’ora to the minister.
evidenced by the chagrin that some women experienced with “the Māmā Tirata show”; the comment from the woman in the audience beside me was a case in point as was the fullness of the reasons behind the Va’ine tini woman’s opposition to the hanging of my tivaivai. Such disruption is provided by the contestation over prestige and hierarchy and specifically the parameters of the negotiable nature of the teina/tuakana (junior/senior) status, because in many ways, Māmā Tirata was being the quintessential teina (junior).

As I discussed in the introductory chapter, the teina/tuakana (junior/senior) ranking orders a more muted version of hierarchy in the family unit, but in the public domain, it has much wider implications. This way of behaving provides the framework for both the transaction of value and the potential appropriation of “surplus” (Turner 2008) because it is not a given that the tuakana will always be the one in charge nor the recipient of prestige. In terms of the latter, Rasmussen (1995: 63) contends that the apparent emphasis on the first-born male gives the impression of an absolute hierarchy, but it is in fact more negotiable and the system has the provision for the junior to assert power on certain levels. Whilst the system defaults to the first born, there is potential for the junior to contest should they have the ability, skills, and sagacity to do so, which leads to contestations of power. It was this aspect of the system that applied to Māmā Tirata.

Cook Islands hierarchies are not all consuming in the way they are for Tongans for example, however, they do influence ways of behaving and existing, whereby the parameters of teina/tuakana create the matrix that people exist in their extended kin networks, as well as how a non-ranked person can gain traction in certain contexts. Kin connections are at once a set of spatial relationships, as well as an ordered hierarchy that dictates a way of acting in relationship to others. I often heard people speak in this way, in terms of kinship structures, dynamics, and as a mode of action, but my understanding only grew in regard to how this orientates how people even operate in the world wholly and completely, as my research progressed, but especially as I tried to understand what Māmā

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98 In mid-2010, I went to see the Māmās at the Tiare Māori Va‘ine tini, which had in the intervening years also become a group for both elderly women and men. One of the Māmās had died and I felt very sad about it and really just wanted to talk to the other Māmās that had known her too and to grieve with them before the funeral. I was talking to Māmā Mere who was the convener of the group and in the course of our discussion she talked about various people, some of whom were in the hall. She prefaced each discussion about someone (herself and others) foremost in terms of how they were connected to others we were talking about. The terms were how she and everyone else were connected to one another vis-à-vis genealogical positioning and she used both a kin term (as in aunty, uncle, cousin etc) and the teina/tuakana status vis-à-vis the person being referred to. She was essentially describing a matrix of relationships that connected people in New Zealand, Australia, in the islands, at that moment, and back through time. It wasn’t just a way to explain to a papa‘ā, it was a way of existing, of being.
Tirata was doing, and how she was doing it in the ‘o’ora I detail in this chapter and the last.

I subsequently asked Wilkie Rasmussen about this:

Jane: That constant reckoning of family. There’s no understanding from the papa’ā point of view of how that works. There’s no sense of how that operates.

Wilkie Rasmussen: The papa’ā dismisses the cousin thing... but it’s much more. It’s a way of living... it’s a way of operating, transacting with each other; negotiating what needs to be done. [Personal interview, Rarotonga, August 2010]

But Rasmussen went on to expand this notion, and effectively linked domestic constructions of kin with power structures which are writ large in the public domain of the Cook Islands ceremonial economy where value is ultimately accrued (cf. Rasmussen 1995). He said:

I think the attachment to all of that is there’s an element of mana [authority and power], and that element of mana is the one that makes you the appropriate person to talk to that other person in a sense because you would have the authority and mana over him or her... sometimes in events, I don’t just get up and say look sort this out and that out, they’d just ignore me but if someone with that appropriate genealogical connection and link which this person knows that she holds that kinship authority over me, and mana over me, then the natural reaction is yes they can tell others what to do [or garner prestige from the context]. [Personal interview, Rarotonga, 10th August 2010]

The multidimensional association of tuakana with authority is clear, but how a teina successfully negotiates their way outside of this is through talent, “wit and wile” (Rasmussen 1995: 62), and the display of this in appropriate contexts. In other words, through the traffic in value, the display of values and inevitably, the gifting and/or use of valuables. So for Māmā Tirata, her phenomenal abilities to create tivaivai and her acute intelligence, gave her the means to be a clever teina, but contradictorily a degree of humility was required alongside the ambitious drive.

**Māmā Tirata as the teina**

To my knowledge, Māmā Tirata had no genealogically elevated position in the titular hierarchy on her home island of Aitutaki, but in the migrant context, she was the exemplary talented, ambitious, clever teina (cf. Rasmussen 1995). However, that some criticised her for this was apparent, as was the way of Cook Islands social politics. She was
a very intelligent and astute woman, she could play music on the piano by ear, she was forthright, and eloquent in the way she spoke and had the ability to be subtle or incisive when the occasion called for it. She was a warranted Justice of the Peace in both Australia and New Zealand which reflected her profile in the Pacific Islander communities in both locales, and this was due in large part to her profile as a *tivaivai ta’unga*. She was an enormously talented *tivaivai ta’unga* especially when it came to cutting and designing *tivaivai*. I watched her many times launch into a folded piece of fabric with her big scissors and merely a few chalk mark flourishes for guidance, and create the most beautiful and intricate *manu* or *tātāura* pattern. It was extraordinary to watch what emerged from seemingly merely random brandishes with those scissors. She had cut literally hundreds, even a thousand plus *tivaivai* for other women. The *mana* that this ability generated for her was significant. The link between prowess in *tivaivai* and formal political power has been borne out by the ascendency of other Cook Islands women in political contexts both in New Zealand and the Cooks. While a woman with political aspirations does not have to be a good *tivaivai* maker, it certainly helps enormously. Māmā Tirata was not attempting to stand for office, she did not have this type of power in her sights, but she was motivated to stand tall among other *ta’unga* and women, and accrue prestige as *mana* because of *tivaivai*.

The less than inconspicuous manoeuvrings that Māmā Tirata undertook at the various ritual events I have detailed in this chapter and the last unfolded, as opportunities to aggrandise and enlarge her own status, were for the most part, permissible, and appropriate within the prescribed parameters of Cook Islands ceremonial arena. Her actions also bore the hallmarks of a pan-Polynesian form of status stage managing which Officer Filipaina, and even Anne Popongi who helped present the *tivaivai*, were capitalising on as well. Māmā Tirata’s claiming of prestige required the compliance of at least the other women in the *Va’ine tini* as well, because in both the Police logo *tivaivai* contexts they were elevated along with Māmā Tirata. But such actions took skill, ambition and even a degree of single minded drive to pull off. And while she was very successful at such manoeuvring for the most part, the two women who voiced their opposition to her methods at the first Police logo *tivaivai* ‘o’ora event were not her only detractors.

*Māmā Tirata’s memorial service*

I attended a number of services at that same Ponsonby SDA church where the ‘o’ora for Alabama minister occurred with Māmā Tirata over the years of my fieldwork. The last,
her memorial service in late July 2009, was the most poignant. That Māmā Tirata’s ambition and drive were at times too thinly veiled and wrapped too obviously in tivaivai and the form of value that these encompassed for the liking of some in the wider Cook Islands community in Auckland at least, was revealed in a censuring, but oblique way at this service in Auckland. Māmā Tirata died in Sydney in June 2009, from escalating conditions associated with her diabetes, and her funerary services were held there as well. But because she had family in New Zealand and had been part of the Ponsonby SDA community for the many years she had lived in New Zealand, a memorial service was held at this church in Auckland a month or so after her death in Sydney.

The service began with an account of the funeral in Sydney as told by one of her daughters and a niece. Then a number of her extended kin network got up to speak about the various aspects of her life. These speakers told her history and there were funny anecdotes of happy times and an accompanying slide show that featured Māmā Tirata and her family through her 80 odd years on earth. The photographs chronicled her rich busy life: there were images of her making tivaivai that I had taken, photographs of her as a young woman in Auckland at around the time she met her husband-to-be, Bill, and photographs of her in the various locations she had lived her life, the Cook Islands, New Zealand, and Australia. Others featured herself and her growing children through the years, and there were images taken in the months prior to her death as she was ailing.

Once the family and friends had aired their memories and celebrated her life, one of the attending ministers got up to speak. He expressed sadness at Māmā Tirata’s passing and he offered her family spiritual support. But instead of a eulogy, or maybe by way of, he then launched into a trenchant sermon that seemed to me to have a rather mordant edge to it and a theme of scripture based remonstrance that was really a cautionary tale about the pursuit of the right verses the wrong value in this earthly life. He told the first testament story of Lot’s wife (Genesis 19: 1-26, and referenced in Luke 17: 28-33), and repeated the phrase “remember Lot’s wife” as a refrain throughout the sermon. He was telling the story of the perils of looking back and coveting the wrong material things and earthly values in this life, rather than the right spiritual values. 99 I am sure that the minister was not

99 Lot and his family were residents of Sodom and Gomorrah. He was visited by angels and perhaps because he was the nephew of Abraham or because of the hospitality and protection he offered to them, he was warned by the angels of their intent to bring about the imminent destruction of the cities because of the moral pestilence that prevailed there. He was told to flee with his wife and two daughters and to not look back. After some indecision, he did, but as they were leaving the city, Lot’s wife looked back apparently
equating Māmā Tirata with Lot’s wife explicitly, nor was his intent to slander her; nonetheless I found the telling of that story in that context somewhat uncomfortable and disturbing. To have told the story of Lot’s wife at the memorial service of a woman such as Māmā Tirata seemed distasteful to me, but it revealed the fine line that existed between the triumphant teina and the not so successful one.

That Māmā Tirata had caused affront to some people through her life and she had been perceived at times to be too open in her negotiation of prestige and honour, was some people’s perspective, but not an unusual happenstance for ambitious Cook Islanders. She had told me about frictions within her own extended family, and I watched her rile some of the women in the Va’ine tini group with her ambitions for the group as she castigated those who did not want to apply for funding. Her multiple – but entirely appropriate – agendas at her daughter’s wedding were an Aitutakan/Cook Islands way of operating, her conduct around the production and gifting of the tivaivai for the minister was appropriate, and her manoeuvrings at the first and then the second ‘o’ora of the Police logo tivaivai raised the ire of some and profited grudging or enthusiastic admiration from others. Hence the comments from the two women sitting beside me in the audience as Māmā Tirata spoke to the crowd. Māmā Tirata was particularly ambitious within the prescribed parameters of Cook Islands value in the way she clearly displayed Cook Islands values, via her prowess at making and using tivaivai, and she had the skill and aptitude to extract value successfully – most of the time. Many women deferred to her because of her skill in tivaivai, and most considered that her elevated status was appropriate because of her prolific output of cut tivaivai for others and her skill at creating beautiful textiles. Women were very happy to have tivaivai cut by her, even if some did not agree wholeheartedly with her manner at times or her strivings for the prestige associated with the traffic in value that tivaivai materialises. In New Zealand and Australia, her tivaivai networks both Cook Islands and other, allowed her to thrive in many ways; this included being a JP, the media attention she received periodically because of her tivaivai activities, and the stream of rima aro’a (payment gifts) she received for her cutting helped her family financially. In the islands she would not have had such freedom to gain the position she did because genealogical remembering and yearning for the affluent life she had had there, seemingly coveting it, rather than the safety she and her family alone had been offered in the wake of the destruction that was about to be delivered upon the city. By looking back she was punished by being turned into a pillar of salt, and lost her life. “Remember Lot’s wife”.

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positioning was given more weight, if not required, but in the diaspora, she was able to assert her ambitions despite the lack of genealogical/titular bulwarking.

The minister’s sermon was about the perils of coveting earthly desires, and it seemed to me that he was referring implicitly to her machinations with *tivaivai* as an axis of prestige as *mana* and the access to status arena that her skill in *tivaivai* gave her. I found it difficult to discuss this with the other women in the *Va’ine tini*, they would not be drawn on this, but the odd wry comment and knowing smile helped to shed light on how prestige was negotiated. The moments of dissent were therefore all the more revealing and the seemingly jealousy-inspired comments telling. It seemed to me to be rather sad that her memory be made somehow tantamount (however implicitly) to the damning decisions of Lot’s wife. Whilst I was perennially the outsider, and there may have been more to the context of the telling of the story of Lot’s wife, nonetheless, it seemed to me that the minister was grasping an opportunity to harangue. But Māmā Tirata was a devout Seventh Day Adventist, and her faith had held her in good stead her whole life through some extraordinarily trying times. While the minister intoned “remember Lot’s wife” with a slightly jarring frequency, with all due respect, I would prefer to remember Māmā Tirata as the good woman she was, and the creator of beautiful *tivaivai* that wrapped and maintained her family and others because of the many many *tivaivai* she cut for other women, me included.

5 CONCLUSION

*Tivaivai* are effective as circulating concrete media of value because they are an iconic as well as an indexical symbol of the material activity that they mediate (Turner 2008: 50). Traffic in *tivaivai* therefore provides access to prestige as *mana* as a form of social power. In this chapter, I have looked at how *tivaivai* are the axis of prestige for women, and the means through which prestige as power and *mana* is accrued via the circulation of value as provided by the ritual processes of the various ‘*o’ora* I have detailed in this chapter. In the ‘*o’ora* for the minister, the women who made the *tivaivai*, including Māmā Tirata, were afforded prestige by working hard and being seen to do so. When they (less Māmā Tirata), collectively presented the *tivaivai* amid speeches that drew attention to the time frame that the *tivaivai* was started and finished in, and the work that they, as well as Māmā Tirata had done, the women’s work was made tantamount to homage and the quality of their faith. Their mothering was inherent when they presented the *tivaivai* to their “cherished son”, the honoured minister and his wife, but in the process, the women
were displayed as appropriate church Māmās, and quintessential Cook Islands women, and mothers. The traffic in value, values and valuables as focused on the singularised *tivaivai*, produced prestige as *mana* for the Māmās, whilst balanced with the display of their religiosity.

The ‘o’ora events to present the two singularised Police logo *tivaivai* to the non-Cook Islander police officers, however, were for the most part, unbridled status arena. The rhetoric of community kinship and unity suffused the speeches at both events, but the reality at the first event was that the *tivaivai* was presented to the young junior officer in the midst of what turned out to be an overarching bedecking and girding of Māmā Tirata's expertise as a *tivaivai ta’unga* and as an ambitious *teina* who sort *mana* in the Auckland based community. The second event was an amplification of the first, Māmā Tirata was just as effective in accruing prestige in this event as well, but so too did Officer Filipaina, the recipient of the Police logo *tivaivai*. The status arena extended to the trumping of the Cook Islands way, and the Cook Islands community over the other represented Pacific peoples’ communities at the event. The ‘o’ora for the policemen were modern contexts born of the particular version of the dialectic between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market, that Cook Islanders now live in New Zealand. Māmā Tirata’s capacity to manoeuvre as a *teina* was also a product of this, and perhaps the way she was censured as well. The next three chapters change focus somewhat, while this chapter and the last have looked at ‘o’ora, public mothering, and the accruing of prestige as *mana*, the next three chapters look at the relationship between *tivaivai* and money in various ways.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE HAIRCUTTING: TIVAIVAI, VALUE, AND THE MANAGING OF MONEY

1 INTRODUCTION

The large Ātiu hall in Mangere was already packed with 500 people or more when I arrived late for the haircutting of Māmā Lucy’s nephew. I was shown to a seat at the front of the hall and felt the weight of the large crowd behind me. Everyone was seated at trestle tables facing towards the stage where the boy, who was no more than seven or eight, sat on a wide deep armchair with rolled arms which had been covered by a finely stitched tivaivai taorei. He looked small and bewildered. His hair was braided into about 150 single locks each tied with a royal blue or a white ribbon. He sat wide eyed on the chair, looking out over the assembled crowd of his kōpū tangata (extended family), and invited guests like me. From where I sat, the small boy appeared at the centre of a profusion of textiles and food: propped either side of him, nestling him into the depths of the chair were cushions with blowsheet covers. Another tivaivai manu was draped around his legs. The stage area surrounds and the set of tables in front of the stage (for the honoured child, his friends, and close family during the feasting part of the haircutting) were all festooned with blowsheets. The front face of the stage was also covered with blowsheets and propped along the edge of the stage, placed side by side, was a row of cushions with blowsheet covers edged with lace.

On the floor where the blowsheet covered tables were placed, were plastic fibre mats, and in front of the children’s main table, was a chair draped with a tivaivai that was ready for the ‘o’ora that was to come. Down the length of the centre of the hall was a long set of trestle tables groaning with food wrapped assiduously in cling film. It seemed to me that the small boy was effectively wrapped in concentric layers of textiles made by his female relatives. The layers of cloth radiated out from him, tivaivai as the most elite textile wrapped him at the centre, and lesser textiles effectively wrapped the ritual arena and the honoured guests who sat in the front part of the hall. The overall effect was of wrapped containment, which was to facilitate the transition the boy was making into a Cook Islanders’ version of manhood, which involved the gifting of money that was about to take place as each lock of hair was ritually cut from the boy’s head.
This chapter is about the haircutting, the pākoti’anga ‘o’ora, as a rite of passage ritual, whereby the ceremonial sequence of the haircutting mediates the transition of the boy from one social identity to another, utilising liminality, transition, and transformation in the process (V. Turner 1974: 231-238, cf. 1969; Myerhoff 1982: 109; cf. Alexander 1991: 20). It is also about the circulation of value that takes place in the process of the haircutting, and the way this facilitates the use, the gifting, and exchange of specific valuables, including tivaivai. The other featured valuables that are exchanged through the course of the ritual process are: envelope wrapped money, locks of hair, lesser textiles, food, and other gifts, but these valuables are all ranked below tivaivai. The relationships between this hierarchy of valuables is expressed in specific ways in the haircutting, which reflects the way value as values is materialised in ceremonial arena for Cook Islanders and infers on the form of manhood attained in the rite of passage.

Envelope wrapped money is as much a part of the haircutting as a ritual process, as tivaivai is, and at certain junctures, arguably more a part of what is “gained” (Guyer 2004: 17, 174) from involvement in the haircutting and other ceremonial arenas than other valuables - even tivaivai. But money moves in its envelope wrapped form and is circulated publicly in the midst of the haircutting and the various different rituals that comprise Cook Islands ceremonial economy because of the values that tivaivai manifest. Tivaivai and the lesser textiles literally and figuratively wrap and adorn the ritual complex that transitions a boy into a form of manhood, which culminates in the cutting of the boy's hair and the gifting of potentially significant sums of money wrapped in envelopes. So this chapter looks at how tivaivai effectively dignifies the exchange of money in particular because of the values that tivaivai materialise (cf. Turner 2006a, 2006b, 2008). How money is incorporated into the ceremonial economy is, I argue, a specific function of the core values which are being materialised as valuables in public exchange processes, first and foremost as tivaivai, but also as gift money and the other lesser valuables. The way money has come to be managed in the context of the haircutting is as much about the particular Cook Islands' version of the dialectic between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market, as it is about Cook Islands ways of ritually wrapping to transform and sanctify. It also represents a pragmatic response to the realities of the capitalist context that Cook Islanders live in, especially in New Zealand.
2 THE EVENT: THE GIFTING OF MONEY AT THE HAIRCUTTING

As I took my designated seat towards the front of the hall for the haircutting, Māmā Vero, the most genealogically senior woman in the Auckland Ātiu community had already begun to recite the boy’s genealogy for all to hear. She stood in front of the crowd with a microphone in hand addressing the large audience. As the holder of the genealogies, Māmā Vero spoke as one who was used to commanding a room. An imposing woman, her long white grey hair was plaited in a single braid, and she wore a finely worked pandanus hat.100 As she spoke her skill as an orator was apparent. Her rapid Ātiuan was lost upon me but she used changes in tone, pauses, and gestures to tell the story and command the attention of the crowd in a way that emanated mana (power). She had a direct authoritative way about her that made everybody listen as she systemically linked virtually all in the audience to the boy sitting on the stage: by birth, marriage and adoption, back through time to the islands and then to New Zealand. The timbre of her voice rose and fell as she told the history of the movement of kin backwards and forwards between the islands in the Cooks and beyond. The boy’s place of birth, his ‘enua’ānau, was New Zealand, but his ipukarea his homeland and ancestral home was Ātiu and the other islands to which he and his family were connected. Everyone in the room was drawn together, all heard, the older ones remembered and the younger ones learned. Māmā Vero was mesmerising and it seemed to me that as she spoke, she literally talked the ritual into being. As she related the knowledge of where the little boy and the greater part of the audience belonged, this too was wrapped in the worked upon array of textiles that adorned the hall and the boy. That wrapping with textiles and Māmā Vero’s reciting of the genealogy set the ritual context for the exchanges that were about to happen.

After the reciting of the genealogy, it was time to cut the locks of hair from the child’s head. The Master of Ceremonies (MC) instructed the most senior people to file up onto the stage first. All the guests had been allocated a ranking number which designated the order they were to file up onto the stage.101 The most elite guests, followed by close family members filed up first. Several of these initial people, who were probably closer

100 Plaited pandanus hats are another Cook Islands women’s art form. These are made mostly in the Northern group. Cook Islands women and men wear the hats to church and to special events, and for women in particular, they are part of the attire of a well-dressed woman. Māmā Vero’s hat in this instance, added to her mana (power).

101 In New Zealand, this is often noted on the invitation (Loomis 1983: 228), and Ama (2003: 121) notes that the same thing happens now in haircuttings staged in the Cook Islands. The fact that this process began in New Zealand and spread to the Cook Islands shows how the ritual economy has amplified in the diaspora.
family members, adorned the boy with neck garlands (‘eī) made from artificial flowers, lollies, pūpū shells, ribbons, and cash money notes, before they cut their lock of hair from the child’s head. There was at least one $NZ100 note, multiple $NZ20s, and a number of $NZ10 and $NZ5 notes, totalling around $NZ250 (see figure 14). Just as the tīvaivai and lesser textiles that surrounded the boy were part of the circulation of value, the money ‘eī materialised a different version of those values (the implications of this I deal with below). It seemed to me that the boy was literally decorated with various valuables.

After the elite guests and close family, the rest of the audience were sequentially invited to queue up in ranked order to take their turn on the stage and cut a lock of hair. Ushers worked from the front of the hall to the back, table by table, instructing the representatives of groups to line up. As these people filed up and took their turn on the stage to cut a lock of hair, I watched as most handed an envelope that contained money to one or other of the parents who were attending their son. The envelope was tucked down beside the boy, and then the giver was handed a beribboned pair of scissors and instructed by the boy’s parent to cut a given lock of hair.

Figure 13: The boy on the stage during his haircutting, featuring the old woman in the white cardigan bearing money wrapped in an envelope.

The music troupe behind the boy on the stage played popular Cook Islands songs, there was lots of noise as people chatted and laughed, and the atmosphere was festive as the ritual cutting of hair proceeded. Some of the older women danced to the music as they
stood in line, waiting to cut their lock of hair. Figure 13 shows the boy ‘wrapped’ on stage and the line of older women are waiting to cut the child’s hair. The old woman in the white cardigan has her envelope in her hand; she was doing the hula which made the crowd whoop and laugh.102

Eventually, the section of tables where I was sitting was ushered into the queue. Filing up on to the stage, even I felt nervous, as I looked out over the large crowd and was affronted by the noise and the expanse of people, and I wondered at the child’s strained composure in the face of such public display. The three women in front of me in the line were a family of large Cook Islands women; they were wearing beautiful fragrant ‘ei katu (head garlands) and their thick long black hair flowed down their backs. Two of these women were holding store-brought duvets in plastic packaging which they intended to gift - in full view of the crowd - before cutting their lock of hair, thereby gaining maximum prestige (cf. Loomis 1983: 220). They handed the textiles to Māmā Lucy, who was helping out on stage. The third woman had an envelope in her hand which I noticed had her family’s name on it; she handed this to the boy’s mother and then cut her lock of hair. The giving of envelope wrapped money and a gift, often a textile like a duvet, if not a tivaivai, is up to the individual. Kin closest to the child usually give both, commensurate with their greater love for the boy and to signal their willingness to be a continuing part of his life in the future.103 One of my informants told me that “sometimes you give money and sometimes you give money and a gift, it depends on your connection”.

As I took my turn to cut the child’s hair, I handed my plain unwritten on envelope to the boy’s mother, and his father handed me the scissors and instructed me where to cut a lock of hair between the ribbon and the boy’s scalp. The boy’s mother placed the envelope with my gift money in beside her son, in a pile with other envelopes. The boy was still as my scissors bit into his hair, severing another lock from his head. As I stood momentarily in front of the large crowd cutting the lock of hair, I was struck by the very public, drawn out

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102 Loomis noted that during the haircuttings he attended: “Most people came up on the stage with a white envelope carrying a monetary contribution, their own family name written on the front… It was expected that everyone making a cut would contribute something; one should never come empty-handed. Often a participant would place his envelope or cash upon the sheet covering the boy, or put it directly into the boy’s hands. By the end of the ceremony the boys’ hands were bulging with money” (Loomis 1983: 220). Eimke (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 29) includes a photograph of the multiple named envelopes gifted during a haircutting ceremony on Atiu.

103 “Gift items are usually of the sort that the boy can use in daily life or that others can use on his behalf, such as bed-quilts, set of cups or glasses, appliances and clothing” (Loomis 1983: 220).
nature of the process, the drama of the ritual as each piece of hair was seemingly exchanged for envelope wrapped money. I took my lock of hair, and walked to the other side of the stage. I passed Māmā Lucy, who smiled at me as she ordered the growing pile of duvets, and other textiles and gifts that were amassing at the side of the stage. I returned to my seat and watched the rest of the crowd file up, give their envelopes, and cut their lock of hair. The process took about 45 minutes because of the large number of people.

When all the braided locks had been cut from the little boy’s head, a relative who was adept at actually trimming hair gave the boy his first haircut and styled the unevenly cut hair into a short haircut in front of the crowd. Māmā Lucy and his parents then took the young boy to the back area behind the stage out of view of the crowd. The boy and his parents effectively transitioned through an “off stage” (Goffman 1959; cf. Wotton and Wood 2004: 219) moment, to emerge transformed. His brief disappearance was important because the transition he was making was punctuated with a full change of clothes for him and his parents as well. During the actual haircutting, the little boy wore a suit complete with tie, which was covered by a blue tunic to keep the hair from his clothes; his father had worn a shirt made from a brown and white hibiscus pāreu fabric and his mother, a long sleeveless dress in the same fabric. When all three emerged from the back stage area, the boy and his father now wore green and yellow hibiscus pāreu fabric shirts and dark trousers and his mother had changed into a dress in the same fabric. The boy wore the money ‘ei around his neck and he wore a plaited pandanus hat with a garland of flowers on it over his newly cut hair. The change of clothing, of new wrappings in other words, heralded and underlined the transformation the boy had just made, as his hair was cut and he was gifted with what amounted to several thousand dollars.

The boy’s parents lead him out into the hall area to loud and enthusiastic cheers from the crowd. As he came to stand in front of all the people, flanked by his parents, the young boy hung his head. He was trembling a little, and must have been finally

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104 After the haircutting, I asked Māmā Vaerua what I should do with the lock of hair, she said that I should keep it because it was “good luck”.

105 Pāreu fabric is a specific type of light cotton and polyester/viscose fabric that bears tropical floral or island scene motifs. It is used extensively by Pacific Islanders in the diaspora and across the Pacific to clothe people at events, or for normal everyday wear. There are shops in South Auckland that specialise in the sale of pāreu fabric and sell a vast array of designs.

106 Māmā Lucy, the MC, and a number of other women who were on the stage helping out, along with the troupe of musicians who were behind the boy at the back of the stage, wore shirts or dresses in a similar brown and green pāreu fabric.
overwhelmed by the crowd, the noise, and the attention, because he had started to cry. His mother coaxed and comforted him as he was paraded around the hall. Eventually he was seated on the tivaivai adorned chair that sat in front of the head table in front of the stage ready for the subsequent 'o’ora, and eventually the feast.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 14:** The boy and his parents parading through the hall in their new clothes, after the haircutting, note the money 'ei around the boy’s neck.

**Cook Islands manhood as conjoinment through the creation of obligation**

A haircutting ritual is a public ceremonial event in which a boy aged anywhere between four and 21 years of age\(^\text{107}\) has his hair braided into locks which are cut off one by one by individuals who gift money for the privilege of doing so. Haircuttings are considered a rite of passage, some of my informants casually referred to the ritual as an initiation into manhood. Loomis called the haircutting an “initiation rite” (1985a: 1), and Eimke (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 28) noted that the day prior to a boy's haircutting, he was allowed to

\(^{107}\) The age of the boy having his hair ritually cut varies. Of the haircuttings I attended, three were for younger boys aged around seven or eight, which seems to be the average age, although I attended another haircutting which was for an older youth of 18. I heard about at least one other haircutting that was for a 21 year old which was combined with his 21st birthday celebrations and was staged as a large prestigious event in the National Auditorium in Avarua in Rarotonga. Loomis (1983: 227) notes that for those who subscribe to the pre-contact origins of the rite, most assert that the “traditional” age of the boy was generally older, over 20 years of age. He contends that the inference was that not cutting the boy’s hair was a way of keeping him chaste, which has a very post-contact and very Christian ring to it. However, Syme contends that for most traditionalists, the age of the boys having haircuttings in the 1970s, was at the time of his research, between 12 to 15 years (Syme 1978: 11 cited in Loomis 1983: 227).
behave in childish, even “girlish ways” but his haircutting was the “moment when ‘he becomes a man’” (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 28). At a haircutting that Loomis attended in the early 1980s that was for two boys, the MC referred to the two boys about to have their hair ritually cut as “girls” (Loomis 1983: 219). In a series of toasts to the boys and their families, the MC called for all attending the event to be “one family! [and] To support these two young children, to come as a boy today” earlier, he had referred to the boys as “girls [who would] come as a boy later” (Loomis 1983: 219). Later towards the end of the haircutting procedure, when there were just a few locks of hair left, in a call to urge others to come forward to cut a lock – and give a monetary gift – the MC said it would not be good to leave the two children “half girl and half boy” (Loomis 1983: 220).

The specific form of manhood that is being achieved in the process of the haircutting entails the acquisition of a short haircut and the distinction between long female hair and short male hair (Loomis 1985a), but there is more to the Cook Islands version of manhood than the length of hair. The manhood gained was about conjoinment and the perpetuation of the connected kin group. The organisation of an event the size of Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting was about setting up for the boy “a particular future through exchange relationships” (Gershon 2007: 484), that for Cook Islanders in particular, involves being enmeshed in translocal as well as transnational networks (cf. Evans 2001: 127-149). Along with the cash money wrapped in the envelopes, what was gained (cf. Guyer 2004) from the ritual, were the set of names on the front of the envelopes along with the specific sums given. The piles of named envelope wrapped money gifts and the other gifts were the materialisation of social relationships in the form of obligations serviced, created, or renewed. What was most important in the ritual context, what the boy had gained with the ritual cutting of his hair in exchange for envelope wrapped money, was a set of connections, and obligations – this is what made him a man in the Cook Islands sense.

As I watched the small boy being greeted and received by the crowd of kin, I looked back up at the stage and the significant pile of envelopes that sat on the tivaivai taorei where the boy had been enthroned, and I thought about the envelope I had just given. My envelope contained a single $NZ20 note, I had asked a number of the women in the Va’ine tini what amount of money I should give and this was the amount they decided was appropriate. I realised that unlike all the rest of the envelopes, mine had no name on it, and I also realised that what I should have done, but was too shy for my papa’ā reasons to be so
obvious about doing so, and unknowing (then) of the importance in Cook Islanders’ terms to do so, was to have named my envelope too. Because the name on the envelope was what was most important in the ritual context, and everything about the event, from the arraying and the range of textiles used, to the oratory that Māmā Vero had so eloquently delivered, to the ritual cutting of the boy’s hair and the format for the gifting of the envelopes, was about managing this hierarchy of value. These things were all about ensuring that the money itself and the amount was secondary to the relationship created, renewed, or maintained, by the gift of money and this was effectively created by the subsequent noting of the name of the giver and the amount they gave. To give as I did with a blank envelope could have made my gift disappear because it could not be linked to me. I wondered if my gift was powerless, while the named envelopes that wrapped the money within, remained potent, signifying, indexing relationships because they were either the reply to a previous obligation or were renewing or creating a new obligation by gifting. My money in its blank envelope was seemingly not connected to a debt of any kind, potentially lost, adrift, unfettered, and untethered; disconnected from any relationship and with no potential to create a relationship. If I had put my name on my envelope this would have identified me as the giver and therefore made me a party to, albeit to a small degree, the network of social relations that the event was about, even though I was not kin, I was an invited guest and because giving like this was all about becoming enmeshed in the network of kin, and about obligations.108

The conjoinment that the boy was gaining through the ritual was a form of social power within the realm of mutuality; within his own “community” and between other “communities” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) that constituted his extended kin network. The recording of who gives what is done assiduously. Whatever is given at an event like a haircutting is noted: *tivaivai*, other textiles and gifts, money, food, services. Māmā Eva told me that there is always a book where who gives what and how much is noted in exacting detail at each event. She said, “I always know what everyone gives”, and it is important to know, because therein lies the relationship. Therein lies the ability to receive and eventually reciprocate, with food, entertainment and locks of hair at one’s son’s haircutting, and eventually with the same amount of money or textiles or gift in kind at the next event, where the individuals/families who are your guests at your function, become

108 But I was also the standout novice in the stratagems and vagaries of Cook Islands ceremonial gifting, and while my envelope was blank, Māmā Lucy would have known it was mine because I was the *papa’ā* who was learning about gifting.
your hosts sometime in the future in what constitutes a non-agonistic mode of exchange. After a haircutting, such a record constitutes a reference for the boy’s interactions with his community of kindred in later life when he has become a man and is making his own way (cf. Loomis 1983: 229). That those connections and obligations are for the most part, initiated, maintained, developed (or not as the case may be), by gifts of envelope wrapped money, I deal with in the second part of this chapter.

Cash “donations” at haircuttings are made for a number of reasons; from being a way to help kin and actually do and show aro’a as in love, or as a reciprocal gesture that answers a prior contribution from the family of the boy, or a desire to establish a link with a family or exert influence (Loomis 1983: 229). Regardless of the prime motivation, the gifts of textiles, money, food, and services “constitute kaitou ‘indebtedness’, [and] also ‘credit’ for the boy and his family, to be reciprocated as they see fit on a later occasion”, and careful records are kept “so the approximate equivalents can be recompensed in the future” (1983: 229). Loomis calls this the “social cost” of the maintenance of kinship relationships. He notes:

The ritual event reproduces and transforms networks of kindred stretching across the city, and sometimes to other parts of New Zealand and the islands. Metaphorically, we might say the strands of hair from the boy signify the reciprocal exchanges which bind participants together economically, symbolically and by kinship piri’anga [custom]. [1983: 229]

When I asked Māmā Lucy what the money that the family had gathered at the haircutting of her nephew was going to be used for, she said that it was for the boy’s “education”, and had been put in a bank account and saved. This particular child now had an education fund, gifted by his extended kin network, and the 150 or so people who actually filed up on stage, now held a lock of the child’s hair. The conjoinment and the values inherent in it were materialised in these valuables. The fund and the connections and obligations it represented, were about the boy’s future. By staging the event they were attempting to link the boy into on going obligations as connections to his wider kin network via the organisation and successful execution of the haircutting event (cf. Gershon 2007; Evans 2001).

**Who gets invited to a haircutting**

As to who actually gets invited to a haircutting, that is, who is being asked to be in a relationship with the honouree, and therefore who is being affected by the circulation of
value in the venue, the reciting of the genealogy, and being asked to gift money, is important. As I outlined in Chapter One, the reckoning of descent is cognatic, but kinship links exist really only if individuals choose to actively manage and maintain them (or not) via social interaction and construction, especially publicly in ritual events like the haircutting. The most important and relevant kinship relationships "are those which have been actualised at a given place and time for a specific purpose" (Loomis 1983: 223). To that end, who gets invited to a ritual occasion such as a haircutting, and how they get invited, is quite specific.

Inviting the several hundred participants for a haircutting such as the one for Māmā Lucy's nephew was done on the basis of each individual's recognised genealogical connection with the boy. That is, invitations were sent to as many of the child's kōpū tangata (extended kin) members plus affines as could be identified, as well as certain significant guests who were known by the family and potentially added to the prestige of the event. The invitations to a haircutting are worked out after considerable deliberation via a "repertoire of customary strategies" (Loomis 1983: 225) that are evoked to decide first who is to be invited to an event and then the order in which they are to be invited to cut the hair of the boy. In theory, a person can claim membership to as many kin groups as they have ancestors, and in doing so activate their potential rights to land, assistance, and status providing this is accepted by the group in question. But along with such a claim of ownership and membership, comes a requisite set of obligations as well. The closer the kin, the more binding the obligations. Close kin are expected to make a greater contribution (Baddeley 1978: 151). The further a person is from the boy whose hair is being cut, the more they are welcomed and honoured in ritual contexts, because their contribution is unexpected. This is why I was offered a seat close to the front of the hall.

The audience at the haircutting resulted from both formal invitation and the decisions of individuals to attend. An individual bases their choice to attend on the closeness and nature of the relationship they have with the boy whose hair is being cut and his family. Previous obligations that existed which required reciprocity, pressure from family, financial and time constraints, as well as "the weight of obligatory custom mediated through kin, personal feelings towards the sponsoring family and possible future benefits to be obtained" (Loomis 1983: 224). This is of the order of reciprocity between communities in the realm of mutuality (Gudeman 2001: 81). Invitations were issued based
on genealogy, general relationships and “whether the family has an unpaid kaio‘u ‘debt’ to a particular kinsman, irrespective of how close they are” (Loomis 1983: 224).

The invitation process for the haircutting of Māmā Lucy’s nephew was done in consultation with Māmā Vero. She had a set of books which she regularly updated that recorded the genealogies of the Ātiu community (cf. Loomis 1983:225). The potential to make an error in the ranking, especially for those who appear on the top of the list is ever present. There is more at stake and therefore more mana involved. Several women told me that guests can feel slighted if they consider that they should have been further up the list, or if a guest arrives uninvited who requires deference too, or if an individual decides to use an event and their ranking to:

> [P]ress home a claim to status or rights rendered contentious in another context (e.g. land rights in the islands, or a title claim the family has been arguing about). These are moments of risk of ‘akamā ‘shame’ to the sponsors as well as the individuals involved, and require considerable diplomatic and performative skills on the part of the MC. [Loomis 1983: 226]

**Wrapping and the ritual complex in the rite of passage**

The assembled audience at Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting attended for obligation reasons as much as wanting to be a part of the process that transpired. Rites of passage are “inevitably moments of teaching, when the society seeks to make the individual most fully its own, weaving group values and understandings into the private psyche so that internally provided individual motivations replaces external controls” (Myerhoff 1982: 112). This was the case for the initiate as Māmā Vero rousingly recited his genealogy, but a comparable process was happening for the audience too. They were reminded of to whom, how, and where they belonged. Part of the “ideological and dramaturgical ‘work’ of the haircutting” (Loomis 1983: 230) is to galvanise and rouse kin to actively belong to the kōpū tangata (extended family). Another is to provide the appropriate ritual context to facilitate the gifting of money which is the most pragmatic way of being actively family and showing and doing aro‘a. Both these have added impetus in the diasporic context. The symbolic change of clothing of both the boy and his parents was part of this dramaturgy, and showed that the boy was now connected to his parents and the kin networks they represented in a different way, and they to him, as facilitated by the gifting of envelope wrapped cash by the assembled extended kin. But the provision of good food, entertainment (generally Cook Islands dancing), the elaborately wrapped
ceremonial venue, and the judicious use of *tivaivai* in particular was also part of this because of the circulation of value that it created and dignified.

3 WRAPPING AND THE RITUAL COMPLEX THAT MANAGES MONEY

The ritual complex facilitated the transition of the boy into a Cook Islands version of manhood; it also managed the use of cash money in the service of kinship and obligation. The wrapping and enthroning of the boy in elite textiles and the ritual stage area in lesser textiles accentuated the hierarchy of textiles that has such salience for Cook Islanders. To have the boy sitting on a *tivaivai taorei* and a *tivaivai manu* draped over his knees was to publically signal how cherished he was in his family “community” (Gudeman 2001, 2008). He was allotted other *tivaivai* in the ‘*o’ora* that followed the hair cutting process, but such specific use of *tivaivai* in the haircutting ritual to wrap the boy evoked specific values and made him appear mothered, smothered even in a Cook Islands way. As he sat on the stage flanked by his parents, and other relatives, including his aunty, Māmā Lucy, the *tivaivai* were a sign of the purported integrity and strength of the family. The boy, the proceedings, and the transactions that took place within the rite of passage ritual, were at the centre of the public display of the values of Cook Islands kinship that were being materialised (Turner 2006b, 2008) via the performance of the genealogy and the copious wrapping with concentric layers of textiles of the boy, where he was seated, and the ritual surrounds at the front of the venue.

In the display on the stage, the values of the domestic sphere and the *aro’a* that ideologically operates there, were being writ large, so to speak, in the public domain of the haircutting event (Turner 2006b: 12, 20; cf. Graeber 2001: 73). The spectacular, dramatic decoration of the boy and the stage area were a part of the ritual complex that effectively dignified the gifting of money – whilst elaborating the money into something much more than mere cash. So the wrapping of the boy and the ritual venue in textiles, the cash money gifts in envelopes, and metaphorically, the crowd with rousing oratory, was not by coincidence. This ritual complex, along with physically cutting the boy’s hair and the subsequent feasting conferred the boy with the specific Cook Islands’ version of manhood, and made the cash money and the act of gifting it into the materialisation of the means of maintaining, creating, renewing social relationships because of the circulation of value that it was part of.

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109 In a similar way that the wedding ‘*o’ora* I looked at in Chapter Three did.
The combination of the textile decorations, the rhetoric of the genealogy, and the whole orchestrated ritual process which created a “high formality of exchange”, helped to “separate signification and utility, emphasising the semiotic character of objects that also bear use and market value. [whereby] Such formality is part of the on going work effort it takes to keep gift and commodity distinct” (Keane 2001: 73-74). This formality was able to bring about the distinction between mere money and envelope wrapped money because it referenced the specific parameters of value. The oratory, and the assiduous attention to the selection of specific textiles in wrapping and decoration, did “work” in Keane's sense, but more fundamentally, they were about the circulation of value, the signalling of values, and the materialisation of these as valuables, and the evoking of the hierarchy of valuables at that. Keane contends that:

The insistent attentiveness given to tokens in offerings implies a latent alternative. People are aware of the possibilities that the gift might become detached from the giver and the intent. Objects require the reflexive capacity of language if they are to serve as fully efficacious media of social relations. One pig, horse, or piece of cloth [or one envelope with money in] is pretty much like another of its kind: it is words that specify what kind of action is being performed, from whom the prestations come, to whom they are directed, and what kind of act they perform. As a result, the capacity of objects to serve semiotically as representations and economically as representatives of persons is unstable and requires constant effort to sustain. [2001: 74]

In the Cook Islands context, it is not just words that talk the ritual into being; there is a whole ritual complex that does this. Gell (1998) generally and Küchler (Eimke and Küchler 2009) specifically, attribute agency to indexical qualities of the object and tivaivai respectively, in effect fetishising the source of value and agency. Whereas Turner (2006b, 2008) construes agency from the dynamic among value, values and valuables as the structural parameters of value within a given cultural group. Value is expressed as values, which are materialised in specific ways as valuables.

Money, lesser textiles, hair, and food were circulated via various modes of exchange in the haircutting, but what was also circulated (cf. Fajans 1993b; Turner 1989, 2008) was value. The key values of family and aro’a were literally talked up by Māmā Vero in her rousing oratory and this was underlined by the physical grouping of the nuclear family unit of the boy and his parents on the stage. The parents flanking the boy and the arraying of the textiles in the surrounds made the boy appear at the very epicentre of the “community” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) that their family constituted. In the large audience of the vast hall
were other communities, who were conjoining in the appropriate way with the boy and his family by cutting the boy's hair ritually, gifting envelope wrapped money, taking part in the feast, as well as their very presence at the event which acknowledged the ritual process that was taking place. The ritual process made the boy into a Cook Islands man and situated the gifts of money in the realm of mutuality.

**Transforming cash money into the gift**

Money, Marx contended, “is the great leveller, that... does away with all distinctions” where none, including Cook Islanders by inference, are able “to withstand the alchemy” (Marx 1961: 132; cf. Bloch and Parry 1989: 6). Simmel in turn, has argued that the impersonality and anonymity of money coalesces well with the impersonal and inconsequential relationships which are characteristic of the marketplace that operates under such principles. He contended that money changes the way people think, is anathema to bonds of kinship and the other ascriptive criteria that hold people together, ultimately rendering person from object (Simmel 2011 [1907]: 332-337; cf. Bloch and Parry 1989: 5). Simmel contended that while the gift of an object effectively carried with it an element of the giver (cf. Mauss 1990 [1925]), exchange relations are “more completely dissolved and more radically terminated by the payment of money” (Simmel 1978: 376, quoted in Bloch and Parry 1989: 5). According to Simmel, money destroys community, depersonalising and neutralising social relationships with a distancing objectivity that is supposedly in marked contrast to non-monetary processes (Simmel 2011 [1907]; cf. Bloch and Parry 1989: 6). Keane notes that since Mauss’s *The Gift* (1990 [1925]), money and gift exchange have been viewed as mutually exclusive realms, essentially fundamentally opposed: “The latter is distinguished from the former by the obligations between people that bind one moment of exchange to others, and by the spiritual links between people and the things that circulate between and... along with them” (Keane 2001: 67).

But the notion that money can be a prestation with all that term implies is borne out in the literature from Africa to Melanesia (cf. Akin and Robbins 1999; Comaroff and Comaroff 1990; Ferguson 1985; Hutchinson 1996). Cook Islands ceremonial arenas, like the haircutting, are no exception. How money can be the gift, exchanged for locks of hair in the service of the maintenance, underlining or creating anew of kinship or kinship-like bonds, is achieved with the ritual complex. This works because values are materialised as specific valuables as the ritual complex is enacted and what amounts to Cook Islands value generally, circulates. In Keane’s Sumbanese example, he notes that the status of money is
not the most “stable” in exchange because while it can serve as a formal token, in say bride negotiations:

[W]hose referent is confined to ceremonial exchange... it retains the potential for reinterpretation as cash value. In either case it is ‘symbolic,’ but its vulnerability to slippage is a function in part of its irreducible materiality. Even money shares with other objects the property of taking objectual form. Thus it can cross contexts and, being semiotically underdetermined, is subject to reinterpretation. [2001: 68]

So money is as susceptible to operating in another regime of value as the next type of valuable (cf. Keane 2001: 78). It has phases of being a commodity and phases where it is something else entirely (Kopytoff 1986), and the other values remained implied but are not acted upon in that arena. I argue that for Cook Islanders, this is the reason why money is given in prestation. Money also belongs to the realm of market, Cook Islanders live in modern political economies like New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Australia, and they need money to live, just as much as they need Cook Islands values and valuables to be Cook Islanders. The fact that Cook Islanders have incorporated money into processes in the realm of mutuality, whereby envelope wrapped money as a valuable maintains Cook Islands values to do with kinship and aro’a, is part of the way Cook Islanders manage the dialectical tension between the realms of mutuality and market.

In the context of Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, after the event was over the envelopes were all collected up and opened one by one. The name of the giver and the dollar amount given were exactingly recorded by the family. The specific cash money notes given by each individual or group were alienated in the process: as all the cash notes were placed in a pile, they were made indistinguishable from each other, losing any connection with the giver, a process made complete when the money was banked. The name-bearing envelopes, so important in the ritual context, were discarded once the name and amount given was recorded. But what was not alienated was the social relationship created (Gell 1992), because the name of the giver and the amount given were so carefully recorded, and became a chronicle of debts and obligations, which in the Cook Islands context, amounts to social relationships. In the context of the haircutting for instance, the gifting of money, is treated like other material manifestations of values, as in tivaivai, but the prescribed process that the gifting is done in accentuates the hierarchy of valuables. The boy was decorated with dressed-up-money in the form of the money ‘ei (neck wreath). This was the only time I actually saw money during the proceedings, but it seemed to me that the
inclusion of sweets, flowers and lengths of ribbon with the cash notes, effectively dressed
the money up, wrapped it even, so the notes were not just money, they became
decoration (cf. Graeber 1996). The hierarchy of valuables was maintained because it was a
tivaivai taorei that he was seated on and a manu that physically wrapped him. Money is
extensively moved and gifted in ceremonial arena because it is part of a ritual complex that
is broadcast by tivaivai. Ideologically, money embodies and materialises the same values
that tivaivai does – but to a lesser degree.

The possibility remains that money is capable of reproducing on its own, containing
“the possibility of autonomy and riches beyond the demands and politics of social
interaction” (Keane 2001: 81), hence the need for such adherence to ritual, as well as the
ambivalence that many Cook Islanders have about participation in ceremonial arena. But
for those who do participate, the values of the “base” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) orientate the
alternative regimes of value. Keane contends that “In the modern world, the authority of
ancestral mandates meets an alternative authority in the pervasive presence of money”
(2001: 84). While the dialectic between the use of money in the realm of mutuality and of
market is on-going, the persistence of the accumulation of obligation and gain that
involvement in Cook Islands ceremonial arena creates, despite palpable alternatives,
denotes a certain subaltern volition in the face of hegemony. As Keane notes for his
Sumbanese example:

To use money as a material token, emphasising the underdetermined
character of its materiality, is to deny the authorizing stamp on its face. To
treat money as if it were gold is to deny the ultimate power of the issuing
authority in favour of the semiotic value asserted by ancestral mandate.
The use of the coin [or cash notes wrapped in a named envelope] does not
replace material use-values with symbolic values but rather asserts the
primacy of one authorizing origin for signs over another. It asserts the
superior power of exchange to suspend use-values in favor of claims to
higher value. In the process, it seeks to deny the abstractness of money.
Yet it does not necessarily do so by reasserting the materiality of
meaningful objects. Rather, those objects are turned into signs of invisible
values. [2001: 87]

110 In other gifting contexts, money is given openly, but these tend not to be life and death ritual contexts.
Alexeyeff (2009: 96-99) describes the koni raoni, literally ‘dance around’ that happened on Aitutaki while she
was there in 1996. A competitive dance performances ensued among the villages on the island, which
prompted onlookers to gift money out of appreciation and aro’a. See also Anson Grieve Productions (1996)
for footage of monetary collections as fundraisers for a church tere (travel) party to travel back to Aitutaki
from Auckland for the opening of a new church hall.

111 See Keane’s discussion of yora, a traditional notion of wealth that bears striking resemblance to markets,
money and government development projects 2001: 80-81).
Hence, locks of hair are exchanged for envelope wrapped gifts of money, because these valuables materialise key values. The work of the ritual complex in the haircutting maintains the boundary between the values inherent in the exchange valuables, especially the cash money, and the alternative value and uses that the wrapped money possess in coexisting regimes of value (cf. Keane 2001: 78). Just as wrapping had the power to activate sanctity (Kaeppler 2007: 120; cf. Gell 1993: 87) in pre-contact times, the wrapping of money in envelopes sanctifies the “dirt” (Douglas 1966) of money, putting it in place in the service of kinship conjoinment. Hence, when I talked to people about the gifting of money, most used the shorthand term “envelopes” to refer to such gifts.

4 THE HAIRCUTTING AND THE WIDER ECONOMY

Whilst the whole ritual complex at work in the haircutting dignifies the gifting of money in a way that creates social life, this process remains part of the particular Cook Islands version of the dialectic between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market. The capacity of the named envelope-wrapped cash money to be the means of maintaining, creating or renewing social relationships is drawn in part from the dual value of money, and its currency (in all senses of the word), in the market realm. As Hart notes, “The coin has two sides for good reason – both are indispensable. Money is at the same time an aspect of relations between persons and a thing detached from persons” (1986: 638). In Keane’s Sumbanese example, formal ceremonial exchange and the discourse around it are “developing into strenuous and self-conscious responses to the world of money and markets. This response is both discursive, a vision of an alternative regime of value, and practical, an effort to control the circulation of value’s objectified forms” (2001: 75-76). The same can be said for Cook Islanders.

Money has had a profound impact on the way Cook Islanders conduct their lives. The impact began with colonisation, but like the rest of the colonial process for Cook Islanders, the arrival of money has not brought about a wholesale obliteration of cultural process. I argue that rather than destroying modes of social connectivity, it has been employed to extend them in what constitutes a contemporary response to the political economy that Cook Islanders live in New Zealand, and the particular version of the Cook Islands dialectic that characterises the tension between the realm of mutuality and market in the wider global context. In light of this, in the sections below I look at Loomis’ work on the haircutting (1983, 1985a), to recast his data and update it with perspectives gleaned from my own fieldwork.
Tradition and Change

There is some debate about how traditional the haircutting ceremony actually is, but most agree that they are more common now than they used to be. Some of the people I spoke to about haircuttings said that it was a tradition that dated from the time before the missionaries came. However, others have scoffed at this and declared that it was a convention introduced by the missionaries, and another woman told me “[haircuttings] it’s a new thing”. Some think that the haircutting ceremony is just for title holders, others for the oldest son only of a nuclear family. Antony Hooper indicated that he neither saw nor was told about haircutting ceremonies amongst the Auckland Cook Islander population at the time of his research (late 1950s), and that it was his opinion that the current haircutting ceremony was essentially a copy of the Niuean event (personal correspondence cited in Loomis 1983: 230). In his own writing Hooper asserts that it was the 21st celebration which was the key kōpū tangata (extended kin) event of an individual’s life (1961a: 172). Haircuttings are ‘new’ like tivaivai, but are still wholly a Cook Islands event (cf. Baddeley 1978; McGeorge 1995).

In reckoning what constitutes a proper haircutting, Loomis drew on data from a particular edition of a 1981 Radio Pacific Talkback programme which discussed the issues of authenticity and the parameters that constituted an appropriate haircutting event. The particular programme featured Papa Tuiono as the resident tūmū korero (culture authority), who presented “rhetorical summations” on what constituted tradition and correct procedure (Loomis 1983:226). But in the process, he used the programme as a forum for pressuring listeners to take part more in Cook Islands activities, as well as a platform for asserting his own leadership status and power in things cultural amongst the Cook Islands community in Auckland. A number of disagreements ensued on air. Loomis notes that Papa Tuiono began the programme by asserting that the haircutting ritual was a traditional event of long standing and was considered a “sacred practice” in the islands. Several listeners concurred, saying that it was an “ancient custom... a custom of ours practiced since early times” (Loomis 1983: 226). Other callers did not agree, and said it was borrowed from the Niuean tradition, others said that they had just not seen the event staged in the islands, and others questioned the authority of the old Papa to assert what was traditional. Another more “cynical” caller said “if it was in fact a ‘sacred tradition’, it should be kept in the islands since people came to New Zealand to earn money, not to give it away” (Loomis 1983: 226).
Loomis notes that the actual format, size of the audience, and the amount of gifts and money contributed at haircutting ceremonies had increased (1983: 216). Ama, in writing about the Cooks Islands, said it was a practice that had almost died out (she did not specify when), but has become popular again amongst families, “especially those from Atiu and neighbouring islands, and now involves a huge ceremony with thousands of dollars’ worth of gifts being given by those who are privileged enough to be given the right to cut one lock of hair” (Ama 2003: 120). In 1985, Loomis wrote that the haircutting ceremony and the event had become more popular “and elaborate” amongst the Cook Islands community in New Zealand than in the islands. He noted that the ceremony was “an important vehicle for families to accumulate wealth and gifts for their child” (Loomis 1985a: 1). This is an important statement, and this was the sense that I was left with after participating in the haircutting of Māmā Lucy’s nephew, but that the attention paid to the circulation of value, especially through the use of textiles was also very important. More than just being ritualising of economy and economising of ritual in the McAnany and Wells (2008) sense, reiterating the old dichotomies, this is in fact a statement about the way Cook Islanders do “economics” in Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) terms.

**Changes in amounts and processes of gifting**

Loomis (1983: 230) noted that on the basis of his records from a number of events at the time of his fieldwork (late 1970s, early 1980), cash donations averaged around $NZ10 for those living in New Zealand and $NZ2 for visitors from the islands. The value of food donations averaged between $NZ8 and $NZ10, and purchased gifts, often textiles, cost in the vicinity of $NZ10 to $NZ15, meaning the average household gift was between $NZ10 and $NZ30 for an event, and he inferred that the giving was agonistic (1983: 228). However, one of my informants, Māmā Eva William, indicated that the agonistic element was no longer how Cook Islanders gave. She asserted that at the time we were talking (early 2009) what was appropriate for an extended kin gift was an envelope containing around $NZ50.00. She said:

> Unlike our Samoan and Tongan brothers and sisters... don’t quote me on this, you would have to talk to them, but with them it all comes down to [giving], they would do everything and anything to do it for their family, even if it puts them in hock, but we are not the same. I mean a $NZ50 envelope is a lot of money if you go to one of these events but to a Samoan, from what I have come to know, like $NZ50 from an immediate family member is like a slap in the face. You know you might be expected to take
It seems to me that what Māmā Eva was saying was that the agonistic element that is so pervasive in Samoan and Tongan gifting is not as relevant for Cook Islanders and is also unsustainable. While I have seen and heard about marked competition in gifting (cf. Loomis 1983: 229), Māmā Eva was contending that it is the process of the mechanics of gifting that is most important. Loomis noted that at the haircuttings he went to, names and amounts given were not read aloud, as one boy’s father’s sister said “for fear of embarrassing the donor” (1983: 220). Nobody makes money out of a haircutting. Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting would have cost a substantial amount of money to stage, but a sum of money was sanctified for the boy’s education, obligations and connections maintained, underlined, or created and “community” and the “realm of mutuality” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) fostered and strengthened.

Loomis contends that the transition to the gifting of money has not only increased the popularity of staging haircuttings, but has opened the system up to “abuse”. He notes “In Auckland, however, there is a widespread notion that a family holding a ritual for more than one son is greedy” (Loomis 1983: 227). This makes some haircuttings into “cheap” affairs particularly if the boy is young, and has not had a chance to grow his hair long (Loomis 1983: 227). The notion of cheap infers that a family have staged the event just to make money. An appropriate haircutting will be for an older boy, the family will take time to save money for the food so there is plenty of it, and have the appropriate decorations as in Cook Islands textiles, especially tivaivai, so as to prevent shame, and a proper MC will be used, one who knows the correct procedure, genealogies and the way to manage the crowd. As one of Loomis’ informants remarked, to hold a cheap haircutting is the equivalent of “selling the hair of a child to make money”, and he notes that this can be declared the case if families contravene what some consider “the tapu on the boy’s gifts and cash donations. The contributions are for the boy alone to use, for his benefit and for his future advancement. Kin who appropriate these are stealing from the boy; stealing from their future leader (taking his power)” (Loomis 1983: 228). But families are more pragmatic now. Another haircutting I heard about that was for a four year old boy and occurred in 2010, was held because the boy’s maternal great-grandmother was visiting from the islands. It was small event, and only a few hundred dollars were gifted. However, this money was gifted-on by the boy’s mother to a cousin who was going overseas for
university study and needed some new clothes. The mother told me that she had asked her grandmother if she could gift the money to her cousin, and the grandmother had agreed because of the cousin’s need.

**Food in the ritual complex**

Loomis asserts that in the Cook Islands, the main form of prestations in pre-contact times and in the post-contact era was food, especially in the low lying atolls where life was a little more tenuous. He notes, “As such, food was the subject of complicated categorical ordering and a means of status accumulation” (Loomis 1983: 228). Whilst food has been relegated somewhat in the hierarchy of valuables, in lieu of inscribed envelope-wrapped money, food remains important (cf. Alexeyeff 2004). At events, wherever there is monetary gifting, there is always food provided for consumption at the event and to take away. I have been to events where there was a stack of boxes put aside to help people carry food home, and at another funeral feast, which was held in a Chinese restaurant in South Auckland, takeaway food cartons were supplied. As I got to know families in Auckland, I became aware that for some of them, the food taken away from an event on a given weekend constituted one to two days of food consumption for the family. Events in other words, are part of the way people provisioned for their families. Loomis noted:

*In New Zealand food is given as a matter of course to assist with the production of the event. Such assistance is appreciated but usually taken for granted. In a wage labour economy cash is more readily available (and increasingly so in the islands), and its donation the source of prestige. The more the better. Even so, for older migrants the money is considered the symbolic equivalent of a prestigious food donation in the islands. An older kinsman may be heard to demean the size of his monetary gift by stating, “Te oronga nei au koka puaka ngota,” ‘I am just giving a little pig’. [1983: 228]*

But I think Loomis undervalues the contribution and role of food in ceremonial economy; the gift money cannot be legitimately received without reciprocity of the gifting of food as well. Because of the regularity of flights between New Zealand and Rarotonga, and Rarotonga and the other islands, the delivery of island specific food as gifts has increased (Alexeyeff 2004, 2009a). This was made apparent to me at a wedding I attended where not only were the portions of food small and of very poor quality, there was not even enough food to feed the guests once over, let alone have food enough to allow the guests to take food home. The family were extremely embarrassed by this and the mother of the bride gave me the impression that she was going to need to compensate at future functions at the
next gifting opportunity. At Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, the arraying of the copious amounts of food on the tables even before the haircutting began so people could see the food when they arrived, seemed to me to be a part of the ritual process.\textsuperscript{112} Spatially, the food was relegated to the area below the stage, but the volume and abundance of it was as much a part of the process of the materialisation of values as valuables and part of what was being exchanged that day, as the range of textiles were.

\textit{Textile use}

The act of completely surrounding the stage area or even all the walls of a hall with textiles was not uncommon. At other haircuttings I have been to, the walls of smaller venues have been covered with \textit{tivaivai}. At Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, the prolific use of blowsheets as decoration was somewhat of an elaboration of what usually got done.\textsuperscript{113} These were lesser textiles that referenced the eliteness of the \textit{tivaivai} strategically and publically used, but they were also produced in a fraction of the time it took to make a single \textit{tivaivai}: they were cheaper, easier to make, and able to be produced \textit{en masse} quickly. I watched Māmā Lucy, and her kin Māmā Kura and Māmā Moeroa of the Enuamanu Va’ine tini produced close to a hundred of these decorated sheets in a single day.

In the haircuttings that Loomis wrote about, there was no mention of an ‘\textit{o’ora} following the actual haircutting ritual, however, all the haircuttings I attended included this form of processual gifting as well. This ramping up of the ritual complex is arguably part of the managing of the integrity and efficacy of the haircutting. The delivering of Māmā Lucy’s nephew to the \textit{tivaivai} draped chair ready for the next part of the ritual, the ‘\textit{o’ora}, whilst he bravely wiped tears from his eyes was a powerful image for me that showed the weight and importance of the ceremony to the boy’s parents, his extended family and effectively

\textsuperscript{112} Not to put to finer point on it, but the food was also wrapped. This was done with cling film, for hygiene reasons for the most part, but it was still wrapped. At every event I went to, food was treated in this way, and it struck me that such assiduous wrapping of food was a process that has salience for Cook Islanders.

\textsuperscript{113} See Jowitt and Lay (2002: 45) for an image of another haircutting done by Māmā Lucy for her grandson Kayne. The layout and extensive use of blowsheets was similar to the haircutting ceremony of Māmā Lucy’s nephew. Another haircutting I went to on the same day as Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting (which is why I was late to the latter), was held in the large Pukapuka Hall, also in Otara. This haircutting featured three \textit{tivaivai} on the walls and at least one on the chair that the young man sat on for part of the ceremony. The central one, which was hung behind the main table, was one of the machine made \textit{tivaivai taorei} made by Māmā Porio’s daughter-in-law, Nana, for the Enuamanu Va’ine tini program (see Chapter Seven). At least the other two hanging \textit{tivaivai} were part of Māmā Porio’s \textit{stash of tivaivai}. The use of Māmā Porio’s \textit{tivaivai} in this context added prestige to the event, and while she was kin to the family of the boy having his hair cut, the use of her \textit{tivaivai} was a form of gift to them. The mother of the boy having his hair cut was a busy full time teacher and mother of a newborn. She told me that she did not have time to make \textit{tivaivai}. 

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referenced the way Cook Islanders manage the dialectic between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market (Gudeman 2008).

**The Implications of the Haircutting**

Loomis (1985a) makes much of the changing nature of the symbolism of hair in Cook Islands cosmologies. In pre-contact times, male hair, particularly that of a chief’s was considered emblematic of his *mana* (power). Through luck, social manoeuvring, and prowess, an individual could become ‘akamana meaning filled with *mana* (Loomis 1985a: 2), because the process of accruing *mana* "was constituted in the give-and-take of social practice" (Loomis 1985a: 14). Hair was an important symbol of authority and status, and was considered ‘akatapu, dangerous, potent even and essentially made off-limits (Loomis 1984: 2). Maretu (1983 [1871]: 69) wrote that men’s hair “was their decoration and that was what made men attractive”. Women at the time wore their hair short, so cut hair was associated with lower *mana*. With the arrival of the missionaries and the Europeans, men were encouraged to cut their hair as a mark of civilisation in the European manner. It is likely that the colonial missionaries had little or no knowledge of the implications of male hair, and instead, they were orientated by the notion that the state of an individual’s physical appearance was tantamount to the semblance their soul (Loomis 1985a: 5; cf. Eves 1996).

Loomis tries to make summations from what was revealed in a rhetorical slip of the tongue in the oration of one of the elders at a haircutting he attended when the MC inadvertently compared the boy having his hair ritually cut to the biblical character of Samson. Samson was said to have derived his superhuman strength from God, his hair being the core of this power, and the removal of which would cause the cessations of his strength and power. However, Samson was betrayed by Delilah, who upon discovering the secret of Samson’s hair, literally brought him to his knees with weakness by ordering his hair be cut and his subjugation was made complete. Loomis argues the MC’s inadvertent comparison made the audience suddenly became “aware of the structural homology between the boy and Samson” (Loomis 1985a: 12). All realised the now made obvious connections between the boy having his hair cut and Samson and the mode of his demise (Loomis 1985a: 12). By inadvertently creating the analogy between the boy and Samson, it became apparent that the haircutting that was about to be enacted could potentially deprive the boy of all his strength or *mana*, a horrifying notion to the crowd which the MC
attempted to rectify. Loomis argues that the rhetorical slip was more truth than mistake. He contended:

In fact the Samson metaphor was eminently appropriate in contemporary New Zealand... Not only did it highlight the conflict between what they were doing and ‘traditional’ notions. It showed the startling relevance of the Samson story for their own underpowered social position in New Zealand society. [Loomis 1985a: 12]

To an extent Loomis is right, but I think what he missed in his Marxist zeal, is the way money moved in haircuttings and other contexts, and how this is part of the way Cook Islanders do economics.

In the context of Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, the young boy was born in New Zealand, he was educated here, and while he has the option to go back to the islands to live partly because he will have claims on land in the islands, he will more than likely end up living in New Zealand like two thirds of the Cook Islands population. He has to function in a capitalist Western economy, the process of becoming a man then is one where he is wrapped physically and metaphorically in textiles that trumpet certain specific values about being a Cook Islander in New Zealand and about being a human being, he is given gifts of textiles and several thousand dollars, possibly as much as $NZ10,000, he is adorned with neck garlands that are embellished with cash money notes and his passage to manhood is completed by a change of clothes, a feast and an ‘o’ora where he is literally wrapped and adorned in textiles, and ultimately tivaivai. While Samson lost his strength as his hair was cut from his head, what Māmā Lucy’s nephew gained as his hair was shorn is at least a nod to economic power, not to mention a network of kin whom he is now obligated to, and conjoined with.

Loomis is not remiss in pointing out the marginal status of Cook Islanders in the New Zealand economy (1985a, 1990a), nor can I argue that this has improved a great deal since Loomis was researching and writing, but there is something powerful about the amassing of a set of “communities” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) – represented by 500 people or more at Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting – to gift into existence a fund that is ostensibly put aside for the boy’s education and his later life, and to ritually sanction the set of values that the community adhere to by way of dignifying this gifting of money. There is volition and a conscious cultural ritual response to marginality that Loomis has not taken notice of, so ready was he to consign the Cook Islands population to total subjugation at the hands of
the capitalist process. Looking at Loomis’ data in a different way, I argue, as I have from various perspectives throughout this thesis, that there is much in the use of materialised valuables: *tivaivai*, money and food and hair, that is about a particular dynamic that is operating in Cook Islands ceremonial arena that allows people to get by and to do economy in a wider more encompassing way that involves the realm of mutuality as well as market (Gudeman 2001, 2008).

## 5 CONCLUSION

The haircutting is a rite of passage ritual that transitions a boy from being a child and a passive member of an extended kin network, into a Cook Islands version of a man: an individual who is actively connected to his *kōpū tangata* through the receipt of gifts, which generates obligation and commitment to reciprocate. The ritual entails the cutting of braided locks of hair from the head of the boy by members of his kin network, whereby the locks of hair are effectively exchanged for “envelopes” that wrap gifts of cash money. The transition into manhood and the managing of the “envelopes” as gifts rather than just money is achieved by the performance and presentation of a ritual complex that signifies all that Cook Islanders value most, namely the core values of *aro’a* (love) and connected kinship. In the haircutting, the version of the ritual complex deployed sees the ceremonial context decorated in textile valuables, at Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, the boy was arrayed in concentric radiating layers of textiles, with *tivaivai* as the paramount form of wealth at the centre, wrapping the boy in a fabricised materialisation of his close female relatives’ mothering *aro’a* (love). His genealogy was recited by an orator, to connect the boy to the audience of his extended kin network and to remind those present where they belonged, and to whom. His hair was ritually cut and with the gifting of wrapped money enacted, and then a symbolic change of clothes, the boy became a man.

The fact that envelope wrapped money can readily be converted into cash value in the realms outside of a gifting context, is part and parcel of how the system works, in fact it is essential to the way the system works for Cook Islanders in Auckland. Cook Islanders operate from the “base” (Gudeman 2001, 2008). They have a specific notion of money as it moves in the ceremonial economy, which is inevitably articulated with and is a function of the value of money in the market economy that they live in New Zealand, but the two are not synonymous. They are related and managed yes, but are not the same. Cook Islanders have articulated the ceremonial economy with the capitalist economy with a fully-fledged active ceremonial economy which accommodates money in its midst as an important but
non-sterile valuable that services social relationships in the way a good gift should, creating the requisite obligations and binding people together. Envelope wrapped money does all this under the auspices created literally and figuratively by *tivaivai* which materialises values as valuables as semiotic media of value (Turner 2006b, 2008). Money in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy is a materialisation of values too, as it is in capitalism; but how this operates in the realm of mutuality for Cook Islanders is different and specific. Here, “envelopes” are ranked as a lesser valuable because of the hierarchy of valuables that prevails. In the next chapter, I extend this discussion about the relationship between *tivaivai* and money in the context of funerary processes, and look at the wider implications of the gifting of envelope wrapped money.
CHAPTER SIX

TIVAIVAI, MONEY, AND OTHER VALUABLES IN FUNERARY PROCESSES

1 INTRODUCTION

An elderly man died early one morning in the adjacent village from where I was staying when I was on one of the outer islands in the Cook Islands. There was no morgue on the island, so it was necessary to be expedient with the burial. People began to gather at the man’s house early in the morning to be part of the rituals that manage death on the island. The woman I was staying with took me with her when she went to visit the family. We arrived at 8.30 in the morning, it was already hot, and there was little breeze that far inland. The man’s house was at the edge of the village and there was a growing crowd of people sitting under the trees adjacent to the dwelling. The crowd was muted, a sombre stillness prevailed in the intensifying heat, and the unease that accompanies the rupture that death causes, seemed palpable to me. The feeling that death was close and immediate was disorientating, and as we walked past the small house, which had banks of windows on three sides that were open to the dirt road in front, we caught a glimpse of the man’s body lying inside. He was wrapped tightly, neatly, snugly in a tivaivai. It was a powerful, confronting image of the centrality of tivaivai as the cloth used to mitigate the cleaving of relationships that death brings about so abruptly.

The man’s head and face were exposed, his cheeks already sunken and cadaverous attesting to his long illness. I remember his wispy grey hair, somehow incongruous with the rigidity of his face. The rest of his body was shrouded in the tivaivai. I do not remember the pattern of the tivaivai, but I have an enduring memory of the pink colour that comprised the top part of what was probably a tivaivai manu. And despite the brevity of my view, I remember the detail of the stitching: yellow and pink variegated cotton and the ubiquitous tuitui taveri\textsuperscript{114} stitch. Beside the man was a line of women mourners, I did not see their faces, but I imagine I heard their benumbed crying and registered that smell which is inevitable with death far from a metropolitan centre. Why I remember the stitching I do not know, but somehow those acute details attested to the labour that it took to sew the tivaivai and the enormity and weight of the act of wrapping the dead man, the

\textsuperscript{114} This is a Cook Islands derived stitch, which is an elaboration of the standard blanket stitch and is commonly used as an edging on tivaivai manu and tivaivai tātaura.
almost snugness of the *tivaivai* wrapped in the way that it was, substantiated who he was in life, his connection to a network of kin and the fact that he was cherished. I did not find out who had provided the *tivaivai* for his shrouding and subsequent burial, but I was told stories about his life as the day wore on that painted a picture of a man who had lived a less than stellar life. But whatever the quality of the way the man had lead his life had been – good or bad- he was honoured in death in the appropriate way.

I had a sense of the geographical and ideological layers that radiated out from what was left of the man's physical earthly presence. As news of his death spread around the island, and beyond to Rarotonga, New Zealand and Australia where most of his kin lived, it seemed to me that as he lay wrapped tightly and neatly in a *tivaivai*, that single textile defined the legacy of what remained of the relationships he had had when he was alive, and anchored the supernatural and economic processes that ensued. That this man's death affected a whole network of people in different geographical locations was inevitable because of the way Cook Islanders live around the Pacific basin. But the immediate need to bury the body quickly was managed by the rituals that gathered people in the vicinity of the man's body. These rituals were focused on the gifting of envelope wrapped money by the people arriving at the house and the need to feed these people by the man's family who were at the house.

Activity around the man's house was centred on the kitchen which was detached from the back of the house, where the food was being made. People continued to arrive throughout the morning from all over the island and depending on their relationship with the deceased, either joined the waiting crowd, went to help with the food preparations, or to grieve with the close family members. Māmā and I sat quietly outside with the growing crowd for almost five hours, until we were shown into the kitchen area and given food to eat. I was new to the field but the impressions that remain for me of that disquieting day were about the elemental, centrality of *tivaivai* in the ritual processes around death, and the roles that money and food plays in the process. *Tivaivai* were about the perpetuation of lived relationships into the grave, the erstwhile bedspread had the power to look after the dead in perpetuity, because that particular pink *tivaivai* was the materialisation of specific orientating key values. That something considered as an elite valuable would be consigned to the grave was powerful indeed, but how loved the man actually was in reality, was elided and maybe even relegated by the weight of the value that *tivaivai* manifested. The veracity of the stories about the man's life did not seem as important as the need to
transition his body into the ground through the end of life rituals. This process also entailed the reconfiguring and conjoining anew his kin and extended kin group after the rupture of the man’s death, through the gifting of envelope wrapped money and the provision of food. The emblemised nature of that single tivaivai heralded the ritual gifting complex that ensued at death, effectively, the weight of the tivaivai and the form of gift that it constituted, dignified the subsequent exchange of food, envelope wrapped money, and other textiles. The tivaivai wrapped the dead man, adorning his relationship with the living, and the food and envelope wrapped money sustained and re-connected the living.

This chapter explores the ideological implications of the use of tivaivai in the rituals around death, and how this defines the relationship among textiles, money, and food. Because of the potent symbolism and weight afforded tivaivai when they shroud the dead, I look at the issue of what is alienated and what remains inalienable in the process of gifting tivaivai, especially at death. I argue that this is one of the aspects of what defines tivaivai as symbolic media of value (Turner 2008: 49). The second part of the chapter looks at the ritual complex which entails the exchange of money, envelope wrapped money, food, and various forms of textiles in a display of the hierarchy of textiles, including tivaivai, which occur through the various funerary events. The exchange and circulation of these various forms of valuables in the sequence of rituals effectively transitions the dead and the living through the rupture that the death of an individual causes.

The relationship amongst tivaivai, lesser textiles, money, envelope wrapped money, and food and how they operate within a “community” (Gudeman 2001) as part of the apportioning and allotment of the base, and between “communities” as part of the reciprocity complex that conjoins Cook Islanders across geographical space and through the matrix of kin as transnational and translocal networks, is part of the Cook Islands version of the dialectic between the realms of mutuality and market. In the last part of the chapter, I argue that even if an individual does not get involved to any great degree in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, conventions around death, especially the gifting of money, are adhered to by most. I shift the focus of the chapter in this section and look at the literature on gifting and remittances to frame the movement of these valuables in light of my analysis of the ritual complex that manages death for Cook Islanders in the diaspora and in the islands as part of the way Cook Islanders do economics in an expanded notion of economy (Gudeman 2001, 2008).
2 QUANTIFYING THE WEIGHT OF TIVAIVAI AS THE BURIAL SHROUD

Not all Cook Islanders’ bodies are buried with tivaivai, but when tivaivai are not used in death, it is still about the use of tivaivai in death. This can be about changing values as materialised in tivaivai, or it can be about making a statement about the relationship between the dead and the living. Some families will lay the coffin of the deceased on a tivaivai during the days before the interment when the body is in the house, but will not place the textile in the grave. Other families will get a tivaivai or other textile from the kin network in the immediate aftermath of a death so that the body can be appropriately adorned. There is not necessarily any specific connection between the deceased and the maker or the textile, but some women will have a specific textile that they would have long marked for the burial of a husband or other close kin. Some people think it is a “waste” to let tivaivai go into the grave, but others let the ideological weight of tivaivai at death speak about the enormity of the inherent relationships. I had several other fieldwork experiences, aside from that of the death of the man on the outer island, which in one way or another, powerfully conveyed the weight that tivaivai can carry as the materialisation of values and the defining material of value for many Cook Islanders as expressed through the use of the textiles around death. Death and the emotions around the loss of close kin were not easy subjects to talk about with the women and men I listened to in the course of my fieldwork, so these insights come my way unexpectedly, and were all the more poignant and efficacious for it.

In Auckland in 2010 I rang one of the women from the one of the Va’ine tini I was connected to (I will call her Māmā Tui\(^{115}\)). One of the other women from the group had died and I wanted to check on the funeral details. I had not seen Māmā Tui for a while so I caught up on her news. The death of the Va’ine tini Māmā was not the only bereavement she had had during the year; one of her children and her husband had died within a month of each other, the husband succumbing to illness some three weeks before. I felt terrible that I had not known at least about her husband, so I went to see her the next day. She was understandably shell-shocked by all the deaths, and she was very sad about the passing of the Māmā from the Va’ine tini a few days before. I had known her husband over the years of my fieldwork, and Māmā Tui and I had talked in the past at length about the nature of their relationship. Her husband had a range of medical issues, and Māmā Tui had nursed him for many years. But despite this, he had treated her appallingly at times through their

\(^{115}\) Pseudonym.
married life; he had fathered a child with another woman, and physically and psychologically abused her on a regular basis, and I had witnessed his cruelty to her on a number of occasions.

In the course of our conversation that day, I asked Māmā Tui if she had buried a *tivaivai* with her husband. This was a difficult question to ask, and not one that I had had the courage to ask before of other grieving women because it seemed too personal and intimate. But I knew that this would be a loaded question for Māmā Tui and I guessed that she was torn between utter relief at the abatement of the pressure that their relationship had been for her, and a jarring sense of unreality at the passing of her husband. Her reply was poignant, and while not a direct answer, the meaning was explicit. She said, “that day of the funeral, it was raining, there was water and mud in the hole [the grave where the coffin lay] and I thought, I’m not putting my *tivaivai* down there, so I just took them home”. Her reply was not said with bitterness, just tired acceptance. While her *tivaivai* had been present at the funeral, perhaps for reasons of impression and appropriateness, it seemed to me that Māmā Tui was making the ultimate statement about the end of her relationship with her husband. He was not worth wrapping in *tivaivai*. Her *tivaivai* were for the relationships in her life that she valued.116

The giving of *tivaivai* to a loved one at death to use to wrap the body for burial is the ultimate allotment of the base (cf. Gudeman 2001, 2008). The public display of such a *tivaivai* through the funerary processes is a powerful and elemental one, imbued with all the ideological values of domestic *aro’a* that Cook Islanders articulate, writ large again in the public arena. Such a *tivaivai* publicly displays the *aro’a* within a marriage and the quality of the woman as a wife for example. When I was on the southern island of Mangaia in the Cook Islands, one couple were explicit about this. Tekea Moe’ara, was the Woman’s Affairs Officer on the island at the time, and she had offered to introduce me to her mother who was a good *tivaivai* maker. We were invited to her parents’ house on the lower *makatea* (coral shelf) to eat and as we sat in the living room, I glimpsed corners of older

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116 Māmā Tui told me about an argument that had ensued within her family while her husband was dying. It was about the burial plot that her husband was to be interred in, and eventually her as well. She said a single grave site in the cemetery cost $NZ1200, if the spouse of the first person to die is buried on top there is no extra cost to do with land, but if another plot is purchased beside the first, the total cost is $NZ3000. Māmā Tui’s husband had asked her to buy only a single plot, her words were, “he begged me”. She indicated that she had agreed and said “I had forgiven him”. However, Māmā Tui said that another of their daughters who had been angry at the way her father had treated her mother, said, “If you don’t pay it [the extra money for the double plot] then I will” because she didn’t want them buried together.
tivaivai on some of the beds in the adjoining rooms. Family photographs adorned the walls of the room featuring the Moe’ara’s eleven children and their extended family. The tivaivai came out before the food. Māmā Moe’ara, who was a skilled tivaivai maker, had a spectacular array of tivaivai, and as each one was unfolded, she told stories about the making of them or who they were destined to go to. She said she kept some for herself because she just liked them, but others she had a destination in mind.

Māmā Moe’ara’s husband sat beside her on the couch as she told the stories about her tivaivai. Pāpā Moe’ara was a retired school teacher, a thoughtful and measured man who was articulate and extremely well spoken. He was half Ātiuan and half Mangaian and Māmā Moe’ara was from Ātiu. The young son of their youngest daughter lived with them and this child was playing in the living room too. Tekea and I unfolded a large spectacular tiger lily pattern tivaivai taorei. I asked Māmā Moe’ara why she had not given the tivaivai away yet. She paused, then turned to her husband and smiled, and as she looked at him she said “You tell her”. The couple were sitting on their couch with the tivaivai draped over their laps. Pāpā Moe’ara grinned as he looked back at his wife, and then turned to me and said, “This is the one she is going to bury me in”. Māmā Moe’ara explained that it was the first tivaivai taorei she had made when she was newly married; her husband had cooked the food for the family while she had gone to the Va’ine tini group to sew. For the elderly couple, privately and figuratively, the tivaivai wrapped, contained, and adorned all that was good about their married life together; as a public display of this it was destined literally to wrap the husband in perpetuity from his death. That tivaivai stood with the couple through the duration of their married life, and it constituted a set of actions which materialised value (Turner 2006b, 2008). It had come to stand for the love, affection, and connection that they considered characterised their marriage, because tivaivai are both “an iconic as well as an indexical symbol” (Turner 2008: 50) of kinship and aro’a. The values that this old couple lived by and the togetherness that had characterised their marriage for many long years, were poignantly materialised in the beautiful large intricate tivaivai taorei that lay over them, for them it was a “biographical object” (Hoskins 1998). It was a moving moment.

Māmā Moe’ara had made the tivaivai as a member of a small Va’ine tini group on Mangaia in the 1960s. There were six women in the group and the president and ta’unga

117 Māmā Moe’ara’s mother’s uncle was the father of Māmā Porio, the ta’unga from the Enuamanu Va’ine tini.
was a woman call Māmā Vereara Maeva, an esteemed *tivaivai* maker and a woman with considerable *mana*, who later set up the Cook Islands National Council of Women (CINCW, see Chapter Seven). Each woman in the group made the same pattern, which was Māmā Vereara’s own, and from what I gather, the women did more or less all their own sewing on their individual *taorei*, but worked together while they did so and had a great time. Through the course of my fieldwork on Mangaia and on Rarotonga, I saw three of these tiger lily *tivaivai taorei* made in different colour ways, and a fourth that was a new version of this pattern. That same day I saw the one Māmā Ruatoe had made.118 A week or so later, when I was back on Rarotonga, I saw another of the six *tivaivai taorei*. This one was in Māmā Vereara Maeva’s house in Rarotonga and the *tivaivai* actually belonged to another woman in the group, Māmā Kimiora Samuels who still lived on Mangaia. Māmā Vereara was copying the pattern because she wanted to make another *tivaivai* like it. She told me she had buried her version of the *tivaivai* made with the group in Mangaia with her husband when he died. I asked her why she chose that particular *tivaivai*. She said that it was the first *taorei* she had made. She said she had asked her husband for the material and he had willingly brought it for her. She said, "I told him, this is my first *tivaivai taorei*, this is yours". She said her husband used to help her with the counting of the squares and would put each piece on the ground as she finished it to chart her progress. She said when she finally finished, he was so proud of her. He used to say that he was proud of having a wife who could do such things; she said “to him, women who sew *tivaivai* like that are the best women men can have”. She said “a woman who knows how to sew, knows how to wash, knows how to cook is the ideal woman”.

These fieldwork stories told me a great deal about the gravitas and centrality of *tivaivai* in managing the process of death and the rituals that manage and mitigate the transitions required for both the dead and the living. *Tivaivai* are inherently to do with the social ramifications of death (Kaufman and Morgan 2005: 323; cf. Hertz 1960 [1907]), and link – or not – the living with the dead in a way that coalesces with understandings of kinship and processes of *aro’a*. *Tivaivai* do this because they are semiotic media of value (Turner 2008: 49). Death is a social event and the range of processes enacted with *tivaivai* are important. Later in this chapter I look at the role of *tivaivai* and other textiles in exchanges that involve money, envelope wrapped money, and food which sustain the living

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118 Māmā Ruatoe had used hers to *‘o’ora* her son at his wedding in New Zealand, along with 49 other *tivaivai* she has made. Māmā and Pāpā Ruatoe had lived in New Zealand for 20 years and had saved to build a house in Mangaia, where they had retired to at the time I met them.
in the event of death, but in the next section, I look at what is alienated and what is
inalienable in the gifting of tivaivai, especially at death.

**Alienability, inalienability, and the true source of the value of tivaivai**

By looking at what is alienated and what is not when tivaivai are gifted at death in
particular, I argue that this infers on the relationship among value, values, and valuables.

Turner’s application of Marx’s notion of the fetishism of money in capitalism, which
obscures the true source of value is a way to understand the difference between tivaivai as
material objects, the values they materialise, and the value they signify. Küchler (Küchler
and Eimke 2009: 27, see also 2009:5) contends that tivaivai are inalienable, she notes:

Like the mother who in marriage left the island to bring up her family
elsewhere, tivaivai are rarely made to stay within the household, but
move, at least temporarily, elsewhere, usually following children and
grandchildren. Because the thus harnessed cloth is still in its cut stage
associated with divine agency, bearing a likeness to the duality of being
which characterizes the ariki, tivaivai are rarely acquired as commodities.
Instead they are inalienable gifts, to be returned on the death of their prior
owner, remaining with the tribe in just the same way as their ariki titles do.
Having said this, it is important to note that some tivaivai are bought, and
that some others do not return to their previous owner, but are given to
another family member. Women tend to give tivaivai taorei to their
daughters as wedding gifts, destined to be wrapped around their
husbands on death. [Küchler and Eimke 2009: 27, emphasis added]

Küchler makes the same point elsewhere (2005b: 179, 183, and 186). However, her
assertion that tivaivai are returned to the prior owner of the tivaivai upon this person’s
death is problematic, and according to my observations, is contrary to what tivaivai are
about and what women intend when they gift the textiles.\(^{119}\) When I asked Ātiuan women
in Auckland if they expected the tivaivai they had gifted to be returned upon their death,
they were bemused by the suggestion. All the women I asked in Va’ine tini in Auckland said
that this is not what happened when a woman dies. Certain textiles may go into the grave
with a woman but this is to materialise the relationship rather than to “return” the gift. I
argue that Küchler does not quite grasp the implications of tivaivai as the gift, because she
has simplified the dynamic of tivaivai as the gift by grafting Weiner’s (1992) schema of
keeping-while-giving onto the gifting frameworks of Cook Islands tivaivai (Küchler 2005b:
188) where it does not hold up. My contentions hinge on the way tivaivai materialises
value for many Cook Islanders.

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\(^{119}\) Küchler did some fieldwork on Ātiu and in Auckland (Küchler and Eimke 2009).
In my discussions about the ideology associated with tivaivai in this thesis so far, I have argued that when women gift tivaivai, their intent is that the tivaivai will be cherished and owned by the receiver. Tivaivai materialise values for most Cook Islanders, but as I have discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, tivaivai as objects are effectively fetishised as the source of value. It is the relationship among value, values, and valuables, which makes a valuable like tivaivai materialise and seem imbued with value. That the ultimate, as in final and also most exalted destination of special tivaivai is burial, sheds light on the substance of tivaivai and the value they materialise. Tivaivai don’t just provide a measure of the contrasting levels of value, they are also material objects that bring those values into being in a way that those values are recognisable to other Cook Islanders. I have argued that when tivaivai are withheld in certain situations as a sanction, or a previous gift rescinded for the same reason, this is a powerful form of censure. But the giving back of tivaivai in the way Küchler suggests is an equally powerful gesture, but not in the way she thinks. Permanently giving back tivaivai is tantamount at worst to severing a relationship or it can signal the relegating of a relationship, or at least signal changes in values and what is valued. In Chapter Three I wrote about how sad Māmā Tere was when her daughter returned the tivaivai she had been given by Māmā Tere at her wedding ‘o’ora. While the mother-daughter relationship was not severed, the daughter just did not value tivaivai in the way her mother did. However, the way that relationship was expressed from Māmā Tere’s point of view was changed, and this was very unsettling and sad for her because of the salience that tivaivai had for Māmā Tere. So Küchler’s conflation of the concept of inalienability and the physically giving back of tivaivai to the giver raises questions about what is inalienable and what is alienable about tivaivai as the gift, which leads to issues about the nature of the relationship between tivaivai as the object and people, and ultimately about value and values.

I argue that certain aspects of tivaivai are inalienable, but not in the way Küchler thinks they are. Rather than tivaivai being about keeping-while-giving, it seems to me that the Cook Islands way of gifting tivaivai is to give-away-in-order-to-maintain. Theoretically, for a while I considered that Strathern’s (1988: 178-179) notion of partible personhood held salience, the idea that a piece of the maker went with the gift seemed relevant. In the course of my fieldwork, I was told of instances from time to time where receivers of
*tivaivai*, generally children of givers, associated the *tivaivai* with their mother, but such instances were about the relationship rather than the object per se. It is my contention, that in the migrant context at least, when women give *tivaivai*, their most intense desire is to have the *tivaivai* cherished when they are alive, but also when they are dead. In other words, to have a woman’s *tivaivai* returned would be the worst, the last thing a woman would want to happen. But women do not want *tivaivai* kept because they contain something of them as such; they need them kept because of what *tivaivai* materialise, *tivaivai* are about relationships. *Tivaivai* are gifted to maintain relationships that they literally and figuratively wrap – or not as the case may be - as with Māmā Tui and her dead husband.

The inalienability concept was posited in the literature as an alternative to Mauss’ use of the concept of the *hau* (spirit) of the gift (1990 [1925]: 11-12) which constituted his attempt to locate the driving force behind why gifts were reciprocated (Yan 2005: 252-253). In reply, Weiner (1992) determined that the most important objects are those that are not given away, as in those that are inalienable. As Graeber (2001: 34-35) notes, for Weiner (1992), the value of an object is derived from how much it needs to not be given away, as opposed to Simmel (2011 [1907]) who saw value as a product of exchange, but for both, value was derived from the object itself: the object in effect was fetishised. For Turner (2006b, 2008) and Graeber (2001, 2005), value is essentially derived from what people do, as in their actions in other words (cf. Munn 1986), and how this is related to what people value. Hence, Turner’s use of the mechanism of the fetishising of money in capitalism which locates the source of value as above and beyond the object itself. Likewise, it is not *tivaivai* that are the source of value, but the relationships that they enhance and accentuate (Turner 2006b, 2008). While the form and function of *tivaivai* is very important, the way they materialise value is more so, and this was lost upon Küchler.

Küchler’s conflation of the concept of inalienability and the idea that this means that the textiles are usually returned to their prior owner upon the death of that woman,

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120 One woman I met on Rarotonga told me about a *tivaivai* she was given by her mother when she left for Fiji to attend nursing school. She said that she used to wrap herself in it when she was feeling lonely or needed support to study for her exams. This wrapping, she said made her feel loved, nurtured and safe. She told me that she was offered NZ$3000 for the *tivaivai* by a “visiting American” but she refused the offer because of the value the *tivaivai* had for her. Such is the perceived ability of *tivaivai* to express the love of a mother, but what was really wrapping the woman was the values that *tivaivai* stood for. The idea that this *tivaivai* would be returned to the mother, the prior owner upon her death, seems to fly in the face of what *tivaivai* are to women who give, and hopefully those that receive *tivaivai*. 
despite her caveat that many are sold etc. and many are not returned, is demonstrative of one of the deficiencies of Weiner’s notion of keeping-while-giving. Weiner asserts that the most important objects are inalienable, but in the context of *tivaivai*, it is not the object *per se* that is inalienable but the structural value that created it, and lets the textile materialise that value. It seems to me that the need to be able to alienate parts of what *tivaivai* are, in particular their physical materiality, is crucial because of what they are ideologically, but also because of the dynamic nature of *aro’ā* and the way Cook Islanders move and configure families across time and space, in and around the Pacific basin. In keeping with Turner’s notion that a valuable like *tivaivai* is a materialisation of a set of values (2006b, 2008), it seems to me that there are two parts to *tivaivai* as the gift. It is not so much that part of the maker goes with the *tivaivai* in the sense of the Maussian “*hau*” of the gift either, or even in the Weiner sense of the object being bound up with identity of the transactor (1985, 1992), nor does Strathern’s notion of partible personhood (1988) work well either, because what is paramount in the gifting of *tivaivai*, what is most important is the maintenance that the gift does. So *tivaivai* are an allotment from the base, they are at once material and social: the social aspect is inalienable, but the material is explicitly alienated.

Gell’s (1992) analysis of the difference between gift and commodity exchange, and his issue with Gregory’s (1982) definition of gift exchange is another way of looking at what is alienated and what is not. Gregory contrasts gift exchange with commodity exchange by asserting that gift exchange creates qualitative relationships between people using inalienable objects in transactions with transactors who are in a state of reciprocal dependence, whereas commodity exchange does the opposite. But Gell (1992: 143) contends that gift exchange is far similar to commodity exchange than Gregory realised. Gell (1992: 144) argues that objects are alienated in gift exchange, but what is not alienated in gift exchange is the social identity of the giver which he asserts is connected to the object as it moves, because there is no glory for the giver unless they have lost the object. The social identity of the giver amounts to the relationship they are having with the recipient, and this is what is inalienable.\(^\text{121}\)

\(^{121}\)Gell’s (1992) assertions infer upon the notion of spheres of exchange. Bohannan’s notion of spheres of exchange (1955; cf. Barth 1967) and his analysis of economic activity among the Tiv of Nigeria categorised the movement of different units of valuable in the Tiv gift economy. In Bohannan’s ethnographic context, there were three spheres and each dealt with a different type of object. But as Robbins and Akin (1999: 9) point out, missing was any evaluation of the different social relations that prevailed in the midst of the spheres and the activity that operated in any particular sphere of exchange. They note that the use of Bohannan’s scheme has been inconsistent, and many theorists have struggled with it to the extent that any
This separation of what is alienated and what is not makes even more sense when looking at envelope wrapped money as described in my previous chapter and prefigures my analysis of exchanges of money and envelope wrapped money through funerary process in the next part of this chapter. At haircuttings and after death, as well as in other ritual contexts, money is given wrapped in envelopes with the giver’s name written on the front. At the end of the event, the money is removed from the envelopes and placed in a pile to be banked, and money as an object is ultimately alienated. What is inalienable is the name of the person and the relationship that is created or maintained with the gifting of the envelope wrapped money. What is recorded for future reference is the name on the envelope and the amount given – therein lays the relationship. I will return to the implications of this via my analysis of funerary money gifting later in this chapter.

Contrary to Küchler’s argument, tivaivai are given away with the intention that they are given to never be returned because it is in the receiver owning and cherishing and keeping the tivaivai that the relationship is looked after, that the relationship is serviced and maintained. Hence the way tivaivai can be consigned to the grave, the way they are given to beloved children, and others who are perennially important to a woman. The notion of inalienable is of a different fixity in the Cook Islands way of seeing the world. The textiles are transacted, hopefully permanently, what remains inalienable is the desire to continue, create, maintain, and enhance the relationship being adorned, which has added impetus in the current environment where families can be spread out across the Pacific basin. By wrapping a loved one in tivaivai, at death or in life, one is wrapping a relationship in tivaivai, in love, honour, and esteem, thereby fortifying the relationship.

subsequent application has resulted in the loss of the “well-delineated shape that made it such an appealing model in the first place” (Robbins and Akin 1999: 9). Hutchinson identified a similar issue with her Nuer material; Bohannan’s model was an ill-fit because “it is premised on the idea that ‘things in themselves,’ rather than the social relationships through which they flow, differentiate ‘spheres of exchange’” (Hutchinson 1996: 90 cited in Robbins and Akin 1999: 9). But as Robbins and Akin argue, those who struggled the most, were in fact, “on to something” (1999: 9). The reason why, is that the spheres of exchange concept was all about objects, and for Melanesian examples, this was problematic. I argue the same applies to Polynesia and Cook Islands exchange systems. In Robbins and Akin formulations, they have added two missing dimensions. The first deals with social relationships, which in Bohannan’s original model were largely consigned to the margins, and the second concerns what Robbins and Akin call the “modality” of the exchange (1999: 9) as in the mode that the exchange takes place in. In the context of the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, not all exchanges are the same and there is a distinction between say a haircutting and an ‘o’ora at a wedding, or the gifting of money during a funerary process, different formats prevail in each type of exchange or prestation. But what Robbins and Akin are calling modalities is circumvented in my analysis by my focus on the relationship among value, values, and valuables, because this dynamic connects action to structure.
When Māmā Tirata died mid-2009, the *tivaivai* she gave to her daughter during the wedding ‘*o’ora* in Sydney in 2001 (as I discussed in Chapter Three) were not “returned” to Māmā Tirata, in fact it was the opposite. They were cherished more, and while they may have reminded Marie of her mother, they were more than mnemorns, those *tivaivai* were about connection, and the vestiges of a relationship which is more potent. The keeping-while-giving concept is somehow static, and compromising, even synchronic in that it provides merely a snapshot of the extent and relevance of *tivaivai* at least; that is why the gifting of *tivaivai* is more in the vicinity of giving-in-order-to-maintain because while *tivaivai* materialise value, they are not the source of it. “Value is the way that individuals’ actions take on meaning for the actor herself, by being incorporated into a larger social whole” (Graeber 2001: 67), so to consign a *tivaivai* to the grave to perpetuate love or even just for appearances, or to place a *tivaivai* underneath a coffin, effectively distils the values inherent in the process of gifting. It is the value and values that remain inalienable; it is the materialised valuable that is ultimately alienated.

3 FUNERARY PROCESSES AND THE RITUAL COMPLEX

Because the value inherent in *tivaivai* is really about the way the textiles are elicited to maintain the key, core relationships within a family as a community as an allotment from the base (Gudeman 2001), lesser textiles and valuables are used to do maintenance on the layers of other relationships that radiate out from the core ones. These are the relationships between communities that make up the extended kin group in the form of reciprocity. As the paramount form of valuable, and the semiotic media of value (Turner 2006b), *tivaivai* effectively dignify the gifting and exchange of other valuables that circulate in the ritual complex. These include money, envelope wrapped money (the distinction between these is explained below), food, and lesser textiles. In this thesis I have argued that the movement of these valuables during the various events that comprise the Cook Islands ceremonial economy is part of the version of the dialectic between the realms of mutuality and market that prevails for Cook Islanders. In this section I look at the exchanges of this range of valuables that occurred through the various funerary processes after the death of the husband of Māmā Nga\(^{122}\) from a *Va’ine tini* I was a member of in Auckland. With reference to Rasmussen’s (1995) account of the transfers of two types of money after the death of his great aunt, I analyse how the ritual complex is dignified by

\(^{122}\) Pseudonym.
*tivaivai* and helps people manage the supernatural implications and the economic realities around death for Cook Islanders.

**Māmā Nga’s Husband’s Funerary Processes**

One day in early August, I arrived at the usual weekday *Va’ine tini* meeting of one of the groups I belonged to, to learn that Māmā Nga’s husband had died on Monday. Māmā Nga was younger than many of the Māmās in the group and still had intermediate school-aged children. I knew her reasonably well, and enjoyed being with her because she was good fun, she regularly made all the women laugh because of the bawdy comments she made from time to time. As I helped tack the latest *tivaivai* on the floor with the other Māmās, the other women doing the tacking told me that the group were all going to Māmā Nga’s house that afternoon for a service. I became aware of a discussion going on between the president of the group, and several of the other Māmās about a gift of money that they considered was appropriate to give to Māmā Nga at the house that afternoon. As we were leaving the hall after lunch, bound for Māmā Nga’s house, the president of the group showed me an envelope that she said contained $NZ200. She had written the name of the group on the front of the plain envelope in her neat spidery script.

I took two of the Māmās in my car to Māmā Nga’s house. The discussion in the car was about what it was like to be alone after bereavement because one woman’s husband had died and the other had left her “bad” husband. It was a dreary late winter’s afternoon, overcast, and cold. The South Auckland house of Māmā Nga and her husband was in a smaller street off a main road. It was a typical weatherboard state house; the well mown lawn sloped gently down to the footpath and the section of garden in front of the house was neat and tidy. We entered the house through a porch into a hallway and were shown into the small, but crowded living room.\(^{123}\) There were about 40 people seated on chairs,

\(^{123}\) Rasmussen writes about how as people arrived merely hours after the death of his great aunt to her house, they divided themselves into either host-kin or non-host kin/associates (1995: 153). This was important because it had bearing ultimately on how people gave money. Kinswomen of the deceased mobilised in the kitchen, and a “quick collection of money among the host kin members took place to buy temporary supplies of food, drink, and toiletries. This was to see things through until an official family meeting was held” (1995: 153). Six days of mourning ensued. When the body of the woman returned to the house the day after, she was placed in the bedroom where she had died. “A mattress was laid on the floor and covered with mats and *tihaihai* [*tivaivai*, this is the Tongarevan spelling]. Her coffin was left open and it was put in a position so that her eyes were facing east. Tongareva people believe that the dead must always see the sun rise” (Rasmussen 1995: 154). Spatially, the house became divided into an outside area which became the men’s area and was a place where people ate and could laugh and joke and gossip. The interior of the house was the domain of women, it was where the body sat, and a sombre solemnified atmosphere prevailed (Rasmussen 1995: 153). People, mainly women stayed with the woman’s body for the duration of the time she was in the house, “Tongareva people say the deceased must be kept warm by the living so she was
couches, and on the floor, and beneath the windows at the other end of the living room was the body of Māmā Nga’s husband, lying in state in his casket. The coffin was open but there was a nylon table cloth draped over the body so that only the man’s head and shoulders were visible. Māmā Nga sat in front of the windows, and beside the coffin, she looked tired and sad. She and her husband, who was several months shy of his 65th birthday when he died, were both from one of the outer islands and had been married for 19 years, they had a number of children, two of whom sat beside her by the coffin of their father. The walls of the living room were covered with framed family photographs, featuring wedding parties, sports teams, and other groupings of people draped to some degree with yellow and white pūpū ‘ei (shell necklaces).

Māmā Nga acknowledged the Māmās from her Va’ine tini with a nod as we filed into the very crowded room and sat in front of another bank of windows at the opposite end of the room from the casket. While there was a quietness about the room, it was not overly solemn, some people were talking, others were smiling or laughing quietly, but as the weak mid-afternoon sunlight filtered through the windows, proceedings quietly began to formalise. A prayer was said by a minister, who then spoke about the deceased. A number of people got up to speak including Māmā Nga’s mother, who lived in small provincial town outside of Auckland. The mother said that when her daughter had visited her town with the Va’ine tini the year before, she said she was proud of her daughter for belonging to the group and for making tivaivai. She said that the women were important and the group was important. She talked about her son-in-law, most of which was said in rapid outer island dialect. One of the Māmās told me later that Māmā Nga’s mother said “now that your husband has died you can do what you want because you don’t have to look after a man”.

Various other people spoke, and then the speeches came to an end with another prayer from the minister at about three in the afternoon. Quietly, people began to stand and those nearest the adjacent kitchen began to move from the living room into the kitchen and then out into the backyard. It was during this move that the president of the group quietly and unobtrusively handed the envelope of money from the group to a member of Māmā Nga’s husband’s family. One of the Māmās told me later that most of the people in the room passed on money in this way too, but I did not really see it because it was neither constantly attended to” (Rasmussen 1995: 155). It seemed to me that the tivaivai beneath her coffin was part of this process, who made the tivaivai was not mentioned, but the importance and centrality of the textile was apparent.
obvious nor ostentatious. People were leaving the room and moving out to the back yard to eat. A tarpaulin had been expertly rigged up to cover a space between the garage and the house. Under the covered area a set of long trestle tables had been set up and covered with table cloths and adorned with vases of flowers. Behind the trestle tables were hung a number of tivaivai, somehow resolutely denying the cold and wrapping the context where the requisite kaikai (feast) was about to take place. As people began to sit down, plates of the usual feast food of taro, bread, tomatoes, chicken, chop suey, bananas, poke (banana pudding), and the like were placed on the table by female relatives of the deceased. People were offered drinks of fizzy orange soda, tea, or water. Māmā Nga came to talk to the people eating in her back yard, and after about three quarters of an hour many of the Va’ine tini women, including me and my car load, left.

The next day there was a family service held for Māmā Nga’s husband at their church and then the following day he was buried. I next saw Māmā Nga at the Va’ine tini meeting three weeks later. She came with one of her toddler grandchildren, a little girl with the most beautiful big brown eyes. Towards the end of the session, Māmā Nga got up to speak to the group. She thanked all the Māmās (including me) for seeing her through the sad time; she thanked everyone for coming to her house that day and being with her and her dead husband. I eventually got over to talk to her; I asked her how she was, and how she was coping with the loss of her husband. We got to talking about tivaivai, she said that she had a number of tivaivai that she had made for her husband, which she had intended to gift to him at his 65th birthday that would have occurred in a couple of weeks’ time. I asked her what she was going to do with the tivaivai; she said rather sadly that she would probably give them to her daughter or something. She did not mention whether or not she had buried her husband with a tivaivai, nor did I ask because it seemed too personal a question at that moment. But she did talk freely about the money she had received.

She said that she had got $NZ32,000 all up from the funeral and the various services. At the time, being relatively ignorant of the extent of monetary gifting that potentially happens when a Cook Islander in Auckland dies, I asked her if it was an insurance policy. She laughed and said “no, that’s a papa’ā thing”; she said the money was “given by the family and friends” and she was quite happy about the amount too. She said that people had given her money because when her husband was alive, they had given to everybody else. I asked her what she was going to do with the money, she said that it had paid for the funeral, and a portion would cover the cost of the unveiling, including the cost
of the headstone, and that she also wanted to buy a car. The sum that Māmā Nga received was considered by other Cook Islanders to be a lot of money; other informants have told me that most funerals would elicit sums from gifting more in the vicinity of $NZNZ10,000 to $NZNZ20,000, sometimes less, depending on the status of the deceased and their involvement in the Cook Islands community. Quite why the sum was so high for this particular funeral I did not get to the bottom of, but that the $NZNZ3 2,000 represented reciprocal obligations that were due in one way or another, was what was most important.

At the funerary processes of his great aunt, Rasmussen was the family spokesperson so it was to him that people discreetly gave “donations in envelopes” (1995: 155). He described two forms of money given through the sequence of ritual processes; the first was effectively a collection by the children and their partners of the deceased. This began as soon as people arrived at the house and was not wrapped in envelopes. Eventually at a family meeting held a day or so after the woman died, it was agreed that each of the “children” (Rasmussen 1995: 153) should contribute $NZ100, and $NZ3000 was collected, “this money was separate from the money given in envelopes, which was to be announced for everyone to hear and know after the funeral” (Rasmussen 1995: 157). The distinction between the two types of money was explained by Rasmussen: he noted that “in a sense, the hosts had their own collection while the visitors contributed separately and their contribution was to be acknowledged... The difference was, the operation fund was not considered as moni taeke (money from relatives/or public money), the other was” (1995: 157). The distinction between moni taeke as in money from relatives or “public money” and that given by those considered the deceased’s children were expressions of public aro’a and domestic aro’a respectively. The latter were part of the apportionment of non-sacra from the base within the family of the deceased as a community (Gudeman 2001: 8), the former of the order of reciprocity between communities in the realm of mutuality. The first did not come wrapped in envelopes, the public money did, and had the individual’s or the group’s name on it. My designation of domestic money as domestic aro’a, and public money as public aro’a has bearing on the last ritual service held in the funerary process for the dead, the unveiling.

**Māmā Nga’s Husband’s Unveiling**

About six weeks after the funeral of Māmā Nga’s husband, most of the people who had been at Māmā Nga’s house the day the Va’ine tini went that afternoon, and more besides, assembled at the South Auckland cemetery for the unveiling of Māmā Nga’s
husband’s gravestone. It was a beautiful clear blue sky day at the end of September. Māmā Vaerua and I arrived around 11 am. The well cared for cemetery was a busy place, there were many people there visiting the graves of their loved ones. In the middle of the cemetery, off to one side was Māmā Nga’s husband’s grave site. Māmā Nga was there getting things organised, ready for the service, and several other people, including her mother and her two younger children were helping her. She had more or less finished the decorating of the gravestone and the surround by the time Māmā Vaerua and I made our way to the graveside.

The grave of Māmā Nga’s husband was spectacularly arrayed for the unveiling. The headstone was covered in multiple layers of fabric textiles, which were secured in place by a wide dark blue satin ribbon tied in a bow, one of the bottom most layers was a tivaivai. The top layer was a ‘made in China’ synthetic pink satin bedspread with embroidered red roses on it; this was draped over the gravestone and spread out over the area of the grave itself stylising a bed and the sleeper within, as if fortifying the deceased for this final ritual. Two bed pillows covered in matching pink floral satin pillow cases were placed at the foot of the grave accentuating the image of the bed. Surrounding the pink satin bedspread was a profusion of real and synthetic silk flowers displayed as bunches in vases, or as wreaths. These flowers were placed on plastic woven mats, which covered the dirt around the grave. Above the headstone was an archway which was woven through with pink, white, and blue synthetic silk hibiscus flowers. Māmā Nga said that her daughter had wanted the archway. The profusion of coloured flowers over the archway and the surrounds, and the glistening satin bedspread combined with the now intermittent dramatic blueness of the sky, made for a dazzling, magnificent display. The impact of the display, with the layers of textiles wrapping the headstone, was designed to display how much the deceased was loved and cherished. More and more people arrived, and the service got underway with the Master of Ceremonies (MC) calling the minister to begin with a prayer.

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124 Unveilings of gravestones can happen up to a year after the death of the person.
Then the actual unveiling began. The MC was quite explicit about how long this process was to take and he said that people were to be aware of the time they took in accepting their gift and be brief. He said “we have 25 people and groups to get through”, meaning there were 25 layers over the headstone to be unveiled. He removed the blue ribbon from the wrapped headstone and then began to read aloud sequentially from a book he was holding, the names of specific family groups, individuals or other groups who were to step forward to remove a textile layer from the gravestone, with the assistance of Māmā Nga. In the process, what was also happening was that the contributors of public money, were being ritually presented with a textile in reply to their gift of envelop wrapped money they had given.

So the unwrapping began (cf. Gell 1993: 89). The first layer on the headstone, the pink satin bedspread with matching pillowcases, was given to the minister. The next layer was a nylon tablecloth; the next, a hand-crocheted tablecloth, then came a blowsheet, followed by a pāreu, and then several layers of various types of nylon table cloths. As
names were called out, an individual or group would step forward and accept the textile and speak briefly.

Figure 16: Unveiling a layer from the gravestone at an unveiling.

Eventually, the MC called the name of the *Va’ine tini*, and I was told to go up along with the president of the group. Māmā Vaerua said later that Māmā Nga had asked that I be one of the ones from the group to go up. The MC and Māmā Nga unwrapped the tablecloth and handed it to me, the president of the group said a few words as I stood to the side. Māmā Nga hugged and thanked me and said that I was to keep the tablecloth. The group president and I both went back to our places in amongst the crowd. Māmā Vaerua whispered to me that it was a great honour to be given a textile from an unveiling. Giving a layer of the unveiling to the *Va’ine tini* and me, demonstrated the extent of Māmā Nga’s social network, and her association with a *Va’ine tini* was a source of mana as prestige for her. A *tivaivai manu* was the third to last layer, in accordance with the hierarchy of textiles; this was given to Māmā Nga’s two children. The next layer was a blowsheet, and the final
layer was a piece of commercial pāreu fabric with the name of the outer island the couple were from and “Lagoon Magic” emblazoned on it. These last two layers were removed by Māmā Nga, her grandchild and her youngest son. The reference to their home island was important, the fact that the deceased was being buried in New Zealand rather than in the islands was, it seemed to me, acknowledged by this textile layer.

Unveilings have important spiritual functions as well, the symbolic act of releasing the spirit of the dead person was achieved by the erection of the headstone, the unveiling of it, and the subsequent feast (cf. Rasmussen 1995: 155). That that releasing of the spirit, like the initial containing of the body, and the referencing of the island homeland was done with textiles was powerful. The service came to a close and the whole ritual was concluded with a kaikai (feast). My overall impression of the unveiling was of how textiles were used to underline the reciprocity between communities and to elaborate conjoinment even as textiles were used to ritually transition the living and the dead through the process of death (cf. Kaufman and Morgan 2005; Schneider 1987). The symbolism of the unwrapping that the unveiling entailed was the opposite of what textiles and tivaivai in particular are enlisted to do in life rituals, but that many bodies are placed in the grave with the textile shroud to perpetually wrap them after the end of life ritual, materialising the relationships the dead have with the living is powerful. What was also salient for me was how textiles were part of the reciprocity complex that was being enacted through the ritual of the unveiling. The supernatural element of the process was performed and achieved by the initial wrapping of the gravestone and gravesite and then by their ritual unwrapping. What was also processed by the divesting and handing-on of those specific textiles was ultimately part of the dialectic between the realm of community and the realm of market. Those layers of textiles, save the tivaivai layer, were given to those groups or individuals who had given envelope-wrapped money during the funerary processes; these were also the same people who were fed at the various junctures in the sequence of rituals that entailed the funerary processes. The gifting of money, as I argued in the previous chapter, is dignified by the values expressed by tivaivai, and the relationship between tivaivai, money and food is configured in particular ways in the wedding and other ‘o’ora, and at the haircutting event. In the context of death, this relationship comes to the fore in a different sequence of processes.

The activity that was inherent at the back of the house in the outer islands as the sun rose merely hours after the man died was all about the preparation and provision of
food to the gathering mourners. After the prayers and speeches over the body of Māmā Nga’s husband in Mangere, came food served in an area lined with tivaivai, and the subsequent series of events that followed always culminated in a kaikai (feasting, provision of food). Along with the tending to the body of Rasmussen’s grand aunt in Auckland, the kinswomen of the deceased were mobilised to feed and look after the mourners who were arriving to pay their respects to the deceased and the family. In the midst of the provision of food, or afterwards, depending on the context at all these events, the quiet gifting of envelopes was taking place. Food has particular “affective materiality” (Alexeyeff 2004: 68, 71) for Cook Islanders, whereby the giving of food is about giving aro’a as in love but also as in gifting per se. The provision and consumption of food has a supernatural role as well, especially the last feast, which marks the end of the mourning period for the living (Rasmussen 1995: 155). If tivaivai are the most elite valuable and materialise key values, the role of the range of lesser valuables as in other textiles, envelope wrapped money, and food, is to carry a lesser version of the ritual load.

The cost of the unveiling, the elaborateness of the headstone, and the display of the grave site seemed to me to have been made to have a direct correlation to the amount the dead man was loved. They were a display of Māmā Nga’s mourning but also of her muliebrity and the quality of wife she was, as well as her standing in the community. The unveiling and the subsequent kaikai (feast) were well organised and planned, it was clearly important to do these right because there was mana as prestige at stake, because once again, this was an event where the circulation of value took place. Effectively, money, textiles, and food were exchanged in a ceremonial arena, and it is the implications of the movement of these different valuables that I want to look at now.

4 Framing the Giving of Money During Funerary Processes

Anecdotally, it seems to me that even if individual New Zealand Cook Islanders do not get involved in gifting at events like haircuttings or weddings for example, the event of a death in a kin network is another matter. When a family members dies, specific conventions come into play that require the giving of money in particular ways, and who gives what and how, are dictated by the proximity an individual holds genealogically to the deceased. Māmā Nga’s intention of buying a car with the money aside, and the larger than normal sum that she received through the public money gifting after her husband died, generally nobody gets rich participating in such ceremonial arena (and many struggle to give appropriately). But the system nonetheless operates to deliver sums of cash and
quantities of food and support at key events in people’s lives and to the participants in the ceremonies that mark those events. In this section, I change tack and step back from the substance of my ethnographic stories detailing the ritual complex that involves the circulation of value, values, and the valuables of tivaivai, lesser textiles, money, envelope wrapped money, and food through funerary process, to put the movement of these valuables in a wider context. This wider context entails the translocal and transnational kin networks in New Zealand, and between Cook Islanders in this country, the Cook Islands, Australia, and other locales around the Pacific basin.

**Putting the gifting of money in a wider context**

Making the link between how the roles that food, money, and envelope wrapped money took in the ritual processes that came into play when the man died in the outer islands and was shrouded in a tivaivai, through the course of the funerary processes that transpired when Māmā Nga’s husband died, and the way Rasmussen’s great aunt’s death was managed by her Auckland Tongarevan family as a community, is very important. In each context, the movement of valuables, and the circulation of values and value, played out across geographical boundaries and through space and time, while the obligations being created, acquiesced, terminated, or renewed, encompasses the full range of an expanded notion of economy (Gudeman 2001, 2008). The way these valuables moved and why, are part of the specific version of the dialectic between the realms of mutuality and market (Gudeman 2008) that has these particular permutations for Cook Islanders.

Historically, these have to do with the relationship that the Cook Islands have with New Zealand, the upshot being that Cook Islanders have New Zealand passports and come and go freely between New Zealand, the Cook Islands, and Australia. This has meant that by 1989, the number of New Zealand born Cook Islanders was equal to the number of island born (Spoonley and Macpherson 2004: 180), and by 2002, 70% of those identifying as Cook Islanders in New Zealand were born here (Macpherson 2004: 139). To the extent that New Zealand is now home to many more Cook Islanders than there are in the Cook Islands (Marsters *et al.* 2006: 43). So when somebody dies in the islands, it affects a kin network that for the most part lives in New Zealand, likewise a death in New Zealand has repercussions in the islands. The political economy realities that have made migration to New Zealand an option and more often than not, a necessity for many Cook Islanders (Loomis 1990a, 1990b), is one of the permutations. The way that Cook Islanders manage
this has to do with how value, values, and valuables are configured and transferred within and between the various versions of community that arise to create “conjoined persons” (Gudeman 2008: 22), which is achieved by the movement of cloth, food and money.

To not respond appropriately with the correct form of money, food and/or help when another Cook Islands person dies would be seen to act so inappropriately that such a person would exclude themselves from a family or wider kin group community (Rassmusen, personal correspondence). So strong are the conventions around death that the giving of money is far from some form of a payment, is made clear in my analysis in this chapter and the last. However, the movement of the two types of money in this way in translocal and transnational networks and between and within Cook Islanders’ communities as families in New Zealand and the wider Pacific basin is only partially understood by Western economics driven analysis. A piece of government commissioned research published in 2007 by the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research (de Raad and Walton 2007) is a good example.

This paper labours under the burden of having to write about all Pacific peoples in New Zealand as a homogeneous group, and the spectre of the macro/micro economic focus was inevitably present. However, the aim of the research was to assess how Pacific peoples were faring economically in comparison to the general New Zealand population and to make forecasts on probable trends. In the introduction, the authors note that as per the terms of reference for their report:

How Pacific communities in New Zealand behave and prosper is... of great significance to the country as a whole – to the performance of the New Zealand economy, to the health and well-being of New Zealand society, and to the shape of our culture.

It is clear, however, that the welfare of Pacific people in New Zealand cannot be understood without considering the linkages back to the Pacific islands, and indeed the wider Pacific Rim. The international mobility of Pacific people, and remittances and overseas development aid affect, or

125 This quote from the report typifies the Western economic paradigm that the authors were operating from:

We start with the standard assumption in economics that measures of incomes and wealth are reasonable proxies for wellbeing. Another basic assumption is that people’s actions are motivated by a drive to maximise their wellbeing. For this paper, the implication is that Pacific people will make choices that will maximise incomes and net worth, so that over time these would converge to that of the total population. [de Raad and Walton 2007: 21]
are affected by, the economic and social prospects in the Pacific islands. Pacific issues are New Zealand issues, and vice versa. [de Raad and Walton 2007: 1]

That the authors understood the connection between the different nexus of populations is relevant. However, their omissions in their orientating framework became apparent, as they set about looking at various statistically supported indices to basically assess how Pacific peoples were doing across a range of criteria, from:

- Age/sex distribution of the Pacific peoples population - much younger than the total New Zealand mean (de Raad and Walton 2007:3),
- to education outcomes - poor but improving (de Raad and Walton 2007: 4),
- to unemployment rates - higher than the New Zealand wide rate (de Raad and Walton 2007: 6),
- to labour force participation - slightly lower than the New Zealand total (de Raad and Walton 2007: 7),
- and levels of income - generally lower but with the possibility of equalising in the future (de Raad and Walton 2007: 8),
- to an analysis of “net worth” vis-à-vis others in New Zealand (de Raad and Walton 2007: 10).

Net worth is defined as “a point-in-time measure of individual or household assets (such as housing, shares in companies, and deposits) less liabilities (such as mortgages, loans and credit card debt)” (2007: 10). The authors note that the mean net worth of individual Pacific people was calculated at $NZ35,800 (with a median of $NZ1,600), which did not compare well with the mean net worth of $NZ163,700 (with a median of $NZ86,500) for all individuals in New Zealand (2007: 10). In offering an explanation for this, de Raad and Walton (2007: 11-12) cite a number of possibilities including: less income means less consumption; Pacific peoples are on average, younger therefore a significant proportion of the population are not even earning yet; Pacific people have a lower life expectancy; and those intending to move back to the islands do not need to amass as much capital because the cost of living in the islands is generally significantly less. The last two points are the most relevant to my analysis in this section of the chapter. The authors contend that:
• Pacific peoples use “alternative means to deal with unforeseen circumstances, such as in-kind and financial support from the community, church, or family-run credit clubs” (de Raad and Walton 2007: 11). And lastly
• “That they build up individual or communal assets in ways that are not measured in the official statistics” (de Raad and Walton 2007: 11-12). The authors cite the sending of remittances as an example of this.

Given the undifferentiated population focus of the research and the narrowing Western economic stance, what the authors have is a vague understanding of the extent and the role of ceremonial economy for Pacific peoples, and the way Pacific people operate economically in New Zealand to varying degrees.

Elsewhere in the report, the authors were not only verging on the positive in their conclusions regarding the possibilities of Pacific Islanders’ incomes eventually catching up with the rest of the New Zealand population, they elaborated on their partial understandings of what remittances and gifting constitute. In the executive summary, the authors note that in their summations of net worth of Pacific peoples, they speculated on whether remittances and gifts should be seen as a form of saving. If they are in fact a form of savings, then they contend that “there are assets which are not taken into account and we risk understating the resources of the Pacific communities in New Zealand and the wider Pacific” (de Raad and Walton 2007: i). Such “assets” I argue include obligations owed and to be received in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy.

In the Pasifica Women’s Economic Wellbeing Study: Final Report (Koloto and Sharma 2005) published by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the authors quote one informant’s response when asked what “economic wellbeing” meant to her, they cite participant seven, a Samoan woman who said:

Economic wellbeing to me means being able to provide for my family's needs, as well as those of your extended family. It also means being able to save for fa’alavelave [Samoan ceremonial gift giving process where money, food and textiles are exchanged and gifted reciprocally and often agonistically], so that when something happens there won’t be any financial stress on the family. Economic wellbeing also means being able to leave something for your children when you leave this earth, and not relying on loans from one fa’alavelave to the next fa’alavelave. Economic wellbeing means that your bank account is always healthy, not running out of money and having to loan off your family. [Koloto and Sharma 2005: 69]
They note that for 43% of their informants, being able to provide for their families, including extended families, was economic wellbeing, and that for many the adherence to cultural processes was important (Koloto and Sharma 2005: 74). This was how most of my Cook Islands informants viewed *tivaivai* and the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in their lives as well. For Cook Islanders, the translocal networks that operate in New Zealand are arguably more important because most Cook Islanders live here. These, in conjunction with the transnational networks that include the Cook Islands, Australia and beyond entail the Cook Islands ceremonial economy and events like those I have been describing in this chapter and the preceding ones.

Whenever remittances are written about in the development literature on the Pacific, the enduring reference tends to be the MIRAB model (Bertram 1997; Bertram and Watters 1985, 1986). This acronym, which stands for MIgration, Remittance, Aid, Bureaucracy, was coined to highlight the special, generally dire, circumstances of Pacific nations (Barcham *et al.* 2009; Bedford 2004; Marsters *et al.* 2006), but has a tendency to cast all Pacific nations as a homogeneous dependent entity, and fails to “capture accurately the nature of small island socioeconomics” (Marsters *et al.* 2006: 31). The emphasis on remittances has been about the sustainability of such transfers (see Bertram 1993 as an example), and the flow from the centre to the periphery (cf. Alexeyeff 2004; Barcham *et al.* 2009; Connell 1990, 1991; Lockwood 1993; Loomis 1990a, 1990b). More recent studies have given a finer grained perspective on this. To the extent that not only do such flows go the other way (Alexeyeff 2004:73; Marsters 2004; Marsters et al 2006), but that there is more to the basis of what remittances are. The inference is that a more expanded notion of economy is required for analysis. As Marsters *et al.* (2006: 32) note, the backwards and forwards remittances between the Cooks and New Zealand:

> Represent flows of goods, money, aroha [sic] and identity-forming values, which play an integral part in constituting individual and social experience in ways more significant than the simply economic. They are in turn constitutive of these networks and work to reproduce family interconnectedness.

Other literature has called for a move away from Western economic models to understand the way remittances work (Barcham *et al.* 2009; Bedford 2004; Bertram 1997; Connell 2010; Evans 2001; Horan 1997, 2002; James 1991, 1993, 1997; Loomis 1990a, 1990b; Marsters *et al.* 2006; Spoonley and Macpherson 2004). The growing awareness that cultural processes are not only relevant, but are integral to understanding how remittances...
work, is important. Loomis considers that remittances “have been conceived too narrowly” (1990b: 79), he instead defines them as “any form of value transfer by migrant individuals or groups back to kin, friends, or organisations in their self-identified land of origin” (Loomis 1990b: 62). That remittances flow from the islands to New Zealand now, and that there are many more Cook Islanders in New Zealand than the Cook Islands is about the changes that have occurred politically and economically since Loomis was writing. But his use of the term “value transfer” (1990b: 62) supports my argument in this thesis. He contends that, “At a family level... death is an important regulator of remittances” (Loomis 1990b: 75) which attests to the argument I have been making in this section of this chapter.

5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has looked at the ideological implications of the use of tivaivai in the rituals around death as the semiotic media of value, and how this defines the relationship among value, values, and the valuables of tivaivai and lesser textiles, two types of money gifts, and food. Tivaivai anchor the supernatural processes during the rituals at the end of life for Cook Islanders by being made the most potent and poignant form of burial shroud, and being an integral part of the unveiling of the gravestone which releases the spirit of the deceased. Tivaivai as the paramount form of wealth also dignify the exchanges of lesser textiles, money, envelope wrapped money, and food in the ritual complex that affects the transitions made by the dead and the living, as made necessary by the rupture of death. Tivaivai wrap the dead, adorning, and perpetuating relationships the deceased had with the living, while food and envelope wrapped money sustain and re-connect the living. Because what is alienated at death in particular, is the materiality of tivaivai, but the relationship that is figuratively wrapped and adorned remains inalienable. In other words, value is inalienable.

Given the varying sums that can be exchanged through Cook Islands funerary processes, no individual, or group is likely to get rich by participation in such ceremonial arena, some would find it difficult to give money appropriately as well. However, I have argued that the system nonetheless operates to deliver sums of cash and support to the family of the deceased, while the attendees of the funerary events, receive food, connection, support, and the obligation to be given to when their close kin die when they give envelope wrapped money. Such a system of obligation and conjoinment is how the realm of mutuality operates for many Cook Islanders. I argue that the term Loomis used to
refer to remittances in 1990, as in “value transfers” (Loomis 1990b: 62), potentially has a wider meaning now, and equally applies to the movement of valuables and the circulation of value in the contemporary Cook Islands ceremonial economy in Auckland, because most of the Cook Islander population lives in this city. Such an “alternative perception” (de Raad and Walton 2007: 27) does alter the perception of how Pacific peoples generally, and Cook Islanders in particular, operate in a more broadly defined notion of economy (Gudeman 2001, 2008).

This chapter and the previous one have looked at how money is channelled and managed in the realm of mutuality through the rituals of the haircutting and those that prevail around death. In the next chapter I look at the relationship between money and tivaivai at the boundary between the realms of market and mutuality, and the issues around the sale of tivaivai.
CHAPTER SEVEN

TIVAIVAI AND MONEY IN THE REALM OF MARKET

1 INTRODUCTION

Māmā Mere told me about a tivaivai tātāura she bought at a Va’ine tini show in Ngatangiia on Rarotonga in 1956. She was 18, working fulltime at the Treasury in a very good job, and she paid the then hefty sum of £5 for the tivaivai which was the equivalent of almost three weeks wages for her. She said the tivaivai she bought was intricately patterned and beautifully made, and that she was able to use it “whenever I did things at home”. By this she meant that she arrayed the tivaivai in her home for herself and others to see when people came to visit. By doing this, she made the tivaivai reflect her quality as a woman, and the buying of the tivaivai instantly gave her the trappings of appropriate womanliness. Her choice to buy the beautiful and spectacular tivaivai was about metaphorically wrapping and adorning herself with the value that tivaivai materialised for her and in the eyes of other women, and literally her home when it wrapped and adorned the bed or couch to materialise her womanliness. Even though Māmā Mere had not sewn the tivaivai, it became “her tivaivai” and was imbued with the capacity to reflect who she was.

When I asked her why she had bought a tivaivai rather than make one herself, she said that she did not have time to sew a tivaivai of that calibre because of her work commitments, and she may not have had the ability at that time in her life either (she has subsequently become a very fine maker of tivaivai). But I suspect too, that there was prestige as mana involved in being a working woman in 1956 especially given the job she had, and being able to spend so much money on a special tivaivai, and even being short of time to sew. Working and having no time to sew are now the norm, and mana is now connected to being able to make and use tivaivai as well as cope with everything else for some women. Māmā Mere moved to New Zealand two years later and my sense was that having such a fine tivaivai continued to ‘make her look good’. She was making tivaivai herself by then, but the quality of that particular tivaivai was what she wanted associated with herself in New Zealand as well, and being so endowed gave her mana as prestige. She eventually got married and still has that tivaivai. For Māmā Mere buying that tivaivai enhanced who she was as a woman, her use of money to buy the tivaivai did not detract or
debase¹²⁶ what *tivaivai* were as semiotic media of value. But the sale of *tivaivai* is now construed differently. I heard many women say that *tivaivai* are never sold, because the ideology of what *tivaivai* are implies that commoditisation is not part of their “social life” (Appadurai 1986). But the reality is that *tivaivai* have been bought and sold in certain circumstances since they became valuables around the turn of the nineteenth century, what has changed are the reasons for buying and selling, and the way this is framed.

The focus of this chapter is how Cook Islands women use *tivaivai* to make the most of the opportunities presented by the realm of market, as well as manage the constraints and hegemonic realities of the capitalist political economy that Cook Islanders live in both the diaspora and in the islands. I do this by looking at two ethnographic contexts which deal with issues around the sale of *tivaivai*. In both of these situations, *tivaivai* and *tivaivai* associated products were commoditised or were faced with commodification. Debasement and cascading threatened, but in both contexts, the value and values materialised by *tivaivai* were preserved and elaborated by the sophisticated and adroit management done by key women, of what amounted to the dialectical tension between the realms of mutuality and market. The first context was the high profile and very public sale of a singularised (Kopytoff 1986) *tivaivai taorei* by Māmā Vereara Maeva (now Maeva-Taripo) for $NZ10,000 in Rarotonga in April 2001. The second context looks at the circumstances and outcomes around the funding that the Enuamanu Va‘ine tini in South Auckland sought and were awarded by the Community Employment Group, a division of the Department of Labour, to “To explore the possibility of Tivaevae and other craft becoming an enterprise and making money for ourselves and our community” (William 1999: 1), as per their MiniGrant application.

In part, the ethnographic detail in this chapter contrasts differences to do with the making and sale of *tivaivai* in the Cook Islands versus New Zealand. The forms of opportunities and constraints that prevailed in each locale were different, but the processes are not diametrically opposed, rather just different shades of complexity. Such analysis adds considerable complexity to the understandings of the way women use *tivaivai*, as well as the ways Cook Islanders do economics in an expanded notion of economy (Gudeman 2001, 2008). This sheds light on the subaltern strategies that Cook

¹²⁶ Gudeman (2008: 23) uses the word “debasement” to mean the process of undermining, contaminating, even destroying the substance of the base. “Discourse [c]ascading” is the “colonization of local models by a universal model”, “Price Cascading” as “the expansive effect of market trades on realms outside the market” and “Debasement” as “the effect of cascading on the mutual realm” (2008: 23).
Islanders create in response to the opportunities and hegemonic forces that exist in the global capitalist economy.

2 THE SALE OF MĀMĀ VEREARA MAEVA’S TIVAIVAI TAOREI

When Māmā Vereara Maeva sold a large and spectacular tivaivai taorei for the unprecedented sum of $NZ10,000 at a Trade Show on Rarotonga in April 2001, the sale was conducted in a very public way. She had made the tivaivai with the help of her Va‘ine tini group, and it was bought by the owners of the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa, Tata Crocombe and Liz Raizis. The tivaivai taorei had been awarded the supreme prize for the best tivaivai in the Cook Islands the year before at the National Council of Women’s annual conference. I argue, that despite the rhetoric that tivaivai are not sold, the fact that they are exchanged for money in a way that approaches mercantile exchanges, is done in a particular way that references the values that tivaivai materialise. The sale of Māmā Vereara’s tivaivai elaborated on and changed these parameters, eliciting some of the tenets and opportunities of the capitalist market in new ways, and reordered boundaries to deny other hallmarks of the capitalist process.

The rhetoric associated with the sale of tivaivai generally

The selling of tivaivai made for ceremonial gifting and the production of tivaivai specifically for sale are controversial issues amongst Cook Islands women. Most women say things like “I would never sell my tivaivai”, or “it’s not right to sell your tivaivai”, or “you need your tivaivai for your children, why would I sell them?” Such a blatant association of money with tivaivai that can potentially take place in straight mercantile exchange, places the textiles and the women that make and use them, squarely in the midst of the tension between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market (cf. Gudeman 2008). Effectively, these processes pull valuables away from the base and into the realm of market where the ideology of tivaivai is dissipated and the values materialised by tivaivai are potentially nullified. This is dangerous territory because the boundaries between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market are rigorously, ritually managed during events in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy.

The previous two chapters have been about the ritual complex that is employed to transition individuals through rites of passage events, namely initiation into manhood at the haircutting, and the end of life rituals that bury a dead person. Both contexts involved the significant gifting of envelope wrapped money or “public money” (Rasmussen 1995:
Money was never overtly revealed in these ceremonial events; at the haircutting the money ‘ei (neck wreath) was dressed up with sweets, coloured paper, flowers etc. and became a decoration (Graeber 1996). Public money appeared in public at the haircutting more ostentatiously as envelopes were placed beside the boy in full view of the audience, but during the funerary services were passed more discretely to the family spokesperson. In each context, for the most part, the money was always wrapped in envelopes and connected to relationships by the name on the front of the envelope. Such was the rigorous attention paid to the managing of money. Because envelopes were used to wrap the cash, money became an entity that operates as a valuable within the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, and as a lesser valuable than tivaivai in particular. In other words, money is channelled in such a way that “its flow elicits the distinctions that create [Cook Islands]... social life” (Robbins and Akin 1999: 15). So the sale of tivaivai has the potential to be dangerous territory, because in a realm like the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, “there always lurks the possibility that objects will begin to consort promiscuously, erasing in the shuffle the many boundaries between kinds of persons and kinds of relationships that people have worked hard to create through their exchange” (Robbins and Akin 1999: 7). This can potentially happen when tivaivai are sold in mercantile exchange.

As I became more and more involved in Va’ine tini and tivaivai in South Auckland, I became aware of the fact that tivaivai – despite the rhetoric to the contrary - were sold relatively routinely. I would arrive at one of the Va’ine tini meetings and would hear about how a particular woman had sold a tivaivai during the week to another who “really needed one” for her child, grandchild, niece, or nephew for their haircutting, wedding, 21st etc., or how another woman had sold a tivaivai because she “needed money to go on a tere party”. A number of the Va’ine tini had tacked tivaivai for sale at their public tivaivai shows, to “fundraise for the group”, with the inference being that the Mâmás could make better and more tivaivai with the proceeds from such sales. So if a given woman really needed a tivaivai she would be able to ask around, somebody would inevitably need money, and if the cause was right it would be seen as appropriate to sell a tivaivai. Women I spoke to who had sold or bought tivaivai all tended to speak in these terms; there was always a story about need and what was implicit was that the sale of the tivaivai would help both the buyer and the seller operate as a good Cook Islands woman, mother, or aunty, and it was framed in such a way that the exchange of a textile for money was secondary to the
values served. Essentially, the language used to describe the transaction denied the market aspect of the transaction in favour of the mutuality as in a social relationship.

Most of the sales of tivaivai that I watched or was told about were generally buttressed with the rhetoric of need that ultimately referenced the ideology of tivaivai and adhered to or served the core Cook Islands values. The women giving up her tivaivai in this way ended up with a sum of money and there are conventions and going rates for the different types of tivaivai, but what remained intact, despite the exchange of money for textile, was some form of social relationship. The acquisition of such a tivaivai and what it would be used for or what the money would allow the seller to do, situated the transfer of money within the realm of mutuality. However, the rhetoric of need, inherent in such transactions, made the notion that “tivaivai are never sold” literally correct. If selling means a fully commoditised market transaction, tivaivai are for the most part not sold, because Cook Islands women are effectively asserting a particular, limited meaning of selling, which they explicitly contrast with the forms of transactions they enter into when money is exchanged for tivaivai. The rhetoric is ultimately about boundary maintenance (cf. Barth 1969).

When Māmā Mere bought a tivaivai in 1956 to be ‘more of a woman’ and to gain a greater valuable, it was considered an acceptable thing to do. The fact that she gained so much, as did the seller, made it so. Most if not all women at the time would have made and used tivaivai. After the sale, Māmā Mere just had a better tivaivai than most. Cook Islands women buy tivaivai in South Auckland now because more and more women are time poor, or have decided that they do not want to make tivaivai, but they still need them for obligations. Such women acquire tivaivai in this way to define their Cook Islandness in the midst of the prevalence and pervasiveness of the market realm and other identity options. While the sale of tivaivai through the various Va’ine tini that I was connected with was not quite a weekly occurrence, women were very aware that tivaivai had a commercial value that could be actualised to generate cash if need be, and women who were selling tivaivai were really doing it because they needed the money. One woman told me about a tivaivai she sold to a papa’ā woman who just came to the door of the hall where the women were

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127 Going rates for the various tivaivai at the time were: tacked but not sewn tivaivai manu were sold for around $NZ250, a fully hand sewn, finished tivaivai manu is priced in the vicinity of $NZ600 - $NZ800 and up to $NZ1000, but one woman told me she sewed a tivaivai manu for a friend for $NZ400. A tivaivai tātaura would go for around $NZ1000 - $NZ1200 or more depending on the amount of embroidery on it. Tivaivai taorei are seldom offered for sale, but one that I did see for sale was a smaller handmade taorei made from diamond shapes and was offered for $NZ800.
having their Va’ine tini meeting. She said the papa’ā woman just offered her some money for her tivaivai and the sale was completed with payment almost instantly. The Cook Islands woman was unabashedly delighted with the quick cash she had made. There was no rhetoric of relationship in that transaction, and while it is likely that such a transaction could not have been conducted in that way with another Cook Islander, the woman told me “the papa’ā really wanted a tivaivai”.

The owners of an upmarket shop in a well heeled papa’ā suburb in Auckland that sells decor-quality Pacific-made and Pacific-inspired textiles and furnishings including machined ‘made in China’ tivaivai manu look-alikes, told me that they had a lot of trouble sourcing handmade tivaivai to sell. They said most women would not on-sell, and when I discussed with women in the Va’ine tini about the opportunity to sell tivaivai through this retail shop, many women said that they had a real problem with the mark-up that the retailers inevitably placed on their tivaivai. What the Cook Islands women were actually objecting to was the profit making that the retailers needed to make to be in business, the heart of the capitalist transaction in other words; the Cook Islands women were making a distinction between two types of exchange, their version of selling and the papa’ā shop owners’ version. But I also got the impression that the complete absence of any form of social relationship in the process was not desirable as well, almost to the effect that “why should I do all that work and only get money for it”.

During the course of my fieldwork, I have watched the parameters of the sale of tivaivai change. The form that the tension between the realms of mutuality and market takes has changed, and the dialectic has been elaborated in the face of the diaspora and the way Cook Islanders configure New Zealand and its political economy. During my last two visits to Rarotonga (in 2007 and 2010), I saw hand written road signs advertising tivaivai for sale in the adjacent houses, and a road side stall had lower grade but still hand stitched tivaivai for sale, which is something I never saw in the late 1990s and early 2000s. More and more hand stitched tivaivai were also available for sale at the weekend market in Avarua on Rarotonga. Likewise, in South Auckland I have seen tivaivai more routinely offered for sale in markets as well, and handmade tivaivai are occasionally offered for sale via the New Zealand internet trading site Trade Me.

That the parameters around the sale of tivaivai have changed is in part due to the very public sale of a tivaivai taorei in Avarua on Rarotonga in April 2001 by Māmā Vereara
Maeva for $NZ10,000. Even in 2001 this was considered a substantial sum of money, and was far in excess of the going rate for *tivaivai* at the time, but the very public way the sale of this particular *tivaivai* was configured and conducted was about mitigating potential debasement and cascading (Gudeman 2008: 23) that was an imminent threat. I argue that the sale of this particular *tivaivai* *taorei* also reordered the parameters within which *tivaivai* are valued as a whole. The very public way the sale was conducted showed how the work that Cook Islanders do to differentiate kinds of exchanges, kinds of relationships, and kinds of objects has the potential to threaten the ideology of what *tivaivai* are when transactional boundaries are potentially breached. Or, as in this case, when boundaries were breached and the rhetoric closed in to talk up a new form of exchange with particular contingencies and a set of new outcomes.

**The reality of the sale of Māmā Vereara Maeva's *tivaivai* *taorei***

On Tuesday the 10th of April 2001, an article written by Nancy Bataillard appeared in the *Cook Islands News*¹ in Rarotonga, with the headline, “Intricate *tivaevae* [sic] fetches huge price”. The article read like this:

An exquisite and intricate *tivaevae* *taorei* (quilt) displayed at last week’s South Pacific Trade Fair has sold to Rarotongan Resort manager Tata Crocombe and his wife Elizabeth. Crocombe was reluctant to reveal the actual price he paid, but it is understood to be more than $NZ10,000.

And it seems he may have scored something of a bargain. Cook Islands Association Non Government Organisation (CIANGO) president Vereara Maeva said that particular *tivaevae* had previously been ordered by a wealthy United States resident who had been prepared to pay $NZ30,000. The quilt was supposed to be delivered to the US in June.

“But I thought I’d rather sell it to our local people. I knew the Crocombes would use it to promote our own hotel and our country” said Maeva.

A group of CIANGO women [Māmā Vereara’s *Va’ine tini* group] took two years to sew the *tivaevae* and Maeva took another year to finish it off. She also designed and cut the panels for the queen-sized *tivaevae*. “It is not an easy job. If I had been paid $NZ50.00 an hour to do it I probably would have earned about $NZ37,000 a year. We made it in three years – you add that up,” Maeva says. She says the sale of the expensive *tivaevae* should

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¹ The *Cook Islands News* is the daily English (for the most part) newspaper published in Avarua, Rarotonga for a Cook Islands wide audience. It is made available around the Cooks, flights permitting, on a daily basis, but has been available on-line since at least 2000. However, it has only been in recent years that internet in the Cook Islands has been far reaching enough to make a difference to circulation of the newspaper within the Cooks.
encourage the women who make them. “The money is in their hands,” she says.

The CIANGO women¹²⁹ pocketed almost $NZ17,000 from the South Pacific Trade Fair and their tivaevae were selling for thousands of dollars each.

Although it’s the first time Maeva had ever sold her tivaevae commercially she says she didn’t do it for the money but to promote her organisation and the Cook Islands. The five women in CIANGO [at the stall at the Trade fair] sold almost all of their craft. It is understood the Crocombes also brought a number of other tivaevae to display in the hotel.

“It’s amazing that locals are buying too. I would like to thank those who brought our things and a big thank-you maata to Tata Crocombe and his wife for their support” says Maeva. [Bataillard 2001]

This article appeared on the third page of the newspaper and was widely read, or at least news of the sale spread rapidly. When I arrived in Rarotonga the following week to begin a month-long stint of fieldwork, everyone I spoke to was talking about it. When I got back to Auckland at the end of May, the sale was widely known there too.

When I interviewed Liz (Elizabeth) Raizis of the Rarotongan Resort, she said that she and her partner Tata Crocombe considered that *tivaivai* were the “quintessential expression of Cook Islands culture” and that it was their aim to make a dedicated exhibition space at the resort to showcase Cook Islands culture generally and *tivaivai* in particular.¹³⁰ They were intent on giving visitors a Cook Islands experience at their resort and they considered that this included having access to *tivaivai*. Raizis said that they wanted to move away from the generic resort experience, where most visitors come and go from the Cooks without ever learning about what a *tivaivai* is, let alone actually seeing one or more. The hotel at the time was on a drive to place more uniquely Cook Islands objects in the hotel complex. They had brought copies of works done by local artists, in which

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¹²⁹ The term ‘CIANGO women’ is somewhat of a misnomer. About five women were asked to sell *tivaivai* at the Trade Fair event; at least two of them were women of profile. They were not all in the same *tivaivai* group (*Va’ine tini*), but their individual groups were affiliated to CIANGO which is more of an umbrella organization that represents a range of NGO (non-government organizations) in bigger Pacific-wide and world-wide forums as well as helping the so-called ‘on the ground’ groups function logistically. CIANGO is a not-for-profit organization and is a laudable institution in its goals and aims. Māmā Vereara Maeva is employed as the president of the group.

¹³⁰ To put the purchase of the *tivaivai* by the Rarotongan Resort and Spa in context, the collecting and displaying of exemplary Pacific Islands quites by exclusive tourist resorts was a precedent set by the best resorts in Hawai‘i. A form of patronage of the local arts, such collecting was also an effective marketing and profiling strategy that added prestige to the resort and allows guests to get a sense of the locale. Having *tivaivai* gave the resort *mana* too.
*tivaivai* often featured prominently, to hang in the resort rooms, and they were in the process of re-doing the furnishings in the public spaces in more Cook Islands-style fabrics. She said:

> We don’t want anybody to be here at the resort and think that it’s a Tuesday, it must be Los Angeles, it must be Tahiti, or it could be anywhere. Everywhere they look, everything they are experiencing they need to feel completely immersed in the Cook Islands culture, married with a contemporary feeling and also with the modern comforts that people need when they go off to a resort for a holiday. [Liz Raizis, personal interview, Rarotonga 22nd May 2001]

When I asked her why the resort had brought the quilts at the Trade Fair, she noted how hard it was to buy *tivaivai* normally, and that they were just not for sale routinely, “especially quilts of that calibre”. She said that the women who had gone to the Trade Fair had “psychologically” got their heads around selling. She and Tata Crocombe had been on the lookout for *tivaivai* to buy for some time and the Trade Fair constituted a unique opportunity to buy, so buy they did. She said, when they saw Māmā Vereara Maeva’s *tivaivai taorei* for sale, they knew it was special and unique. Liz Raizis talked about their impressions of Māmā Vereara’s *tivaivai taorei*, she said:

> As far as that particular piece goes, I mean, we know enough about *tivaivai* to know that that was a very special piece... while people will carry on making *tivaivai*, perhaps increasingly more *tivaivai manu*, I don’t think that pieces like that are going to be repeated. Nobody has got that kind of time [to make *tivaivai taorei* by hand] and nobody has even got that kind of expertise anymore. So you know that is truly an historic piece, it is truly a work of art, so there is no doubt that was a high price to pay but we just felt, you know we consulted on it, and we both felt strongly that it was a truly special piece, that kind of thing does not come on to the market very often and it would be a corner stone of any exhibition, or celebration that we would want to put together. As I say, I know that she felt very relieved and comforted to know that it would remain in the Cook Islands, and it would be owned by a Cook Islander, and I think those are very important things. [Liz Raizis, personal interview, Rarotonga, 22nd May 2001, emphasis in original]

That particular *tivaivai taorei* already had a singularised (Kopytoff 1986) character to it even before its sale. The first time I saw this *tivaivai* was when it was in pieces and under construction in Māmā Vereara Maeva’s living room in Aorangi in November 1999.
I had gone to interview her on my first stint of fieldwork in the Cooks, and she told me at the time that the first version of the tivaivai had been buried with one of her sons, and she was thinking about giving this version to another son who lived with her. When I next saw this taorei in October 2000, it was finished. Māmā Vereara had entered it into the craft competition that ran in conjunction with the National Council of Women’s annual conference which I attended briefly that October in Avarua. Māmā Vereara’s tivaivai taorei was the outright winner of the competition, effectively judged the best tivaivai in the Cook Islands that year. The craft competition was held in the National Auditorium which was across the roadway from the Pukapuka Hostel where the conference was being held. I remember walking into the auditorium and seeing this large tivaivai taorei. It was displayed by being arrayed over the angled seating, so it was not easy to have a close look at it, but my overall impression of the tivaivai was of a magnificent, beautifully executed piece of work. The other tivaivai displayed were also extremely fine examples of the various types of tivaivai and were done by some of the most talented tivaivai makers from around the Cooks, but Māmā Vereara’s tivaivai taorei stood out. The sewing was well executed, the pattern was unusual and complicated, and for such a large taorei, it was beautifully balanced and even.
People were expressly prevented from photographing any of the *tivaivai* or other crafts in the auditorium that day because of copyright; there was even a sign up to that effect. However, I was allowed to photograph Māmā Vereara, Māmā Kimiora Samuels, and Māmā Tokerau Munroe sitting in front of Māmā Vereara’s winning *tivaivai taorei*, at the craft display during the National Council of Women’s conference in October 2000. The three women featured in the photograph are arguably three of the best *tivaivai ta’unga* in the Cook Islands still, these are prestigious, high profile women, the award winning *tivaivai* enhanced them, but they enhanced the *tivaivai taorei* too because of their inherent *mana*. This photograph now stands as part of the social life (Appadurai 1986) of this particular singularised (Kopytoff 1986) *tivaivai*.

Clearly, the *tivaivai* itself was special, but it seems to me that the *tivaivai* constituted the whole package so to speak, because of who Māmā Vereara Maeva is. It was no coincidence that the Crocombes decided to buy that *tivaivai* from that particular *tivaivai* maker. Māmā Vereara Maeva is not by any means the average *ta’unga*. She is arguably the most high profile maker of *tivaivai*, and Cook Islands woman in the Cooks, the Cook Islander diaspora, and even the world. Her public service accolades are numerous, and when I mention her name to any Cook Islands woman in New Zealand, Australia, or the

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131 Another photograph of this particular *tivaivai taorei* appears on page 59 in Küchler and Eimke (2009). The caption for the photograph notes that the *tivaivai taorei* was made by Māmā Vereara Maeva and her sewing group, and that the *tivaivai* is from the collection of the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa. No mention was made of the price now attached to the *tivaivai* though.
Cooks, they all know her. She was born in Aitutaki in 1940. Originally trained as a school teacher, she worked for the Public Service until 1996 and then got involved in NGO work and organisations. She set up the Cook Islands chapter of the National Council of Women in 1984, an extraordinary feat that required uniting women from one end of the Cooks to the other.

She told me the story of how she lobbied successive Prime Ministers until her vision for Cook Islands women prevailed. Her light hearted humour and droll delivery of the story of her run-ins with successive Prime Ministers and other powerful men made me laugh, and the way she told the story made it sound as if the eventual outcome would be inevitable. But her comedic story telling ability belied the steely resolve she possessed and her astute command of Cook Islands power structures. In this context, she was the quintessential overtly talented and strategically bold female ‘teina’ challenging the male tuakana (cf. Rasmussen 1995). She was president of the National Council of Women from 1987 to 1996 and has since held many positions in various NGO organisations, and she holds a Rangitira title under Tinomana Ariki. Māmā Vereara is a renowned tivaivai ta’unga, she is as famous for her generosity in teaching others to do tivaivai as she and her husband and family travelled around the Cooks as her first husband was posted from one island hospital to another in his capacity as a medical doctor, as she is for her NGO work. She is charismatic, kind, acutely intelligent, an astute political operator and highly regarded by most.

So the sale of that tivaivai for that price by that particular woman was as much about who the maker was, what she had done in her life, and the profile she had amongst Cook Islander women in the Cooks and beyond, as it was about the tivaivai being a large and beautiful taorei. Alienating that particular prize-winning tivaivai in the particular way it was sold at the Trade Fair, as chronicled in the media, was significant. The tivaivai arguably became the most publicly alienated tivaivai at the point of sale, and in the next moment was placed in the most publicly inalienable position that a tivaivai had ever held (cf. Kopytoff 1986). Being sold in the way the tivaivai was, and being bought by the owners of one of the most exclusive resorts in the Cook Islands for their “collection”, the tivaivai morphed into a valuable art object. A reordering of the regimes of value had taken place, and it was not just about the price of tivaivai, but was also fundamentally about “the nature of persons as it is defined at the shifting boundaries between subject and objects,
boundaries whose particular configurations may define a historical epoch” (Keane 2001: 66).

I argue that Māmā Vereara’s status as a ta’unga was reoriented as well as the overall value of tivaivai. While for Māmā Vereara Maeva, to sell that tivaivai, in that way, to the Crocombes, had the potential to be denigrating and devaluing for tivaivai as a whole, it was also potentially compromising for her. However, the way Māmā Vereara and the Crocombes handled the process meant it ended up exalting the art form into a hither too unattainable realm. But because of the public way the process was conducted, and the rhetoric that suffused the process, it moved beyond a simple transaction into one that was about the reordering of the regime of value that tivaivai occupied. Māmā Vereara was really the only person who could have done this and got away with it. Whether or not tivaivai was due for such a reordering in such a way, I cannot say, but that sale created another dimension of tivaivai that arguably did not exist before.

The Crocombes were aware of the implication of doing business with such a high profile purveyor of tivaivai and how their payment constituted a re-ordering of value. Liz Raizis said to me:

When we brought that piece, Tata was well aware at the time that it would set a new benchmark; we weighed that into the equation as well. People may try to pass stuff off to us for $NZ10,000 but we know what particular kinds of works are worth and we have brought tivaivai since that, we certainly haven’t paid that kind of money for it, I mean that was a particular special piece and it was, on balance, it was a high price, but we were under the circumstances, prepared to pay for it. It doesn’t mean that we would be prepared to pay that kind of money for any old tivaivai that walks in the door, that was a very special unique sort of piece, but having said that, as I say, Tata was very well aware at the time that it would set a new benchmark and he is also pleased and delighted that it would because it meant that it would help create a market for tivaivai that up until now people haven’t known that there would be people prepared to buy it, that there would be people prepared to buy it at a responsible price, and that they could actually sell it right here in Rarotonga, not necessarily have to go off anywhere else to find a buyer. And it meant that people would really realize that these are valued things, nobody’s thinking ‘Oh that's just a tivaivai what the hell!’ [Liz Raizis, personal interview, Rarotonga, 22nd May 2001]

They knew what they were buying and what it meant to buy from Māmā Vereara. They knew that one form of value associated with tivaivai, its monetary value in the realm of market, was inexorably altered, hence Raizis’ assertion that a new benchmark was being
set. Apart from all the other things that tivaivai are, from the embodiment of womanhood and motherhood to the ultimate gift and the premier form of wealth in Cook Islands ceremonial arena, after that sale of Māmā Vereara’s tivaivai taorei to the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa for $NZ10,000, tivaivai arguably also became a valuable with a recognisably, explicitly stated, high monetary value.

The rhetoric around the sale and the fact that Māmā Vereara was allegedly offered $NZ30,000 for it by an overseas (i.e. non-Cook Islander) buyer was part of this revaluing of tivaivai; this other monetary value is attached to the tivaivai as much as the $NZ10,000 sale price, and was part of the rhetoric that situated the new conditions that the sale was taking place in. The two price tags are both part of that particular textile’s new realm of value, and arguably part of a new realm of value for tivaivai generally. The fact that Māmā Vereara was at the Trade Fair with tivaivai for sale, reinforced her assertion that she wanted her special tivaivai taorei to stay in the Cook Islands.132 What was more important was that by being alienated for that brief moment, that tivaivai taorei effectively became more inalienable once it had changed hands and The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa took ownership of the tivaivai and it became the star of their collection. Keane notes that such reordering can involve a “certain dematerialization of the human world, a denial of the ways in which human subjects are enmeshed with material objects” (2001: 66), but in this instance, that tivaivai became the materialisation of an extended set of values (cf. Turner 2006b) that incorporated money in a new way. The tivaivai taorei became the most publicly valuable tivaivai in an economic sense as well as cultural sense because it was a prize-winning tivaivai. The dialectic between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market was re-configured, but it was a fine line to tread. The sale was astutely managed in the media by Māmā Vereara, because by accepting such a substantial sum of money, Māmā Vereara could have appeared “greedy”, a word I often heard used by Cook Islanders when they spoke about issues of money at events and in gifting. But that this did not happen was because of the way Māmā Vereara and the Crocombes managed the sale, and in particular the way Māmā Vereara talked about the number of hours it had taken her and the women to sew, and how low their hourly rate was (Bataillard 2001).

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132 Not to question the veracity of the existence of the $NZ30,000 offer, when I went to talk to Māmā Vereara about the transaction, she said that by way of a deterrent to Tata Crocombe the ‘would-be buyer’, she came up with the $NZ10,000 figure, “never dreaming that he would accept it”, but when he and Liz Raizis did accept it, she went ahead with the transaction. The $NZ30,000 was a cultural truth, a conduit and means to locate the new parameters that the sale set.
As with the inclusion of cash money in the haircutting ritual and the funerary process, money was managed in the transaction, especially via the wording of the article in *The Cook Islands News* which stands as a public record. The transaction effectively became a form of exchange that referenced ritual exchange – albeit in a new way. There was a trading of values and valuables: from Māmā Vereara along with her *tivaivai*, came her prestige, her profile, and her *mana*, and from the Rarotongan came the promise of exalting the *tivaivai* by collecting it and ultimately displaying it in the hotel complex. Māmā Vereara was publically honoured, and she received a substantial sum of money. I argue that while the money that changed hands was probably not wrapped in an envelope bearing the name of the hotel and the Crocombes in bold print on the exterior, the social relationships enacted through the exchange were tantamount to this format as seen in other ritual exchanges. The newspaper article stands as the record of the relationship, a ‘public book’ so to speak.

The money would have been useful to Māmā Vereara; she would have given some to the women who helped her make it. I did not ask her what she was going to use the money for, but I did speak to one of the other women, Māmā ‘Aka’iti Ama, who sold a *tivaivai* to the Rarotongan for around $NZ5,000 at the same Trade Fair. Māmā ‘Aka’iti was a prominent *tivaivai* maker, holder of a *Mata’iapo* title, a sitting magistrate (she was a Justice of the Peace) and the first president of the Cook Islands National Council of Women which was inaugurated in 1984. She was delighted with the sale, and when I went to interview her a day or two before I saw Liz Raizis, she had already begun work on the replacements for the *tivaivai* that she had sold to the Crocombes. She gave me the impression that she was even excited about redoing the pineapple pattern *tivaivai taorei*, because she got the enjoyment of the whole process all over again.

She told me she had bought a car with the proceeds from the sale, and pointed to it out in the driveway of her house. She had such a look of delight on her face as she talked about the car that her little grandson, who was sitting on her knee at the time, wriggled and laughed because of her infectious excitement. When I related this to Liz Raizis, she said, “We were absolutely thrilled for her because you know it’s one of those arrangements made in heaven you know. We got some beautiful *tivaivai* that will be a big part of the exhibition, and she got a brand new car that’s going to be a big part of her life”. Here again is the rhetoric of need on the part of the buyer of the *tivaivai*, and the seller having the right reasons to sell. The Crocombes were helping Māmā ‘Aka’iti out by buying the *tivaivai*, and
she had a good reason to sell. Māmā ‘Aka’iti, and for that matter, Māmā Vereara, made a
great deal more out of the sales than the up market papa’ā shop in Auckland was trying to
make with the sale of handmade tivaivai, but the transactions of these two tivaivai were
framed in a way that justified the actions of both the sellers and the buyer. As Liz Raizis
said:

Art is a wonderful quandary... I mean on the one hand it is totally
priceless, but that doesn’t mean it’s free! On the other hand, why shouldn’t
a woman who has slaved away on dozens of tivaivai make some money
out of [it]... to get some money to get something she desperately needs, I
know that she [Māmā ‘Aka’iti] is totally thrilled to bits with that car
because up until now she has had to phone up all the relatives and say
‘Can you pick me up and take me such and such a place and I’ll be there
two hours to the dot so... ’ so you’ve got no flexibility in your life, no
independence in your life, and suddenly she’s got totally new found
independence. She’s an adult, she’s not a kid that needs to be chauffeured
around anymore, she’s a woman in her own right who can go where she
pleases when she pleases. [Liz Raizis, personal interview, Rarotonga, 22nd
May 2001]

**Boundary Maintenance**

When I went to see Māmā Vereara not long after the sale, even my asking about the
sale in my capacity as a researcher, induced unease and a detectable defensiveness in her
over the sale of the tivaivai. I knew, as she did, that the adding and amplifying of the
monetary realm of value to that particular tivaivai taorei in such a public way was a risky
business, for tivaivai generally, but also for her. As Keane notes, inalienable value is not the
exclusive domain of elite or rare activities:

What is at stake... is the relationship between persons and things. Distinctions among kinds of objects and the ways they circulate matter, in
part, because they have profound implications for the character of the
humans who possess the objects and carry out transactions with them.
After all, to be without a price is often taken, as it was by Kant (1956
[1785]), to define the human subject. Late in the twentieth century, most
inhabitants of even the ‘freest’ of market economies were still likely to feel
that cash value stopped, or should stop, where the truly human began.
[Keane 2001: 65-66]

For Māmā Vereara, this was the production and use of tivaivai, and the last thing she
wanted personally and as a public figure was to be associated with making mere money
out of tivaivai. Her unease and defensiveness were revealed implicitly in the specifically
circuitous route that our conversation took in the half hour or so I spent with her in her
CIANGO office that afternoon. She spoke of the sale in terms of doing a great service to the Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa which was in turn actively exalting the profile of tivaivai for Cook Islanders in the eyes of visitors to the Islands, and therefore tivaivai as a whole (once again, the rhetoric of mutual benefit). The insider/outsider distinction made between the $NZ10,000/$NZ30,000 prices were underlined and her defensiveness was lest the transaction be reduced to merely a sale.

This was new territory for the transacting of tivaivai in regard to the sums of money involved, the public mode of sale, and the rhetoric that grew up around the transaction that effectively manifested the transaction as something other than out and out mercantile exchange, but it was new territory for Māmā Vereara too. She told me, “True women make tivaivai... we laugh at women who don’t make tivaivai”. She said it “hurts me to see our culture as a commercial enterprise”. She said “papa’ā don’t understand the value of tivaivai”, it “disappoints” her when she sees a tivaivai hung on a wall and not on a bed. She said the “single greatest threat to tivaivai and its value is the commercialisation of tivaivai... But the reality is, that we live in a papa’ā world, we need money.” She asserted that by selling tivaivai, women’s talents were at least being appreciated, but the negatives were, the commercialisation of culture and “the essence, the value of culture [is] gone with money”.

I went away feeling somewhat taken aback by what she had a said, and I felt ‘told off’ really, but came to the conclusion that what she had been saying to me, and what she had achieved by selling that tivaivai in that way was quite specific. She, her family, and the women who contributed labour and skill to the production of the tivaivai, benefited financially from it, and the Crocomes had the chance to pursue a good marketing concept, but what was also happening was a renegotiation in a fiscal way. The sum of $NZ10,000 was a substantial amount of money, more than anything though, it set a precedent. The sale put a value, and a high one at that, on the previously ambiguous realm of tivaivai production. The process meant that the monetary value of tivaivai taorei in particular was publicly organised by Māmā Vereara Maeva, on her terms specifically and in Cook island terms generally. She indicated in The Cook Islands News article that other tivaivai could be measured in value against the one she sold. When I was back in Auckland a few months later, I heard conversations to that effect, which showed exactly how that had happened.
The sale and the re-configuring of the monetary value of tivaivai

I often visited another Va’ine tini in South Auckland that met regularly at a preschooler Punanga Reo (language nest). The women all had children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews at the centre, and were often as not looking after the children while their sons and daughters were in paid employment. The Cook Islands early education teacher, who ran the centre, saw it as a logical progression that the Māmās would meet to make tivaivai in the same environment, in and around the children, while the latter learnt Rarotongan, because fostering language was about fostering culture. The group had a small amount of funding from Creative New Zealand to make and market framed pieces of embroidered and piecework tivaivai. One day in late July 2001, I was driving Māmā Tu and Māmā Vaerua to the regular Wednesday meeting of the Tiare Maori Va’ine tini when they both suggested, rather conspiratorially, that we go to the Mangere Town Centre on the way, to see the launch display of the framed pictures in the middle of the shopping centre.

The Va’ine tini women had about ten framed pieces of tivaivai mounted on easels; some of the easels were draped with blowsheets or tie-dyed pāreu. There was also a trestle table that had two tivaivai tātāura with matching pillows for sale, as well as various pillow cases, a tivaivai manu, and some hand crocheted table cloths. Above one of the easels was a sign that stated the name of the group, and where their funding had come from. The conditions of sale, as in “cash up front”, were listed beside this. There was another small notice that said the designs were all “copyright”. Each frame had a card taped to the corner which listed the title, the name of the person who cut and designed it and the name of the sewer. The prices were not shown, but one of the Māmās had a folder with a list of the prices of each frame. The prices were set by each woman, and varied widely according to what the individual woman thought her work was worth. One tātāura piece of embroidered flowers was priced at around $NZ400, another taorei piece which one of the women had sewn the night before the framing was to take place because they needed an extra piece to make up the numbers, was priced at $NZ1800. I asked the woman why it was priced so high, she said “one like that sold in Raro for $NZ10,000”. Keane (2001: 66) contends that “the growing availability of alternative regimes of value can give heightened visibility to certain cultural assumptions” or, as in the case of tivaivai, extend the regimes of value that it operates in which is exactly what happened here. The framed piece did not sell for $NZ1800, the woman eventually dropped the price, but that the women were getting a
sense of the monetary value of *tivaivai* was exactly as Māmā Vereara had hoped, as she said “The money is in their hands” (Bataillard 2001).

**Postscript**

When I was in Rarotonga in 2010 for the Pacific Arts Association Symposium, the meeting organisers commissioned Andrea Eimke to curate an exhibition of *tivaivai*. She assembled some twenty quilts for the exhibit from various sources, including The Rarotongan Beach Resort and Spa. Māmā Vereara’s and Māmā Aka’iti’s *tivaivai* *taorei* were both featured in the exhibition. This was the first time I had had a chance to look at the *tivaivai* *taorei* that sold for $NZ10,000 up close, and I was amazed to see that there was an error in the pattern at the centre of the large *tivaivai*. While it was still a magnificent *tivaivai*, there was a set of four squares which were out of sequence. Whilst the error was small, it was obvious because of the symmetry of the *tivaivai*. Such an error would always be noticed by other Cook Islands women and would generally be considered a detraction. That the *tivaivai* was less than perfect could have dictated a lesser value in a commercial process, however, the fact that that *tivaivai* was still sold for such a large sum of money despite the imperfection, was significant. The imperfection was merely a small feature of the profile and context of that particular *tivaivai* *taorei*; who made it, who bought it, why, and how, were what singularised that *tivaivai*. Māmā Vereara used the opportunities presented by the capitalist market, her talent and her profile, as well as the value that is materialised in *tivaivai*, to accrue *mana* as prestige for herself and for *tivaivai* generally, and a significant sum of money through the process of the sale.

The next ethnographic context I look at had the same variables of *mana*, the materialised value in *tivaivai*, and the opportunities presented by capitalist agendas, but this time the action took place in New Zealand. The outcomes were different, but in this context too, the women ended up with the *mana* as prestige that comes with the traffic in *tivaivai* as the materialisation of value. They also got money, but in a different way.

3 **THE ENUAMANU VA’INE TINI AND THE COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT GROUP FUNDING**

Funding from local and government agencies and other funding bodies was a big deal for *Va’ine tini* in Auckland. There was really very little funding available and the pursuit of it was a focus for all the groups, but few were as successful at securing funding in the way
that the Enuamanu Va’ine tini did. The Enuamanu Va’ine tini was one of two tivaivai making groups I joined and spent a considerable amount of time with during the two and a half years of intensive fieldwork that I did. I joined the group just months after it was formed and, for the most part, the group was comprised of 14 women who would regularly come to the group. Others claimed membership of the group but did not regularly attend. All these women were Ātiuan or were married to Ātiuan men. The Va’ine tini was connected to the New Zealand based Ātiuan community in Auckland, the Enuamanu Ātiu Nui Maruarua Society Incorporated (Karora et al. 2007). This organisation owns and administers the large Enuamanu Hall in Mangere which is the geographical focus for the community. The hall is an Ātiuan piece of Auckland, an Ātiuan enclave, and it is rented out for Ātiuan (and other Cook Islands groups) ceremonial events like haircuttings, wedding receptions, and key birthday and wedding anniversary celebrations. It is also where the Enuamanu Va’ine tini held their weekly meetings.

The Community Employment Group Funding

The Enuamanu Va’ine tini was set up initially via a grant from The Community Employment Group (CEG), then a division of the Department of Labour, and the women subsequently received two additional grants from this funding body. The first was for $NZ2000 which they received in August 1999, and helped with the purchase of an industrial sewing machine, hall hire, catering, fabric, and other workshop resources. The second was for $NZ1200 which was a contribution towards the cost of incorporating the Va’ine tini into a legal trust and was received in May 2001. The third piece of funding was for around $NZ10,000 and was received in September 2001. This money subsidised the production of machine-made tivaivai taorei, a tivaivai show to display the new tivaivai in Auckland, and the development of a new product which was launched at the tivaivai show. This new product was a set of framed pieces of tivaivai taorei and embroidered tātaura, which were made to be sold to other Pacific Islanders as well as papa’ā to make money. The funding covered the cost of the material and the framing of the six tivaivai pieces. The funding also covered the cost of a tere (travel) party for the Māmās and the Enuamanu music and dance troupes to travel to Wellington to “market” the new frames via the staging of a second tivaivai show featuring the machine made tivaivai taorei and the framed pieces for the Porirua Cook Islands community.

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133 Enuamanu is the Ātiuan word for Ātiu.
At the time, the CEG had some 70 case workers whose job was to identify groups for funding and actively work with the funded groups in the community to maximise results. One of these case workers, Māmā Eva William, was a New Zealand born Mangaian, who was married to an Ātiuan. Māmā Eva, her husband and their children as well as her mother-in-law, had been (and still are) very active in the Ātiuan community for many years. Māmā Eva saw an opportunity for the Māmās of the Ātiuan community to set up a Va’ine tini with the availability of the funding, so she helped the Māmās apply for the funding and became their case worker. Māmā Porio, as an exemplary ta’unga, was designated the head tutor, and she set the work programme for the Va’ine tini. Most of the Va’ine tini tended to have set programmes of craft production that each women would be required to get through in a six month period, after which the Va’ine tini would have a show to display the work of the women. In 2000, the Enuamanu Va’ine tini were focused on making various tivaivai tātaura, and there were shows in April and October that year to showcase the women’s production. In 2001, the programme for the first part of the year was focused on the production of blowsheets also showcased in a show.

The programme for the second part of the year was to make machine made tivaivai taorei. Most of the women had never made these before, and although some had made taorei by hand in the islands, few were bothering to make them in New Zealand because

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134 This terminology was used rather than the term ta’unga in deference to the funding criteria which I look at in great depth below.
they are so much work. Depending on who I talked to, the use of a sewing machine to do the sewing was either a great innovation or a travesty; such was the controversy around using a machine for these most elite textiles. However, the *tivaivai* show in late October in Auckland 2001 to display the machine made *tivaivai taorei* and launch the new product, and the *tere* party to Wellington to do the same show a second time in Porirua a week later, were not ‘ordinary’ *tivaivai* shows. These shows, and the contexts that created them from the displaying of the spectacular machine made *tivaivai taorei* and the controversy around these, to the funding the women received and the implications of this marked them so. I argue that these shows and the broader analytical context is demonstrative of the way these Cook Islands women made the most of opportunities presented by the funding, and for the most part, on their own terms.

**The Enuamanu Va’ine tini show, Auckland, October 2001**

As I walked into the Enuamanu Hall that early Saturday afternoon in late October to be a part of the machine made *tivaivai taorei* show, I was not prepared for the sheer impact of the display of the *tivaivai en masse*. Under Māmā Porio’s instruction, the group had been making the machine made *tivaivai taorei* for the previous few months. I had seen all the new *tivaivai taorei* countless times at various stages of production, some I had even helped assemble the squares of fabric for, and watched as women laboriously sewed and sewed as the women slowly put their *tivaivai* together.135 I had also been at the hall the night before until midnight helping with the finishing off of the last *tivaivai*, the hanging of the *tivaivai*, the food, and the general preparation of the hall. But the finished display was a sight to see. Standing in the cavernous space that is the Enuamanu Hall, I was literally surrounded and wrapped by the prodigious *tivaivai* and fabric labours of the women of the Enuamanu Va’ine tini. The expansive bank of colour and pattern that the machine made *tivaivai taorei* created when hung *en masse*, was breath taking. *Tivaivai* lined the walls of the entire hall, most of the *tivaivai* were ones made by the women previously, but the nine new machine made *tivaivai taorei* hung around the south end in all their technicolour glory, along with two new handmade *taorei* made by two of the other Māmās. The effect literally wrapped the assembling crowd of Māmās, their families, and invited guests who were beginning to arrive. On a dais in front of the machine made *taorei* were the set of six framed pieces of

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135 I did not make a *tivaivai taorei* with the other women because at the time that Māmā Porio was setting the program for the group, I was only two thirds through the sewing on my *tivaivai tātaura* so Māmā Porio decided that I should finish that first before beginning another. I did finish my *tivaivai* in time for the October Auckland show so it was displayed at both the Auckland and Porirua shows.
taorei and tātāura that were the heralded new product; they were propped upright on trestle tables that had been draped in tivaivai.

Māmā Parua Tavioni’s tivaivai was one of the first new tivaivai taorei that I saw as I walked into the main entrance of the hall. When she was instructing the men hanging her tivaivai the night before, she had covered it with a sheet so it could not be seen until the moment of the show. Now here it was in all its splendour (see Figure 20). As I looked at it I realised that I had never really registered the pattern of this tivaivai or any of the others during their making because they had seemed perennially in pieces. But here hung Māmā Parua’s finished article, a beautiful yellow rose tivaivai taorei with an orange background. Up close, tiny pieces of cotton still adhered to the myriad of small seams attesting to its newness. Māmā Parua’s tivaivai was just beautiful. Like all the new tivaivai taorei, it was very large, at least twice her height and the same width. The very weight of the combined fabric seemed to strain the hanging mechanism because of the sheer bulk of material used in its construction, and the confounding volume of sewing (albeit by machine) made it so worked upon, so created, so laboured over by Māmā Parua. When I first meet Māmā Parua at the Va’ine tini at the beginning of the year before, she had told me that she had never made tivaivai, let alone a tivaivai taorei, until she joined the group. A caterer by trade, she was also the secretary of the Va’ine tini and the Enuamanu organisation, and helped run the hall.

Later in the afternoon, when I photographed Māmā Parua’s beside her tivaivai, she fussed over her finished work. I watched her almost caressing it as she picked still more pieces of cotton from its surface in preparation for the photograph. She touched and smoothed the near thousands of small squares of the tivaivai taorei, as if remembering each piece of sewing that she did to put it together: each concentrated precise application of the machine needle she had to do to maintain the evenness of the two and a half centimetre square pieces of fabric, and each conscious use of a specific square of coloured fabric to maintain the accuracy of the pattern.
Along with all the sewing, I had seen her in previous months frustratingly unpick portions of it with repressed fury and teary eyes because the seam allowance was not consistent enough, making the pieces sit unevenly in one part. In another section, she had made an error in the pattern, in both contexts, the piece had to be redone completely because unlike hand stitching, unpicking machine sewing damaged the small squares of fabric too much and made them unusable. The following week, Māmā Parua was back again sewing her taorei on the machine, but while she concentrated on the sewing and getting things absolutely even, another Māmā was handing her the squares to sew, and meticulously checking the pattern as she did to help Māmā Parua avoid more mistakes. It was a difficult process doing taorei by hand and no easier by machine, and just hard to do well either way. So to finish a taorei was a triumph for any woman. For Māmā Parua it was a significant achievement but also a hallmark of exalted Cook Islands womanliness.

As Māmā Parua stood beside her now finished tivaivai taorei to be photographed, resplendent in her purple tie-dye muʻumuʻu (Island-style dress) and bedecked with ‘ei

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136 All the Vaʻine tini Māmās, including me, wore dresses like this that day. When I arrived, I did not have too long to stand in wonder at the spectacle, because as soon as I arrived, Māmā Vaʻine said to me, “Where is your muʻumuʻu Jane? Go and put it on.” Too shy to wear my muʻumuʻu dress from my home, to Mangere, afraid of looking odd in my white middle class neighbourhood, I looked more out of place at the hall without a muʻumuʻu on. The fabric had been dyed by other Māmās in the group in the back area out behind the hall a few months before on a sunny winter’s day. The fabric was worked upon, altered, acted upon, and therefore made more worthwhile, more valuable and esteemed because it was enhanced by the labours of the women,
**katu** (head wreath) and looking every bit the spectacular Cook Islands woman, her *tivaivai* appeared contiguous with her. It seemed to literally materialise, manifest, and express her essential muliebrity and capacity to be a Cook Islander, and it occurred to me that this was exactly the effect she wanted to create. It struck me at that moment, that for Māmā Parua, if you are not a woman without *tivaivai*, then how much more of a woman are you when you stood beside, and claimed the production of, and ownership of, such a magnificent piece of needle work. “How do you feel Māmā Parua?” I asked. Her reply was emphatic: “I feel proud that I have finished it!” The way she stood somehow conveyed the sense that this *tivaivai* in all its orange splendour trumpeted her prowess, saying by her very actions in creating the *tivaivai* taorei that she was a Cook Islands woman because she could make *tivaivai*, everything about her attested to this, as she embodied a fierce pride and a resolve accomplished. The *tivaivai* materialised her values, and the values of the other people in the hall, and it showed who she was as a Cook Islands woman.

There was a sense of pride in all the women that day, as they all basked in the reflection of the magnificent spectacle of *tivaivai* on display. That Māmā Parua’s *tivaivai*, and the *tivaivai* taorei made by the other women in the group were created in a modern, innovative way, by machine, and were in part brought about by government derived funding added other layers to the context, effectively making this no ‘ordinary’ *tivaivai* show. Everything about this show, from the size of the *tivaivai* taorei and their construction, to the funding that the women received to set up the group and produce the *tivaivai* along with the criteria for the funding and the ‘new product’ that was launched later during the show, to who was invited to the show marked it so. These marks of difference were as much about the dialectical tension between the realm of mutuality and market as they were about Māmā Eva William’s sophisticated ability to negotiate the funding and manage that dialectical tension.

**The Context of the Funding**

In her capacity as the group’s CEG advisor, Māmā Eva noted on the first MiniGrant application form (William 1999: 1) that the large Enuamanu Hall in Mangere was an

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and this worked on fabric referenced the hierarchy of textiles and underlined the eliteness of the *tivaivai* taorei. The actual sewing of the dresses had been outworked and the finished dresses were distributed to the Māmās before the show. The musical troupe and the dancers who were also part of the show all had blue and white tie-dye dresses or shirts on as well, made from fabric that had been tie-dyed by the women. Effectively, the whole hall, the show and the performance were covered in worked on fabric in one way or another. If actions are about value and values, the array of fabric wealth on display that day was dazzling, and all facets of the display attested to the women’s prowess, and were part of the circulation of value that was taking place.
utilisable resource and the setting up of a Va’ine tini had potential. She wrote, “I support this application and see it as a good starting point for their community, to explore and look at the skills they possess to benefit not only themselves but the community at large” (1999: 1). On the same document, under the question, "What is the application for?" Māmā Eva had noted that the money was “To explore the possibility of Tivaevae and other craft becoming an enterprise and making money for ourselves and our community” (1999: 1).

The grant application forms were suitably brief, but the key words of ‘tivaevae’, ‘community’, ‘enterprise’ and ‘money’ were mentioned and the inference conveyed was that the productivity of the Māmās done for the creation of traditional textiles would be harnessed for potential income generation.

The use of this language was important because the funding from the CEG was made available through a policy directive from the incumbent Labour Government which was outlined in a document entitled *Pathways to Opportunity: From Social Welfare to Social Development* (Ministry of Social Development 2001). The document stated that the policy “offers a new approach to social security for people of working age in New Zealand” (Ministry of Social Development 2001:1) with the emphasis on moving from the old system of social welfare to the new, modern version of “social development” (2001: 1). In the introduction to the document, signed by then Prime Minister Helen Clark and Steve Maharey, the then Minister of Social Services and Employment, it was stated that the $NZ5.4 billion paid out each year in benefits “must become an investment in people’s potential” and that in the past, debates about our social welfare system have been about “more verses less”, but now:

We must move past this fruitless debate and focus instead on the purpose of social security in our economy. Technological, economic, and social change makes a social development approach to welfare more, not less, important.

For New Zealand to compete successfully in the global economy we need skilled workers. The sense of security provided by an effective and properly-focused social development can support people to develop their skills, and provide a springboard for them to move to new opportunities.

This means seeing social security not as a fortnightly benefit cheque, but as a carefully considered social investment to lift people’s capacity today, so they can look after themselves tomorrow. [2001: 1]
The policy document went on to elaborate on how this was to be achieved. The traditional
social welfare system was being extended into a ‘working’ programme - literally and
figuratively. According to the Pathways document, while the passive forms of income
assistance had worked in the past, things had changed; “The modern social development
approach recognises that helping the individual means addressing problems such as lack of
skills or loss of confidence. Further, it recognises that this is best done by working in
partnership with the communities in which people live” (Ministry of Social Development
2001: 2).

The “new social development approach” (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 4) had a set of aims and implicit was the tacit acknowledgement that income assistance was
not enough on its own, that people have different skills and this can be a function of the
community they belong to, and that development in the Western economic sense could be
facilitated by giving certain types of assistance to people as individuals but also as
members of communities. That the particular form of social development sought was
ultimately about sustainable income generation was made clear in the list of aims of the
new approach:

1. A simple, flexible, and more effective system to meet individual needs.
2. More beneficiaries moving into sustainable paid work.
3. Fewer families and households where no family members are in paid work.
4. More beneficiaries earning income from part-time work and more beneficiaries
   increasing the amount they can earn.
5. Every family being able to meet their basic needs.
6. People enabled to be more involved in their communities (2001: 4)

The first five aims have an explicit Western economic focus; the sixth is seemingly more
altruistic. Much hinges on this term “community”. Such terminology, as well as the use of
the term “social exclusion” elsewhere in the document (Ministry of Social Development
2001: 5, 20) were indicative of the New Zealand version of the neo-liberal reforms that
were infusing policy in the United Kingdom and Australia at the time. In the United
Kingdom this movement was referred to as the “Third Way”,137 and was a scion of the New

137 The “Third Way” was a stance heavily influenced by the sociologist Anthony Giddens’ (1998, 2000) notion
of the “new progressivism”. This was meant to be the new way forward, and sought to navigate a course
between the old welfare state system of the left and the minimalist state championed by the right. Giddens
writes:
Right philosophies of the 1990s (Vasta 2004). One aspect of neo-liberalism is the attempt to expand market models into all areas of life. Suffice to say that the notion of “community” used in the policy document was not Gudeman’s (2001), but in actuality, the funding allowed the women to do economics in just those terms.

Whilst Māmā Eva’s use of the term community in the MiniGrant application was entirely in keeping with the policy directive, and her intent and that of the women’s were in line with the government funders, Māmā Eva was aware of the broader meaning of community for Cook Islanders. She knew how the tivaivai taorei and any money made would be used, and how the tere party was about so much more than “marketing”. Māmā Eva knew what community was about for Cook Islanders and the role that tivaivai and money played in what constitutes the realm of mutuality for Cook Islanders in ceremonial arena. It is likely that levels of the CEG hierarchy knew how broadly defined this concept could be for Pacific people as well. Māmā Eva told me there was considerable discussion about what development meant for the different Pacific peoples generally within the organisation.

The idea that community productivity, as in the production of valuables like tivaivai could be harnessed for (Western) economic processes was explicit in the funding application, despite the fact that in a general sense, this ran counter to what tivaivai were. This was dealt with by Māmā Eva and her careful handling of the language required in the grant application and subsequent reports on progress, as well as her dealings with CEG and Department of Labour hierarchy, to both reveal and gloss at the same time. The development of the new product was an aside to the actual production of tivaivai that were about participation ultimately in ceremonial arena. Māmā Eva and the women never had any intention of actually selling en masse the tivaivai they made, and that the creation of the new product was a strategy which effectively deflected commercial pressure from the

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The cornerstone of the new progressivism are said to be equal opportunity, personal responsibility and the mobilisation of citizens and communities. With rights come responsibilities. We have to find ways of taking care of ourselves, because we can’t now rely on the big institutions to do so. Public policy has to shift from concentrating on the redistribution of wealth to promoting wealth creation (Giddens 2000: 2, cited in Vasta 2004: 203).

This sounds familiar; under a heading of “What Will be Different”, the Pathways document states, “Communities will be at the heart of this approach. Government agencies will work more closely with groups in their communities and regions to develop opportunities and jobs” (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 4).
the women made. Māmā Eva told me that a number of the Māmās did make a reasonable amount of money out of the framed pieces, but the Māmās’ focus remained on the production of tivaivai. In terms of work hours, far less time was spent producing the pieces to be framed compared to the machine made tivaivai taorei but the framed pieces ‘ticked all the boxes’ so to speak, from the funder’s point of view.

The funding to the Enuamanu Māmās was seen as lifting their skills, and supporting them and their families which it certainly did, but it was also supporting an important cultural institution, and the assistance was certainly Cook Islands specific. That there was a disjuncture between the ultimately macro and micro economic foci of the policy, and the aims of the Māmās, was dealt with adeptly by Māmā Eva William. The process she employed amounted to a thwarting of the potential cascading that was threatened, and constituted a deft negotiation of the dialectical tension between the realms of mutuality and market. There was no duplicity or impropriety on the part of Māmā Eva or the other Māmās, just a little ‘working with in the system’ type of strategy. That the demise of the CEG and its ability to give out and administer funding came about several years later (in 2004) was due to less than adept management of this on other grants, highlights the level of sophistication that Māmā Eva William operated at. That, and the fact that the sums of money involved were less, let Māmā Eva and the funding she secured for the Va’ine tini operate within the parameters outlined by the funding, as well as benefit the women in ways that adhered to the notion that “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, and all that this means.

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138 The framed pieces sold for around $NZ300 each, but this did depend somewhat on who was buying them. The main target market for the pieces was other Cook Islanders and others who wanted a piece of tivaivai but didn’t want to pay the going rate of close to $NZ1000 for a tivaivai manu, and around 20 frames were sold.

139 The CEG came to a tumultuous and public end in the glare of damning media publicity that was counted as a blow to the Labour Government by right wing opposition parties at the time. Provision was made in the Pathways policy for the funding of “social entrepreneurs” who were considered to be people with skills and flare who could “make a real difference in their communities... [and] make an even greater contribution to their communities” (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 18). A furor erupted and a media frenzy ensued, when it was publicised that the CEG had been funding “an overseas ‘hip-hop’ fact-finding tour, an overseas tour to study gay and lesbian sports participation, and the establishment of a regional Maori television station” (http://www.jobsletter.org.nz/jbl20400.htm, accessed 25.8.11). The hip-hop fact finding tour in particular meant Minister Maharey got a grilling in parliament (http://202.68.89.83/en-NZ/PB/Business/QOA/e/c/47HansO_20040518_00000593-9-Community-Employment-Group-Advice-to-Ministers.htm, accessed 25.8.11) the upshot being that the funding and the CEG became untenable and notification that the CEG was to be disbanded appeared on line (http://www.beehive.govt.nz/node/20989, accessed 31.8.11) on 20th September 2004. The fact that the hip hop artist concerned, Lady 6, has gone on to become a very successful recording artist with an international profile is now a moot point.
The Māmās as poster girls for the funders

The women with their beautiful colourful tiavaivai, island style dresses and flowers, and the box-ticking that their enterprise constituted, meant the Māmās literally became poster girls for the funding. Under the heading 'Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion' in the Pathways document, it stated that "Extending opportunities so no group is excluded from society or is denied the full rights, benefits and responsibilities of citizenship is a key challenge being addressed by government" (Ministry of Social Development 2001: 18). Efforts to deal with housing issues, education and health are mentioned, and it states that the interconnected social issues are addressed by, amongst other things, "Investing in the people themselves to develop their capacity to play a full part in our economy and society" and "providing people with the opportunities they need to move ahead" (2001: 18). The document went on to state that these processes are being assisted by "Investing significantly in skills development and capacity building, including programmes so Māori and Pacific peoples communities can take greater control of their own development" (2001: 18). As if to literally illustrate this, on the next page was a photograph of two of the Māmās (the president and treasurer of the group respectively) sewing tiavaivai, adorned with 'ei katu (head wreaths) and dressed in the group’s matching pāreu fabric shirts. Above the photograph, and under a side heading of “Practical Capacity Building” the document states:

The Department of Labour’s Community Employment Group has identified Pacific peoples as one of its priority groups for development services.

For example, it has helped set up Enuamanu Vainetini – a group of 30 women in Mangere from the Cook Island of Enuamanu who meet regularly to create intricately-designed and crafted tivaevae (Cook Islands quilts). The Community Employment Group will also be helping them to market their tivaevae. [Ministry of Social Development 2001: 21]

This same quote appeared in a summary of the Pathways directive on Prime Minister Helen Clark's official webpage140 at the time. The Prime Minister also attended a function at the Enuamanu Hall during the period of the funding to highlight the women's, and the funding’s, success.

At the same time, a promotional video about the success stories for the CEG funding featuring the Māmās was made. Their section in the video was filmed in July 2001 when a film crew came to film a Va’ine tini meeting. Māmā Eva instructed the women to cover the walls of the annex building beside the main Enuamanu Hall where the group normally met, entirely with tivaivai, and the Māmās all dressed in mu‘umu‘u dresses and ‘ei katu. The brief was to film the Māmās doing their usual “enterprise”, but the fact that the women never dressed themselves or the hall in this way for a regular session was part of the staging that was required to make the maximum impact on the film. Māmā Va’ine had forgotten to bring her sewing that day, so preoccupied was she with bringing tivaivai for decoration, and food for the kaikai with the film crew. When she realised that I had brought my tivaivai to sew, she asked me if she could sew it whilst on camera. Footage appears of her sewing my tivaivai in the promotional video, and it seemed to me that this was all part of the artifice.

The showcasing was reflected in the illustrious guest list for the Auckland show in October 2001 as well. The luminaries included the then Minister for Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon. Mark Goshe and some spectacular photo opportunities ensued.

Figure 21: The Enuamanu Va’ine tini and The Hon. Mark Goshe, Minister for Pacific Island Affairs at the Auckland Enuamanu Va’ine tini show, October 2001.
The photograph in Figure 21 features the minister flanked by the entire Va’ine tini, including me, sitting in front of the just launched new product and surrounded by the new machine made tivaivai taorei. In the photograph, down some of the wall pillars of the hall, separating the tivaivai taorei one from the other like the vā’i section that divides the pattern template in a tivaivai taorei (see Appendix Two for more detail on the construction of tivaivai taorei), are visible lines of strung up purple balloons. These balloons had ‘Community Employment Group/ te ahu tangata/ Department of Labour’ emblazoned on them, and it seemed to me that they prefaced the relationship between the women and their tivaivai, the layers of governmental involvement and the political economy landscape that these women and their kin were inhabiting in New Zealand.

The Production of the Machine Made Tivaivai Taorei

In deference to the idea that handmade tivaivai taorei took so long to make with the implication that this was not commercially viable, I speculate that the decision to make machine made tivaivai taorei was not a coincidence. Setting these as the programme for the group and using the funding received to subsidise their production, as well as making them alongside the production of the framed pieces which were for straight mercantile sale, was a ‘good look’. The innovation of the use of a sewing machine to do what was generally done by hand, gave the women a ‘modern look’ from the funder’s perspective. It made the women appear to be making concessions with their traditional production, updating their traditional techniques in a way that seemed to be in line with more commercial issues and intent. The fact that the women never had any intention of making tivaivai taorei for commercial production was an aside, but the appearance of the attempt to speed up the process of the taorei production seemed to be a nod to this. There was no duplicity or subterfuge, because the women were not bound to produce tivaivai commercially in the conditions of their funding, and the commercial intent of the funding was covered by the development and production of the new product anyway. But Māmā Eva had an astute and sophisticated handle on what looked best from her organisation’s point of view, and she managed the production, launch, and marketing of the new product with expert acumen. She knew how to ‘frame’ the whole process (pun intended). The large, spectacular

141 While the new product was being organised by Māmā Eva and Māmā Porio, and touted as a ‘new’ as in nobody-else-has-done-this-before product, I was aware, (because of my multiple connections with other tivaivai groups), that another Va’ine tini, were doing the same thing. When Eva William found out that the other group had pre-empted their enterprise she was not happy. I described the launch of the other group’s framed pictures at the end the first part of this chapter.
machine made *tivaivai taorei* appeared to redefine the parameters of what *taorei* were from an outsider’s point of view, but there was an element of this redefining taking place from a Cook Islander’s point of view as well.

To put the production of *tivaivai taorei* such as these in context, through the course of my fieldwork in New Zealand, Australia, and the Cook Islands, I seldom saw women making *taorei*. They were used frequently in ritual contexts in the most elite way, but women said they were either too hard to make or took too long to construct. Māmā Porio was particularly interested in teaching the Māmās how to make *taorei* by machine because it was so much faster. She was also determined that the skills needed to make *taorei* would not die out and the patterns (mostly hers) be used, which effectively kept them alive. Māmā Porio had first made *tivaivai taorei* in this way when she was living on Ātiu in the 1950s. She told me that she was teaching full time at the local island school, she was mother to some 10 of her own children and had various feeding children around, and she was committed to making two *tivaivai taorei* for the centenary celebrations of the arrival of the gospel on the island of Ātiu within a few weeks. She decided that the only way she was going to manage it was to make them by machine. So she did, and created quite a stir with her *tivaivai* innovation. She said those first *tivaivai taorei* were finished with one centimetre square pieces and they took her two weeks, a handmade *tivaivai* with a similar gauge would have taken months and months. Most of the Enuamanu women were somewhat ambivalent about producing *tivaivai taorei* by machine, some just decided not to do it, others who began the process, found themselves regretting it regularly - until they had finally finished, of course.

It was rather unprecedented that a *Va'ine tini* in Auckland would undertake a programme that featured *tivaivai taorei* anyway. Generally, the larger the *tivaivai* and the smaller the squares used, the more prestigious the *tivaivai taorei* is. So the sheer size, number, and boldness of the machine made *tivaivai taorei* that were displayed first in Auckland under the gaze of the Minister and then in Wellington at the Cannons Creek Cook Islands Community Centre in Porirua City, was audacious and had an angle of affront about it. The women’s *tivaivai* attested to the vigour and the capability of the Ātiuan women in the diaspora, and their command of forces over which they generally had little control. *Tivaivai* shows tend to be thinly veiled status arena anyway, but this was amplified at the show in Wellington in particular.
The tere party to Wellington and the second tivaivai show in November 2001

When the Ātiu group, along with the music and dance troupe went to Porirua and staged the same show in Cannon’s Creek for the Porirua Cook Islands community, some of the Wellingtonians considered that the Auckland women had not made “real” tivaivai taorei, so affronted by the massive tivaivai were they. I heard whispers of disdain about the arrogance of staging a show with such boldness and how uppity it was for the Auckland Māmās to have come to Wellington and “showed off” in the way they did. Māmā Eva knew that this was part of the reaction that the Wellington show would elicit, but she also knew that nobody could deny how spectacular the display of tivaivai was, or how industrious the women were, or that there was prestige associated with being the recipients of grant money. The Auckland women were trafficking in prestige as mana at the expense of the Wellington women because of their display of value and valuables. Māmā Eva organised a film crew from a regional television station as well as print media to attend the show to publicise the event, and a group of Wellington quilters were invited to attend as well which made it even more prestigious. This was all a source of chagrin for some in the Wellington audience. The Māmās and I all wore a second set of mu’umu’u dresses (in pink and yellow tie-dye), also worked on by the Va’ine tini women, as did the dance and music troupes, the guests were all fed lavishly with Cook Islands feast food, and the overall effect was a ceremonial triumph, and the prestige garnered through the production of tivaivai of such size and value was palpable for the Māmās. The values being materialised were mana as prestige inducing, but they were also elaborated, subsidised and government endorsed by the funding that Māmā Eva William had secured from the CEG.

4 CONCLUSION

The day we arrived in Wellington on the tere party, Māmā Eva had organised a tour of the tivaivai collection at Te Papa, Museum of New Zealand and the dance and music troupes staged a performance on the marae inside the museum. The tere party were then bussed to Parliament buildings, where we were given a tour and then had a meeting with the Hon. Winnie Laban, the sitting Labour Member of Parliament for Porirua and the only Pacific Islands woman in Parliament at the time. In the course of the tour, we were shown through the Parliamentary debating chamber and I noticed that Winnie Laban’s seat was at

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142 The papa’ā quilters were there at the invitation of Māmā Eva. Another papa’ā woman in the CEG who was higher in the hierarchy than Eva William and was a quilter, had suggested that the Va’ine tini extend an invitation to the papa’ā quilters. The presence of the papa’ā quilters at the show and the kaikai was prestigious for the Auckland women because it showed their influence in areas outside Cook Islands ceremonial arena.
the very back, arguably in the least visible, least powerful place in the house. I pointed this out to Māmā Eva William, her reply was telling. She said, “At least she is here”. To me, this demonstrated a certain pragmatic approach to the realities of the position that Pacific peoples hold in New Zealand society, but it perhaps belied Māmā Eva’s sophisticated, nuanced, and knowing management of the multifaceted opportunities that the funding presented, and that she herself had created through the availability of the funding. The same pragmatism and creativity (if tinged with moments of unease) was dramatised by Māmā Vereara as she publicly sold her *tivaivai taorei* for a substantial sum of money.

In both ethnographic contexts that I have detailed in this chapter, the notion that the boundaries between the realm of mutuality and market are never completely impermeable was apparent, whereby *tivaivai* have other regimes of value (Appadurai 1986) that they can operate in. Such permeability that is part of the dialectical tension between the two realms is “both a resource and a threat, insofar as a skilful or simply powerful player can take advantage of it, but the existence of alternative schemes of value bears the increasingly real potential to undermine the status claims that are sustained in exchange, a threat at once logical, political and economic” (Keane 2001: 72-73). But such “alternative schemes of value” can present opportunities, and in my ethnographic contexts these occurred via funding, and the offer of a substantial amount of money for a *tivaivai*. Both situations were about making the most of opportunities, and formulating subaltern strategies, in the face of capitalist hegemonic structures. Both Māmā Vereara and Māmā Eva were such skilful and powerful operators, they both used the contours of the opportunities presented by their respective contexts, as detailed in this chapter, to aid and abet their own agendas, but also the parameters of value for *tivaivai* and the women who make and use them in different ways. The threats of debasement and cascading that were relevant in each context were mitigated and managed through astute management by both women. I argue their actions were demonstrative of the complexity of the dialectical tension between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market. The wider implications of this I will deal with in the next chapter, my conclusion.
CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION: “YOU ARE NOT A WOMAN WITHOUT TIVAIVAI”

1    TIVAIVAI, VALUE, AND ECONOMY FROM THE BASE

When Cook Islands women say “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, they are saying that the making, the gifting, and the using of tivaivai are about how to do Cook Islands womanliness, and how to be a Cook Islands mother and/or auntie. As women gift these beautiful laboured over textiles to specific close individuals within and between the various configurations of ‘family’ as ‘community’, they are turning social relationships into actual materialised linkages that are “traced and traceable... by the flow of material wealth” (Evans 2001: 134). Such communities are a family unit, extended family groups, church congregations, and the wider Cook Islands community. How Cook Islands women use tivaivai as the gift and/or as decoration is part of the way Cook Islanders do economy via sacra from the base which constitutes the foundation of a local model of livelihood (Gudeman 2001, 2008). Economy from the base infers that economic processes can be expected to be founded and contingent on the priorities dictated by a group's cultural framework. This is what comprises a local model of livelihood, and this is an expanded, more encompassing notion of economy, and necessarily moves beyond standard Western economic theory and the centrality of the market.

Economy from this perspective entails two realms: the realm of mutuality and the realm of market (Gudeman 2001, 2008). These two realms are not dictomised; rather they exist in all people’s lives in various forms in a kind of dialectical tension. In other words, Cook Islanders live in, exist in, and operate economically in, both the realm of mutuality and market. For Cook Islanders, the Cook Islands ceremonial economy dominates the realm of mutuality, here, the range of public ceremonial events operate as ritual arena. The events draw Cook Islanders together through translocal and transnational networks, for rite of passage events like weddings, birthday and anniversary celebrations, haircuttings, and funerals, as well as for church events, and for non-kin events where the Cook Islands community is represented. In these contexts, tivaivai and other valuables circulate in what amounts to an expanded notion of economy.

Tivaivai are a specific, special category of valuable which are made to operate as a “semiotic medium” (Turner 2008: 50) and effectively materialise the values that are the
structural properties of the way Cook Islanders conduct relationships. Such semiotic media become the powerful loaded category of valuable that they are, because of the link between value, values, and the category of valuable that inheres via cultural frameworks that are significant to the structure of society. Within Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) broader scope of economy, tivaivai, as semiotic media, are causative in two specific ways. The first is that tivaivai are understood as fundamental to the way women see themselves and how they operate as Cook Islands women. This leads to the access to and the axis of prestige for women who make and/or gift and use tivaivai. The second is that tivaivai as semiotic media, outrank other valuables within the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, so they dignify the gifting of other valuables within the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. These lesser valuables include envelope wrapped money, food, lesser textiles and locks of hair at haircuttings.

The Cook Islands ceremonial economy is not part of the broader notion of economy just because cash in the form of envelope wrapped money is gifted there, although this is part of it; it is because the movement of envelope wrapped money as well as tivaivai and the lesser valuables of lower ranked textiles and food, moves between individuals and communities as reciprocity which has wider implications in the lives of Cook Islanders. Such reciprocal exchanges between individuals and communities conjoin the givers and receivers together, and the fact that envelope wrapped money and tivaivai are part of this is important.

2 HOW TIVAIVAI HAVE AGENCY

Tivaivai came to be semiotic media for Cook Islanders because they were textiles, and they required the skill of sewing. The missionaries arrived in the islands in 1821, and they championed the production of sewn items as part of the conversion process, and as tantamount to being a good Christian woman, being appropriate, and as a mode of paying homage to God (cf. Eves 1996; Thomas 2000; Weber 2009). As Cook Islanders converted to Christianity in line with the missionaries’ agendas as well as for their own reasons, the production of tivaivai became the distillation of what it means to be Cook Islands women, mothers, and female Christians. Because of this, women began to covet tivaivai in such a way that they became the access to and axis of prestige. In the pre-contact and early contact periods, the indigenous textiles of plaited mats and bark cloth were the textiles of ceremony and ritual, and these were made, for the most part, by women (Küchler and Eimke 2009; Sissons 2007). Bark cloth, in particular, had the power to sanctify through the
act of wrapping (Kaeppler 2007; cf. Gell 1993: 89). As conversion to Christianity gathered momentum in the midst of broader socio-political changes in Cook Islands society that ensued in the wake of the arrival of Christianity and colonisation, one of the consequences was that by the 1890s and early 1900s, indigenous textiles began to be supplanted by tivaivai in exchanges to do with ritual and honouring. What persisted was the importance of textile wrapping in ceremony. The contemporary expression of this is manifested in current Cook Islands ceremonial economy events where women wrap and adorn their loved ones and dignitaries with their tivaivai, and decorate ritual venues with their textiles, at events in South Auckland and in other nexus of the Cook Islands population.

I argue that tivaivai, as the paramount form of wealth and the specific weighted category of valuable that is designated as the semiotic media of value, have come to be iconic valuables that are an indexical symbol of the structural properties of the Cook Islands system of social relations (cf. Turner 2008: 50). Tivaivai are a model of and model for social relationships and action, and this is how they express specific notions that are fundamental to the way Cook Islands women experience the world and exist in the world, as well as dignify the gifting of lesser valuables. Tivaivai as valuables, materialise the key values of kinship and aro’a which orientate Cook Islanders to varying degrees (depending on how much individuals choose to belong to Cook Islands ‘communities’), and both valuables and values are refractions of the structural framework of value that prevails for Cook Islanders.

In this thesis, I have argued that when tivaivai are circulated publicly through exchange as the gift and used as decoration, as the material focus or at least a weighted presence at the various life and death rituals that Cook Islanders perform at specific junctures in individuals’ lives, transitions occur: in the individual, in the assembled extended kin group, and in objects as valuables, especially money. The various events that comprise the Cook Islands ceremonial economy are the institutional frame within which these transformations take place and tivaivai the circulating symbolic media of value and the foundation of the ritual complex that elicits the transformations in people and valuables. Together, they effectively constitute “the complementary components of a total system of communication and transaction of value” (Turner 2006b: 20) for Cook Islanders to one degree or another. The Cook Islands ceremonial economy is a major part of the realm of mutuality (Gudeman 2001, 2008), and tivaivai and the values they anchor, are sacra of the base, so the range of events in this ceremonial economy are the arena where
ritual and socio-economic processes take place for Cook Islanders in the diaspora and in the islands. The format of the various events, and the wrapping and adornment with tivaivai that transpires in these public arenas – literally and figuratively – is what motivates women to make tivaivai, and/or gift tivaivai, and to direct family resources towards the making or procuring of tivaivai – so that the textiles can be given away to maintain the most important kin and social connections.

The values that women pursue as they use and/or gift tivaivai in one way or another in these public contexts, sees them acting within the structures of society whereby, the values of aro’a and kinship that they are orientated by as well as the tivaivai themselves, are both symbolic refractions of the structure of Cook Islander society (Turner 2006b: 20). Through the use of tivaivai as decoration to wrap and adorn, and as the gift where tivaivai are used to wrap and honour during ‘o’ora, at haircuttings, to wrap a body for burial, or a gravestone to release the spirit of the deceased, women employing tivaivai are dealing in the most appropriate and coveted form of socio-political and ritual expression, and they are recognised as doing so by other Cook Islanders, so they accrue prestige as mana in the process. “The accumulation of value thus entails engagement in the forms of social structure” (Turner 2006b: 21), so the relationship among value, values, and valuables is enacted.

At ceremonial events, a ritual complex circulates value and is deployed to bring about ritual transformations and conjoinment. Tivaivai, as the paramount form of valuable, and the semiotic media of value, are the material foundation of this ritual complex. The use of tivaivai in various ways, along with the use of lesser valuables, and the exchange of lesser valuables of envelope wrapped money, food, lesser textiles and household gifts, as well as locks of hair at a pākoti’anga ‘o’ora (haircutting) are parts of the ritual complex. The reciting of genealogies at events, the adorning of the person or people who are the ritual focus of an event with ‘ei and ‘ei katu, as well as the wearing of these along with island attire like mu’umu’u dresses as appropriate womanly dress by women gifting tivaivai, the use of Cook Islands drumming to accompany gifting and Cook Islands dancing at events as entertainment, are all parts of the ritual complex that brings about change. Certain aspects of the ritual complex are foregrounded and backgrounded as different types of events require, but all kinship, non-kinship, and religious events have more or less the same kind of valuables which circulate value and are exchanged. The actual rites vary, but the circulation of value created by the gifting and use of valuables, tivaivai in particular, is
powerful for Cook Islanders. The hierarchy among tivaivai (taorei being considered the most elite), the hierarchy among textiles, and the hierarchy of valuables, are used to accentuate and indicate weight and closeness of relationships, within families as communities and between family groups as communities.

When women say “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, what ‘woman’ means has three main facets to it: women as Cook Islanders, women as females, and women as mothers. As tivaivai are used in all forms of public ceremonial events as the gift, and/or as decoration and adornment, specific aspects of mothering, muliebrity, and Cook Islandsness are detailed in different types of events and according to the formulation of community that is being evoked. In kinship, non-kinship and particular religious events, tivaivai are the elite valuables in a hierarchy of valuables that circulate value, because the use of tivaivai in one way or another countenances and displays the values of kinship and aro’a. By doing aro’a as gifting, women display adherence to the principles of kinship and how Cook Islanders are seen to be appropriate.

‘Mothering’ (and grand-mothering) through the gifting and use of tivaivai to wrap and adorn, proclaims a woman’s connection to her biological child, her feeding child, and also to the children of her siblings and cousins, and the children a woman is connected to via naming, both in the capacity as aunty. The use of tivaivai signals publicly that the relationship a woman is adorning is one that is integral to her. By gifting to such children, a woman is materialising kinship connections, with the child and with the kin group that the woman and child are connected to by descent, by the act of literally and figuratively wrapping them in value. In a wedding ‘o’ora, the sheer volume of lesser textiles and tivaivai which appear at the culmination of the gifting performance, and ideally top a large pile of textiles that have been gifted by the mother and to the mother for the ‘o’ora, are a physical manifestation of mothering and muliebrity. This is demonstrative of the aro’a that endures between the mother and the child as the focus of the ‘o’ora, and the quality and quantity of mothering achieved by the woman, because tivaivai are the highest form of expression of domestic aro’a. As sacra from the base, tivaivai are allotted within a community as in a family unit, publicly at wedding ‘o’ora and at other kin event ‘o’ora such as those that happen after a haircutting. In the contemporary environment, such tivaivai are now often allotted as heirlooms because fewer younger women are making tivaivai.
Being able to sew and finish a *tivaivai* is imbued with prestige as *mana* because such an act typifies being a ‘good woman’. By being able to “hold a needle and wash your underpants”, a woman is seen to be capable of being a good wife in a man’s eyes for at least the older generation. Tied up with Protestant work ethics and the notion that the value of a woman inheres in her capacity to work, and work in a particular (Christian) way (cf. Eves 1996; Weber 2009), the vestiges of this ideology persist in the production of *tivaivai* for older women at least. But this notion of womanliness is changing for younger women, as evidenced by Māmā Tirata’s daughter’s reaction to her wedding ʻo’ora. While Marie did not covet *tivaivai* in the way her mother did, she valued the role *tivaivai* had in the transition she made during the wedding ʻo’ora as a rite of passage. However, another young woman, when asked by her grandmother what *tivaivai* she wanted for her 21st, replied that she wanted a blowsheet with the Coruba Rum logo on it. Textiles are continuing to have salience but in a variety of ways. For other Cook Islands women, young and old, the pride I watched them exude when they finished sewing a *tivaivai* was patent. The *Va’ine tini* shows that the groups all did once or twice a year were arena to express this form of womanliness. Witness Māmā Parua’s palpable pride at being seen to be publicly connected to her magnificent *tivaivai taorei* which she had finished; she was explicitly proclaiming her muliebrity and her capacity as a Cook Islands woman via the textiles very material physicality.

The performance of muliebrity that a wedding or haircutting ʻo’ora is, also affords access to prestige. By doing a wedding or haircutting ʻo’ora in the appropriate way, a woman is showing herself to be a good mother because she has a child good enough to be honoured and a child who wants to be so honoured. Such displays of appropriate mothering is prestigious and affords *mana*. How well the textile decoration of the venue is done is important, as is how the ʻo’ora is performed. Here, how many and how fine the *tivaivai* are that a woman gifts, and the extent of those gifts given to her by others for the ʻo’ora, as displayed in the performance of the ʻo’ora sequence for others to see, because people end up knowing who gives what, is part of the axis of prestige too. In the diaspora, women’s muliebrity has been elaborated to include the display of prosperity as the display of material wealth and network connections, especially through *tivaivai*. The financial means required to stage an ʻo’ora is on display as well, as well as the networks a woman has to call in obligations due, to help amass the money and textiles to stage the event as Māmā Tirata did. Such public displays of value as an ʻo’ora reveals, has as much to do with
financial means as it does with the adherence to Cook Islands values in the current environment.

In wedding ‘o’ora, the accruing of prestige as mana is balanced with the public display and maintenance of the mother-child relationship as the child and their new spouse are honoured. A similar balance ensues in religious events where a stylised form of mothering is evoked when tivaivai are gifted to departing ministers. The community from within which the gifting is being done is the church congregation. In this instance, the women doing the gifting are allotting sacra from the base as mothers to a cherished ‘son’, who is also God’s representative on earth. In gifting to a minister, a group of women’s capacity to work is put on display. Their muliebrity is revealed in being seen to be good Christian women, and the communal work achieved, often within a publicly notified constraining timeframe, attests to the women’s laudable Christian work ethic and sewing ability. It is through these parameters that women accrue a form of mana that publicly makes them good church going Cook Islands woman. This form of mothering though the gifting of tivaivai to a minister is as much about conforming to church doctrines to do with how to be a good Christian mother and woman as it is about the mana accrued via the production of tivaivai as religious homage, but the balance between mana and homage is carefully maintained.

At other non-kin ‘o’ora, there is no such balance, and such events were virtually unbridled culturally sanctioned status arena. The two public ‘o’ora events in South Auckland that saw singularised tivaivai bearing the logo of the New Zealand Police being gifted to a non-Cook Islands junior police officer at the first event, and then a more senior non-Cook Islands police officer (who went on to gain political power) at the second event, showed how the acquisition of prestige as mana by some astute operators over and above others can be amplified in the modern diasporic context. The besting by Māmā Tirata, and the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini by association, as well as Cook Islands tivaivai versus other Pacific women’s textile valuables, and the Cook Islands community versus other Pacific people’s communities was explicit in both event contexts. That besting was achieved by Māmā Tirata’s traffic in tivaivai as valuables, and the materialisation of values as a refraction of social structure. Her, at times, blatant negotiation of prestige as a teina (junior) was admired by some and distained by others. Such pursuit of prestige as mana is made possible via traffic in the value which the use of tivaivai creates. The occurrences of such events in the New Zealand context is about the understanding that New Zealand is the
southernmost island group in the Cook Islands archipelago, whereby most Cook Islanders now live here, as much as it is about how some have found ways to manage the constraints and make the most of opportunities presented by living in New Zealand.

Some women have special *tivaivai* that they have designated as their husband’s funeral shroud. These tend to be *tivaivai* that have a place in the couple’s personal history. A number of women related stories to me about how their husbands “cooked the food while I sewed”. This was a refrain that expressed the love and the respect the husband and wife had for each other, and this was distilled by designating a particular *tivaivai* that a woman had made while her husband did such cooking, as the textile that would wrap the husband in perpetuity upon death. *Tivaivai* stood between such men and women as symbols of what a good woman is as a wife, and how a man should behave as a husband. However, Māmā Tui’s choice not to shroud her husband in her *tivaivai* was an equally powerful statement about the demise of their relationship.

*Tivaivai* seem to do so much in older and many younger Cook Islands women’s lives: from expressing womanliness, to showing *aro’a* to the woman’s closest kin as in her children, her husband, named kin or friends, to doing *aro’a* in the act of gifting, and being seen to be all that it takes to be a Cook Islands woman, including the accruing of prestige as *mana*. In all of this, there is a sense that *tivaivai* have agency. It would be easy to assume that *tivaivai* are the source of that agency in the sense that ‘they do things’. But this really amounts to the fetishising of the object (Turner 2008); *tivaivai* don’t actually do anything without human interaction, because the textiles are not the source of value. Rather, it is the relationship among the Cook Islands parameters of value, the core Cook Islands values of *aro’a* and kinship, and *tivaivai* as the paramount form of valuable which creates the power, potency, and agency of *tivaivai* as the “symbolic tokens of value” (Turner 2006b: 20). This is how *tivaivai* work.

3  ECONOMY FROM THE BASE: TRANSLOCAL AND TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND THE COOK ISLANDS CEREMONIAL ECONOMY

The Cook Islands ceremonial economy in the modern world involves “value transfers” (Loomis 1990b: 62). Loomis was referring to the remittances that were sent from New Zealand to the islands in the 1980s, and early 1990s, but I argue that this term can also be expanded to refer to the movement of valuables in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in the contemporary environment. Now, while some New Zealand based Cook Islanders send remittances to kin in the islands via transnational networks, others send
transfers from the islands to New Zealand (Marsters 2004), as well as to Australia, and between populations in these metropolitan nations. It arguably also includes the movement of valuables and the circulation of value that occurs in ceremonial events in translocal networks and the range of Cook Islands ceremonial economy events that happen in Auckland in particular, because most Cook Islanders live in New Zealand and most Cook Islanders in New Zealand live in Auckland.

In this thesis I have explored the range of links between tivaivai as sacra of the base and the way tivaivai dignify the gifting of other valuables, including envelope wrapped money in the name of reciprocity (for the most part) between families as configurations of community. I argued that the ritual complex that is founded on tivaivai as semiotic media ritually transforms people but it also changes money of the realm of market into a specific type of gift in the realm of mutuality. Envelope wrapped money is gifted to maintain, renew or acknowledge extended kin relationships, and bring about conjoinment and connection as reciprocal obligation in the process.

The way tivaivai, as the paramount form of valuable and the semiotic media of value, dignifies the gifting of lesser valuables that are exchanged in the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, and the way money in particular moves in this realm as envelope wrapped money is important. That the gifting of tivaivai and the exchange of envelope wrapped money and the other lesser valuables are integral to the lives of many Cook Islanders, depending on their level of involvement in Cook Islands ceremonial arenas, expands the notion of what an economy is. Such a form of economy is one that intertwines socio-cultural processes with what is considered Western economic process (Gudeman 1986, 2001, 2005, 2008).

The way the Cook Islands ceremonial economy has evolved and manifested translocally in New Zealand, and transnationally among Cook Islanders in New Zealand, Australia, and the Cook Islands, to include the gifting of envelope wrapped money, is as much about the reality of living in a capitalist political economy like New Zealand, as it is about the public display of core values and the deploying of the ritual complex. Reasonable sums of money can be gifted through funerary processes and at haircuttings depending on the status of the person who has died, and the boy and his family who are the focus of the haircutting. Attention to the details of the ritual complex are important, because through
this process, the money is transformed and sanctified via its wrapping by the envelope, into a gift of aro’a given to do aro’a and maintain kin relationships.

At an event like a pākot’anga ‘o’ora (haircutting), the audience is galvanised into belonging by the reciting of the genealogy of the boy at the focus of the haircutting. Māmā Vero, as the orator at Māmā Lucy’s nephew’s haircutting, spoke the ritual into being by connecting the boy with the audience through kinship connections, to the islands, to New Zealand and Australia, back through time and up to the present. The elaborate and dramatic decoration of the stage area with blowsheet textiles referenced the hierarchy of textiles and the elite nature of tivaivai as the paramount form of valuable and semiotic media. As the child sat wrapped in a profusion of textiles, with tivaivai nestling him in the closest proximity, and lesser textiles radiating out to surround and wrap the entire stage area and the guests, his hair was ritually cut by his kōpū tangata in exchange for envelope wrapped money with the name of the giver emblazoned on the front. Tivaivai wrapped the boy through his transition into manhood and effectively dignified the gifting of other valuables in the ritual complex, including the envelope wrapped money. The form of manhood that the boy was transitioned into involved the acquisition of a set of obligations, because a Cook Islands adult is one who is enmeshed in the matrix of obligations as connections that conjoin Cook Islanders. The ritual context was part of the high formality of exchange that differentiated and fetishised the named envelope that wrapped the money as the source of value. This formality was able to bring about the distinction between mere money and envelope wrapped money because it adhered to and was made to coalesce with the specific framework of value that orientates Cook Islanders.

In funerary processes the link between the use of tivaivai to shroud the dead for burial (or not as the case may be), the gifting of envelope wrapped money, and the exchange of lesser textiles at the unveiling, along with the successive feasts in the funerary process, shows the centrality and gravitas of the use of tivaivai in death rituals, and the power and weight of tivaivai as semiotic media of value in the ritual complex. The distinction between money allotted within a family unit to deal with the immediate aftermath of a death and the gifting of “public money” by people more distant genealogically from the deceased is significant (Rasmussen 1995: 157). The unveiling of the gravestone by unwrapping layers of lesser textiles and finally a tivaivai, is part of the reciprocity to the living who have gifted the envelope wrapped money. Lesser textiles are gifted to the representatives of givers of public money at the unveiling, in a process that
acknowledges the monetary gifting that has taken place, and the provision of the successive kaikai through the funerary process is part of this reciprocity. But the unwrapping with textiles and finally tivaivai, as well as the feasting also effectively release the spirit of the deceased. Tivaivai wrap the dead into perpetuity, materialising, as they are wrapped around the deceased, at times the closest of kin relationships in the dead person’s life; at other times referencing the ideology of how relationships should be and the correct protocols surrounding death. Tivaivai look after the deceased through death, and food and money fortify and reconnect the living after the rupture that death causes. Tivaivai anchor the supernatural and the economic processes around death.

When an individual dies in the islands or in Auckland, kin networks that reach around the Pacific Basin are affected. The flow of money in envelopes or via money transfer organisations is part of the ritual complex that is about managing death and transitioning the living and the dead through the rupture of death. Western economic derived analysis of the nature of gifting and remittances has tried to quantify such transfers, and has speculated that gifts and remittances could be “assets [of Pacific peoples] which are not taken into account and we risk understating the resources of the Pacific communities in New Zealand and the wider Pacific” (de Raad and Walton 2007: i). Such “assets” I argue, include obligations owed and to be received in Pacific peoples’ ceremonial economies generally, and the Cook Islands ceremonial economy in particular. What de Raad and Walton (2007) recognised through the haze of their economistic lens was that the workings of ceremonial economies, like the Cook Islands ceremonial economy, were potentially part of (Western) economics. To call such reciprocal obligations that occur in the exchanges that ensue in the ritual complex, as I have described in my analysis of haircuttings and funerary processes, an “asset” would be to use the language of the market to describe a fundamental process of the realm of mutuality for Cook Islanders. But in Gudeman’s (2001, 2008) broader notion of economy, the movement of such valuables as envelope wrapped money is seen as part of the dialectical tension between the realm of mutuality and the realm of market.

I argue that the Cook Islands ceremonial economy has evolved to give a less than tacit acknowledgement of the economic realities that Cook Islanders live in and that ritual events, like the haircutting and funerals, effectively operate to deliver, amongst other things, at least a nominal economic/monetary contribution to individuals’ lives at key stages in their lives. Nobody gets rich from participating in the Cook Islands ceremonial
economy, and maybe only a third of adults participate regularly in gifting (cf. Cowley et al. 2004: 437; Loomis 1983: 215), with others doing aro’a as in gifting money and envelope wrapped money during funerary processes intermittently, but the system nonetheless operates to deliver sums of cash and quantities of food and support at key events in people’s lives and to the participants in the ceremonies that mark those events. The ritual process draws people together in networks of obligation that requires reciprocity; people are reminded of who they are related to and where they have come from, and they are also fed and entertained in the Cook Islands style. People eat and they take food away with them; a number of households I was associated with ate regularly for 1-2 days a week from feast food gathered at the weekend from functions attended, but of course they would have given money and maybe even textiles, including tivaivai, at these events. But what goes around comes around. As de Raad and Walton (2007: 27) note, “alternative interpretations of the role of remittances and gifting would alter the perception of the economic performance of Pacific people”.

Cook Islanders are actively involved in managing and mitigating market forces to manage and maintain the integrity of the realm of mutuality and the ideology and cosmology that connects tivaivai to the foundation of the base as the semiotic medium of value. They have become adept at circulating valuables of various forms through the ceremonial economy, most derived in one form or another from the market economy, and managing the dialectical tension that this creates. The use of money available in the realm of market to aid and abet the production of tivaivai, and the claiming of money in the realm of market because of the ideology of what tivaivai are, is also part of the dialectical tension between the realms of market and mutuality. Where capitalism meets mutuality, if you will, creates opportunities and prompts individuals to form subaltern strategies to manage the constraints of the hegemonic forces of the realm of market. When Māmā Vereara Maeva was offered $NZ10,000 for a beautiful award winning tivaivai taorei that she had designed and sewn along with her Va’ine tini group, she was able to accept the high price offered, gain mana for herself, as well as reset the monetary value associated with tivaivai, which effectively reconstituted the parameters of value for tivaivai. Māmā Vereara is arguably the most high profile ta’unga of tivaivai in the world. The way she framed the sale of the tivaivai in the media in the terms of need and aro’a as per the way the sale of tivaivai was more routinely managed by women selling more ordinary tivaivai, preserved her mana as a ta’unga and extended the value of tivaivai into a monetary realm hither to unknown for
tivaivai. As Māmā Vereara said, “the money is in their [tivaivai makers] hands” (Bataillard 2001). When I got back to Auckland women were already revaluing their tivaivai accordingly.

When the Auckland based Enuamanu Va’ine tini negotiated and were awarded funding from the Community Employment Group (CEG), Māmā Eva William was able to manage the broader government agendas inherent in the funding, along with the needs and intent of the women tivaivai makers in the Va’ine tini, and Cook Islands notions about what tivaivai signify and what they are used for. The funding criteria required that the women commercially develop their tivaivai production (William 1999: 1). But the fact that the women did not end up having to sell their tivaivai en masse and instead, deflected the funder’s criteria by producing large spectacular tivaivai taorei by machine which, while appearing to be a concession to the funder’s criteria, was also a way to of gaining prestige as mana for the women when the tivaivai were displayed. They also produced a “new product”, a set of framed pieces of embroidery and patchwork, which took a fraction of the time to produce, compared to tivaivai, but ‘ticked all the boxes’ from the funder’s point of view because they could be easily marketed and sold. The quick production of these framed pieces freed up the women’s time to make tivaivai, which were also subsidised by the funding, for their own ceremonial purposes.

By virtue of the specific historical relationship between the Cook Islands and New Zealand, the situation and the responses by Cook Islanders to the colonial process and globalisation have set them apart from other Pacific nations in specific ways (Crocombe 1994: 311). Cook Islanders have New Zealand passports and govern themselves in free association with New Zealand so they have access to both New Zealand and Australia. Crocombe noted the multifaceted nature of the on-going links between those in the islands and those in the metropolis. He contended that these were more complex than just remittance behaviour. He highlighted the way people move, stating that of the total population of the Cooks at the time (18,000), “more than half that number travel between the Cook Islands and abroad (mainly to Aotearoa/New Zealand) every year” (Crocombe 1994: 317). He contended:

Whether Pacific people have more say over their identities than people elsewhere in the world depends on whether one looks by country or by the person. Island countries have the least say – they are too small and open to be able to determine more than a fraction of the aspects of their own identity. But island individuals, on the contrary, have more say than
most other individuals in the world living in such large units that they have little room to manoeuvre. [Crocombe 1994: 329, emphasis in original]

In the almost 20 years since Crocombe wrote this, the Cook Islands population in New Zealand has outstripped that in the islands, and one of the ways Crocombe’s “individuals” have responded is about family networks (cf. Gershon 2007) and linkages that involve transnational connections and translocal networks in New Zealand in particular via the Cook Islands ceremonial economy. Cook Islanders as members of extended family networks operate in both the realm of mutuality and market, in an expanded notion of economy and they do this with tivaivai as sacra from the base.

Women spend many long hours making tivaivai, those beautiful unquilted quilts, and when they do so, and then use their tivaivai to maintain the most important relationships in their lives, and to adorn and wrap dignitaries and ministers, they are operating in the realm of mutuality, and in accord with Cook Islands core values and social structures. The Cook Islands ceremonial economy and the movement of valuables that takes place at the public events that comprise this realm, including the gifting of tivaivai and envelope wrapped money, are part of a ritual complex that circulates value and transforms people and objects. This is all part of an expanded notion of economy. Women make tivaivai, but the value inherent in tivaivai ‘makes’ women too, because as Cook Islands women say, “you are not a woman without tivaivai”, and this is as much about economy as it is about the maintenance of kin relationships and appropriate modes of Cook Islands womanliness and mothering.
APPENDIX ONE

A NOTE ABOUT ORTHOGRAPHY

Throughout this thesis I use the term *tivaivai*. Elsewhere, (notably Hammond 1986a, 1986b; Herda 2011; Hutton 2002, Rongokea 1992, 2001) the term used to refer to patchwork and appliqué unquilted quilts is *tīvaevae* which is pronounced with a long vowel sound on the ‘i’. This form is spelt “*tīvaevae*” in the *Cook Islands Māori Dictionary* and refers to a “patchwork quilt” (Buse and Taringa 1995: 501). It is likely that the provenance of the *tīvaevae* form of the word is derived from the term to patch, namely *tīvae* (1995: 501), because the patchwork form of *tivaivai*, the *taorei* were almost certainly the first type of *tivaivai* to be made in the Cooks (cf. Hammond 1986a). With the repetition of the last part of the word, Buse and Taringa state that “*tīvaevae*” means to put patches on something or the act of doing patchwork (1995: 501). However, despite the dictionary entry, there is strong opinion over which is the right spelling of the word.

The form *tīvaevae*, according to a number of my informants, technically should be pronounced ‘*teevayvay*’. As one of the Māmās (Māmā is the correct way to refer and speak to an older Cook Islands woman) pointed out, the word *vaevae* means “leg or foot” (cf. Buse and Taringa 1995: 551). I have heard the occasional women from Rarotonga say ‘*teevayvay*’ when speaking about *tivaivai*, but most scoff at this. Most importantly, a number of Cook Islands women in Auckland have taken umbrage at my use of the *tīvaevae* spelling and insisted that I use *tivaivai* as the correct spelling of the word. Māmā Tirata, a friend and one of my principal informants as well as one of the most talented *ta'unga* I came across in my research, kindly but forcefully took me to task early on in our relationship and unequivocally and explicitly instructed me to use the *tivaivai* spelling. Given the way she pronounces the word, there should be a macron on the i, as in *tīvaivai*, however, Māmā Tirata didn’t countenance the use of macros or glottals. It was she who disparagingly said that “*tivaivai* have nothing to do with legs!”

In Küchler and Eimke’s (2009) recent publication on *tivaivai*, Eimke notes that she too became drawn into the “orthographic battle” (2009: 42). She notes that perhaps the answer lies in looking at what *tivaivai* actually do. She cites Savage’s dictionary definition of the prefix *tī* as an intensifying one, giving force and intensity to the proceeding adverb.
(Savage 1980: 376) and conveying the sense of “‘wholly’, ‘entirely’ or ‘all over’” (Küchler and Eimke 2009: 42). She notes that Savage lists the meaning of vaī as “to wrap up, to enclose with or in something, to encase or fold together, to enfold” (Savage 1980: 448, cited in Küchler and Eimke 2009: 42), although this would make each of the ‘i’ sounds long in pronunciation, as in tīvaīvaī, which I have never heard spoken. Although, given that tīvaīvaī wrap and adorn not only people but relationships and ceremonial context, this would seem the most appropriate spelling (emphasizes aside). Buse and Taringa (1995: 551-2) list the meaning of vai as “water, watery or juicy”, but also as “keep, remain, stay, last, exist (over a period of time in a given place)” (1995: 552), but do not give a definition for vaī and list the word ‘vaī’ as that meaning “wrap” (1995: 552) which is getting even further away from common pronunciation, but closer to one of the meanings of the word. My informants’ usage of the word seems to approximate most to tīvaīvaī with emphasis only on the first i. Throughout this thesis, I have omitted the macro when writing the word tīvaīvaī simply because this is how Māmā Tirata told me to write and spell it.
APPENDIX TWO

TYPES OF TIVAIVAI, THEIR CONSTRUCTION, AND THE LESSER FORMS OF TEXTILES

1 CATEGORIES OF TIVAIVAI

Tivaivai generally are made via hours and hours of sewing by hand, they can be sewn by machine, but at some cost to the prestige of the textile. There are four styles of tivaivai: they can be stitched together in the patchwork style to make tivaivai taorei, appliquéd with embroidery enhancement to make tivaivai tātāura, or appliquéd without embellishment to make tivaivai manu. A fourth style, tivaivai tuitui tātāura features embroidered on squares of fabric joined together with crochet. All the forms of tivaivai feature symmetry and combinations of colours of two or more fabrics to create the pattern contrast.

Tivaivai are made generally exclusively from a 100 % cotton fabric called azlin, which is considered appropriate for use in tivaivai making because of its weight and weave. It is also the cheapest form of this type of fabric available being made in, and imported from China. Women also use sheeting for both layers of tivaivai manu in particular because it is cheaper, but more often the sheeting is used for the backing fabric only because there is no sewing required to put the base fabric together. If azlin is used for the backing fabric, strips need to be sewn together because azlin comes in fabric bolts between 90 cm and 150 cm wide. Tivaivai come in varying sizes, from cot size, to single and double bed sized, queen or king sized.

When I began my fieldwork in Auckland in 1999, there were several places that azlin could be purchased around the city. These outlets catered for the specific textile needs of the Polynesian market because the fabric sold was predominately Pacific Island fabrics (pāreu fabric). Such needs included tivaivai production as well as the sewing of ‘Island shirts’ and mu’umu’u (island style Mother Hubbard dress). Such shops tended to be located in South Auckland where many Pacific peoples live, but there were outlets in west and central Auckland as well. However, during the time I have been doing this research, the central Auckland Pacific Island fabric shops have either all closed down, or moved to south or west Auckland, reflecting the movement of Pacific Islander populations out of the central suburbs as house prices have skyrocketed in these areas. In 2010 to my knowledge, there were only two places that stocked azlin, namely The Fare Pareau in Otahuhu, and another in Mangere that used to be in Newmarket in central Auckland. The current price for a metre of azlin is close to $4, but it does depend on availability. When I was last in the Cook Islands in August 2010, azlin was supplied to Rarotongan makers and those in the outer islands by Vonias a, business which sold fabric, clothing, and other hardware items. Vonias had three outlets on Rarotonga and had 33 different shades of azlin, a good range of colours. The woman I spoke to at the Vonias on the western side of Rarotonga said that three to four women come in each week to buy fabric for tivaivai; multiplying by the number of outlets on Rarotonga, that would mean that as a very rough estimate, as many as ten new tivaivai could be created each week on Rarotonga alone.
Tivaivai are ranked textiles, and are gifted accordingly at events like weddings where a specific gifting performance called an ‘o’ora occurs. At such events, tivaivai are gifted last after a range of other lesser textiles are given in what constitutes a hierarchy of textiles. The various types of tivaivai effectively top the hierarchy of textiles. Other textiles that generally fall below tivaivai in rank are handmade crocheted blankets (these are sometimes ranked higher than some tivaivai depending on the work put into them and who has made them), machine made tivaivai of various kinds, machine made bedspreads, embroidered pillow cases, brought blankets, especially mink blankets, table clothes, brought bedspreads, tea towels, towels and other household linen (see Section 2 of this appendix for explanations of these various types of textiles).

Women can make tivaivai on their own, or form groups called Va’ine tini to sew tivaivai together either communally or as individuals. The cutting and designing of tivaivai is done by an expert in tivaivai called a ta’unga, and they tend to hold prominent positions in Va’ine tini. Generally the quality of sewing of tivaivai is important, and women are scrutinised by others for neatness. When I was sewing my tivaivai tātaura, other women would come to inspect my work; they would flip a corner over and look at the neatness of my stitching on the back of the tivaivai; I often saw women do this to tivaivai at tivaivai shows as well.

**Tivaivai Taorei**

Many women say that the most elite form of tivaivai is the tivaivai taorei. Tivaivai taorei are made from thousands of small pieces of azlin, which are cut into shapes, generally squares, but hexagons, diamonds, triangles, or other more irregular shapes can be used as well. When making a taorei with squares of fabric, some 15,000 pieces, each measuring around 3 cm square when sewn into the tivaivai (so the cut size of the square would be 5 cm square to allow for seam allowance) are sewn together to make a double bed sized taorei and around 56,000 to make a king sized bedspread (Rongokea 2001: 16). Smaller sized squares can be used, and generally the smaller the square, the more work involved in the production of the textile, and therefore the more valued the textile is.
Appendix Figure 1: Māmā Tapu Porio and her daughter-in-law Māmā Nane Makakea, holding pieces of Nane’s tivaivai taorei.

Appendix Figure 2: Māmā Nana Makakea sewing a tivaivai taorei on the machine.
The pieces used to make a taorei are sewn together in the patchwork way (Rongokea 2001: 16-17), either by hand or by machine. Some women told me that taorei are the most elite because they are the most expensive to make. Māmā Nane said that the taorei “costs more to buy [the] fabric” given that a number of different coloured fabrics are needed to produce a given pattern. But another woman told me that taorei were cheap to produce, because you just used scraps of fabric. Others contended that taorei were the most coveted because they were the hardest to make.

The need to maintain the same tension and seam allowance throughout the entire construction of the taorei is critical. Any deviation can result in what one woman called “humps” where the sewn together pieces do not sit flat. One tivaivai taorei I was shown on Aitutaki which had been sewn by 20 women from a church Va‘ine tini as a gift to a departing minster in just three weeks was large but it was rather uneven in the middle. Because of the amount of work involved in the making of a taorei, they are often sewn by groups of women, but the comment “Many hands have made that tivaivai” is a disparaging one, highlighting the fact that if the tension is not consistent, the tivaivai is not even. The tivaivai taorei I saw in Aitutaki was one such tivaivai.

The communal making of tivaivai taorei facilitates the laborious process of creating the thousands of squares or other shapes needed to make the textile. Some women told me that to make taorei, women gathered together to rip or cut (cf. Rongokea 2001: 17; Herda 2011) the array of fabric colours into piles, and then a woman reading from the pattern called out the colours so that the squares could be threaded onto a strand of sturdy cotton. This meant that individual women could take the strand of threaded squares of fabric away and sew the sequence into the correct pattern. The Enuamanu Va‘ine tini made machine made tivaivai taorei in the second half of their yearly programme in 2001. However, most of the women opted not to have other women sew their tivaivai taorei because of the possible discrepancies in tension and errors in the pattern. Hence, the colours of fabric were threaded onto cotton according to single colour only.

The actual patterns of tivaivai taorei are contained in units called pu, an actual template is called an ‘akapū. An ‘akapū contains the entire pattern, and repetitions of this unit create the whole tivaivai. These can be stored as templates for the making of future tivaivai taorei. Sections of ‘akapū are joined together by uniform bands of pattern called
vāʻi. Patterns can feature anything from anchors, to crowns, flowers or star shapes and *tivaivai taorei* tend to have four way or at least two way symmetry.

Appendix Figure 3: ‘Akapū templates for *tivaivai taorei*.

Some women create and store patterns on graph paper or by colouring in a pandanus mats (Rongokea 2001: 12), others just keep *akapū* sections. The sewing of a *taorei* is a laborious task. Once the patchwork part of the *tivaivai taorei* is sewn, the whole piece is backed to hide all the seams on the reverse of the work. The backing fabric is folded over on the sides to create a boarder. This is generally done with a machine.

*Tivaivai tātaura*

*Tivaivai tātaura*, also known as *tivaivai karakara* or *tivaivai* fancy, are generally ranked second in the hierarchy of textiles. These are appliquéd and are made using three or more colours of fabric and feature embroidery embellishment to varying degrees using variegated cotton. This type of *tivaivai* generally feature flower patterns. A variety of stitches are used, including a stitch called *tuitui tāviri*, which is a particular stitch used around the boarders of patterns and is purportedly a Cook Islands stitch (Andrea Eimke, personal correspondence, November 1999). It is a version of the standard blanket stitch.

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144 When I first began my research in 1999, the brand of variegated cotton that was available was ‘Anchor’ cotton. This was considered good quality and did not run when the cotton got wet or the textile was washed. This soon became unavailable and was replaced by ‘Rose’ brand cotton. This was thinner, more prone to breakage, and the dyes were not very colourfast, many women despaired of it when it was first introduced. For the most part, the brand available now is called ‘Pearl’ which is largely considered even worse than ‘Rose’ cotton.
but involves two loops of cotton around the needle. The effect is a sort of zigzag stitch. *Tuitui tāviri* is done without a hoop but most other embroidery is done with a hoop, because it makes it easier. Some *tivaivai tātaura* feature large amounts of embroidery. I have seen women, generally from Aitutaki, embroider flowers for *tivaivai tātaura* and embellish them with a crochet border; others have crocheted whole flowers and appliquéd these to the backing fabric along with appliquéd leaves and called these *tivaivai tātaura* as well.

Appendix Figure 4: The late Mama Dorice Reid, Te Tika Mata’iapo, with a *tivaivai tātaura* she made with her grandmother as a child.

*Tivaivai tātaura* can be sewn in either of two ways. The pattern is cut out and then tacked (*tāmoumou*) onto the backing fabric and the embroidery done onto the whole *tivaivai*; this is generally the method used when a woman is sewing the *tivaivai* on her own. The second way is where the shapes of the pattern, generally flowers, are cut out and the embroidery done onto each flower before they are tacked onto the backing fabric along with the leaf
part of the pattern. This method is used if a group of women are working communally to produce *tivaivai* for each other.

**Tivaivai manu**

The *tivaivai manu* is a simpler form of appliqué *tivaivai*, also known as *tivaivai panapana*. *Panapana* is the Cook Islands Māori word for the simple slip stitch, which is often used on many *tivaivai manu*. Other *tivaivai manu* feature a border of the *tuitui tāviri* stitch to outline the pattern on the top layer of the *tivaivai*. *Tivaivai manu* consist of two colours, the pattern is cut out of the top fabric which is then appliquéd to the bottom fabric to produce contrast. The top patterned piece is cut from a single piece of fabric which is folded in half, then quarters, and even eighths (if azlin is used the strips of fabric are sewn together first before cutting to create the right size for the top layer). *Tivaivai manu* feature floral motifs, or a combination of flora and fauna, such as butterflies, peacocks, or marine life, and sometimes mermaids.¹⁴⁵

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¹⁴⁵ Some women told me that mermaid *tivaivai* were bad luck. One woman said she was having trouble in her marriage and fighting with her husband all the time. A friend told her to get rid of her mermaid *tivaivai*, which she did by burning it, and she said her marriage troubles disappeared after this. *Tivaivai* featuring peacocks are also considered bad luck by some (cf. Rongokea 2001: 12), and another woman told me a story about a ‘kiss-me-quick’ flower pattern *tivaivai* that seemed to bring her bad luck as well, the woman decided to burn this *tivaivai* and her problems seemed to go away too.
A variation of the *tivaivai manu* is called the *tivaivai manu veru*. I saw only three of this variation of the *manu* during the course of my fieldwork, and they were all made by Māmā Tirata Bailey. She translated the term *veru* as “shattered”. With this style of *tivaivai manu*, she had cut the motifs from the fabric pattern by creating a lattice in the interior of the motif, and then as the *tivaivai* was tacked, other coloured fabric was inserted behind to create even more contrast (see Figure 3 in Chapter Three).

Several of the various *ta’unga* I watched cut *tivaivai manu* and *tivaivai tātaura* tended to just draw the basic pattern straight onto the fabric with chalk or pen, and then as they cut, they would add more features. Others used paper templates for the basic floral or other motif, and the rest of the pattern fleshed out with other pen lines, or just cut out as the *ta’unga* cut the *tivaivai*. I watched Māmā Porio cut a *tivaivai manu* one day at the Enuamanu Va’ine tini; her concentration was enduring as she carefully inscribed a baby rose and butterfly pattern onto the fabric. She then carefully cut the pattern out, which took her well over an hour. The result was an astonishingly intricate and complex design that involved an inordinate amount of subsequent sewing. Māmā Tirata from the Tiare Māori Va’ine tini was relatively quick and flamboyant when she cut.

The laying out process took as much time as the cutting, because the placement of the top pattern layer onto the bottom layer required exactness and evenness. To set out a *tivaivai manu*, the base fabric was taped securely to the floor and then the *ta’unga* would carefully unfold the cut pattern layer and position it correctly. Other women, generally not the *ta’unga*, would then tack (*tāmoumou*) the top layer to the bottom to keep the *tivaivai* pattern in place during the actual sewing.

**Tivaivai tuitui tātaura**

During the time of my fieldwork, I only ever saw four *tivaivai tuitui tātaura*. The first two I saw on my first trip to the Cook Islands in 1999. These were ones done by Māmā Vereara Maeva-Taripo, and Māmā Parau Tarui, arguably two of the highest profile *tivaivai* makers on Rarotonga; the third was in a *New Zealand Herald* newspaper article (Blake 1998). Each *tivaivai* featured around 20 squares of intricate and fine embroidery arrayed in a four by five grid featuring the same embroidered pattern, which were then connected together by a crocheted band to make a double bed sized *tivaivai*. To make such *tivaivai* required considerable embroidery skills.
The fourth *tivaivai tuitui tātora* I saw was in Auckland in September 2011. I was visiting one of the *Va’ine tini* groups I had belonged to when I was doing my fieldwork, and Māmā Tekua Turia showed me her version of this *tivaivai* that she had just started. Being under production, it was in pieces, but as she showed me her sewing, I was aware that the other women around us were looking as well. They were all very impressed by her tackling such a *tivaivai*. Her sewing was very fine and she was bashful about her attempts, and I had a sense of the prestige that she was garnering from her production of such an uncommon *tivaivai*.

2 **LESSER FORMS OF TEXTILES IN THE HIERARCHY OF TEXTILES**

Other lesser textiles feature in the hierarchy of textiles especially during wedding *ʻoʻora*, unveilings of gravestones, and as decoration of ceremonial venues. Handmade textiles tend to rank above home machine made textiles, and store brought textiles, but it does depend on the textile and the person’s preference up to a point. The forms of textiles indicate the closeness of the relationship, the more elite, the closer the kin connection.
Tivaivai tend to be reserved for the closest of kin connections, lesser textiles services more distant relationships within an extended family group, and between “communities” (Gudeman 2001, 2008) but it does depend on the context. Lesser textiles are gifted in the context of an ‘o’ora to bolster the volume of textiles gifted and as a nod to the older function of wedding ‘o’ora which was to supply the linen for the new marital home. Forms of lesser textiles that I mention in various places throughout this thesis that require some explanation include:

**Embroidered pillow cases:** These are produced extensively by many Cook Islands women as a way to show embroidery skills and often feature as part of Va’ine tini programmes. They are gifted at ceremonial events, especially during wedding ‘o’ora. Depending on the amount of embroidery, and the quality of the stitching, these can be held in high esteem.

**Crocheted blankets and tablecloths:** Depending on the fineness of the work, these can be held in high regard. These are made by hand from cotton or wool.

**Machine-made bedspread:** These are known as ‘au’iri pāreu. They are made from pāreu fabric and are usually made on the machine.

**Blowsheets:** These are made by laying out plain cotton sheeting on the ground. Stencils of various motifs like flowers, leaves, birds, bunches of grapes etc. are arrayed on the sheet in a decorative pattern. Then women take pots of paint, suck paint up into straws, and then literally blow it over the stencils. Several colours of paint are used, and the process done enough times so that once the stencils are removed, the pattern is revealed by the negative spaces. To make the most of the paint used, women also lay another cotton sheet over the paint covered stencils to imprint the stencil patterns to create a positive image on the other sheet. Blowsheets have the advantage of being quick and cheap to produce. I watched women from the Enuamanu Va’ine tini produce upwards of 100 blowsheets in a single day.

**Tablecloths:** Various synthetic fabric tablecloths in varying sizes with lacy designs frequently featured as layers at unveilings I went to, and during wedding ‘o’ora.

**Mink Blankets:** These blankets are made from a thick 100% polyester piled fabric. They are warm and come decorated with various motifs. Large deluxe blankets can cost as much as $NZ200.
**Pāreu and tie-dye sheets:** Pāreu can be worn as clothing by both men and women, and can be made from pāreu fabric or plain fabric tie-dyed. Some of the Va'ine tini produced these as fundraisers and they were sold for around $20.

**Bought textiles:** These include anything from Chinese appliqué quilts, to duvets, to towels, and tea towels.
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